

SERVING SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS IN THE LAKE UNION SINCE 1908

HERALD

MARCH 2021



SISTERHOOD OF SERVICE
OUR WOMEN IN ASI LEADERSHIP



My, how 40 years fly by when you're doing something that God has called you to do! It was the alumni weekend at Spring Valley Academy, and I had requested Walter Wright to be the keynote speaker. Walter and Jackie had another appointment later that evening and they were getting ready to make the drive back to Columbus when Walter stood up and said, "Gary, there's just one thing I need to say before we go." He sat back down on the couch at my parent's home. "Gary," he said. "When are you going to accept God's call to ministry? My patience has just about run out!" He presented his case and then we all gathered in a circle of prayer.

Well, it wasn't long before I got a call from Skip Bell to serve in the churches of Defiance, Bryan and Hicksville, Ohio. Later I served as Youth director at Pioneer Memorial, then Youth director for the Dakota Conference before joining the Lake Union Conference as Communication director, Prayer coordinator and Native Ministry director.

This is my last issue as editor of the Herald. So, may I say, "If you are sensing God's call to serve as you read this issue, say 'Yes!' It's the best thing you'll ever do!" ■


 Gary Burns
 Editor



ONLINE NEWS

Ken Bacon was named president and CEO for AdventHealth's Multi-State Division, effective March 1. In his new role, Bacon will oversee the strategic direction, development and expansion of the entire division, which spans five regions comprised of 20 campuses across eight states, including the four Adventist hospitals in the Chicagoland area.



When news of baseball legend Hank Aaron's death was announced, well-known Michigan-based artist Nathan Greene took to social media to reminisce about the time early in his career when he was assigned to illustrate Aaron for a Readers Life Series textbook.



Claudia Allen was awarded the inaugural Drum Major for Justice Award from Washington Adventist University for her commitment to engaging social justice work through writing, speaking and organizing for structural change, particularly within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Allen, a graduate of Andrews University, grew up attending Niles Philadelphia Church.



Fifty decisions for baptism were made following an online virtual evangelistic series with Alejandro Bullón which ran December 5-12. The Lake Union Conference sponsored and partnered with Hispanic coordinators from the five conferences. Bullón presented the series titled "Mas Allá del Dolor" (Beyond the Pain) from his home in Brazil.



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Sisterhood of Service

Becky St. Clair

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: DAVE SHERWIN

ON THE COVER: Women ministry leaders from the Lake Union are promoting mission across the globe as well as locally.

The *Lake Union Herald* (ISSN 0194-908X) is published monthly (except for January/February, June/July and November/December) by the Lake Union Conference, P.O. Box 287, Berrien Springs, MI 49103-0287. Periodicals postage paid at Berrien Springs, Michigan, and additional mailing offices. Yearly subscription price is \$12.50. Vol. 113, No. 2. POSTMASTER: Send all address changes to: *Lake Union Herald*, P.O. Box 287, Berrien Springs, MI 49103-0287.

ADDRESS CORRECTION Only paid subscribers (see below) should contact the *Lake Union Herald* office with their address changes. Members should contact their local church clerks directly for all *Lake Union Herald* address changes. Contact phone numbers and our mailing address are listed below for your convenience. Online submissions can be made at <https://www.lakeunionherald.com/contact>.

Lake Union Herald office: 269-473-8242
Lake Region: 773-846-2661
Illinois: 630-856-2860

Michigan: 517-316-1552
Indiana: 317-844-6201 ext. 241
Wisconsin: 920-484-6555

Members outside the Lake Union may subscribe by sending a check for \$12.50 (per year) to P.O. Box 287, Berrien Springs, MI 49103-0287.

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Some Truths about the Truth

It is reported that electronic/digital media takes up as much as four hours of our day and television slurps another four hours from our diurnal existence.



▲ Maurice Valentine

Truly, our minds are absorbed with the times because of fear and, I fear, we — me included — have become like those in Athens who, according to Paul, always loved to hear some new thing. Notice that the quality of the “new thing” didn’t matter to the Athenians, so long as it was new.

Why are we so attracted to bad news? Especially when that which has been entrusted to us is good news. Is it possible that we are becoming addicts of bad news because every day there’s something new in the bad news? Would we pay attention to the weather forecast if every day was a carbon copy of the day before? Intoxicated with any and all news good, bad or indifferent, we often saturate and sabotage our own mental and spiritual well-being with that which is often unsavory and un-Christlike. I am not bemoaning media itself. It is a way to propagate the Good News that helps us reach people we would or could not otherwise reach.

The Israelite sanctuary was God’s media. At the inauguration of the sanctuary service, everything was sprinkled with blood because saving mankind is bloody business. But the closer you got to the sanctuary, that which was dark was enlightened. The brazen altar, although drenched in blood, tells us God has provided a substitute for the penalty of our sins. The laver taught that God wants to wash and renew us. The altar of incense reminds us that God does indeed hear our prayers. The table of shewbread reminds us that our bread and water will be sure but, moreover, there is a Bread more important than that which we place in our mouths. The candlesticks also were a harbinger of good news. They were to always be lit since Jesus represents eternal Light, the only light that really matters. The

bright glow beyond the veil were the bright beams of our Father’s mercy indicating His desire to one day be reunited with us.

When we look through the lens of the Bible in the context of a God who died to save us, our worldview is stabilized and our fears are released. Jesus created light, but more importantly He *is* Light. For that reason, we do not grope in darkness regarding what is real, what is truth, and what is yet to come upon a world drenched in darkness. Looking for absolute truth? The Bible itself, with Jesus providing the context for every verse, is the greatest media instrument we could ever grasp. When I don’t read it, my days are confusing, even debilitating, because a constant focus on the here and now blurs my view.

The Word of God teaches there is a time and season for all things and each thing should be done with moderation. If we engorge ourselves on things such as the news, commercials, sports, reality programming and social media, they can serve as distractions from what’s truly important. Each day they push our mental and spiritual being to the point of causing us to lose track of what is really real.

