

SERVING SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS IN THE LAKE UNION SINCE 1908

HERALD

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021



WE MADE IT THROUGH
REFLECTIONS ON FAITH, RESILIENCY AND HOPE

ILLINOIS MEMBERS
ILLINOIS FOCUS
INSIDE



“Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus.” I don’t know how things are going for you, but I’ve gone through the biggest challenges of my life. First, my wife, MaryAnn, lost her mother in March, then we lost MaryAnn in September, then we lost my father in October (none were victims of the coronavirus). Yet, through it all, God has been faithful as a constant and abiding Presence. Yes, there are times when the loss is overwhelming, yet God seems to be closer than ever.

I assume that life has been different for all of us but I trust that some of the stories in this issue of the *Herald* will be a source of healing and encouragement to our readers.


Gary Burns
Editor



Titus Naftanaila was elected president of Wisconsin Conference. He and his wife, Rozina, served as the pastoral couple for the Green Bay District. Naftanaila, pictured here with wife and son, Sebastian, begins his presidential responsibilities January 1, 2021.



Stacey-Ann DePluzer was re-elected to a second two-year term as Lake Union Youth Department Adventist Association of Camping Professionals (AACP) representative. In this capacity, Stacey-Ann serves as the link between the camps in our Union and the AACP board.



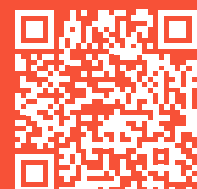
After a long period of caution and hesitation because of the pandemic, Indiana’s Hammond Church received six additions into its membership. The baptism was conducted by Pastor Ovid Radulescu; he and the entire Hammond Church joined in welcoming their new members.



The Lake Union is pushing forward standards detailed in a video, with the goal of guiding our church’s efforts to protect its members. Project Safe Church, as the initiative is known, seeks to address reports of sexual abuse within Lake Union churches.



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After the Dust Settles

By Nicholas P. Miller

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: STEVEN NORMAN

ON THE COVER: Toson Antwan Knight (back center), with mentees. Front row: Anwau Charles, Robert Merriweather; back row: Eduardo Yarbrough, Earle Kearney, Barry Stewart, Edmen Stewart

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Mission Unstoppable

Jesus said, Now this is eternal life, that they may know the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom You have sent. I have glorified You on earth by accomplishing the work You gave Me to do. John 17:4



▲ Maurice Valentine

Jesus started the work of the New Testament church. During the pandemic, if you think the work has ground to a halt, think again. In Mexico, a virtual evangelistic meeting was held which averaged 190,000 viewers per night. One night had 242,000 viewers.

If you think that was big. . .

One of our media ministries had a meeting, originally planned for our region, that went from what would have been maybe 30 churches but instead was broadcast to over 600 churches around the globe.

You think that was big. . .

Meet Steven. He's a pastor who had a meeting cancelled after gathering the names of 400 people to invite to his meeting. His burden for souls wouldn't allow him to let those names wither on the vine. He told himself, *"I've got to do something with these names. I can't let these individuals go unknowing of Jesus' soon return,"* so he held a virtual meeting.

You think that was big. . .

Several of our conferences have held meetings with anywhere from 20 to 40 people in attendance, some in-person, some virtually. Pastors and churches together who, like Steven, feel the need to share the message.

You think that is big. . .

While speaking to someone several weeks ago, she shared that she is giving Bible studies over the telephone. In a weekly meeting, she is teaching the Amazing Facts series to a group of people, without video. Moreover, she is already hoping to share the advanced series once the regular series is completed. Furthermore, she inspired my heart as she told me she participates in an early morning prayer call and is also

having a more intimate Bible study with her sister. She stated that her Bible students see many things that they had no idea were in the Word of God, but they find it hard to dispute because it is so plain.

We are not following Scripture if we believe we will catch every fish in the pond. No fisherman believes he will catch the entire lake. Yet, the work goes on just as those who are fisherman keep fishing. The work goes on, similar to how every spring the farmer keeps sowing. The work goes on, the same way every health-care professional keeps going out the door each day to rescue the perishing. The work is not what we do; it is who we are. When we see Jesus high and lifted up, we can't help but tell somebody. It's like fire shut in our bones.

If you noticed the numbers mentioned here got smaller and smaller, then hopefully it is clear when I say, "You think that was big." I'm not referring to numbers. I'm referring to faith.

We tend to get caught up in numbers. However, as Jesus' three-year evangelistic meeting concluded, He experienced a great decline in "numbers" attending his meeting. The Book of John asserts, *...many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, "Will ye also go away?"*

Ask God to give you a faith that can move mountains, then wait and see what the Lord does for you. The greatest witness may be when each of us asks God to show us what He would have us do.

I met the Lord for myself as I tuned into the local Christian channel during my drive time back and forth to work every day. During my morning and evening

commute, I listened to the radio evangelist and my heart for the lost beat so strong. I said, "Lord, I would like to tell the whole world about Your love and I would like to do that on the radio." So, I went to school, majoring in Theology with a minor in Communication.

As time went on, I forgot about my dream to be a radio evangelist. Then, suddenly, it fell right into my lap. One of my members came to me and said, "Pastor, I want to put you on the radio." I told him I would do it even though I was fearful of the cost. He developed a not-for-profit radio ministry board and, for two years, he and other faithful members raised the funds so I could tell the Denver metropolitan area about His love. Who knows what God has in store for you? Your greatest challenge may be co-workers with whom you interact every day or a brother, sister, child or grandchild.

"Mission Unstoppable" is the Lake Union Conference theme for 2021. We are thankful for all you are doing to help finish the work. If thinking about the work gets you excited, think again and ask: "Lord, what are we not doing that we need to do? Where are we not sowing that we need to sow? What questions are we not asking that we need to ask? What things should we be considering that have not even crossed our minds? What can the Holy Spirit do with those who seek to bring Glory to God through their service?" But here's the most important question of all. "Lord, what can I do that I'm not currently doing?"

Ellen White wrote in the book, *Acts of the Apostles*: "The disciples felt their spiritual need and cried to the Lord for the holy unction that was to fit them for the work of soul saving. They did not ask for a blessing for themselves merely. They were weighted with the burden of the salvation of souls. They realized that the gospel was to be carried to the world, and they claimed the power that Christ had promised."

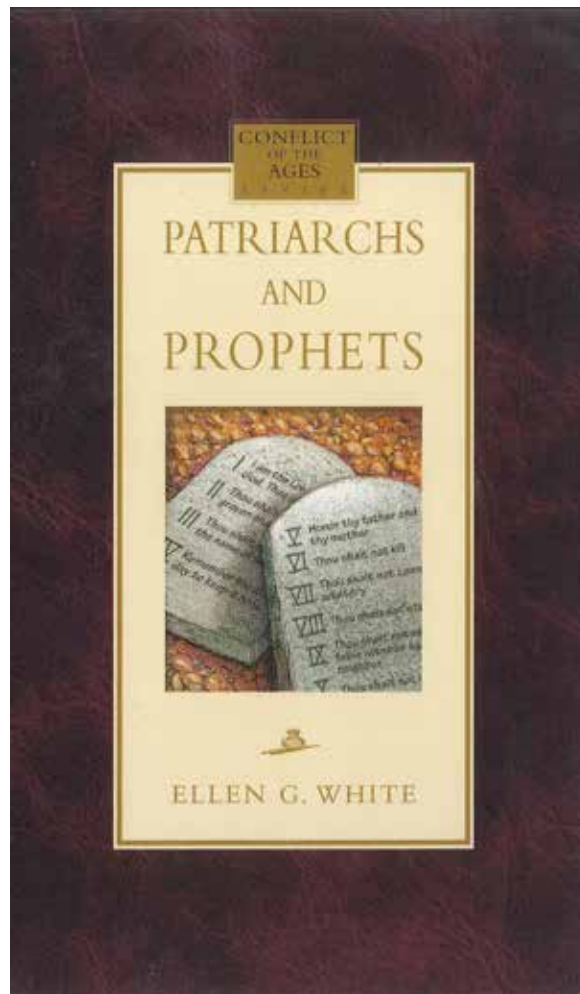
Whether the crowds are dwindling or increasing, being faithful is all that God asks us to do. If crowds were all that was important, then Noah was a failure. Have you ever considered the fact that when Jesus spoke the words, *I finished the work that You gave Me to do*, His crowds were probably at their smallest?

As much as I love big evangelistic meetings or other major initiatives, the church isn't a building nor an amphitheater or stadium filled with people hearing the Word of God. The church is God in you and God with you. The church is God in me and God with me. Pray

for the harvest in all endeavors, whether big or small. So long as the faith is big, God can work with your dream to finish the work.

The President's Book of the Year is *Patriarchs and Prophets*. Let's read it together and let's grow together. Moreover, let's read the Bible together. Join me in reading three chapters of the Old Testament every weekday morning and two chapters of the New Testament every weekday evening. ■

Maurice Valentine is president of the Lake Union Conference.



THE PRESIDENT'S BOOK OF THE YEAR IS *PATRIARCHS AND PROPHETS*. LET'S READ IT TOGETHER AND LET'S GROW TOGETHER.

Memory and the Pursuit of Jesus

We want our children to “stay in the Church.” Discussions arise that it is more than just membership, that it is about relationship with Jesus, and on to what might be ways by which we can encourage this growth.



▲ Ingrid Weiss Slikkers

We schedule family worship, Sabbath School, Pathfinders, summer camp, and many other home or organizational spiritual formation activities which support development in hopes that what they learn will become integrated into their being.

In reading about the brain and memory in recent months, I find myself pondering the connection. I’m learning that semantic memory remembers rote pieces of information with no necessary emotional response. An example commonly given is multiplication tables. This kind of memory has no real personal experience connected to it and is comprised of basic facts or knowledge about the world while absent of context. In applying this to religious education, I find it easy to quickly list examples of semantic pieces of memory with facts such as the books of the Bible in order or the twelve tribes of Israel.

Procedural memory, on the other hand, is how to do something. Connected to motor skills, it requires movement or action. Early in child development arise walking and talking. This procedural memory eventually builds into tying shoes or riding a bike. As processes are mastered, they can be done on “auto-pilot.” As I had previously done, I thought about it in terms of spiritual formation and wondered if repeating John 3:16, the Lord’s Prayer, praying over meals or daily worship had become procedural, something that was being done without thinking for many of us?

Episodic memory includes events or experiences. It involves conscious thought, not just rote memory. Knowledge of it comes from experiencing inside context. Within this form of remembrance, we are able to

not only recall, but actually “re-experience” the memory with images, feelings, and the meaning it brought to our life. It is highly personal. It is lived experience and encompasses the senses. Experiences like being at the rim of the Grand Canyon where every sense was stimulated, or simply remembering grandma’s voice, laughter and the smells of her kitchen although she has passed away. You are able to “see” it and “re-experience” it.

My parallels then gave me pause. Could it be that we are overly concentrating on semantic and procedural memory with our children? Clearly, both are vital foundations. Semantic memory of Psalm 23 is significant and should be pursued. Procedural memory of church attendance is important. My pause came when I considered that episodic memory is more than just reading or hearing and comes as we experience it. How much effort is going into this area of growth? How can I encourage *knowing* our Savior this year? How can we see, feel, hear *and experience* Jesus?

What is God guiding us to do so that, at the end of 2021, we will be able to use our episodic memory because being with Jesus is as real and present as when we recall sitting around a campfire with close friends last weekend? ■

Ingrid Weiss Slikkers, assistant professor and director, International Center for Trauma Education & Care, School of Social Work, Andrews University

Peace Through the Storm

The storms of life. We all have them — you know, the storms of stress, sorrow, setbacks and sickness. Jesus said: *These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.*

Eternity without pain is on the horizon but, in the meantime, God has a special four-part “peace plan” to guide, strengthen and empower you, filling your life with peace, purpose and joy. Daily applying these four principles will help you flourish instead of flounder as you face the inevitable challenges and demands of these last days. They are:

1. A Lifestyle that Promotes Peace. Lifestyle is a major factor that affects mental, physical, social and spiritual health. Lifestyle choices matter, especially the ones we repeat every day. They have a profound affect on brain function which is the seat of your thinking, emotions and decisions. “Many of the fundamental tools for the care and feeding of the brain are everyday matters. Physical and mental exercise, proper nutrition and adequate sleep will help anyone gain cognitive clarity and emotional stability.” Healthy food choices, rest and daily exercise are powerful mental, physical and spiritual health promoters.

2. Attitudes that Produce Peace. Your thoughts and attitudes have a powerful effect on the rest of your body, especially your immune, nervous and digestive systems. We can literally think ourselves into a frenzy, but God promises His peace, *perfect peace*, to the one whose mind is centered upon Him (Isaiah 26:3). He invites us to trust Him with every circumstance of our life. “A contented mind, a cheerful spirit, is health to the body and strength to the soul.” This is an attitudinal discipline that focuses on God’s truth and

solutions rather than fear, circumstances and unreliable emotions.

3. Spiritual Principles that Secure Peace.

“Spiritual well-being is at the center of a healthy lifestyle.” To meet our deepest longings, God has provided spiritual principles that bring true life satisfaction. This does not come with wealth, fame, popularity or even perfect health. It comes through making peace with God — in entering into a surrendered, saving relationship with Him. God’s love is the foundation of a relationship with Him and healthy relationships with each other.

4. Faith that Preserves Peace. Faith is more than positive thinking. It is connecting with the living God who seeks to restore what sin has broken and taken away. Jesus never promised an absence of problems. Faith is the conviction that God will guide you and give you power through both good times and bad. Faith says, “Either make the problem smaller, or me bigger!” God has a plan and He cares for you in a very personal way. *For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, purposes of peace, and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope*” (Jeremiah 29:11).

Especially now, in these troubled times, Jesus invites you to enter His peace plan. He will help you thrive, not just survive, the storms of life.

Visit LifestyleMatters.com for more resources. ■



▲ Vicki Griffin

Vicki Griffin is the director of Lifestyle Matters and director of Health Ministries for the Michigan Conference.

Retrospect on Minneapolis

Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins. Matthew 1:21



▲ George R. Knight

The 1888 General Conference session was one of the great turning points in Seventh-day Adventist history.

We cannot have the slightest doubt about its accomplishments. It directed the church back to the Bible as the only source of authority in both doctrine and practice; it uplifted Jesus and placed salvation by grace through faith at the center of Adventist theology; it contested the proper role of the law within the gospel of grace; and it led to a restudying of the topics of the Trinity, the full divinity of Christ, and the personhood of the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps most important, it gave Adventism a fuller understanding of the third angel's message in Revelation 14:12 — the central text in Seventh-day Adventist self-understanding. Not only did that

passage identify the Adventists as they patiently waited for their Lord while keeping all of God's commandments, but it also set before them the gospel message in the fact that God's last message to the world before the Second Advent (verses 14–20) would center on having faith *in* Jesus.

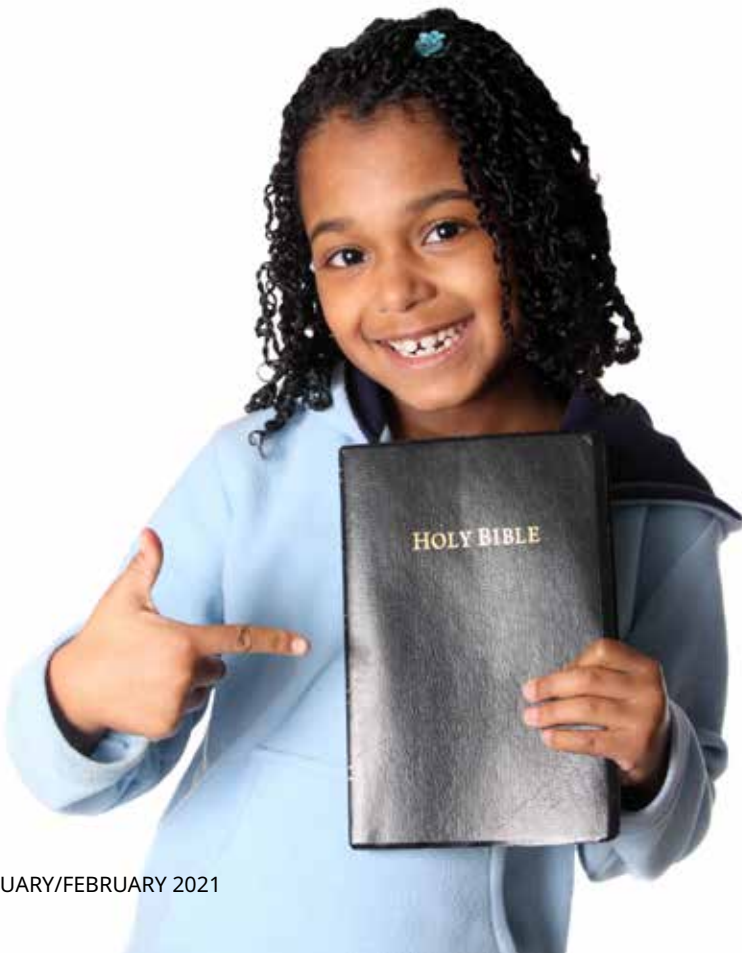
In short, the 1888 message transformed the way Adventists thought about their message. That's the good news.

The bad news is that the devil is always out to make sure that we forget or neglect the good news. Thus it is that some Adventists in the 1890s and beyond continued to focus on the law rather than the gospel, while others used the message of Jones and Waggoner as a new gate into the old legalism and human perfectionism that they had been raised up to stand against.

The whole story of the Minneapolis saga brings to mind two of the greatest facts on earth. First, the utter perversity of human beings. Second, the unbounded grace of God. Looking back on the history of the church in the Minneapolis era, what comes to my mind are the works of John Newton's great hymn: "Amazing grace! How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me!"

"Amazing grace" is the only kind there is. Those two words sum up the message and meaning of the 1888 event. ■

George R. Knight is a retired professor of Church History at the Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. This article is from his book, Lest We Forget, a daily devotional, published by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, page 300, reprinted with permission.



La oración que produce un temblor

Cuando terminaron de orar, el lugar en que estaban congregados tembló; y todos fueron llenos del Espíritu Santo y hablaban con valentía la palabra de Dios (Hechos 4:31).

El libro *Hechos de los Apóstoles* me encanta porque nos enseña que a pesar de los muchos desafíos que existían en el tiempo la iglesia primitiva, ésta creció y se multiplicó. Por ejemplo, en los capítulos tres y cuatro del libro se relata la historia de lo que ocurrió cuando Pedro sanó a un parálítico en el templo. Pedro y Juan fueron arrestados inmediatamente y al día siguiente interrogados por los líderes religiosos del templo. La situación parece haber sido peligrosa para Pedro y Juan. Pero aun así ellos no contestaron con temor; más bien, respondieron diciendo que Jesús era la fuente de la salvación. Los líderes, al ver que no tenían una razón legal para arrestarlos, se limitaron a amenazarlos e instarlos a que no siguieran predicando acerca de Jesús, y los pusieron en libertad.

Lo que me maravilla de esta historia es la oración de los creyentes cuando oyeron el testimonio de estos discípulos. Al leer Hechos 4:23-31, uno se da cuenta de ciertos datos que indican cuán fervientes eran en sus oraciones. Notemos la manera en que oran:

- Estaban unánimes.
- Oraban con alabanza.
- Citaban de memoria su Palabra (Salmo 2:2).
- Pedían valor para predicar.
- Pedían que en el nombre de Jesús se hicieran sanidades y señales.

“Cuando terminaron de orar”, Dios respondió, hubo un temblor e inmediatamente todos fueron llenos del Espíritu Santo y pudieron predicar “con valentía la palabra de Dios”.

Un año extraordinario ha pasado ya a la historia y hemos comenzado uno nuevo. Para muchos de nosotros el año 2020 fue difícil. Por un tiempo fue necesario cerrar nuestros templos. Los pastores tuvieron que adaptarse a una nueva tecnología para poder continuar

su ministerio. Personas que conocíamos y amábamos enfermamos, algunos inclusive fallecieron debido a la pandemia. Las finanzas fueron seriamente afectadas y nuestros hijos tuvieron que tomar clases virtuales. Además, en nuestro país se agudizó la división en asuntos políticos y raciales. Sin duda alguna, el año 2020 ha sido uno de muchos desafíos.

A pesar de las circunstancias difíciles por las cuales hemos tenido que pasar el año pasado, hay una nota muy positiva. Es ver a nuestro pueblo hispano uniéndose en oración. Ha sido muy alentador para mí ver a los hermanos llamándose y usando los medios sociales para mantenerse en contacto con Dios y con su prójimo. Muchos han aprovechado y usado el recurso “Nuestro Único Clamor” para orar por cuarenta días pidiendo el bautismo del Espíritu Santo.

Es mi deseo animar a nuestro pueblo hispano a que en este nuevo año nos comprometamos a orar aun más por un bautismo diario del Espíritu Santo. En base a lo que hemos visto y sentido no tengo duda de que las profecías del fin se están cumpliendo. Creo que éste es el momento en el cual debemos obtener la valentía que nos ofrece el Espíritu. Es mi oración que durante este año disfrutemos de una mayor consagración, y así podamos ver cómo hará Dios temblar la tierra con su poder. ■

Carmelo Mercado es el vicepresidente de la Unión del Lago.



▲ Carmelo Mercado



Chicago area Urban Center of Influence expands ministry, honors slain pregnant teen

By Kathleen Morrissy

IN APRIL OF 2019, MARLEN OCHOA-URIOSTEGUI, A SOUTH SHORE SPANISH CHURCH MEMBER, WAS MURDERED IN CHICAGO WHILE TRYING TO OBTAIN CLOTHES AND ITEMS FOR HER THEN-UNBORN BABY. At a community-wide memorial service, her father, Arnulfo, called for the community to supply the needs of poor and to help struggling moms-to-be with clothes, supplies, emotional care and other necessities.

The Adelante Community Health Center in Berwyn, Illinois, one of the first Urban Centers of Influence in the Lake Union, has been able to help do just that through the ACS Treasure Hunt Thrift Store, established in memory of Ochoa-Uriostegui.

Since opening its doors in May 2017, Manuel Alva, a gastroenterologist and vice president of the Adelante Community Health Center, explains that, in addition to the thrift store, they educate and serve the community through health education, cooking classes, psychological support and a medical clinic. The Center hosts weekly worship programs and nutrition classes as well as monthly cooking classes. Massage therapy sessions are offered during the week and the medical clinic treats patients four days a week. As a result of these services and activities, three of their community members were baptized this June.



▲ Manuel Alva, a gastroenterologist and vice president of the Adelante Community Health Center, explains that, in addition to the thrift store, they educate and serve the community through health education, cooking classes, psychological support and a medical clinic.

Erecting New Signage Brings Challenges and Opportunities

The store is located along a busy stretch of the historic U.S. Route 66 thoroughfare and it was hoped that a street sign would help draw in additional people. A portion of the 2019 Lake Union ASI offering helped to purchase an electric street sign prepared by a neighboring business owner.

When it came time to put it up, the sign-maker could not obtain a permit from the city for installation. The Adelante community started praying. While the sign-maker tried several more times to obtain a permit, the Adventist Community Services (ACS) ministry remained active.

When the pandemic hit, the store was forced to close but the city began to allow previously denied



▲ The Adelante Community Health Center has expanded its community outreach through an Adventist Community Services (ACS) Treasure Hunt Thrift Store. Adelante (the Spanish version of NEWSTART) promotes *agua* (water), *descanso* (rest), *ejercicio* (exercise), *luz solar* (sunlight), *aire puro* (clean air), *nutricion* (nutrition), *temperancia* (temperance), and *esperanza en Dios* (hope in God).

work to be done on the property. In hopes of moving the project along, the sign-maker was contacted. However, even after multiple attempts, he could not be reached. Finally, one day, his wife answered the phone and delivered the news. The sign-maker had passed away just two months before the pandemic began.

But, as providence would have it, he had finished the sign and stored it in a nearby warehouse. His widow had to wait to obtain permission from the warehouse owner to rescue and identify the Adelante sign. She transferred the installation work to another sign-maker. He became friends with the Adelante staff and is now using their lifestyle education materials. Both the widow and the owner of the second company recognized the motive and the One behind the concept of Adelante.

In October, authorization to erect the sign was finally received. One staff member noted, “Our sign has been up for less than three weeks and has brought new friends and multiple questions about what Adelante is all about.” When questions arise, they are more than happy to explain the eight natural remedies that Adelante (the Spanish version of NEWSTART) promotes—*agua* (water), *descanso* (rest), *ejercicio* (exercise), *luz solar* (sunlight), *aire puro* (clean air), *nutricion* (nutrition), *temperancia* (temperance), and *esperanza en Dios* (hope in God). ■

Kathleen Morrissy, Lake Union Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) Communication director

THE FIGHT FOR MY LIFE

What I Discovered as I Triumphed Through Tragedy



By Tricia Wynn Payne

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

My heart raced, pounding as if it would jump right out of my body. Pain gripped me mercilessly, holding me prisoner, powerless. *“What in the world is happening to me?”* I thought as the room swarmed with white coats and green scrubs. *“What is all of the fuss about?”* Feeling confused, I watched them scurry like determined ants. *“Wait a minute. This is about me!”*

I sensed the panic in the room, swelling by the second. The expression on their faces, all directed at me, confirmed my worst nightmare — *“It’s a fatal emergency.”* Fright overwhelmed me, and I looked at Shawn. Appearing just as alarmed, Shawn gazed at me, seemingly helpless to change the unfolding scene. Something was terribly wrong. Sweeping in the room with haste, the doctor explained, “We have to reset

her heart. Where's the husband?" Like a student in class, Shawn raised his hand, "Right here!" With his attention directed at Shawn, the doctor urged, "Okay, it's your job to keep her here."

Holding my hand with intense tenderness and strength, Shawn fixed his eyes on mine and started talking. I can't remember what he said, but our conversation rose above the dread-filled air in the room. In that moment, it was just me and my husband of only one-and-a-half years. Still newlyweds, still in love. My room buzzed with what seemed like the entire staff from the floor. This was my ground zero.

I had seen reactions like this before, about 15 years earlier. Filled with new graduate excitement and youthful vigor, I embarked upon my first full-time professional physical therapy career working on acute care and in intensive care units. It wouldn't be long before what I read about in my textbooks, would be observed and, in some cases, acted out by me as a physical therapist. An alarm would sound from the patient monitor and in dashes the nurse. Then another alarm pings and an announcement blares overhead. Like college sprinters, an entire team runs together to a patient's room, with one mission in mind — save life.

Now I was the patient. Turning his attention toward me, the physician explained, "Tricia, this will probably hurt; it won't feel good." The doctor was about to reset my heart's rhythm, and they had to act quickly. Unbeknownst to me, my heart threatened to race me right out of existence.

Shawn continued his conversation with me, seeming to ignore the crowd of worried medical professionals. Like lovers in the park, we kept talking, but for a moment he stood alone, and I was gone. Shawn describes it as the single most frightening moment of his life. The moment that his wife's life seemed to slip out of his hands. For me, I felt nothing. I heard nothing, I sensed nothing, and I said nothing. There was absolutely nothing, as my heart slowed to a near halt and was then slowly brought back.

I understand well the concept that death is like a thief that surprises us, stealing. In one instant you are here — breathing, hearing, talking, smelling, and feeling — and in the next moment gone. Ecclesiastes 9:12 says, *People can never predict when hard times might*

come. Like fish in a net or birds in a trap, people are caught by sudden tragedy. I was caught! How in the world did I get here from months of abdominal pain diagnosed as ovarian torsion, to undergoing a diagnostic pelvic laparoscopy due to persistent discomfort, to now having my heart reset by panic-stricken nurses and doctors?

Just a year prior, I married a wonderful man, was officially commissioned as a pastor in the Gospel ministry and, nearly to the date, I preached at our denomination's annual Pastoral Leadership and Evangelism Council. The Holy Spirit moved in such a mighty and powerful way that 120 pastors and leaders gathered afterward to continue in prayer. I would have never imagined that after such a year of blessing, near the end of the following year, I would find myself fighting for my life, and it all started with the onset of sudden abdominal pain months earlier.

What I did not know was that tragedy awaited me. I could never have predicted nor imagined the emergency surgery, the painful month-long hospital stay and months of recovery ahead. However, while I did not know, God knew. God always knows what lies ahead of us. I am ever grateful that, even in the midst of our tests, the Lord is merciful and compassionate. I am much better now. God carried me through triumphantly, and later prompted me to write a book about it (entitled *The Fight for My Life*) to encourage others facing unexpected trials.

I discovered that in God's hands, pain is never wasted. He can take even the unpleasant and work it all together for our eventual good if we trust Him. Through the unexpected, through what seemed unfair, even through the pain, I can confidently say God is still merciful. God is still good. I learned to trust Him more. I learned to trust His heart. James says, *Consider it joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing* (James 1:2-4 NASB). ■

Tricia Payne, lead pastor, Detroit Conant Gardens Church

HOW WE
MADE IT
THROUGH

No doubt, it's been a difficult year in every corner of our land. The coronavirus pandemic is not over, either. Not even close. A third wave of infections, hospitalizations and deaths is lashing our nation from coast to coast and changing the way we do even the simplest of things.

As of this writing in early December, more than 12 million Americans have contracted COVID-19, and more than 250,000 of them have died. However, you well know that the pandemic isn't the only challenge God has allowed us to endure this year.

Be that as it may, God always embeds incredible power in the stories that come out of our trials. In ancient Israel, the Israelites were crossing the Jordan and Joshua asked them set up 12 stones at Gilgal (Joshua 4:20). His reasoning was that future generations would ask about the meaning of the monument of stones and, when they did, this would be an opportunity to unlock the power that comes from acknowledging what God had done.

In this feature, we revisited 12 of the people and stories we reported on in 2020, whether in the pages of the *Herald* or during one of our livestream broadcasts. How have they grappled with a year unlike any in recent memory? How have their lives been irrevocably changed? What are they most hopeful for moving into this new year? These are their stories — a form of time capsule, so to speak.

As a band of believers moving into the new year and clinging to the promise of Christ's return, we hope their stories of loss and gain, suffering and joy, struggle and hope gives you a renewed purpose and a strong sense of the presence of God and His work in our lives. ■

Debbie Michel, associate director of Communication



Melissa Garrett

▲ Alice with husband, Harold Garrett, granddaughter, Jasmin Garrett, grandson, Preston Garrett, and their dogs, Lenny and Rusty.

ALICE GARRETT | Wisconsin's Adventist Community Services Director

One day early in the pandemic, I got a call from a friend, Marcia, asking if I had some ladies within the state who could make some masks for her daughter-in-law who was a director of nurses in a rehab facility.