Admittedly, we love these things because they soothe our tired souls and/or anesthetize our internal pain. While soothing our itching ears, the greatest detriment is that they distract us from what’s truly important. Instead, we enter someone else’s reality, to ultimately escape our own.

I remember a lady whose marriage was in trouble, yet all she focused on were the marriages of everyone else. She was wearing emotional virtual reality glasses before they were ever invented. God is attempting to move us from virtual reality to virtuous reality. To look

to those things that are true, honest, just and of good report. . . From stories with no morals to stories rooted in morality and integrity.

Through the years, I have loved giving Bible studies. What we believe, while quite new, revolutionary and transformational for most, is quite honestly, old as old gets. We teach that the Godhead has always existed. God can't be illustrated by a timeline because He has no beginning or end. No one can tell where He came from or where He is going. Yet and still, He's not like a circle because He doesn't repeat like a cycle. That's why God describes Himself as the "I am." As far as His existence and reality are concerned, past and future tense have no application. It is one of many absolute truths in my life that originate in Scripture. Therefore, God the Father is my Anchor, Jesus my Cornerstone and the Holy Spirit, my Guide. From the Godhead all truth emanates and, according to James 1:17, in Him there is not even a shadow, shade or gradation of truth. He's not just the embodiment of or the personification of truth. He *is* Truth! Apart from Him, all else is tinged or tainted by sinful lips.

Truth is important to Jesus, or else He would not have equated Himself with truth. Jesus said, *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me* (John 14:7). There are not multiple roads that arrive at the Heavenly Sanctuary. If the road we are on doesn't lead toward Jesus, it's a dead-end road, and regardless of what we choose to believe, His truth still marches on.

Please remember that this Good News is the reason for our existence. And the Good News is that Jesus is Truth! Moreover, truth can't be separated from Jesus. The truth that He made us and not we ourselves is not just truth — it's Jesus' truth. The truth about being baptized, becoming His disciples, and giving ourselves wholly in service is Jesus' truth. The truth that He's God's only begotten Son who was born to save us. The truth that He wants to strengthen His bond with us every seventh-day Sabbath. The truth that He died and rested in the grave over the Sabbath to keep His own command, His truth. The truth about what happens after death. The truth that He wants us to turn away from the idols of this world. The truth that He lived to make intercession for us, His truths. And, as for the

Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14 heralding His soon return, yes, this and all of the aforementioned are His truths.

In these difficult days, let us spend most of our time looking in, rather than around. Let us look close, rather than far afield. Let us look up with the full assurance that our Redemption drawth nigh. Let us refocus so we can bring hope to those who feel hopeless. ■

Maurice Valentine is president of the Lake Union Conference.

**MISSION
UNSTOPPABLE**

Our theme for this year is “Mission Unstoppable!” Would you pledge to continue to share the Good News of Jesus? New ways are ever opening before us as pastors, teachers and lay leaders, even administrators. We are all finding new ways to share the Truth.

Benefit of the Doubt

“He is such a jerk!” “She never appreciates anything I do for this family!” I’m sure you have said similar phrases in your head after an argument with your spouse. Conflict is inevitable in marriages while we live in a sinful world.



▲ Alina M. Baltazar

As a way to defend ourselves from perceived attacks by our spouse, we convince ourselves our spouse is the problem. As a couple and family therapist, I see so many clients who want to convince me their spouse is the one with the problem. When you have these kinds of thoughts towards your spouse, ask yourself, how does your behavior change towards your spouse? Do you start noticing more and more evidence to support your original negative thought? Is it then harder to feel affection for your spouse as a result?

It is believed that our negative thoughts impact our emotions, behavior as well as how we relate to others. If you want to improve your behavior towards your spouse and have more affection in your marriage, it starts with your thoughts. You first need to be aware of when this happens. Our negative thoughts can be so automatic we don’t even notice them. One way to catch them is, whenever there is conflict with your spouse or you noticed a negative mood shift towards your spouse, pay attention to what is going on in your head. You may feel fully justified in that negative thought, but I encourage you to ask yourself some questions before you fully believe what you are thinking.

What is the evidence?

Sure, what he said to you was mean, but how often does he say those mean words to you? In all of his interactions with you, how often does he say hurtful words? How do you know she never appreciates what you do for the family?

Is there evidence to the contrary?

Is he ever kind to you? How often does he say or do kind things for you? Are there times she tells you or shows you how much she appreciates what you do for the family?

Is there an alternative explanation?

Did he have a bad day at work? Is she overwhelmed with taking care of the children?

What would you say to a friend who had the same experience with his/her spouse?

Sometimes it is easier to have a healthier perspective if we think about other people’s problems.

In your wedding vows, you committed to love and cherish your spouse until death you do part. A lifetime is a long time to be harboring negative thoughts and emotions towards the person with whom you live. It is unhealthy for your physical health and for the health of your marriage. People often think of divorce when marriages deteriorate (and may be necessary when there is abuse in the marriage), but we all know the stress and financial losses that occur with divorce. Instead, work on giving your spouse the benefit of the doubt and don’t let Satan get a hold of your mind where he loves to destroy families. Pray for guidance from the Holy Spirit on how best to respond to your spouse during and after conflict.

Remember, we are reminded in the Bible that *Love believes all things* (1 Corinthians 13:7). Let’s believe the best of our spouses. ■

Alina Baltazar, PhD, MSW, LMSW, ACSW, CFLE, CCTP-I, CFTP; MSW Program director and associate professor, School of Social Work, Andrews University; and co-associate director, Institute for the Prevention of Addiction, Andrews University

Tips for Preventing Cancer

“It is estimated that 50 percent of cancers can be prevented” (Wolin KY, 2010). “Annually 18 million new cancer cases and over 9 million cancer deaths worldwide” (Bray F, 2018).

“Cancer is the number one cause of death in the United States for those under the age of 80 with 600,000 people dying from cancer each year.” (Siegel RL, 2020).