They desperately needed masks for the staff and wanted to know if we could help her out. I called my local ACS leader, Georgia Rosen, then contacted ladies around the state. A Facebook page called "Mask Makers Sew" was started with tips, tricks and patterns, and soon these faithful ladies were making masks. It wasn't long before other facilities and friends were calling, needing us to make masks. Over 600 masks were shipped to many states and facilities.

As this was taking place, many of our food shelves were seeing a large increase in needs. With grant money from the North American Division, we were able to help many needy people with food.

As we move forward into 2021, let us remember to minister to those around us, as Jesus did. *Ministry of Healing*, page 143, reads: "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. . . He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence, *then He bade them 'Follow Me.'*"

As we each spend time studying the Word of God, may we come to know Jesus personally as a Friend. He will guide us in our walk to help those in need. Jesus is coming back to take us to Heaven. He has promised. We will never have to deal with the many adversities we have now. We have a wonderful message of hope, comfort and peace to share with our fellow man. ■



Beetz Kwon

▲ Myoung with his wife, Hyemi, and their daughters, Sebin and Sejin

MYOUNG KWON | Waukesha Community and Milwaukee Northwest Pastor

It's been three years since our family visited Korea. We had made grand plans of visiting our home country, purchased flight tickets at a very good price, and were counting down the days.

Then COVID-19 hit the whole globe. I still hoped for our trip to happen but, eventually, we had to cancel our trip. That is what the entire year of 2020 looked like. Everything got canceled, we couldn't go anywhere, and interaction with people was limited. We were all frustrated.

The pandemic brought a disconnect to our society. But it also strengthened connections in other ways in which I lacked.

Due to the lockdown, I was able to spend a great deal of time with my wife and children as they couldn't go to school. Not only that, my brother's family came over and stayed with us for two full months. It was the best time of my life. I got to connect with my family.

I spent a good deal of time with my colleagues in our region by doing team online media ministry. Even though we didn't meet in person, we got to know each other better and bonded more than ever before. I gained insight from them. I got to connect with my friends and learned how I can better connect with my churches.

At a personal level, I came closer to God as I spent my time with Him. I got to connect with God.

We don't know how this will end. Perhaps this COVID-19 will stick around for a bit longer. But 2020 has taught us what we can gain in spite of our losses and that we don't have to be discouraged. 2020 has taught us that we can still be positive and be vibrant in our lives in 2021. ■



▼ Arthur with his wife, Margaret (front row), daughter, Sabrina, and sons, Arthur (top left) and Isaac (back center).

ARTHUR J. WEBB SR. | Shiloh Church (Chicago) Elder

Certainly, we are “all in this together,” is a phrase that reminds us of the unprecedented or uncertain times of 2020.

The ministry of “Servants of Light, Hope and Healing” is an actively unified outreach ministry for all members of our community, bringing joy to the isolated who are feeling forgotten or lonely, hurt, ill from coronavirus, or shut in from other causes. It is evangelism-on-the-move throughout the Metropolitan Chicago area, aided by colorful signs, conveying messages which capture seemingly inattentive eyes and ears of neighbors who often wave or nod in approval of our ministry.

God reveals His approval for this ministry in many ways. One of which, while doubters may say it was coincidental, but we believe it was providential, was changes in weather conditions. Our visits bring spiritual enlightenment to the hearts, families and homes we visit. On a number of occasions, weather conditions threatened cancellation of visits. For instance, one Sabbath it rained all morning and dark clouds loomed up to an hour before our scheduled first visit. Those clouds were instantaneously replaced by the clearest sunny blue sky imaginable, as if God had flipped a switch. Another Sabbath, forecasted to be the “hottest day of the year,” was hot and humid; however, an overcast sky and a soft breeze off the lake brought relief!

With this new normal of handwashing, masks, social distancing and virtual services still on the horizon for 2021, we extend and encourage other congregations, in the words of the old chorus, “Work with each other, Work hand in hand, And together we’ll spread the news that God is in our land; And they’ll know we are Christians by our love! Yes, they’ll know we are Christians by our love.” ■

HOW WE MADE IT THROUGH



Zack Payne

▼ George, his wife, Theresa, and their dog, Sheba

GEORGE ANDREWS III

Business Owner and Lay Pastor of the Kenosha (Wisconsin) Church

From COVID-19, politics, protests, shootings and a city literally on fire, this year has been an event-packed year.

I was taxed to the limit, so much so that it had an effect on my spiritual state of being. I found myself calling on God to show Himself. This led me to the story of the disciples on the ship when the storm was raging, and Jesus was asleep (Mark 4:38).

But, similar to the disciples, I realized Jesus had given me all I needed and there was no need to question my faith. I was reminded of all that God had brought me through and how He had prepared me as a spiritual leader to keep my family from harm's way.

The protests over the Jacob Blake police shooting was a way for our churches to draw together with each other and also to the community. We were able to clean up and feed the community, leading to several contacts that are now friendships. Through all of this, what really touched me the most was I could truly feel God's presence in everything. I was at the point where the crises become opportunities for me to show how God was still in control.

I have learned that it is one thing to serve God and count His blessings. But the real joy comes when you realize how blessed you are to be serving God. I often tell people: I do not know if there are any golden streets or no more pain and suffering, but I do believe. I do know one thing for sure and that is, I am doing Heaven here, now, on earth, because in my prior lifestyle I already did hell. ■



Christa McConnell

▲ Robb with wife, Chris, and their daughters, Sara and Abby

ROBB LONG

Indiana Conference Evangelist

2020 seemed like another "great disappointment" in the history of Adventists here in Indiana.

Any hope of rejoicing in a great harvest of souls through the Ignite Indiana initiative was dashed when COVID-19 shut down our large outreach events, just as they were about to begin. It was a huge disappointment.

Personally processing this devastating reversal reminded me that great disappointments can lead to new appointments for those who trust in God's grace. From the COVID-19 crisis, I have personally gleaned three helpful lessons:

1. How opportunities to share our faith can quickly be curtailed by circumstances completely beyond our control. That was a harsh reminder, but I better understand now what Jesus meant when He said, *the night comes when no man can work*.
2. How closed doors can lead to new creative ways of doing things. Adjusting to the "new normal" of virtual evangelism and online platforms by developing new technology skills has taken time and effort, but I now feel better equipped to take advantage of the coming opportunities to literally reach millions with our message.
3. How important a Christ-like character is in difficult times. When my wife and I took her 96-year-old mother, who has severe dementia, into our home because of assisted living visitation limitations, our lives changed dramatically. The new demands placed upon us required more personal sacrifice than we've ever been called to exercise before.

As things return to normal, these lessons give me great hope. I think we will have a greater urgency now to share the gospel and the Present Truth whenever we have the freedom to do it. I believe the seeds sown via online platforms will result in countless decisions for Christ and His truth in the future. And I am convinced that the trials of difficult times can create patience in the saints and prepare us for our selfless Savior's soon return to take us to Glory. ■

MARIA FUENTES

Children's Sabbath
School Teacher

"Children's Ministry in Times of a Pandemic" was the title of the Lake Region Conference Hispanic Children's Ministries Department held August 24–28 for teachers and volunteers.

One of the workshops addressed how to teach biblical principles to children in a meaningful, interesting, fun and practical way. At the conclusion of this workshop, Dr. Cristina Calderon, director of the Lake Region Hispanic Children's Ministry, invited all of the teachers and parents to keep preparing our children for the Kingdom so when they decide for Jesus, they'll have a strong foundation to help guide their decision.

While listening, I had the strong conviction to ask my son, Cesar, if he would like to get baptized. You see, Cesar had decided to get baptized when he was 10 but, in the move from California to Illinois, this delayed the fulfillment of his dream. So here, after three years, he was as excited and happy as ever.

The surprise was not over yet. His eight-year-brother, Jayden, heard about the baptism plans and immediately told me that he wanted to get baptized, too, because Jesus Christ is coming soon, and he wanted to be ready! I couldn't believe my ears. Our family was overjoyed when Cesar and Jayden were baptized on the last day of the virtual Children's Ministry Workshop.

As I look back on their decision, I can see that God is working, even during a pandemic. Little did I know when I was registering for this virtual workshop to further my knowledge and serve better as a Children's Sabbath School teacher that this would have an immediate blessing on my family.

We don't know what the future holds but after reading Matthew 24, our family is more and more convinced that God's promises are true. He is coming soon, and we need to be ready. ■



125photography.com

▲ Maria with her newly baptized children, Cesar (next to her) and Jayden (standing front right), along with her other children Omar (back row) and Isaac (sitting)

HOW WE
MADE IT
THROUGH

“ I'm optimistic that 2021 will be a very fruitful year in Youth ministry, especially since young people are doing ministry on social media and in the area of content creation.”

—Eric Herve Jean-Baptiste

RINHLUPUII CHAWNGTHU

Andrews University
Freshman

In January 2020, I was in my last semester of high school. As high school seniors, I, along with my classmates at Indiana Academy, was preparing for graduation and beyond.

There were so many plans for our senior class trip, graduation and a mission trip to El Salvador. However, all those plans fell apart, one by one. The first was the cancellation of the mission trip on the very night we were to leave. Of course, I was really disappointed. I had been looking forward to doing VBS with the kids and helping with medical missionary work there.

Then there was the class trip. We had spent the last four years doing many fundraisers in the hopes of having a good senior class trip. There was hope that, by the time May rolled around, we would be able to at least graduate in person. Unfortunately, that didn't work out either, but I'm grateful we still were able to have a social-distanced graduation service in August.

A few weeks later, I started my first semester at Andrews University. I was just thankful that my first college experience wasn't entirely virtual, although it was far from normal. The semester was cut short due to the rise in [coronavirus] cases, but still it was nice to be on campus.

This year, I want to cherish each moment of life. 2020 has taught me that the whole world can change in an instant. I look to the future knowing that God is in control of it all. A Scripture verse that inspires me to do that is Jeremiah 17:7: *Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord.* ■

Christa McConnell

STEVEN AND TAMARA CONWAY

Detroit Northwest
Church Leaders

Standing in the driveway alone, sun beating down on my face, eyes closed, listening to birds chirping. My senses said I was standing on a secluded mountain.

But "Nope." I was in what was a previously bustling Detroit suburb, outside watching wild rabbits, normally few in number, roam in abundance from house to house. The absence of people, buzzing vehicles and barking dogs I am sure helped this population to burst forth, as well as brought home the realization to me that we are living in a pandemic.

Staying home wasn't so bad, at first. Morning and evening family walks became our norm. We began receiving daily emails, texts and calls from folks struggling with being together 24/7 or with having limited social interactions with family and friends. It was clear that physically attending work, school, shopping, weekly church groups and services, filled voids and created coping mechanisms many simply didn't know they had until now.

Then . . . there was the loss. The overwhelming, unexpected, continued loss of people we loved. Constant grieving day after day became common. With all of this, we needed to explore ways to try to lift the heavy burdens of members and communities without being able to physically touch one single person. Thus, Virtual Family Worship was born. Our livestreamed evening worship began six days a week and, to this day, we have continued singing, praying, reading and sharing encouraging words from our couch.

Jared Thomas



▲ Rinhlupuii Chawngthu (sitting center), with her parents, Lalmuansanga and Lathangveli Chawngthu, and siblings, Remruatpuia and Laldusaki Chawngthu



▲ Steven and Tammy with their children Israel, (seated), Abigail (standing left), Angel (middle) and Gabriel (right)

We are blessed to reach hundreds of Christian and non-Christians unexpectedly. Our church doors closed, but other avenues opened that we never would have even imagined, if it had not been for the pandemic of 2020.

Looking to 2021, my hope is that 2020 has awakened me from my pandemic of “normalcy,” and comfort, reminding me that Jesus was never afraid to challenge the norms of society, pointing us to remember, *For this world is not our home; we are looking forward to our everlasting home in heaven* (Hebrews 13:14). ■

TOSON ANTWAN KNIGHT | Caught Up Mentorship Program Founder

I remember thinking 2020 would be different the day I found out Kobe Bryant died. I had admired Kobe all of my life — his work ethic, drive and passion. Even though I didn’t play basketball, Kobe was my role model.

A few weeks later, I found myself in the hospital needing emergency appendectomy, and a week later, I was back in the hospital with an infection. For the most part, I felt hopeless. I could not wait until I healed. It was only God who gave me the strength to get back out there.

Little did I know that less than two months later, I would face unprecedented challenges. Most of my family work in some form of healthcare in the Detroit area, so the coronavirus hit us hard. I remember getting the call that my aunt, Linda Thomas, had COVID and was headed to the hospital. I called and spoke with her for what I did not know would be the last time. She died, and we buried her on a Friday. Sunday, my uncle, Marion Pettaway Jr., died from natural causes, and the next day my mom, Angela Knight, died from the coronavirus. I will never forget being in the room and watching my mom die. I never cried like that in my life. All I could do was wail, “Ma, Ma, Ma.” I watched as she went to sleep. I will never be the same.

I’ve learned how to stay strong amidst adversity. I run a mentor program and deal with kids who need me. There is no way I could give up even when I had COVID-19 this past November. I was determined to get back healthy and impact the lives of the kids in Detroit.

Growing up in church, I always heard that God would *never leave you nor forsake you*. During these times, I struggled with trusting God. While thinking about my aunt, I remembered something she told me at church one day after I prayed. *Look to the hills from which cometh your help; your help comes from the Lord*. That’s my plan until Jesus comes, hopefully soon. ■



Steven Norman

▲ Toson Antwan Knight (back center), with mentees. Front row: Anwau Charles, Robert Merriweather; back row: Eduardo Yarbrough, Earle Kearney, Barry Stewart, Edmen Stewart

HOW WE
MADE IT
THROUGH

“ Looking to 2021, my hope is that 2020 has awakened me from my pandemic of “normalcy,” and comfort, reminding me that Jesus was never afraid to challenge the norms of society. . . ”

—Steven and Tamara Conway



▲ Nilda Cabanilla

NILDA CABANILLA

AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center
Hinsdale Registered Nurse

I work in a medical unit where most of the COVID-19 patients go, but the unit also has several beds for patients who are not COVID-positive. I work mainly with those patients right now.

Caring for patients during the pandemic has been physically exhausting. Some of our nurses have been exposed to the virus, so the rest of us have had to pick up extra shifts. We all wear masks, face shields and goggles to protect ourselves and our families. And caring for patients is different now — they need assurance, they need help, they are depressed. I often sit with them just to talk, to reassure them. I always tell them that God is there for them, that they should put their faith in the Lord, and I pray with them. We often are communicating with both patients and their families, who cannot come into the room with their loved ones. It is really sad when patients pass away without being able to see their families.

This time also is emotionally and spiritually exhausting. For me, it is my faith that gets me through. I was born an Adventist. I have a morning devotion every morning with my husband before I go to work. When I come home, I thank God for being able to serve my patients that day. In my 30 years as a nurse, 2020 has been the most challenging during my time at the hospital. But I believe that when God calls you to a vocation, you have to answer and serve the Lord through serving others. I aspire to bring the joy of Christ into each patient's room, and hope to be reunited with them all in the Kingdom of Heaven. ■

Dave Pfeleiderer



▲ Aaron Berger with wife, Cindy, and children, Danielle, Brian (back) and Ben (front)

AARON BERGER

Wilson Church (Michigan)
Head Elder

The year started off like any other year. One son at the academy, a daughter at Southern Adventist University, and the rest of us were doing our daily and weekly routines. Work during the week and church duties on the weekend.

Then it happened. Our lives changed in a moment. The children were sent home from school and Cindy, my wife, a teacher, had to resort to teaching grades one through four by Zoom and online. Normal was not normal anymore.

But it was nice having all three of our young adult children home together after four years of going in different directions. We really enjoyed this time as a family while the whole world was locked down. It gave time to reflect on our family and on why we believe and trust in God.

Our Wilson Church construction came to a halt and so did church services. We went to Zoom Sabbath school and downloaded video sermons in our home. It was nice to be able to join the church members and family once we could go back to church together. Still, we couldn't worship in our new church building until August, and what a blessing that was!

Through these times we have learned how important family is and we are trying to spend more quality time together camping, hiking, sightseeing, biking and other outdoor activities. Also, we have a renewed understanding of how important and precious the people in our church family are and that we need to be spending time worshipping our Savior, Jesus. As I look to the future, I am drawn to look for God's leading in my life and my family's lives, trusting in His faithfulness. ■

Ashleigh Hayes



Jonathan Logan

▲ Eric, along with his wife, Eda, and sons, Ezra (standing) and Elias

ERIC HERVE JEAN-BAPTISTE | Lake Region Pathfinder Coordinator

While we can never fully prepare for the future since much is unknown, we trust that God places us where we need to be.

Just before the pandemic, I was appointed as Lake Region's Pathfinder executive coordinator and imagined my routine would involve traveling and meeting youth leaders and young people from around the United States. It's amazing to think that, during the months when events were cancelled or forced to go online, I have found more opportunities to serve than ever before. The most notable was assisting in one of the largest virtual Pathfinder teaching platforms in the world through the Lake Union Club Ministries. By the time you read this, we will have taught 100 different honors to more than 24,000 people from around the globe. What a privilege it was to meet leaders and young people from around the world via the Zoom platform on my laptop! But this opportunity to serve and gain professional opportunities didn't happen overnight. I believe the reason I was able to grow so much in 2020 was because I was willing to serve where I could in 2019. What was I doing in 2019? I was often using Zoom for a podcast called "Youth Ministry and Mentorship 101," not knowing that the knowledge there would lead me to where I am today.

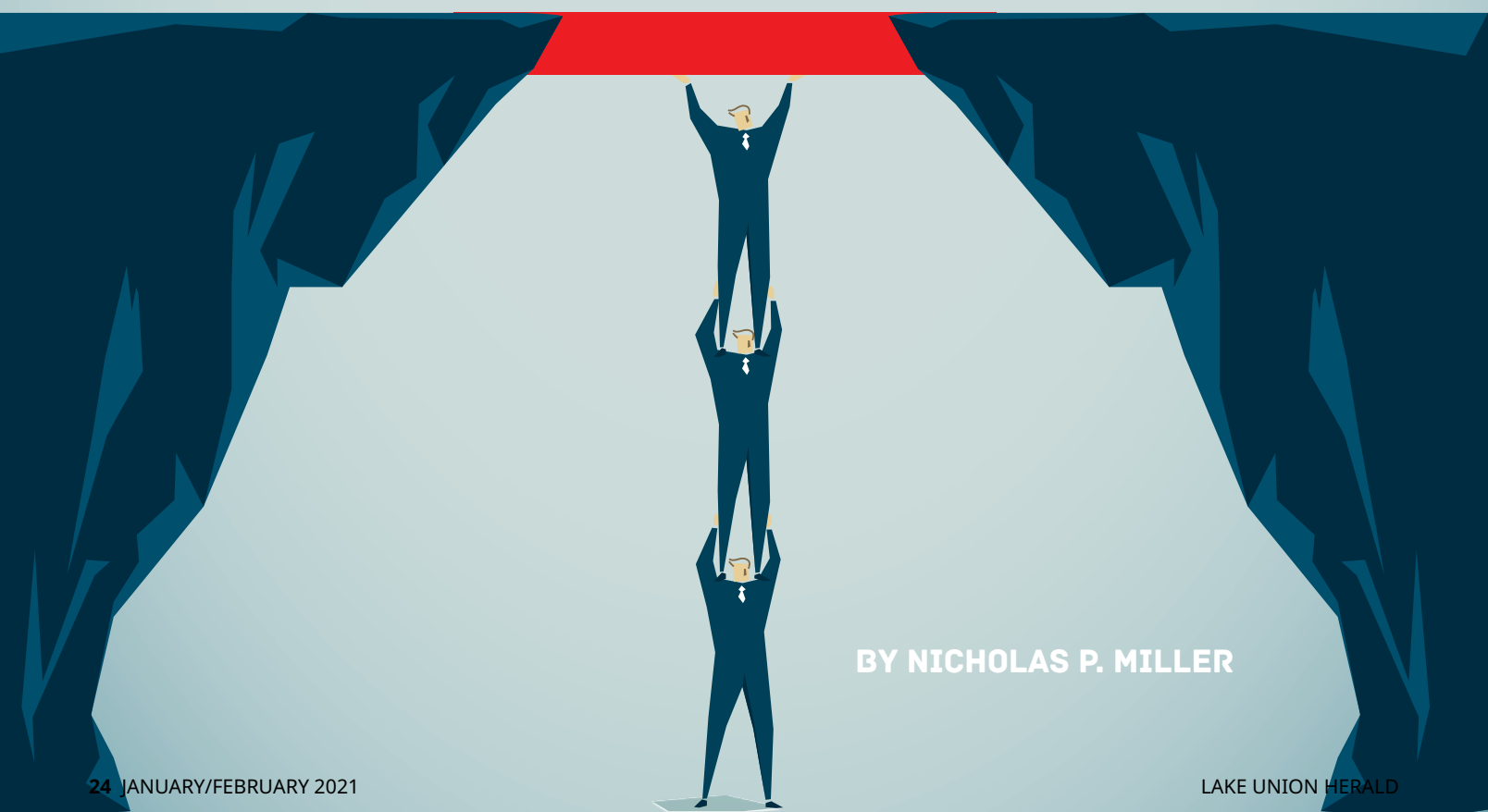
I'm optimistic that 2021 will be a very fruitful year in Youth ministry, especially since young people are doing ministry on social media and in the area of content creation. Without question, the pandemic has brought ministry to those places and, even if a vaccine comes out tomorrow, the Gospel will continue to be spread in those virtual spaces. Mentors, such as the late Robert Jackson who was influential in my life, will continue to be crucial as they are the ones who foster intentional relationships. We likely will face huge hurdles in 2021. However, I am sure those found ready are the ones serving where God has called them. Undoubtedly, God knows our future, and this is why His plans are bigger than what we can even imagine. ■

HOW WE MADE IT THROUGH

AFTER THE DUST SETTLES

THE CHURCH AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS IN 2020

The outcome of the recent election season simply cannot be good news for everyone. Many of my friends are celebrating the exit out of our long, national nightmare; but, for many others, they believe we are just entering a long national nightmare. The experiences are mirror images of each other, one group experiencing what the other one did four years ago.



BY NICHOLAS P. MILLER

This shared experience is an opportunity for us all to understand and even empathize with each other, irrespective of the political views we hold.

Do you want your family and friends to be as frustrated and upset as you have been/or are beginning to be? Perhaps some of us feel that way now; but I think underneath, in our better selves and Christian hearts, we really do not want our loved ones to suffer. Surely, here is a bridge of understanding as we enter a new year.

It is a good time to remember the last President to preside over a national division greater than we have now, Abraham Lincoln. After a war that left more Americans dead than all other U.S. wars combined, over moral issues greater than any that divide us today, he said the following memorable lines: “The prayers of both could not be answered — that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes.”

These memorable words pointed towards unity then, and I think they might help us today. Yes, Joseph Biden, Kamala Harris, and the Democrats have won the White House. But the Democrat “blue wave” that many pollsters were predicting and anticipating has not materialized. The Senate appears very likely to stay Republican, and the Democrats have lost ground in the House, although they hang onto it by a thin margin. There very likely will be no “court packing,” no implementation of new federal LGBT legislation, and no unrestrained implementation of a full Democratic agenda. Nobody has fully won; nobody has fully lost.

Can we see a design in this inconclusive outcome? . . . an invitation, even, to recognize that both sides have legitimate concerns and grievances; that there must be some working together for either side to get along in the business, the *people's* business, of running OUR country; of which God has made us stewards for ourselves and for the world? The pandemic only makes clearer the important role we play, not only for each other as Americans, but as important members of the world community.

As we contemplate this message and its meaning, how might we think about the immediate issues we will face as Adventist Christians and as a church in the coming year? What follows is a brief discussion of the public affairs matters with which we will be grappling in the year to come.

An Ongoing National and Global Pandemic

While we get a new presidential administration on inauguration day, we still will be battling the worldwide

pandemic. By the time you read this, more than 300,000 people will have died in America and more than two million worldwide from COVID-19. While vaccines are in the pipeline, widespread implementation likely will not occur until later in the spring, by which time many thousands more people will have died.

The pandemic has resulted in economic, social and religious freedom concerns, caused by the lockdowns that have been instituted to control the outbreak. How necessary these lockdowns are in terms of extent and duration is a matter of some controversy, although most health experts agree that some level of lockdown and closings are necessary to save lives.

Some Christians have been eager to oppose the locking down or closing of churches as an infringement on religious freedom. Adventist religious liberty leaders, however, by in large, have viewed the lockdowns or attendance limits as appropriate exercise of the state power to protect public health and welfare. They point out that we are not prohibited from worshipping, as churches and Sabbath schools continue meeting over Zoom and Skype. Further, the lockdowns have not been aimed at certain religious groups versus others, unfairly pinching minority religions and leaving majority religions untouched. All have been impacted by the lockdowns.

In some places, especially more liberal states like California and New York, it does appear that, at times, religious gatherings are treated more strictly than secular businesses, like restaurants, bus stations or casinos. Indeed, just as I'm finishing this piece, the Supreme Court has ruled that limits on church and synagogue attendance in New York State were too invasive, and violated the First Amendment.

Some fear that this decision over-zealously promotes religious freedom at the expense of community health. But the opinion is carefully nuanced, and merely holds that limiting a thousand-plus-seat cathedral, or a

“THE PRAYERS OF BOTH COULD NOT BE ANSWERED — THAT OF NEITHER HAS BEEN ANSWERED FULLY. THE ALMIGHTY HAS HIS OWN PURPOSES.”

MAY WE WORK AS A CHURCH IN THE COMING YEAR TO BUILD BRIDGES FOR THE GOSPEL, FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, AND FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN OUR CHURCH AND OUR NATION.

several-hundred-seat synagogue to ten or twenty-five worshippers, is simply unreasonable and violates the First Amendment. The Court affirmed, however, that states can provide limits that are more carefully tailored to actual

health needs. Conservative justices specifically noted limits of 50 and 100 worshippers found in California to be acceptable.

This decision simply says that there are some limits under the Constitution to the state's regulation of church attendance, even in a pandemic. In many places, including Michigan where I live, churches are entirely exempt from closing and attendance limits. Yet still, when we do meet for worship, Adventist and other health leaders believe that we should abide by social distancing, mask wearing and hand washing protocols, as long as infection numbers continue to be high in our communities. Taking these precautions is an important way of loving our neighbors and each other.

The Ongoing Contest Between LGBT Rights and Religious Freedom

While I believe that the new administration will more effectively provide greater coordination and help at the national level to deal with the pandemic, I do think that their policies will increase the conflict between LGBT issues and religious freedom. As long as the Senate stays Republican, the federal legislation on the topic written by the Democrats, known as the Equality Act, will not be passed. Hopefully, this period of divided government will provide a window to pass an alternate bill called Fairness for All.

This legislation meaningfully protects the religious freedom of individuals, churches and even businesses, while preventing discrimination against LGBT persons in employment and housing. Adventist church leaders working in public affairs have helped draft and promote Fairness for All, and view it as a good balance between protecting our religious freedoms, and the fundamental rights of others.

Whether legislation passes or not, it is likely that the departments of Justice and Education will attempt to promote LGBT rights in its civil rights actions. Schools, hospitals and other religious institutions may face pressure to change or compromise their religious views on sexuality and gender. We may have to engage in litigation to defend our biblical teachings on these matters. The good news is that the Supreme Court is relatively conservative, and religious freedom likely will be protected in these matters. The Lake Union last Spring passed a Statement on Sexuality and Gender that speaks to some of these issues to help provide guidance for our conferences and institutions. That statement can be found here, along with other church statements on these issues: <https://www.lakeunion.org/policies/church-statements-on-sexuality-and-gender>.

Issues of School Funding and Vouchers

If the Senate majority changes to the Democrats, issues relating to school vouchers and the content of strings, conditions and limits on hiring and teaching will become a concern. But if the Senate stays in its current configuration, controlled by Republicans, it is likely that religious schools will have protection for their religious teachings and standards.

The importance of these matters was recently highlighted in a Florida case, where an Adventist elementary school teacher was fired for having a gay relationship. The media widely reported the story, and focused on the fact that school gets Florida vouchers money. But the Florida legislature is conservative, and has not attached limiting strings that would threaten our biblical standards. But contrary federal legislation could change that.

Absent Senate change, institutions in conservative states generally will be protected, and thus we should be good in Michigan, Indiana and Wisconsin, although perhaps somewhat less so in Illinois. At the college and university level, the Biden administration is likely to reverse Trump-era regulations which allowed Christian schools to assert a religious exemption in a case even if they had not previously applied for it. In our changed environment, it might be wise for our colleges and universities to seek such exemptions before cases or lawsuits are brought.

Continued Social Justice Protest and Unrest

The stress produced by the pandemic, along with the inequities it revealed in healthcare and education, economic resources, and the difference in COVID exposure between mostly blue-collar essential workers and better protected professional workers, produced a powder keg of emotions that were ignited by some high-profile police misconduct cases. The year 2020 will be forever linked with the names of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, who are added to the long and tragic list of black people — such as Philando Castile, Michael Brown and Eric Garner — whose lives were prematurely snuffed out by overly aggressive police behavior.

One need not believe or insist that all the names on that list were innocent of any crime or wrongdoing to see the injustice of receiving the death penalty for minor infractions like possessing a counterfeit \$20 bill or selling unlicensed cigarettes. Some of the names on that list were entirely innocent at the time of their death. In protesting this kind of over-reaction and unjustified human slaughter, Adventists join their voices with Ellen White, who more than 100 years ago wrote the following observation on the treatment of blacks in American communities:

“The desire to show their masterly authority over the blacks is still burning in the hearts of many who claim to be Christians, but whose lives declare that they are standing under the black banner of the great apostate. When the whites commit crimes, they are often allowed to go uncondemned, while for the same transgressions the blacks . . . are treated worse than the brutes.”¹

Many things have changed in our country for the better since Ellen White’s day, but some things have not changed enough. Many statistics show that people of color are arrested more frequently, mistreated with greater regularity, convicted more often, and given longer sentences for the same crimes than are white people.²

Did Ellen White believe that we should speak against this kind of unfairness? Well, she herself did. “The demon of passion is let loose, and all the suffering that can be devised is instituted against them. Will not God judge for these things? As surely as the whites have brought their inhuman cruelty to bear upon the negroes, so surely will God’s vengeance fall upon them.”³ Can we properly deliver a judgment hour message when we do not speak clearly on the kinds of things that God is judging?



Conclusion – Builders of Bridges of Reconciliation

Let us consider the role that we as Christians might play during these divided times. If, as we saw in our introduction, Lincoln could see God’s purposes in a political stalemate and could speak words of unity and compassion, cannot we do the same? If Lincoln could say these words, and mean them, after our great national Civil War, surely we can say them in light of our heated, but much less violent, social and political war: “With malice toward none with charity for all with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right let us strive on to finish the work we are in to bind up the nation’s wounds . . . ~ to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace [and health!] among ourselves and with all nations.”