“Multiple cancer risk factors have been identified. Smoking, alcohol use, diet low in fruits and vegetables, excess weight, inactivity, unsafe sex, urban air pollution, use of solid fuels, and contaminated injections in healthcare settings accounted for 35 percent of cancer deaths worldwide” (Danaei G, 2005). “Lifestyle factors have been linked to a variety of malignancies, including the most common in the developed world: lung, colorectal, prostate, and breast cancer” (Ezzati M, 2002). Only 5 to 10 percent of cancers are hereditary. It has been shown that a diet high in animal fat is associated with an increased risk of cancer in particular colon and prostate.

“The Nurses Health Study and Health Professionals Follow-Up Study populations (n = 111,562) found substantial longevity benefits in those adopting an overall healthy lifestyle” with women having an additional 8.3 years longer life expectancy without cancer and men experience an additional six years without cancer compared to those with poor lifestyle practices (Li Y, 2020).

The Adventist Health Study 1 and 2 evaluated over 113,000 Seventh-day Adventists combined. These showed that Adventists lived healthier and longer lives, 10 to 12 years longer than their peers, and had lower rates of cancer and cardiovascular disease on account of their lifestyle. A Seventh-day Adventist lifestyle consists of eating a plant-based diet, regular exercise, abstain from alcohol, caffeine and illicit drugs, abstain from tobacco use, maintain a healthy weight and trust

in God. The Adventist Health Message, given over 100 years ago through Divine inspiration by Ellen G. White, contributes to the beliefs and practices of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Adventist Health Message is part of the Three Angels’ message to *Fear God and give glory to Him* (Rev 14:7). *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God* (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Cancer prevention includes screening to detect cancer in an early stage where it can be treated with a curative intent and reduce the cancer death rate. Screening guidelines are available for sporadic cancers and hereditary cancers. Screening tests are available for colorectal, breast, prostate, cervical and lung cancers. There is no standard screening available for ovarian cancer. ■



▲ Arlene A. Gayle

Arlene A. Gayle, MD, member of the Marshfield (Wisconsin) Church, has specialized in medical oncology and hematology for almost a decade. Her interest is in women's health and stem cell transplant. She is currently the medical director for the stem cell transplant program at the Marshfield Clinic Health System.



Meet W.W. Prescott

Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten; so be zealous and repent. Rev. 3:19, RSV.



▲ George R. Knight

One of the most forceful leaders of late-nineteenth-century Adventism was William Warren Prescott. But forceful individuals are not always spiritual leaders. So it was with the early Prescott, who had become president of Battle Creek College in 1885.

The turning point in his life came in late 1890, when he read a special testimony entitled “Be Zealous and Repent” before the Battle Creek Tabernacle. “The Lord,” it said, “has seen our backsliding. . . . Because the Lord has, in former days, blessed and honored” the Adventist Church, “they flatter themselves that they are chosen and true, and do not need warning and instruction and reproof.”

But, “the True Witness says, ‘As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent’” or else “I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place.’ . . . The displeasure of

► W. W. Prescott



the Lord is against His people. In their present condition it is impossible for them to represent the character of Christ. And when the True Witness has sent them counsel, reproof and warnings because He loves them, they have refused to receive the message. . . . What does it mean that such amazing grace does not soften our hard hearts? . . .

“There is to be in the churches a wonderful manifestation of the power of God, but it will not move upon those who have not humbled themselves before the Lord, and opened the door of the heart by confession and repentance. . . . Taken, long experience, will not make men channels of light, unless they place themselves under the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. . . .

“Light is to shine forth from God’s people in clear, distinct rays, bringing Jesus before the churches and before the world. . . . One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other — Christ our righteousness. . . . All who venture to have their own way, who do not join the angels who are sent from heaven with a message to fill the whole earth with its glory will be passed by. The work will go forward to victory without them, and whether will have no part in its triumph” (RH Extra, Dec. 23, 1890).

While reading, Prescott felt so moved that several times he stopped because of tearful emotion. His life would never be the same. He had been an Adventist, but that day he had met Christ as his Savior. Thereafter he linked arms with Ellen White, Jones and Waggoner in preaching Christ and His love. Prescott had taken seriously the counsel to repent and be zealous. ■

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 301. Reprinted with permission.

El método de Cristo aplicado en el ministerio de FARM STEW

“Sólo el método de Cristo será el que dará éxito para llegar a la gente. El Salvador trataba con los hombres como quien deseaba hacerles bien. Les mostraba simpatía, atendía sus necesidades y se ganaba su confianza. Entonces, les pedía: ‘Sígueme’” (MC 102).

Una de las maneras de poner en práctica la declaración precedente de Elena G. de White, es el ministerio de FARM STEW con los menos privilegiados. El currículo del curso básico es una herramienta que contiene los elementos indispensables para una vida sencilla, saludable, productiva y equilibrada.

Para difundir las enseñanzas básicas del currículo, FARM STEW trabaja con voluntarios que han experimentado en sus propias vidas un cambio radicalmente positivo, y por esa razón quedan tan animados y emocionados que comparten su nuevo conocimiento con otros. La transmisión inicial es por lo que la gente se cuenta entre sí, por las evidencias que se ven en quienes ponen en práctica los principios y por el contagioso gozo que irradian los beneficiarios.

Los capacitadores voluntarios viven dentro de las comunidades más vulnerables, con las mismas limitaciones, privaciones y necesidades de sus vecinos y amigos. Los capacitadores forman grupos de interesados para instruirlos con palabras sencillas, pero bien dichas e ilustradas sobre las cosas que han aprendido y que los han llevado a una transformación de sus vidas, sus familias y su entorno.

Los temas que se tratan son pertinentes a la realidad de las comunidades pobres. Se les enseña a cuidar el cuerpo no sólo alimentándolo bien, sino también practicando la higiene adecuada en el lugar adecuado, el trabajo, el ejercicio físico, el descanso diario y semanal, las relaciones interpersonales saludables y la creación de una fuente de ingreso para el sostén propio.