May we work as a church in the coming year to build bridges for the gospel, for religious freedom, and for peace and justice in our church and our nation. An important part of that work is the promotion and support of *Liberty* magazine, the only church paper that can regularly be found in the offices of judges, politicians and lawyers. *Liberty*’s witness is becoming all the more critical during this time of conflict and crisis. Be sure to work with your church’s religious liberty leader to fund subscriptions for the legal and political thought leaders in your area. The freedom you save could be your own! ■

1. 14 LtMs, 1899, Par. 9, in a letter to H.W. Kellogg.

2. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/un-report-on-racial-disparities/>; <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/work/wp/2017/11/16/black-men-sentenced-to-more-time-for-committing-the-exact-same-crime-as-a-white-person-study-finds/>

3. 14 LtMs, 1899, Par. 9, in a letter to H.W. Kellogg.

Nicholas P. Miller is the Lake Union Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director and Professor at the Seminary at Andrews University.

AMITA Health's Mission at Home expands to Glendale Heights



Courtesy AdventHealth

▲ Patients received health screenings, primary care, specialty care, flu shots and counseling during the Sept. 12–13 event at the Sports Hub, just minutes from AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center GlenOaks.

AMITA Health's Mission at Home program recently expanded to Glendale Heights, Ill., with a two-day clinic where nearly 150 AMITA Health volunteers provided free medical care and other services to 218 underserved community members.

Patients received health screenings, primary care, specialty care, flu shots and counseling during the Sept. 12–13 event at the Sports Hub, just minutes from AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center GlenOaks. AMITA Health's spiritual care and social services teams connected patients to community health resources, children received free school supplies and face masks, and every family left with a large box of food from the Northern Illinois Food Bank.

Associates and physicians from every ministry across AMITA Health volunteered at the clinic, including 16 providers representing primary care, orthopedics, pediatrics, dermatology and podiatry.

"By making wholistic care more accessible to the underserved, our volunteers put into action our faith-based mission while

furthering our AMITA Forward strategic plan," said Dave de Ramos, DO, an AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center GlenOaks family practitioner who volunteered at the clinic. The AMITA Forward plan identifies wholistic, accessible and accountable as AMITA Health's three primary strategic paths in the years ahead.

He and Heather Hoffman, AMITA Health regional director of Clinical Mission Integration, led and organized the clinic with support from the Village of Glendale Heights and Mark Bondarenko, executive sponsor for the clinic and senior director of Spiritual Care for AMITA Health's four legacy Seventh-day Adventist hospitals.

Karen Moore, RNC-OB, director of Women and Infant Services at AMITA Health Alexian Brothers Medical Center Elk Grove Village, Nina Smith, associate operations manager for The Resource Group at AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center Bolingbrook, and Karen Munter, manager of Clinical Operations for the Oncology service line at the AMITA Health Cancer Institute at

Alexian Brothers, worked together to procure, organize and distribute supplies for the clinic.

Keith Parrott, AMITA Health president and chief executive officer, toured the clinic with his wife, Kristy, on Sept. 12, and later wrote in his Sept. 18 weekly message that he had heard many stories about the clinic's impact. He cited the case of a 12-year-old girl who came to the clinic unable to run and play due to severe foot pain. Alex McKanna, DPM, a podiatrist, told the girl's mother to visit his office for X-rays and free follow-up care.

"The mom was in tears," Parrott wrote, "and they were in his office four days later and are working on a plan for surgery and treatment."

AMITA Health previously sponsored a pair of Mission at Home clinics in Harvey, Ill., a poor community just south of Chicago. After participating in an AMITA Health medical mission trip to El Salvador and volunteering in Harvey, de Ramos came up with the idea for bringing Mission at Home to Glendale Heights.

"I wanted to provide a medical mission for the underserved in our own community," said de Ramos, who has worked at AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center GlenOaks for more than 30 years. "I wanted to connect them with community resources to support their physical, mental and spiritual health and well-being on an ongoing basis."

Reflecting on the latest clinic after it ended, Moore said she felt "re-energized for the next mission clinic, knowing that I had made a difference in the lives of others. And for that, I'm grateful." ■

Julie Busch, Associate Vice President, Internal Communications, AMITA Health

Pulse groups create connection and community on campus

As the chaplains at Andrews University made plans for the 2020–2021 school year, they had a very specific goal in mind — to create different, intimate spiritual experiences for students even in an environment of COVID-19 physical distancing. In past years, undergraduate students attended corporate chapel programs each Thursday. For fall 2020, however, “Pulse” was developed.

Pulse is a weekly meet-up for small groups of students which is intended to foster community and spiritual growth through intentional conversation, service projects and prayer. Student leaders follow a 12-week curriculum on the theme “Love is Life.”

“Pulse groups aim to facilitate an environment for students to engage with students/classmates they wouldn’t ordinarily talk to, engage in deep conversation about their faith and struggles, and help students realize their shared humanity despite their ethnic diversity,” says Danielle Pilgrim, associate chaplain. “Our hope is that students would experience a more profound sense of community on campus and a richer Andrews experience.”

Pulse group meetings often begin with a few icebreakers that help students become comfortable interacting with one another. Next, the student leaders recap their discussions from the previous week and remind students that their Pulse group is a safe space and judgment-free zone. “Pulse is about opening up spaces where students can hear each other and be heard by another,” says Raabe Garcia, senior, leader of an in-person Pulse group. “Pulse is not the place where we find solutions to problems. Which is great, because I don’t have all the



▲ Raabe Garcia (right) leads a Pulse group.

answers. As a student leader leading a Pulse group, it’s less about giving a talk and more about leading others in a space where we can talk.”

The discussion portion of the group time centers around the concept of love — each week groups talk about a different aspect of love, whether it be loving yourself, God loving you, or loving Him back. Shelby Huse, junior and leader of a virtual Pulse group via Zoom, says, “I like to end with a challenge for the week to encourage the students to be thinking about what we as a group have talked about ... these groups aren’t just meant to have a short-term effect. We want the ideas to follow students throughout their days and weeks, especially the idea of being loved unconditionally by God.”

Student Max Pierre joined a Pulse group because he wanted to meet and interact with new people despite the ongoing COVID-19

pandemic. He has greatly appreciated the different perspectives that arise as a result of the group conversations. He says, “As a junior at Andrews, I noticed that many students have circumvented social gatherings. Pulse helps bring a small group of students together who wouldn’t have done so otherwise. A sense of belonging comes with the open-minded atmosphere and lighthearted conversations.”

Raabe hopes that, in addition to gaining a sense of belonging, students act on what they’ve discussed. “If, at the end of Pulse, there will be a student who feels compelled to call their parents, talk to a stranger with kindness, notice their lonely roommate, or begin the journey of self-love, it would have been so worth the time.” ■

Moriah McDonald, University Communication student writer, and Gillian Panigot, Media Communications manager and FOCUS editor

New ministry formed during coronavirus pandemic

When COVID-19 caused many churches to temporarily worship virtually, the Shiloh Church in Chicago launched a new ministry called, "Servants of Lights, Hope and Healing" (SLHH).

For the last several months our physical church doors have been closed, yet the church remains open — praying, serving and providing hope in times of uncertainty. Virtual worship is good, but it can only go so far. Technology cannot place a loving hand on the shoulder of someone who recently lost a loved one. Technology cannot hug a senior citizen who feels lonely and depressed. In this new world of social distancing, people still need to be physically touched. The ministry of presence is more vital now than ever before.

God gave Arthur Webb, local elder at Shiloh, a vision to start an "innovative way to demonstrate an actively united show of Christ-centered love for a person experiencing not just a sense of isolation or loneliness, but also confronted with the very real threat to life, limb and happiness."

The vision God gave to Webb was similar to the early church going from house to house, praying together, singing together and in fellowship. The ministry began with a light vigil of the brethren reaching out to those with COVID-19 on Sabbath evenings at sunset.

What started out as a handful of people conducting visits quickly grew as word began to spread. The invitation was extended to many women in the church. As sunset was getting later and later, the ministry pivoted from sunset visits to Sabbath afternoon visits.

Over the past 14 weeks, SLHH has visited over 40 separate locations and ministered to 55 members, extended families, friends, and countless neighbors who



Photos courtesy William Lee

▲ Elders, pastor, the Sabbath School Department, Children's Ministry, Community Service and now over 20 individuals go out each Sabbath afternoon to visit the elderly, sick and shut-in members, and anyone who desires to receive light, hope and healing.

actually come outside of their homes to hear the singing and join in the prayers. This is community evangelism.

What's also amazing is that some who experienced the visit have now joined the ministry and are now visiting others as a result of the Holy Spirit impressing them to give back what they have received. There are several couples included in this group, one which recovered from COVID-19, and another dealing with cancer which the doctors say is doing better, have joined the group. They attribute their progress to answered prayer and active involvement in the SLHH ministry.

The testimonies from this ministry has been numerous. One elderly person who has been sick and shut in said, "I didn't think some of you even knew that I existed! It's really encouraging to know now that I do matter and am cared for!" And another member stated, "It's nice to know that I'm not forgotten and that, by so many of you showing up today, it lets me know that my church family cares!" Another person was recently hospitalized

after receiving a visit. This person then testified about the visit and requested that a relative inform members of the ministry that she was in the hospital and provided her bedside telephone number, as she was anticipating and did, in fact, receive several calls from SLHH members.

The daughter of Catherine Miller said, "The visit from the church brought such joy to Sister Miller." She and her husband were so moved and thankful for the time of our fellowship. Joel Middleton telephoned to express his warm-hearted gratefulness for our visit with his mother, wife, their caregiver and himself. He wasn't sure how many of us were present, asking as he saw just a few initially getting off the bus walking to the patio, "Are there more coming?" Again, he was overjoyed with fellowship on Sabbath.

We also have received unexpected blessings. Someone who watches our ministry each Sabbath via Facebook was impressed to make sure that our visits could not only be seen but heard as well, and thereby made a pledge to purchase a



▲ *Servants of Light, Hope and Healing is a ministry of and for all ages, as entire families are consistently involved. The spiritual enthusiasm from each member is what drives this ministry. Members of SLHH often say, "This is a powerful ministry of loving support, active prayer and praise. I look forward to going out each week. Some members have shared it with other churches or some have viewed it on Facebook and have started similar ministries after seeing the impact."*

karaoke device to ensure this. Betty Scott sent the following message accompanied by a donation of a hundred dollars. "Happy thoughts just seem to follow. Thanking God for you. May God continue to bless this ministry. The happiness, encouragement and inspiration that it brings to us each week are a special reminder of God's faithfulness, care and goodness!" In Philippians 1:3 it says, *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.*

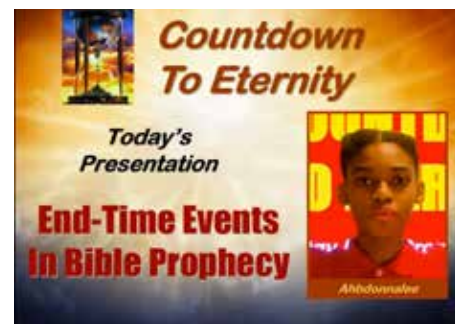
Webb says, "God has replaced dark thunder clouds with clear blue cloudless skies. He has caused the overcast skies and breezes to bring relief on one of the hottest days of the year. The new normal of social distancing has brought out 'What

a fellowship, what a joy divine, and we're leaning on the everlasting arms of God.'" ■

William Lee pastors the Shiloh Church.



▲ *Messages of hope, love and care are displayed on large poster boards. Prayers and singing are heard in the neighborhoods. While we wear masks and social distant ourselves during the visits, the presence of God is felt in the hearts of all.*



▲ *Lee Andre's presentation on Day 9 was on end-time events.*

Lake Region students lead virtual evangelism series

During the fall semester, Lee Andre didn't learn just social studies, math and Spanish at Chicago Christian School. In between her regular classes, she was busy preparing to participate in a special 10-night Bible Prophecy Seminar where she and other youth would preach the Word of God to a virtual audience.

Lee, an eighth-grader, was involved in the "Countdown to Eternity" livestream series which began on Nov. 15, hosted by students from four Lake Region Conference schools.

The focus of the seminars revolved around the Book of Revelation and end-time events; each night a different topic was presented. The series was streamed on both Lake Region's YouTube channel and Facebook page.

"This evangelistic series has strengthened the student's spiritual relationship," said Helen Bryant, Ph.D., Lake Region Conference Education Superintendent. "They were asking theological questions such as, 'What is the mark of the beast?' I know seeds have been planted and I believe the Lord will do the rest."

Each night, Countdown to Eternity began with a welcome and opening prayer, followed by a health nugget and the Countdown theme song. The message for the evening followed, flanked by a review quiz, closing remarks and, finally, closing prayer — all done (over the course of the series) by 60 students from Shiloh, Peterson-Warren, Capitol City and South Suburban schools.



▲ Yaneli, a seventh-grader at Capitol City School

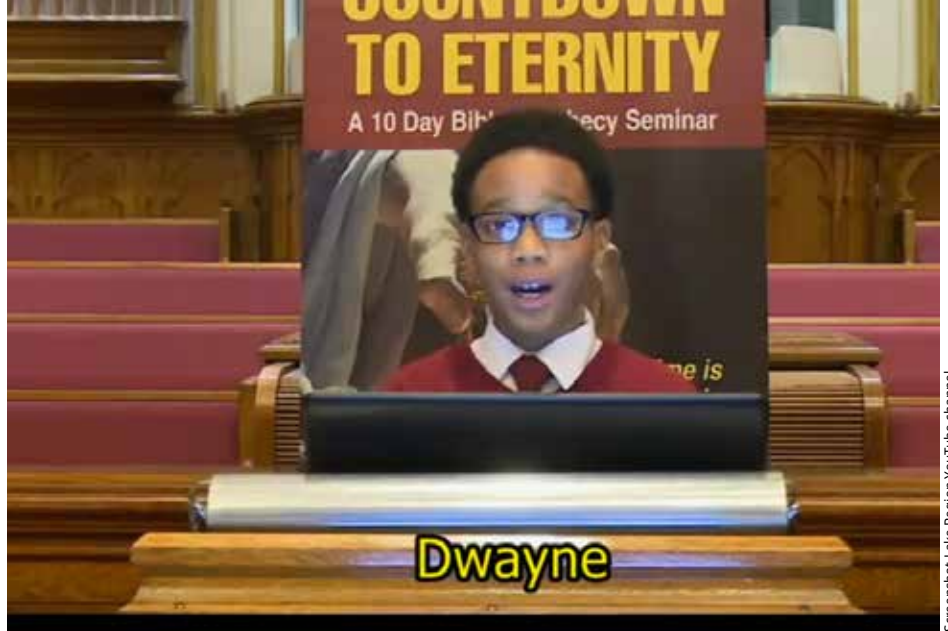
Several students, such as Lee who was the speaker for the second night, weren't new to public speaking. Nevertheless, when she gave her sermon entitled, "End Time Events in Bible Prophecy," she said, "I was kind of scared, and a little bit nervous since it was going to be put on TV," but she was emboldened to speak the name of Jesus.

Dwayne Duncombe II, a sixth-grade student at Peterson-Warren Academy in Inkster, Mich., and speaker on the final night, presented on *The New Earth*, said he was excited to present. "It was also very enlightening."