Si no se dispone de los recursos para adquirir productos frescos, nutritivos y en cantidades adecuadas, se les enseña cómo hacer su propia huerta, se les comparte las semillas para que comiencen a cultivar, e incluso se les enseña cómo cocinarlos, conociendo el valor nutritivo de ellos.

Un tópico desatendido que FARM STEW ha tenido la audacia de poner sobre el tapete, es el tema de la higiene, cuidado y protección menstrual entre niñas escolares el cual, por ignorarlo, lleva a miles de niñas al abandono y deserción escolar. Ese tema que ya sea por considerarse tabú, o simplemente por no tener herramientas para abordarlo con sencillez y practicidad está dando dignidad a niñas y mujeres y, sobre todo, está dándoles un nuevo sentido y rumbo a sus vidas con posibilidades de acabar con el ciclo de pobreza extrema.

Aplicando el método de Cristo, FARM STEW está logrando atender las necesidades básicas a la vez que se van fortaleciendo las relaciones interpersonales dentro de parámetros de respeto y amor. Podemos constatar que las personas están dispuestas a abrir sus mentes, a abandonar prejuicios, a arriesgarse a hacer cambios, a aceptar y adoptar nuevos valores y principios porque han comenzado a gustar y disfrutar el verdadero significado de vivir “una vida abundante” (Juan 10:10).

Te animo a visitar nuestro sitio web en español www.farmstew.org o llamando al 815-200-9362. También puedes hacer el curso gratuito en español entrando a <https://farmstew.teachable.com/>. ■

Elizabeth Kreidler de Santa Cruz, consultora principal de desarrollo de programas de FARM STEW



▲ Betty Mwesigwa, Entrenadora FARM STEW Uganda y Joy Kauffman, Fundadora y Directora Ejecutiva de FARM STEW Internacional con familias aprendiendo la receta para una vida abundante.

As unrests reveal gaps in safety net, a church district steps in to help

By Debbie Michel

IT WASN'T LONG AFTER KENOSHA WAS THRUST INTO THE INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT after a police officer shot Jacob Blake in the back, triggering protests which sometimes turned violent and destructive, that local church leaders began looking for ways to help.

▼ Present for the donation to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America Outreach Center were, from left, Wisconsin Southeastern Network (WISSEN) Churches pastor Zack Payne, ELCA assistant director Danielle Nixon, executive director of ELCA Outreach Center Karl Erickson, Kenosha lay pastor George Andrews III.

On a Sabbath last August, members of the Kenosha, Racine and Raymond churches gathered in downtown Kenosha to pray for the wounded community and, later, spread out into Kenosha to volunteer in support of local clean-up efforts. That event attracted local media. Zack Payne, head network pastor for Wisconsin Southeastern Network (WISSEN) Seventh-Day Adventist churches, was quoted, saying, “We wanted to come together and show some unity in Christ so we can unify with our community and help. It’s a display of unity that we’re all able to come together and accomplish something — we’re here and we care.”

The community was already hurting long before the protests. Kenosha, located halfway between Chicago and Milwaukee with a population of 160,000, has seen its economy, not unlike several Midwestern cities, struggle over the years. According to U.S. Census data, unemployment stands at 10 percent. One in every 5.3 resident lives in poverty.

Payne says his leadership team wanted to do a follow-up to the successful community outreach but,

▼ Present for the donation to the Shalom Center were, from left, Kenosha lay pastor George Andrews III, Shalom Center director of Programs and Operations Lisa Sanders, Shalom Center director of Development & Community Engagement Dustin Beth, Wisconsin Southeastern Network (WISSEN) pastor Zack Payne.



Photos by Allison Payne

with the coronavirus raging across Wisconsin, they found themselves with limited options as to what they could do. As they scanned the area, they saw that there were organizations already making meaningful change. The WISEN leadership decided to join forces with three of those groups.

Armed with a \$6,000 donation from the Lake Union and Wisconsin conferences, Payne and lay pastor George Andrews III showed up at the doorsteps of the organizations a few days before Christmas with checks for \$1,500 each. “They seemed to be doing a lot of good, so we were able to give to them with confidence,” says Payne. (The remaining funds were used to pay some expenses incurred for the August event.)

The Kenosha YMCA/Frank Neighborhood Project is putting the funds toward an afterschool tutoring program at the Frank Elementary School. They’re currently assisting 72 students in improving their math and reading scores. “This [donation] is a tremendous blessing,” notes Rachel Mall, the Y’s Youth and Family director. “Everybody is struggling financially so this money will help us continue the program.”

Karl Erickson, executive director of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America Outreach Center (ELCA), says he wasn’t expecting the windfall, but he, too, is grateful. ELCA is a faith-based nonprofit, focusing on

sharing God’s love and its mission is to help residents become self-sufficient. However, with services curtailed because of the pandemic, they’re focusing on the immediate need of providing warm clothing. Erickson says they have already used the money to buy hats and gloves. “We needed this!” he says.

The Shalom Center of the Interfaith Network is the largest food distributor and homeless shelter in Kenosha, providing 72,000 meals last year through their soup kitchen network and 21,000 shelter nights to single households and families. The Center’s executive director, Tamarra Coleman, says they were especially humbled to receive the unsolicited and unrestricted funds from another local organization. “Last year was a rough year and so many fundraisers were cancelled,” she explains. “For them to think of the Shalom Center is huge. We have a great community.”

Payne, who has pastored in the area for almost four years, says “We are just grateful to be a light to our community.” ■

“WE WANTED TO COME TOGETHER AND SHOW SOME UNITY IN CHRIST SO WE CAN UNIFY WITH OUR COMMUNITY AND HELP.”

Debbie Michel, Lake Union Conference associate director of Communication

▼ Present for the donation to Frank Neighborhood Y were, from left, Cindy Altergott, executive director of Kenosha YMCA; George Andrews III, Kenosha lay pastor; Dr. Rachel Mall, Kenosha YMCA Youth & Family director; Zack Payne, Wisconsin Southeastern Network (WISEN) pastor.