While the students didn't write the sermons, everyone, including Duncombe, agreed it was a positive experience. He said, "I was learning from preaching it, also."

Peterson-Warren Academy principal, Lynette Jefferson, explained, "It also was a revelation for them, to learn some things that maybe they haven't particularly heard before. It was a two-fold blessing: We shared [the gospel] with others and prayed that they understood some new things, but also it helped the students to grow spiritually."

2020 has been a year unlike any other; nevertheless, the challenges it presented also provided opportunity. "We have high expectations of our students," said Fabiola Andre, principal at Chicago Christian School. In the face of such pressure, the students of Lake Region Conference certainly rose to the occasion, not only during this series, but throughout the school year.



Dwayne Duncombe II, a sixth-grade student at Peterson-Warren Academy in Inkster, Mich., and speaker on the final night presented on *The New Earth*, said he was excited to present. "It was also very enlightening."

How It Came Together

Seeing Peterson Warren Academy's student body present "Countdown to Eternity" back in 2017 "left an impression on me," said Bryant. So much so that she reached out to the series creator and Detroit's Burns Avenue member, Tim Gardner, Ph.D., for assistance in bringing the evangelistic series to the schools in 2020.

The schools began laying the groundwork for this initiative on September 13. Keeping students on course with their curriculum while simultaneously hosting a virtual evangelistic seminar was no small undertaking.

Under normal circumstances, a production of this magnitude would have come together a bit more effortlessly; however, due to the quarantine and the ongoing rise of COVID-19 cases, school principals had to dig deeply into their supply of creativity and resourcefulness to film and record the series.

"We physically had to coordinate the picking-up of students," recounted Alexandria Miller, principal at South Suburban Elementary School in Park Forest, Ill. Coordinating filming times and transportation, making sure students remembered their respective scripts, while following proper physical distances was no easy task. "The teachers need to be given an award!" said Bryant.

Over the next two months, Gardner spent his time editing the student's video recordings, piecing them together with music

and aligning them with the format of the program. "It was quite an aggressive timing schedule. [We were] praying each step of the way," Gardner recalled with amusement.

Gardner pointed out that there were obstacles along the way. "Of course, if ever you have that kind of undertaking, the enemy gets busy. It was a battle, every day some issue would come up," he said. However, "I can honestly say, God guided our whole process. Every issue that came up, every challenge that came up, God's spirit was right there, and he helped us to overcome every obstacle. It was incredible how all the pieces — the kids, the teachers and the principals, everything started coming together. It all came together, and God gets the glory for all of that."

In reflecting on the "Countdown to Eternity" program he created in 2008, Gardner said he was proud to see the students of LRC execute the seminar. "Personally, I am amazed at what God can do with willing vessels. Be it kids, or elders, or laypeople. If you are willing and obedient.., it is an awesome privilege to be used by the Spirit of God."

The November 15–24 Countdown to Eternity prophecy seminar is available to watch on the LRC Facebook page and LRC YouTube site. ■

Elijah Horton, Chicago-based freelance writer

Screenshot Lake Region YouTube channel

Berrien Springs ACS opens expanded thrift store

On Nov. 10, Neighbor to Neighbor (N2N), an Adventist Community Services ministry in Michigan, opened an expanded thrift store.

"We are so excited to welcome people to our new store," says Lucy Randall, Neighbor to Neighbor's assistant director. "It's spacious and inviting. We know the community is going to love it as much as we do."

Beginning in 2019, N2N began expanding their facility to include 10,000 square feet to accommodate the thrift store — two times larger than their previous facilities. Featuring a book nook and expanded clothing, bedding, kitchenware and furniture sections, as well as a spacious boutique area and seasonal holiday section, the new thrift store promises to serve the community for many years to come. The cost of the \$1.2 million building project is funded with grants, donations and thrift store income. To date, over \$800,000 has been raised.

Neighbor to Neighbor helps the under-served Michigan counties of in Berrien, Cass and Van Buren. Founded in 1914, N2N has offered client-centered programs, emergency assistance and community service to Berrien Springs and the surrounding communities for over 100 years.

Along with the thrift store grand opening, N2N is launching a new Booster card program geared toward supporting their mission to the community. The program includes early, socially-distanced shopping at 9 a.m. on business days and 10 percent discount on every full-priced purchase at N2N Thrift Store.

"Every Booster has the satisfaction of knowing that their contribution immediately goes to work serving the community," says Laura Meyer, N2N executive

director. "Every day we serve those who are in crisis by providing clothing, furniture, bedding, food, supplies for infants, and other essential items. We serve those who have been impacted by COVID-19, who have lost their jobs, are escaping domestic abuse, and others experiencing various needs. The Booster program is a quick and easy way to know you are making a positive impact."

For more details about the booster program, visit N2N Facebook page or call 269-471-7411.

"We recognize God's leading through every challenge of this journey. Our unified expressions of gratitude are couched in the sentiment stated in 1 Samuel 7:12: *Hitherto has the Lord helped us*, says Meyer.

"We owe a debt of gratitude to Pastor Ron Kelly of the Village Church, Pastor Bryce Bowman from the Stevensville

Church, Busch Construction and so many others who have tirelessly supported us on this journey and especially through this difficult year. They have gone above and beyond anything we expected, allowing us to stay open continually and minister to those in the community who need us most." ■

Ami Hendrickson, Neighbor to Neighbor



▲ The 10,000 sq. ft. expansion features a book nook and additional clothing, bedding, kitchenware and furniture sections, as well as a spacious boutique area and seasonal holiday section.



▲ Neighbor to Neighbor executive director, Laura Meyer, along with officials from local churches, the Michigan Conference and Oronoko Township, shortly after work began on the expansion in 2019.



▲ The bags of food were packed each week by a group of volunteers. Health information was placed in the bags such as “How to Improve Your Immune System” and COVID-19 GLOW tracts.

With funds low and volunteers few, Community Services Center leaders step out in faith

In March 2020, when Janet Allen, director of Jackson’s Community Service Center, realized she would need to shut the doors of the Center because of the COVID-19 pandemic, she felt conflicted and worried.

Most of her staff were over the age of 50. There were great needs in the community. Yet she knew she needed her staff safe — as well as the clients they served.

Janet recalled, “I talked to Pastor Raymond Torres (pastor of the Jackson Church in Michigan) and he suggested we begin

praying and seeking God’s guidance.” The church elders also began praying. In the meantime, Janet watched what other community service centers were doing, using the food distribution drive-by method.

Miraculously, God began to open doors for serving those in need in the Jackson community. A food bank in Battle Creek called Janet and offered distribution guidelines plus food at a very reduced price. At the time, there was little more than \$900 in the client food account. Janet met with her staff, and a plan was devised that the Center would open to the public as a food distribution drive-through. When the word went out that volunteers were needed, several young and energetic members of the congregation offered to help. A total of 25 people (young and older) showed up for the first drive-through food pantry on May 2, 2020. The drive-through lasted for 24 weeks and an average of 74.54 families were served weekly.

Janet and her helpers prayed again for funds as their money had run out. Again, God worked. The Center applied for and was awarded a Federal Government Emerging Food and Shelter Program grant for \$2,418. The Michigan Conference gave a total of \$4,109. The Center also received food donations from the Jackson Summit Church. A “Because it Matters” program in Jackson County donated food. Miraculously many individuals and churches in the county (not of our faith) sent money — just out of the blue. When the drive-through ended on September 29, 2020, a total of \$44,725 (a semi-truckload) worth of food had been given out.

The bags of food were packed each week by a group of volunteers. Health information was placed in the bags, such as “How to Improve Your Immune System” and COVID-19 GLOW tracts.

Each person coming through the drive-through was asked if there was something specific they would like to have the team pray for. Everyone was assured they were all prayed for each week. A few very stressed folks, for one reason or another, wanted prayer at that moment. Feedback was heard of answered prayers.

The volunteers learned there were very caring neighbors among those going through the long line of cars each Tuesday. One week there were over 80 cars in line. One lady cooked for two needy elderly shut-ins; because she had been using her credit card to pay for food (since her employer had reduced her work hours), she asked if she could get food. She later brought pictures of the people she was ministering to.

One family who was served began attending church. Church members who shared what the Jackson church was doing were excited to see their neighbors and friends affirming them in this ministry.

“My faith was very increased,” said Janet Allen. “It was amazing what God did and how He provided when we stepped out in faith.” ■

Maelyn Hamblin is a member of the Jackson Church, located in Michigan.

Conferences in the Lake Union adopt pledge to end racism

Public Affairs and Religious Liberty leaders in the Lake Union have expressed their support for the LEAD Anti-racism Pledge which is a biblically-based protest against racism. The Pledge was initiated by Adventist leaders and

scholars in Tennessee, although its support has expanded to include pastors and leaders of many denominations throughout the country.

“The PARL leaders within the Lake Union believe that racism is one of the biggest challenges facing us as both a society and a church” said Nicholas Miller, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director of the Lake

Union Conference. “We stand in support of an explicitly Christian-based, image of God focused, biblically-based approach to the question as exemplified in the LEAD Anti-racism Pledge.”

One of the initiators of the Pledge, Elder Tony Brand, pastor of Orchard Park Church, explained that “the thought was to launch a 100 percent Christian-based initiative that



Courtesy Lake Union Conference

▲ Conference Public Affairs and Religious (PARL) directors agreed at the Lake Union Year-end Meeting to adopt an anti-racism pledge. From left to right top row: Lake Union PARL director, Nicholas Miller; Indiana PARL director, Violo Weis; Wisconsin PARL director, Jonathan Fetrick; Bottom row: Michigan director and associate director, Andy and Laura Im; Lake Region PARL director, Edward Woods III; Lake Union PARL Department administrative assistant, Jana Quetz.

would be attractive to people of all races and ethnicities and political persuasions.” Brand approached Nicole Parker, an adjunct faculty at Southern Adventist University, who, along with her husband, Alan Parker, Ph.D., a Religion professor at Southern Adventist University, and their teenage children, drafted the Pledge.

They introduced the Pledge to a local interdenominational network of clergy that were part of the One Kingdom One Church race relations initiative. The clergy had expressed a desire, said Brand, “to make a strong moral statement about the racial unrest that erupted because of the killings of Ahmaud Arbery, Brionna Taylor and George Floyd.”

The Pledge, which is about a page long, states: “Rooted in the conviction that the followers of Jesus are called to reflect their beloved Creator and Redeemer as a mosaic and symphony of humanity, I choose courage instead of comfort I pledge to

do my part to fulfill Jesus’ prayer ‘that they all may be one,’ trusting Him to weave ‘every nation, kindred, tongue and people’ into a beautiful tapestry of love, until the day my soul is at rest, free at last.”

The acronym LEAD stands for Listen, Embrace, Advocate, Dream. To paraphrase: It’s a pledge to Listen to others, even when it’s uncomfortable to do so, with an open mind, examining our own actions; to Embrace others with hospitality and to build a community that welcomes harmonious diversity; to Advocate for those facing discrimination, to speak out, to stand up, to respond with respect, kindness and non-violence; to Dream of equality for all.

The Pledge has been signed by over 700 people, including over 200 clergy (several from varying levels of leadership in the Adventist Church). But what does signing the Pledge mean? Those who were instrumental to its creation say their goal is to “end racism

in the Christian Church in America.”

“It’s only through the power of the Holy Spirit that we can eradicate systemic racism both inside and outside of the church,” states Edward Woods III, PARL director for Lake Region Conference. “I am Godfident that the LEAD Anti-Racism Pledge places the onus on individual responsibility and accountability in order to change people, families, communities, organizations, countries and the world.”

The team behind LEAD (nine people of various denominations) have developed their next initiative, the LEAD 40-day Challenge, an anti-racism devotional challenge based on the “I will” statements found in the Pledge. Nicholas Miller has contributed to the devotional written for individuals or churches as a tool to engage people in opposing racism.

To read the Pledge in its entirety and add your name, visit <https://leadpledge.org/>. ■

Jana Quetz is the Lake Union Public Affairs and Religious Liberty administrative assistant.

Marilyn McEntyre speaks on peace for 2020 Waller Lectureship Series: USING DELIBERATE AND CARING LANGUAGE TO CONNECT IN A POLARIZED WORLD

BERRIEN SPRINGS, Mich.— Marilyn McEntyre, author, speaker and professor of American literature and the medical humanities, captured the attention of her virtual audience with the topic “Speaking Peace in a Conflict of Climate” on Wednesday evening, Oct. 21. Her address, titled after her recently published book of the same name, focused on

how intentionality with words can bring healing and strength to a conflicted world. The distinguished author of several books, including *Caring for Words in a Culture of Lies*, *When Poets Pray* and *Make a List: How a Simple Practice can Change Your Life and Open Your Heart*, was the featured speaker for the Department of English’s annual John O. Waller Lectureship on the Arts.



Courtesy Andrews University

▲ Marilyn McEntyre

The Waller Lectureship honors late English professor John O. Waller, who taught at Andrews University from 1960–1987 and chaired the department from 1963–1979. While in the position, he launched a Master of Arts in English and was a mentor for many future teachers, including several of the Department of English’s current faculty. His book, *A Circle of Friends: The Tennysons and Lushingtons of Park House*, was published in 1986 by Ohio State University Press. This book reflects his specialization in the Victorian period. This year’s talk marked the 13th in a long line of esteemed presentations on a wide range of English disciplines, from “Henry Thoreau: A Sauntering Life” by Dave Smith in 2011, to Peter Holland’s “Haunting Shakespeare or King Lear Meets Alice” in 2012, and “Montgomery 55 on My Mind: Success Lessons from the Boycott” by Ramona Hyman in 2019.

Vanessa I. Corredera, chair of the Department of English, spoke to the importance of the Waller Lectureship and Marilyn McEntyre’s position this year. She

expressed, “It is our annual opportunity to engage with research in our field outside of our immediate university family. It’s important for students and the wider community to get a sense of what English and the humanities offer as a field and to dialogue and engage with people outside of our research community.”

McEntyre’s talk centered around strategies for engaging in a deliberate and caring use of language. In a reflection on the power attributed to words and the role they play in peace, she led with the statement, “Peacemaking is a vigorous business.” Speaking peace, she noted, is very different from simply speaking *about* it.

McEntyre explored some of the struggles and strife she has observed in the world and emphasized the importance of stewardship when it comes to using language within culture, given the different contexts and connotations each word holds today. Her focus then turned to the context of communication, presenting the idea that “good conversation is life-giving.”

The speaker outlined seven methods that can be used to properly care for language: taking time for definition, putting words into poetry, articulating outrage, finding facts and checking them, minding metaphors, claiming the comic, and finding an alternative to winning or losing. Each particular facet of the action plan pointed out new ways to use language effectively, especially in the context of peacemaking.

In her exploration of the power of putting words into verse, for example, McEntyre stated her belief that, “Poetry can surprise us into new understandings of each other and our shared vulnerability.”

When detailing her understanding of appropriately articulating righteous outrage, McEntyre expressed the necessity of careful discernment regarding when it is

the right time to speak up for those who need it. She established, “If it’s in our power to speak up for the vulnerable, then it is our duty to do that.”

Her final suggestion, to find alternatives to winning or losing, hinged on the idea that “the way to civil conversation lies through the grey area — through ambiguity.” She reiterated that each individual is connected to others in an extremely subtle and complex network, and therefore can find more ways to connect with others than they might at first perceive within a polarized community.

Corredera highlighted McEntyre’s call for Christians, in particular, to think about what they champion, and additionally pointed to the way the speaker believed in a two-way enrichment between both the humanities and other fields. She hoped, most of all, that students gained an understanding of the key role that words play in day-to-day life. “It’s important that we all pay attention to the language we use — how we use it, how we communicate. All of us are stewards of language and stewards of communication.”

In a thoughtful call to action at the end of her talk, McEntyre directed: “Speak with specificity and humility and boldness, awakened imagination, gratitude, grace and commitment, as followers to the one who called peacemakers blessed, *for they will be called the children of God.*”

Founded in 1874, Andrews University is the flagship institution of higher education for the Seventh-day Adventist Church and offers more than 160 areas of study, including advanced degrees. Its main campus is in Berrien Springs, Michigan, but the University also provides instruction at colleges and around the world. ■

Isabella Koh, University Communication student writer

Andrews University awarded \$2.25M grant

On Sept. 28, Andrews University was awarded a U.S. Department of Education grant for \$2.25 million. The initiative was spearheaded by Padma Tadi Uppala, chair of the School of Population Health, Nutrition & Wellness, and her team.

The grant aims to provide a path to success for at-risk students and improve enrollment of minority students, focusing specifically on the Pokagon Band of Native American students in Dowagiac, Mich. Implementation of the plan includes streamlining curriculum and faculty counseling at Andrews University in order to increase placement rates among students and help them graduate within four years. Twenty percent of the grant is designated for endowment funds, while an additional part of the funds will be allocated to scholarships for under-represented and at-risk students.

In describing the motivation behind pursuing the grant, Uppala explains, "When I observed the diverse racial and ethnic representation on the Andrews campus, I saw a potential for federal funds that support minority and at-risk students in colleges and universities." A lengthy process ensued, during which Andrews University was recognized as a minority-serving institution with a Title III qualification from the U.S. Department of Education. The team competed for the award with the rest of the Title III-designated universities in the U.S. After a year-long wait, they received word that the grant had been awarded to Andrews University.

The main issues addressed by the grant are those of college readiness and placement, inefficiency in mentoring and advisement, mental health issues and inability to pay tuition fees. The project intends to create a system of support that recognizes the challenges that struggling



▲ Andrews University campus entrance

first-time students face despite their intellectual potential and capabilities. Financial aid, career advising and academic support are key components of the grant.

Christon Arthur, provost, acted as a key figure of support in the development of the grant proposal. He reflects, "I think the added support services that the grant would provide to students, especially minority students, are most important. The greatest impact would come from the career services that we will provide to students. Every student should have the opportunity for an internship, and that opportunity is now more likely."

With such goals in mind, funds will target a number of strategies and interventions directed toward student access, support and success. These plans include the diversification of assessment for college readiness and placement, as well as the creation of an accelerated developmental work sequence within course design. Other methods include incentivizing participation in advising activities and teaching students how to become self-regulated learners. The main focus of the grant centers on the necessity of faculty and staff training, particularly in the areas of advising, testing, mentoring, alert systems and awarding prior learning credit. New positions for a career services advisor, student success advisor and educational development specialist will aid in the process.

Ralph Trecartin, associate provost and dean of the College of Professions, worked with Uppala to collaborate with the local Pokagon Band, and helped outline the grant budget. He expresses, "We are proud of all of our students — and want them all to succeed in life. Success includes academic success, career success and also spiritual growth and social understanding. This grant helps us strengthen the support for students from several backgrounds that will bring additional cultural richness to our campus."

The established measures will create integrated and long-lasting support systems and improve college and career readiness for Native American and at-risk students. After a one-year planning and preparation phase, which includes providing college-preparatory training for high school seniors, the first students will be accepted into the new program starting fall semester 2021.

Uppala highlights "the joy of serving at-risk and minority students and helping them succeed in life, reducing their college debts, as well as serving the Native American Pokagon Band students." Beyond the significant monetary value of the grant, it is this act of service that she and the team value the most. ■

Isabella Koh, University Communication student writer

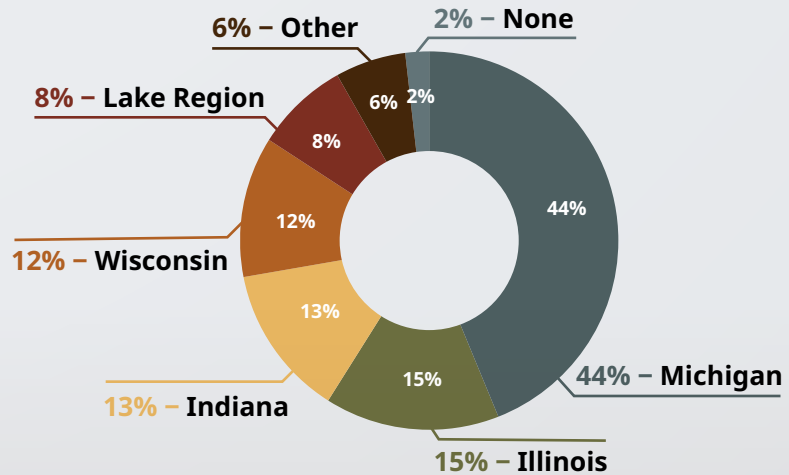
SURVEY RESULTS

We asked, you responded and, for that, we are very grateful. 478 of you took the time to give us your candid assessment of the *Herald* content — what we're doing well and how we can improve. We are already incorporating your suggestions and redoubling our efforts to bring you important news and information from throughout our territory, as well as stories to deepen your relationship with God, for such a time as this. —Editors

We promised you that two survey participants would receive a \$50 Amazon gift cards. We had a live drawing on Dec. 3 (see our Facebook page or YouTube channel) and the winners are. . . **Mandy Lehman** and **Tammy Greene**. Thank you, everyone!

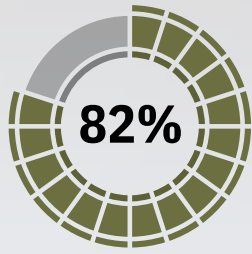


WHERE RESPONDENTS WERE FROM

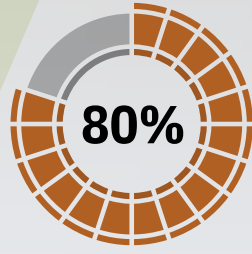


On a scale of 1 to 10, the overall content was valued at 7.55





82% read most or every issue



80% think length of articles should remain the same

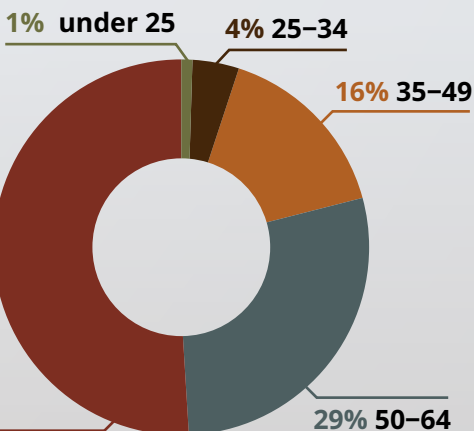
SAMPLING OF THE MOST MEMORABLE TOPICS IN THE LAST YEAR?

- Personal stories, testimonies
- Articles about the Trinity
- Pathfinder (Camporee) articles

A FEW OF THE LEAST FAVORITE THINGS ABOUT THE MAGAZINE?

- Article printed on colored paper. Sometimes it is very hard to read.
- Can't understand the Hispanic message.
- Would like to see articles that challenge me, not just stuff I already agree on.
- I find out about events after the fact and would've like to have gone.

AGE OF READERS



51% - 65 and over



MOST POPULAR CONTENT

Back pages (News, Mileposts, Classifieds, etc.); **Lifestyle** (Alive & Well, Family Focus); **Feature articles**, and **Evangelism columns**.

GENDER

66% female 34% male



SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Add more true live stories of people's experiences. What happened to them and how they grew from it and how God helped them.
- Better content that is relevant to living life in the trenches.
- Feature youth and young adults in one way or another.

HOW SURVEY CONDUCTED

- Published in *Herald* magazine in March through September 2020 issues
- Promoted via all our conferences and Andrews University newsletters, *Herald* social media, *Herald* newsletter subscribers, Facebook ads

JANUARY/FEBRUARY

ILLINOIS

- Jan. 8–9:** *Pathfinder Area Coordinators Retreat*
- Jan. 15–18:** *Youth Winter Retreat*
- Jan. 29–31:** *Pathfinder Southern Area Mega Weekend*
- Feb. 13:** *Pathfinder Northern Area Synergy, MA Center on the campus of BVA*
- Feb. 27:** *Pathfinder Conference Level Bible Experience*

INDIANA

- Jan. 9:** *Indiana Conference Virtual Prayer Summit, 3-5 p.m. EST*
- Jan. 22–24:** *Pathfinder Winter Campout, Timber Ridge Camp*
- Feb. 6:** *PBE Area Level (Virtual)*
- Feb. 20:** *2021 Youth Rally (Virtual)*
- Feb. 27:** *State PBE (Virtual)*

LAKE REGION

- Jan. 1-7:** *Week of Devotion (virtual)*
- Jan. 15:** *Martin Luther King Celebration (lrnsda.com)*
- Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26:** *Black History Month Programs (lrnsda.com)*
- Feb 6:** *Pathfinder Bible Experience (area level)*

MICHIGAN

- Jan. 8–10:** *Pathfinders Area Coordinators Retreat*
- Jan. 15–17:** *Campus Staff Retreat, Camp Au Sable*
- Jan. 25–26:** *Virtual Ministerial Retreat*
- Feb. 5–7:** *Adventurer District Retreat, Camp Au Sable*
- Feb. 5–7:** *Father/Son Man Camp*
- Feb. 6:** *PBE Area Level*

WISCONSIN

- Jan. 15–18:** *Winter Youth Retreat, Camp Wakonda*
- Jan. 22–24:** *JAHWI Leadership Retreat, Milwaukee*
- Jan. 22–24:** *Men's Ministry Retreat, Camp Wakonda (Postponed)*
- Feb. 6:** *PBE Area Level*
- Feb. 12–14:** *Pathfinder Winter Retreat, Camp Wakonda*
- Feb. 19–21:** *Public Campus Ministries Retreat, Camp Wakonda*
- Feb. 26–27:** *Hispanic Women's Ministry Certification, Milwaukee*

CALENDAR OF OFFERINGS

JANUARY

- Jan. 2** Local Church Budget
- Jan. 9** Local Conference Advance
- Jan. 16** Local Church Budget
- Jan. 23** Religious Liberty
- Jan. 30** Local Church Budget

FEBRUARY

- Feb. 6** Local Church Budget
- Feb. 13** Evangelism (NAD)
- Feb. 20** Local Church Budget
- Feb. 27** Local Conference Advance

CALENDAR OF SPECIAL DAYS

JANUARY

FOCUS FOR THE MONTH — FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM

- Jan. 2** Day of Prayer
- Jan. 17–22** Religious Liberty Week
- Jan. 23** Religious Liberty Sabbath

FEBRUARY

FOCUS OF THE MONTH — FAMILY LIFE

- Feb. 1–28** Black History Month
- Feb. 6** Christian Parenting Sabbath
- Feb. 6–13** Christian Family Week
- Feb. 13** Christian Marriage Sabbath

Sabbath Sunset Calendar

	Jan. 1	Jan. 8	Jan. 15	Jan. 22	Jan. 29	Feb. 5	Feb. 12	Feb. 19	Feb. 26
Berrien Springs, Mich.	5:25	5:32	5:40	5:48	5:48	6:06	6:16	6:24	6:33
Chicago, Ill.	4:31	4:37	4:45	4:54	5:03	5:12	5:20	5:29	5:38
Detroit, Mich.	5:11	5:18	5:26	5:34	5:43	5:52	6:01	6:10	6:19
Indianapolis, Ind.	5:31	5:38	5:45	5:53	6:01	6:10	6:18	6:26	6:34
La Crosse, Wis.	4:39	4:46	4:54	5:03	5:12	5:22	5:32	5:41	5:50
Lansing, Mich.	5:16	5:22	5:30	5:39	5:48	5:57	6:07	6:16	6:25
Madison, Wis.	4:34	4:41	4:49	4:58	5:07	5:16	5:26	5:35	5:44
Springfield, Ill.	4:45	4:52	4:59	5:07	5:15	5:24	5:32	5:40	5:48

Within the Lake Union, the officiating pastor or church communication leader is responsible for submission of information to this column. Forms are available in print format, or they can be filled out and submitted directly online. Milepost forms are available at <http://www.lakeunionherald.org>. Conference addresses and phone numbers are listed in the masthead on the inside back cover.

BIRTHDAY



MILDRED RIEN SOLSTAD celebrated her 100th birthday on October 11, 2020, with treats, celebrated with treats, cards, gifts, calls and visits with her friends and family at her home in Menomonie, Wis. She has been a member of the Menomonie Church for nine years.

Married to the late Arnold Solstad in 1940, Millie enjoyed a life that included travel to five continents and still loves to share her experiences of living in many different cultures. Millie has four children: Edward and late Pat (Stanley) Solstad of Minneapolis, Minn., Mary Solstad and late spouse Paul Kriner of Palmer, Alas., late John and Pam Solstad of Roseville, Minn., and Ron Solstad of Anchorage, Alas. She also has two grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

ANNIVERSARIES

RALPH and BEVERLY (Benjamin) BENEDICT celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on September 3, 2020. They have been members of the Battle Creek Tabernacle Church in Battle Creek, Beverly all of her life and Ralph since their wedding. Elder Merle Mills was the acting pastor.

Ralph intended to work in the building trade, but his father was killed in an automobile accident while building the Benedict Memorial School in lower Michigan. Ralph worked for his father-in-law in the printing trade for 10 years and Beverly worked for Consumers Power Company and sales before starting their own printing business (1960 until 1991).



Their three children hosted an open house for friends and relatives at their home on Sept. 6, 2020. Denise and Jim Carter moved here from Ohio to help mom and dad; Dr. Dennis and Eddie Benedict from Loudon, Tenn.; and Laurie and Stephen Erickson who are missionaries in Papua, New Guinea. They have six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.



ELIGAH and IRENE LEWIS celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on November 22, 2020. Eligah Lewis and Irene Kennedy were married November 22, 1950, in Pascagoula, Miss. Purchasing their first home in Prichard, Ala., Eligah and Irene attended the Dearborn Church which is now Emmanuel Church in Mobile, Ala.

In 1955, Eligah and Irene Lewis moved to Milwaukee, Wis., where they became members of the Sharon Church. Dedicated members for 36 years, Eligah served as a deacon for many years, while Irene participated in many community outreach programs. While attending Sharon Church, Eligah, Thomas Prescott and others formed the Sharon Travelers, a

well-known singing group of the Lake Region Conference. After Eligah retired in 1991, he and his wife moved to Thomasville, Ala., where they now reside and became members of the Thomasville Church. Since 1997, Eligah has held the position of head elder.

Eligah and Irene have two daughters, five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

OBITUARIES

BERGER, Howard W., age 101; born Aug. 18, 1919, in Gourley Township, Mich.; died Oct. 28, 2020, in Bark River, Mich. He was a member of the Wilson Church in Wilson, Mich. Survivors include his daughters, Charlotte Moon, Aileen King, and Marge (Bill) Ketler; seven grandchildren; and ten great-grandchildren. Funeral services were conducted by Pastor Tom Hubbard; interment will be in the Wilson Church Cemetery at a later date.