God, why didn't you just say, 'No'?

By Cynthia Woods



▲ Cynthia (center) with her husband, Jeremy, and children, Tyler and Molly

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I USED TO LOVE MAKING CONCOCTIONS IN THE KITCHEN.

I would dump in any and all ingredients I was allowed to use. But there was one item in the pantry I wasn't allowed to use. I wanted to so badly, but my mom said I wasn't to use it. Oh, how I wanted that particular thing, not to use in the mix, but to eat! It smelled like chocolate; it looked like chocolate; it even said "chocolate" right on the package! Who in the world wouldn't want to dive right in?

As a blind woman, I rely heavily on my other senses to identify or become familiar with something. I have had this eye disease known as Stargardt with Cone/

Rod Dystrophy since I was born but it didn't manifest itself until I was nine years old. My sight continued to diminish over the years, and I am now left with only 10 percent sight. When I took hold of that massive candy bar, I still had sight enough to read that it said "chocolate" right on the wrapper.

Fast forward a moment into my adulthood — it's been a journey of self-discovery, adaptation and exploration. I've gone from hiding my sight loss as a kid to trying to be an advocate for the disability community. Oh, and I'd like to rename the disability if I could be so bold . . . I'd like to be known as "other-abled." I feel this is a better representation of those who have to complete tasks in different ways.

My family and I had an opportunity to move from Michigan to Florida a little over a year ago, and we were overjoyed at the prospect of moving to a warmer climate. My husband has a very physically demanding job and this opportunity afforded him the chance to step into a supervisory position. It would be much easier on his body and also offered our children, who were all but grown, opportunities we felt they wouldn't have in Michigan.

I, however, had my own set of reasons for wanting this change. As someone with an other-ability, it has been difficult to obtain independence. When you have to depend on others for driving and such, independence can be elusive. People who love you want to be helpful and do more than is necessary to help. Not wanting to squash the efforts of my friends and loved ones, I simply allow the help to be given. I felt as though the answer was in front of us when the offer came for a job in Florida so we began the moving process. We had to move at separate times as my husband was needed right away at his new job. The kids and I were to come in a couple months.

I began the painful phone call to my pastor about stepping down from my leadership positions at church and reflected on my time in Women's Ministry, as Sabbath School teacher, Prayer Ministry director and Social committee director. I knew I would likely seek out these ministries again once we were settled in a new church, but it was sad nonetheless.

It had taken me some time to step out of my hidden-away self to lead in any kind of ministry but, once I felt the prompting from God, I knew He would be my ability. So, after delivering the news to my pastor, we began telling everyone our plans and my husband drove the hundreds of miles to begin our new life. I knew it would be an adjustment moving into a new community but also was fraught with anticipation about entering into said new community with no preconceived ideas about what I'm able to do. But some realities were beginning to rear their ugly heads.

Our family being apart was taking its toll on all of us and we were facing the very real probability that our 15-year dream of moving south was about to come to a screeching halt. I grieved this loss like a death. It was a death of so many things for me: A fresh start without having to prove my abilities to those who were too close to me. No more harsh winters. An easier way of life for my husband. More options for my kids. A slower pace. All shattered in a month. I had no desire to talk to anyone about this "death" in my life or any desire to enter back into ministry. Frankly, I was confused and questioning why God allowed this. Why didn't He just say "No" from the beginning? I had been asking Him for years to fulfill this dream for us. Why say "Yes," only to say "No"?

"Remember that giant candy bar you used to want so desperately?" God seemed to whisper to me while I was on my face sobbing about this situation. "You were certain it was going to be sweet and delicious," He prompted. I was taken back a few decades in my mind. I vividly recalled sitting on the kitchen floor in front of the pantry, holding that enormous chocolate bar.

I remember seeing one word printed on the package ahead of the word chocolate. I didn't know what it was supposed to mean but it still sounded good. It read "Baker's Chocolate" in big letters on the front. Nothing bad ever comes from a baker, right? I slowly unwrapped

the gold foil and kept an ear tuned for anyone coming. I wasn't supposed to eat this chocolate, remember? I broke off a square and slowly, delightfully, brought it to my mouth. Biting into the heavenly aromatic chocolate, I was met with the most bitter flavor I'd ever tasted! Spitting and sputtering, I opened the trash and not so gracefully deposited the disappointing stolen piece of bitterness.

God was conveying to me through this memorable moment in life that sometimes what we see as being wonderful and delightful can have bitterness we didn't know was there. God, like my mother, had repeatedly said no to something I kept asking for with the idea that it would be wonderful. I couldn't believe that something "I" wanted so desperately could have anything but positive results. Yet, when we had our "taste" of how life in Florida would have been, we found it bitter and unwanted. Just as I found out that the chocolate in the pantry was bitter and unwanted. But God had to let me. . . let us. . . taste it for myself to believe Him.

Psalm 34:8: *Oh taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him* (ESV).

Out of this life-changing experience has come a new desire in ministry. I have stepped back into the position of Prayer Ministry director, occasionally have speaking engagements and am open to how God will use me in ministry. He has laid a new burden on my heart. I am starting a ministry called "God Sees You" in which I want to educate folks on how to appropriately and compassionately interact with those of us in the other-abled community.

We have many activities going on in our churches around the country and I feel it is necessary to be aware of how we can engage with other-abled people in a way that is proper and helpful. This includes asking the right questions and not assuming what a person needs, and approaching someone with kindness and gentleness so as to be Christ-like in our interactions.

Just remember . . . if God seems to be repeatedly saying "No," there just might be a baker's chocolate reason why. ■

Cynthia Woods is a member of the South Flint Church. She is blind and if anyone is interested in her conducting disability sensitivity training, she can be reached at: Aroundthetable365@gmail.com.