CHAPMAN, Michael W., age 42; born Jan. 22, 1978, in Pontiac, Mich.; died Nov. 9, 2020, in Waterford, Mich. He was a member of the Waterford Riverside Church in Waterford. Survivors include his son, Lucas Chapman; father, Louis Chapman; mother, Barbara (Evilsizer) Chapman; brothers, Paul (Kristin) Chapman and Stephen Chapman. Inurnment was in Ottawa Park Cemetery in Waterford.

CORDONE, Warren P., age 78; born July 2, 1942, in Highland Park, Mich.; died Sept. 14, 2020, in Plymouth, Mich. He was a member of the Metropolitan Church in Plymouth. Survivors include his wife, Linda (Perry) Cordone; son, Sean Cordone; and two grandchildren. Memorial services will be deferred until early 2021; inurnment will be in the Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly, Mich.

HOLBROOK, Nancy (Laco), age 85; born June 22, 1935, in Akron, Ohio; died Aug. 26, 2020, in Warsaw, Ind. She was a member of the Warsaw Church in Warsaw. Survivors include her son, Bobby Cash. Private inurnment.

KIND, Arnold Charles "Chuck" Jr., age 66; born Feb. 19, 1954, in Waukesha, Wis.; died July 4, 2020, in West Allis, Wis. He was a member of the Milwaukee Northwest Church in Milwaukee. Survivors include his wife, Karen (Bissell) Kind; son, Arnold Charles "Charlie" Kind II; brother, Brian (Elizabeth) Kind; and sister, Cindy (Mark) Brown. Memorial services were conducted by Elders Mike Edge and

Steve Aust; inurnment was in Prairie Home Cemetery in Waukesha.

MUSTIN, Helen (Thompson), age 94; born Feb. 28, 1926, in Wolf Lake, Ind.; died Oct. 18, 2020, in Fort Wayne, Ind. She was a member of the Indiana Conference Church in Westfield, Ind. Survivors include her daughter, Susan Pfeiffer; sister, Roxy Gibson; and two grandchildren. Memorial services were conducted by Pastor Ray Alexander; interment was in Wolf Lake Solstad Cemetery in Wolf Lake.

RANZINGER, Oscar, age 88; born Nov. 25, 1931, in Voitsberg, Austria; died Nov. 1, 2020, in Goshen, Ind. He was a member of the Village Church in Berrien Springs, Mich. Survivors include son, Mark Ranzinger; daughters, Corinne Van Arsdale, Yvonne Ranzinger, Melonee Patterson, Rachelle Hartkopf; sister, Elfreda Hordosch; and eight grandchildren. Private inurnment.

CORRECTION — *Our apologies to the family of Hans G. Jakobsons, whose obituary ran in the November/December 2020 issue. We inadvertently missed listing his son, Joseph Jakobson, as one of the survivors.*

All classified ads must be sent to your local conference for approval. No phoned ads will be accepted. Allow at least eight weeks for publication. Fifty words maximum. No limit of insertions. Rates: \$36 per insertion for Lake Union church members; \$46 per insertion for all others. A form is available at <http://www.lakeunionherald.org> for printing out and filling in your ad. Ads must be prepaid. Make money order or check payable to the Lake Union Conference. There will be no refunds for cancellations. The *Lake Union Herald* cannot be responsible for advertisements appearing in its columns, and reserves the right to edit ads in accordance with editorial policies. The *Lake Union Herald* does not accept responsibility for typographical errors. Submission eligibility guidelines are listed at <http://www.lakeunionherald.org>.

SERVICES

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EMPLOYMENT

LOOKING FOR TUTORS AND CERTIFIED TEACHERS to join us in Christian online

education (Gr. 2–12). Work part-time from home tutoring “live” via Zoom. If interested, please call us at Sycamore Academy (817-645-0895).

OPENING AT SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY, DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY/ALLIED HEALTH, BEGINNING FALL 2021 — Prefer Biology PhD who will teach upper and lower division courses and labs with heavy weighting on Anatomy and Physiology I and II. Please review full job description and requirements at www.southern.edu before applying. Send CV, statement of teaching philosophy, and three references to: Keith Snyder, Biology Search Committee Chair, Southern Adventist University, Box 370, Collegedale, TN 37315; 423-236-2929; fax: 423-236-1926; kasnyder@southern.edu.

REAL ESTATE

NEED SECLUSION? — In Arkansas for sale, one-acre farm. Newly remodeled, three-bedroom/ two-bath home with attached two-car garage. Formal dining and living rooms. Den with fireplace. Kitchen with laundry. Back mudroom and front screened porch. Certified well and rural water. Perimeter fence. Selling for \$97,000. If interested, call Maria at 870-841-0200.

LIBERTY IMAGINE YOUR WORLD WITHOUT IT WWW.LIBERTYMAGAZINE.ORG

Seventieth Adventist Church

INTO ALL THE WORLD

CLOSED DURING COVID-19 EMERGENCY

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY SABBATH JANUARY 23

SCAN TO GIVE ONLINE

A TESTING TIME RELIGIOUS LIBERTY OFFERING **JANUARY 23, 2021**

FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

A POWER STRONGER THAN WITCHCRAFT

AWR
ANNUAL
OFFERING
MARCH 13, 2021



Commander Liam's reputation is that of a hard man who has complete control over his country's military.

In fact, to ensure his continued success and protection from his enemies, a few months ago he hired a modern-day "witch."

Recently, he received an unexpected text message. It had a link to the **Unlocking Bible Prophecies** series from **Adventist World Radio**. He wasn't sure who'd sent it, but he enjoyed the powerful presentation and the speaker's soothing voice that seemed to calm his soul. New messages began arriving daily, and as he listened, something changed in his heart.

Soon his resident "witch" began to notice the change in him and demanded to know who was sending the messages. She said, "That woman you're listening to has a magic more powerful than mine—I want some of that power! It gives me a strange sense of peace I haven't felt before. How can I receive these messages too?"

That's the power of Adventist World Radio and cell phone evangelism—you never know who's listening and how the Lord is working on their hearts. To read the rest of this story and see how your support is reaching millions around the world, **visit awr.org/offering**.



TWO WAYS TO SUPPORT AWR:

On Sabbath, March 13, mark the offering line on your tithe envelope.

Or give now by visiting awr.org/offering

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12501 OLD COLUMBIA PIKE
SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND 20904 USA

Hold On, Help is on the Way

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1 (NIV)



▲ Paulette Taylor

When did what we knew as “normal” disappear and change to what we have been experiencing since earlier last year? We are bombarded by the strife and turmoil that plague the news airwaves regularly. The COVID-19 pandemic, which has brought about its own horrific challenges resulting in extreme illness for some, to, unfortunately, the passing of countless others. Injustices, that, truth-be-told, have existed since Cain killed Abel and have continued to a greater degree, throughout the ages. This will continue until the Lord returns. . . . But the story does not end there.

The Good News is and always will be Jesus! Just the mention of His name brings hope and joy to the heart of those who believe. Hallelujah! But what about all those individuals who have yet to hear the story of the risen Savior? What about our neighbors and brothers and sisters in our families, and our communities who are seeking for something, anything, better than the existence they now live? We are reminded in Philippians 4:13, *I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.* Help is on the way!

Daniel is a strong testament to the help God can provide to a faithful praying servant (Daniel 6:1–28).

God’s promises are true and sure and have stood the test of time. Surely, if we were to stop and survey all that we see as wrong in this life, we would throw up our hands up, give in to fear and give up. But we have a God who sees and knows all. Think about it. Who brought you or a loved one through that surgery or illness? Or maybe God brought you through a divorce or showed you how to make sense of your marriage. He was instrumental in showing you how to forgive yourself and lose the guilt that had encompassed your feelings. Whatever the case may be, there are blessings to be found everywhere, just look! (*The joy of the Lord is your strength.*)

His hand is upon His people wherever they go and whatever they do. The love of God is unsurpassed! John 3:16 confirms that fact. (*For God so loved the world that He gave us His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him . . .* (KJV) He continues to fight our battles every single day with the sword of truth and the shield of salvation. Praise God! His help is on the way!

So here we are, by His grace, beginning a new year. Where do you stand in your Christian walk? In your prayer life? Are your prayers sincere, deliberate communication each time you lift your voice to the Father? He hears all prayers and knows the true desires of your heart. Talk to Him, trust Him, and take Him at His word. He does not fail, *ever!* Let Him be your Rock and your Fortress, your Very Best Friend, your *Everything*. Let’s continue praying for each other all the way to Glory, one prayer at a time! ■

Paulette Taylor, Prayer coordinator, Indiana Conference



Where There's No Will

This past March my younger sister Tracy died suddenly and unexpectedly at the age of 56. I can't explain just how unprepared our family was for this tragedy.

I usually don't share personal things of this nature in a public forum; however, I thought the sharing of what we were confronted with would be helpful to others.

When the doctor came into the waiting room and shared the extent of my sister's situation, to say that we were stunned would be an understatement. Although the doctor did not come out and clearly say that there was no hope for recovery, most of us read between the lines and knew that, barring Divine intervention, and believe me, we prayed for God to intervene, my sister had no hope of recovery.

Our family's experience was complicated by the need to quickly find answers to some extremely tough questions. Should we leave Tracy on extraordinary life support for an indefinite period? For how long and under what conditions would we remove her? Who would make the decision to leave her on life support or remove her? What would Tracy want us to do? My sister never shared what her wishes would be should something like this happen. Because of this, we did not know what she wanted. She has four adult daughters, a mother, seven siblings, over fifty nieces and nephews and, it goes without saying, numerous opinions on what should be done. It's true that often a surviving spouse makes this kind of a decision, but she wasn't married, even though she was in a long-term relationship, which complicated things even further.

Because Tracy did not have a living will (also known as an advance health directive) to clarify her wishes, our exceptionally large and sometimes opinionated family had to figure it out. Some wanted to keep her on life support for as long as it took for her to "get back to health;" others wanted to "let her go," as there did not appear to be any hope of recovery. Then there was the

discussion about organ donation. The entire family was soon mentally and emotionally exhausted.

With much prayer and many tears, including some emotional outbursts, caused in part by pain and fear, and loss, we figured it out the best we could. We got through it, but I remember thinking, if only Tracy had made her wishes known to us and put her desires in a living will, we might have been spared some of the pain caused by having to make agonizing decisions during an already difficult time. Some of my family members have stated their plans to include advanced healthcare directives in their estate planning. I'm grateful for that. I hope our experience makes you think about this important topic, and if you do not already have a living will or other end-of-life directives, I encourage you to take care of it soon.

If you have questions about living wills, contact your conference's Trust Services Department for more information. ■

Bill Ochs, Wisconsin Conference Planned Giving and Trust Services director



▲ Bill Ochs

▼ Wisconsin Conference Planned Giving and Trust Services director, Bill Ochs, and his family in happier times four years ago. He is pictured in the back row, second from right, with his sister, Tracy, center top row, wearing the light blue dress.



Courtesy Bill Ochs

Signs of Friendship

By Anthony Petroff

IT WAS A SIGN WHICH FIRST CAUGHT MY EYE: “\$500 for whoever can point to where the Bible says that the Sabbath is on Sunday.” This sign threw me off because, although I was a new convert to Christianity, I had never heard anything along these lines.

The setting for this sign was Michigan State University where I was a freshman. MSU was hosting an event called “Sparticipation” where clubs and student-related organizations are given a massive space to organize and advertise themselves to students. When I first spotted the sign at the CAMPUS House booth, I convinced myself I could win an easy \$500.

As I began trying to persuade the CAMPUS House reps that the Sabbath was on Sunday, I was almost overwhelmed by their well of knowledge of the subject, and rightfully found myself being politely rebuked for my ignorance and arrogance on the subject. Despite finding myself humiliated by my own actions, I was impressed by their character and knowledge. When they offered to meet with them afterwards, I accepted.

From there, I regularly met with the members of CAMPUS House. Every time I came over, they proposed I stay for dinner while went over Adventist beliefs with Robin Mox (one of the missionary students with whom I had become friends). Or, they would invite me over to watch a biblical documentary or come with them to general events involving studying or simply discussing things as friends. It was a wonderful experience and, over time, helped me to recognize the fruit of the Spirit. I realized that the church they belonged to, and the denomination as a whole, was made up of individuals who cared

► Anthony Petroff

Jermaine Gayle



deeply about following God’s Word, especially His Ten Commandments.

However, during that year, due to poor personal choices and a growing depression, I almost fell completely away from the faith. I stopped trying to meet up or spend time with my newfound CAMPUS friends or any other groups of people. Around that time, Robin and the other student missionaries were trying to discuss the Sabbath with me, but I dismissed them. In hindsight, I realize I was adamant against Sabbath observance because it would require me to make serious changes in my life.

After living in this unhealthy state for a while, I eventually reconnected with Robin and some of the other students from CAMPUS. By meeting with them and taking a serious look into God’s Word, I was able to come to terms with a loving God who wanted me to follow all ten of His commandments. There were many excuses made. However, the final discussion of the Sabbath, the portion of God’s Word which convinced me to become a baptized member of the Adventist church, was reading about the followers of Christ observing the Sabbath in Luke 23:56. There is no argument I can honestly make to stand against this verse. With a simple description of events, it makes clear the importance of the Sabbath, which I now know is Saturday. I

might not have won \$500 that day but the journey of coming to terms with the knowledge of God’s truth has been priceless. ■

Anthony Petroff was baptized Sept. 19, 2020, at the U Church in Lansing, Mich. He is in his third year at Lansing Community College, studying Computer Networking and Cybersecurity.

Anthony received a \$100 scholarship for this article. If you’re a youth or young adult interested in submitting an article for consideration, please contact: herald@lakeunion.org

Lucas' Wish

By Raquel Mentor



Courtesy Loren Nelson

▲ Lucas Nelson

MOST CHILDREN, WHEN FACED WITH AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE and the opportunity to have any wish come true, would choose to go to Disneyland, perhaps to meet their hero, but not Lucas Nelson. The fourteen-year-old cancer survivor was given this exact choice, but used his one wish to raise funds for the University of Wisconsin's Kids Cancer Fund.

Catching up with Lucas at his home in Wisconsin, he explained why he felt called to make his Make-a-Wish request.

Lucas' journey began two years ago during a camping trip when he inexplicably fainted. A series of tests at the local medical center revealed he had leukemia. While the local doctors in Bismarck, North Dakota, were able to provide a diagnosis, options were limited so he began treatment in Rochester, Minnesota.

There was nothing easy about the trials of cancer, yet he persisted. Sue, Lucas' mom, recalls, "Throughout his journey, he was such a positive young man. He had a great hope that was even better than we had at times."

Reflecting on his experience, Lucas spoke of the support of his community. His parents and sister were always by his side, his friends kept in touch online; even Adventist schools around the country came together with plenty of letters and gifts of encouragement. When the Make-A-Wish people approached him, he spoke from the abundance of gratitude in his heart: he had all he wanted, and wanted to share what he could to help other children with cancer.

Lucas is currently one year into maintenance following successful treatment. He is able to attend school once more, go swimming, attend restaurants, and live a full life, yet his mission remains.

A bright blue shirt donning the word "Survivor" in a number of languages still appears on his website. Even now, he raises funds to provide more donations for cancer research with one specific goal in mind: "I would like for chemotherapy to go by more quickly for kids. Chemo causes you to lose your hair, throw up and lose weight, which is no fun at all. I would love for them to come up with something less destructive."

For anyone who is fighting cancer, he leaves these words: "Keep on going; always hope and always believe. Trust in God, and never give up." ■

Raquel Mentor is a Social Media manager, assisting various conferences in creating a community online presence.

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