*OH TASTE AND SEE
THAT THE LORD IS
GOOD, BLESSED IS
THE MAN WHO TAKES
REFUGE IN HIM
PSALM 34:8: (ESV).*

Sisterhood of Service

Lake Union women
leading out in ASI

Amy Ratsara is up at 6 a.m., doing her daily personal devotions before getting herself ready for the day. When her three-year-old and nine-month-old children wake up, they all sit down to breakfast, followed by worship, before Ratsara passes the baton to the nanny and heads upstairs to her makeshift home office to begin her work day.

➤ By Becky St. Clair ➤



Dave Sherwin

► *Amy Ratsara*

As assistant prosecutor for Kalamazoo County in Michigan, this involves preparing for court hearings taking place that day via Zoom, touching base with her coworkers, and attending online meetings and court hearings. When the nanny heads home, Ratsara begins the evening work of dinner, laundry, errands and spending time with the boys while her husband, a pastor, finishes up his workday. The next morning at 6 a.m., it all begins again.

Jill Morikone starts her day at 5 a.m. with prayer and Bible study. She's at work by 7:30 and faces an unpredictable onslaught of tasks, which, as VP and chief operating officer for 3ABN, may include the following: executive committee meetings, brainstorming sessions for new programming, helping the pastoral team respond to tough questions from viewers, dealing with HR

issues, recording a sermon, approving projects, signing contracts, magazine planning, and checking in with 3ABN Australia and 3ABN Russia. If there is no live programming that day, she's home by 7:30 p.m., and she and her husband eat dinner together with a strict no-technology rule. After clean-up, it's an evening of catching up on emails missed throughout the day, and her head hits the pillow anytime between 10 p.m. and midnight. She's up and running again at 5 a.m. the next day.

Although very different and living in different states, these women's lives are tied together with a thread that connects them also to other women leaders around the world — a thread called ASI: Adventist-layman's Services and Industries. ASI's motto, "Sharing Christ in the Marketplace," drives the organization to promote a Christ-centered lifestyle in which "members seek to experience God's love in their own lives and share that love with the people they encounter in their everyday work and activities." And while membership is diverse, including men, women, businesses and ministries, one demographic stands out: the women leaders.

ASI is a sisterhood of service, with women from all walks of life falling in line behind Jesus to willingly and prayerfully follow in His footsteps. Their combined passion, energy and dedication can and do fuel thousands of efforts for Christ around the world, whether it be at home, in the courtroom, among refugees, in a hospital, from the podium, doing financial counseling, speaking on TV, providing health education, or a myriad of other situations. And it all comes together through ASI, redefining ministry and connecting everyone to the resources they need to fulfill Christ's mission no matter where or how they serve.

A DUAL CALLING

"There were times I considered being a teacher like both of my parents, but I kept coming back to law." Amy Ratsara took a year off after graduating from college, trying to determine what it was she was being called to do with her life. "God made it clear this was the direction He wanted me to go, so I applied to law school."

As her county's assistant prosecutor, Ratsara reviews complaints from police agencies and decides whether or not to issue warrants for the misdemeanors or felonies, then follows them through to court.



► Jill Morikone

Svetlana Christian

This isn't a typical or perhaps expected role for a pastor's wife, but Ratsara says that's part of what she loves about it.

"As a kid, I saw women building their careers in various fields, and I saw others making their homes and families their careers, and none of it seemed weird or wrong," she says. But as she got older, she began to sense that within the church there seemed to be a message to young women that God could call you to be a professional without a family, or he'd call you to marriage and family life, and you'd be "the queen of your household." It was an "either/or" message — one with which Ratsara did not identify.

"In my own life, I sensed a dual calling," she states. "Feeling conflicted doesn't have to mean one or the other has to go; for some, it may, but that doesn't make it true for everyone."

Ratsara makes it clear that her family comes first, but she also gives her all in her professional life. And she considers both her ministry. While shining a light for Christ can be as overt as exclaiming "Praise the Lord!" when things go well, Ratsara also points out that there is something even more important and effective to the cause.

"One of the biggest things we can do to put a good reflection on Him is to be excellent at what we do," she says. "One of my favorite quotes is from the Spirit of Prophecy, where it says that the strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian. The way I've behaved sets me apart and gives others an opportunity to ask why I'm different. When you combine excellence in both work and character, it opens doors for conversations which ultimately lead to what looks more like traditional ministry."

That is the heart of ASI — which is part of why Ratsara is a member and sits on the board of ASI Missions, Inc. Not only does her philosophy line up with ASI's, but being a member of the organization gives her the tools she needs to keep her generation engaged with the church.

"Anyone who is a child of God can be a minister in their field," she emphasizes, "no matter where or how He's called them to do so."

Kathy Morrissy, a certified financial planner in Lisle, Illinois, spends her days advising people on how to

►Kathy Morrissy



handle their personal finances. She, too, views her daily work as an opportunity for ministry.

"Sometimes I fall into the trap of thinking that because I'm not out there doing 'missionary things,' I'm not doing anything," Morrissy shares. "But the truth is, when I'm at work I'm not just offering advice, I'm chatting with people, asking about grandkids, and helping them make solid plans for their future, and those plans often involve the church. I may not be out there building a church, but I can be part of the machine that drives those projects."

The firm where Morrissy works is a member of ASI and has been for most of her life. She knows this because the business was started by her father, and she grew up attending ASI conventions. Now, as she prepares to take

over her father's role after he retires, Morrissy sees the benefit of being part of ASI more than ever — both as a businessperson who wants to support ministry, and as a professional who wants to share Christ in the workplace in her own way.

At 26, Morrissy falls into a unique category of young female certified financial planners; only 23.3 percent of CFP professionals are female, and only 5.5 percent are under 30.

"I'm in a unique position to reach a certain group of people," she says. "I hope to help young women with financial literacy, which leads to financial independence."

Morrissy also is vice president of Communication for ASI Lake Union, using her skills to keep ministries and businesses across the Lake Union connected.

"Every time I go to an ASI convention, I'm refreshed," she says. "There are people out there doing great things

and it's inspiring. They're not just talking about Jesus, but they're showing people what Christianity is about. That's what I hope to do in my career, too."

DIVINE APPOINTMENT

Much like Morrissy, who grew up around financial experts and attending ASI conventions, Julia O'Carey's ministry began in childhood. In 1980, her parents accepted a two-month assignment in Thailand which turned into a seven-year ministry in refugee camps.

"I've had this in my heart and blood ever since I was little," O'Carey says. When her mom founded ASAP (Advocates for Southeast Asians and the Persecuted) Ministries in Berrien Springs, Michigan, O'Carey says she loved watching God work through her, and that her own faith in the Lord has grown in leaps and bounds since officially joining her mom in the ministry.

That was 15 years ago. Today O'Carey is the executive director of ASAP Ministries, a role she's filled for six years now. One of the greatest lessons her mother, Judy, taught her was to commit everything to prayer. This was her key to success as a leader in missions and Julia continues to keep prayer a main component of the culture of ASAP, its lifeblood. If you visit their office, you will likely see prayer happening spontaneously somewhere, and formally in staff and board meetings. They even close the office at noon for prayer.

"Prayer truly is the breath of our souls here at ASAP," Julia shares. "God faithfully hears and answers our prayers because reaching the poor, the persecuted, the unreached and refugees is high on His priority list too."

ASAP is rapidly growing, now supporting 86 schools around the world for at-risk children who would never otherwise have a chance for education, let alone Christian education. Multiple church plants now exist and thrive across nations where most are Buddhist or Muslim. They experience miraculous answers to prayer on a daily basis, thanks to the work O'Carey's mother began, and she herself continues, where the emphasis is on training local people to share the gospel holistically across the 10/40 window.

As vice president for Evangelism for ASI Lake Union, O'Carey sees her role as one of inspiration and encouragement, helping members find the tools and



► Julia O'Carey

Dave Sherwin



►Debbie Young

Dave Sherwin

opportunities to share the gospel with anyone with whom they come into contact.

“I know a little something about Divine appointments,” she says with a laugh, “so I’m sending a book called *Divine Appointments*, by Dr. Tom Evans, to each ASI member to help them stay ministry-focused even during COVID. Whenever we find tools to help, we share them. I know from personal experience the joy of praying for Divine appointments and then seeing the Holy Spirit work on people’s hearts. Nothing is better than being in the center of God’s will, moment by moment.”

One of those receiving that book is Debbie Young, an oncological nurse navigator in Ypsilanti, Michigan,

who spends her days walking patients through one of the darkest valleys of their lives, setting up medical tests and meetings with specialists, and providing logistical support for families.

“I’m a nurse because God deemed it so,” she says confidently. “Considering all of the opportunities I’ve had here to share and talk about Jesus, my being here is very clearly a Divine appointment.”

In 2018, the tables were turned when Young received her own cancer diagnosis. Fortunately, it was treatable through surgery, but she says the experience allowed her to really understand her patients and what they go through which has increased her ability to minister to them.

“I have been given the gift of being able to approach each of them with a perspective of experience on a personal level,” she shares, “and my own journey through cancer has given me opportunities to pray with my patients, opening doors that may not otherwise have been there.”

When she’s not at the hospital, Young opens doors for others to share Christ by running a Christian radio station out of her home, providing inspirational music 24/7. When she and her husband started Quiet Moment Radio in 1989, the idea was to share what the Adventist Church was doing around the world, including interviews with ministry leaders and inspirational stories from those in the mission field.

One year, they attended an ASI convention where they discovered that many of the ministry leaders Young had been interviewing on-air about their initiatives and community involvement were ASI members. They joined, too, and since then Young has served as president of ASI National chapter, the first woman and the first African-American to do so. She currently chairs a committee and serves on the board of the Lake Union chapter.

“The type of people who are connected through ASI really have a heart for reaching people and meeting their needs,” she says. “To be associated with and working with a group of people who have that purpose singularly in their minds is motivating and inspiring, is spiritually rejuvenating, and helps me stay focused on the right things, doing what God wants us to do.”

PLACED FOR HIS PURPOSE

Doing what God wants us to, however, sometimes means accepting a reality we never wanted. This is part of Jill Morikone's journey with God.

"I was making bread in our kitchen at home when the doctor called," she recalls. "After a series of tests and consultations, they had concluded that there was nothing they could do — my husband and I would never have children."

Those eight words were the end of a lifelong dream for Morikone, who had always loved kids and had dreamed of having her own family. She cried, wondering how the God who had caused the blind to see, the cripples to walk, and the dead to live again wouldn't do this one thing for her.

Finally, she felt God tap her on the shoulder and say, "Jill, My daughter, count your blessings." She brushed Him off, saying, "God, I need some pity right now." After some time spent grieving, Morikone says she made a decision.

"I chose to praise Him," she says simply, with tears in her voice. She began to offer up thanks for all she had — her husband, her church, her family, her friends, her health — and, as she recounted her blessings, she felt God remove a piece of the pain from her heart.

Now, 16 years later, Morikone is able to use her experience to help other women going through similar pain. As VP and chief operating officer for 3ABN in West Frankfort, Illinois, she receives countless messages daily from women around the world, asking her for advice, thanking her for being an inspiration, and wondering how they, too, can become a leader.

"I think God has given women unique gifts," she comments. "Some of those gifts are compassion, empathy, intuition and discernment. I believe this makes a difference within an organization. God places different people in different positions for His own purposes, and this is mine."

In fact, those same attributes are what led Joy Kauffman, ASI Lake Union president, to start her ministry in 2015.

"Really one of the biggest motivations for FARM STEW International is my own experience as a mother and imagining what would go on in my psyche if I couldn't feed my children and how devastating that would be," she explains. "Recognizing there are many mothers in that position, most through no fault of their own, spurred me to action."

And so, FARM STEW International was born.

FARM STEW, based in Princeton, Illinois, equips local people in Uganda, South Sudan, Zimbabwe and Cuba to teach their neighbors in rural communities to farm, improve sanitation, enjoy whole food plant-based nutrition, start small businesses, and access clean water and menstrual hygiene products. In just five years, they've already made a huge impact. An external evaluation in South Sudan, one of the top five poorest countries in the world, revealed that FARM STEW had taken the number of malnourished children from 59 percent to 3 percent in 18 months.



◀ Joy Kauffman

Dave Sherwin

Having worked for the federal government in the Department of Health and Human Services, local government health departments and nonprofits, Kauffman says there was always some part of herself she couldn't bring to the table. With training in nutrition and a master's degree in Public Health from Johns Hopkins University, Kauffman's dream was always to combine her ministry calling, training and passion into a powerhouse for health and wellbeing education around the world.

"It bothered me that there was no Adventist health message focused on the world's extreme poor," she says. "I felt that if Jesus brought the good news to the poor, then our health message which gives us another 7 to 10 years of longevity must be relevant to farmers in Africa and Southeast Asia where the majority of the world's poor live."

Kauffman continues: "ASI is part of the reason we can do what we do. ASI gives us the opportunity to collaborate with businesses who will take us on as missional partners, and the resources and inspiration to come up with our own business ideas which make us self-sustaining. This increases our capacity to scale our ministry big-time, and our ability to really be salt and light is so much greater than if we're all just sitting around with our hands out."

So, between checking emails from Africa at 5 a.m., studying her Sabbath School lesson (and maybe preparing to teach that coming Sabbath), praying with a friend on the phone, greeting her teenagers before school, database development, management meetings, cooking classes she teaches as Health Ministries director for her church, and spending time with her family, Kauffman also is fulfilling her duties as president for ASI Lake Union.

"If there's one thing I've learned over the years, it's that when God calls, He does equip," she says. "Even though I had a plethora of excuses why it shouldn't be me doing this work, He simply showed me He'd already equipped me to do exactly those things. I had no need to be fearful."

A VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

Trudi Starlin, ASI board member, is an architect by training, office manager of an electrical contracting company through marriage, and an advocate for refugees by Providence.

Many of her Sabbaths are now spent at churches across the country, building relationships between refugees and local Adventist churches. She also plans large conventions attended by hundreds of Karen, tailored to meet their needs for spiritual skills training and social interaction. And there's a very special reason for this.

In 2008, Starlin learned there was a group of Karen in a town three hours away who needed a translator. Originally from Burma (now Myanmar), Starlin speaks both Burmese and Karen (a tribal language), and she was able to connect with one of the refugees. She learned there were about 25 of them, including children, desperate for a place to worship.

"They, like many others, were legally sponsored by the United Nations to enter the U.S., escaping the violence in their former country," she explains. "Because of the work



◀ Trudi Starlin

Dave Sherwin

of Eric and Agnes Hare a century ago in Burma, the first thing these refugees do when they arrive is look up an Adventist church. Unfortunately, there is a very strong language barrier.”

Starlin had to do something. Bridging the gap, she used her language skills to make arrangements for the refugees to use space at a local Adventist church to worship in their own language. Word got around and, before she knew what was happening, Starlin was helping Karen, Mizo and Zomi refugees all over the U.S. connect with Adventist churches to find spaces to worship in their native tongue.



◀ Patricia LaVanture

Dave Sherwin

Over the past decade, Starlin has helped organize six congregations of refugees from Myanmar across the nation and (pre-pandemic) spends many weekends traveling from her home base in Berrien Springs, Michigan, to visit these congregations and speak to them. This is not, however, her strong suit — or, at least, it wasn't.

“That just wasn't me,” she says. “But God has taught me to rely on Him, to hear His voice, and to be there for His people. There are plenty of times we've felt exhausted from traveling, speaking, organizing and trying to take care of our home and ASI member business, but somehow God always provides the energy.”

And she needs it! Starlin starts her day early with personal devotions then worship with her husband, then fills her day with tasks related to their electrical business, her work with refugees, errands, and tasks around the house. On the weekends, the Starlins have been known to host Bible study groups or welcome university students who need a break from their studies. And in between it all, she's translating and advocating for the 55 groups of Karen refugees around the country who need a voice within the Adventist church — within *their* church.

“It's important to me that these beautiful people know they aren't put aside or left alone, but that our church is embracing them,” Starlin says with feeling. “We want them to be and feel part of the church, so the mission, for us, is here.”

NOT BY CHANCE

Patricia LaVanture never felt embraced by her childhood church. She struggled to feel accepted because she had a lot of questions, and while she knew there was a God and that He should be revered, she didn't understand why He had to die. The Bible remained a complete mystery. The one thing she did understand was healthy living.

“Both in and out of school, I'd read anything I could find to learn more about the nutrition properties of various types of foods, healthy lifestyle tips, exercise — everything related to overall health and wellbeing,” LaVanture recalls.

By the time she was 25, a lot of bad things had happened in her life, and she was discouraged, lost and confused. One evening, she felt impressed to turn on her television to the Christian station.

“A woman’s face filled the screen,” LaVanture says. “She was saying, ‘It’s not by chance you’ve turned on this television program,’ and she began to talk about Jesus.” The woman on TV talked about why Jesus had to die, and how He longs to come into our lives and mend our brokenness. LaVanture was stunned.

“My eyes were opened and I saw my life from God’s perspective . . . my heart was so broken,” she says. “I found myself praying for forgiveness, and I heard God say He loved me, He forgave me, and that He was going to be with me. I felt so light and loved.”

As soon as she’d given her heart to Jesus, LaVanture prayed that He would help her find the church where she was supposed to be. Through a series of special circumstances, God led LaVanture to a small Adventist congregation meeting on the top floor of an apartment building, where the presenter happened to be speaking about how to prepare healthy desserts.

“I almost fell out of my chair,” LaVanture says, laughing. “Healthy living wasn’t trendy at the time, and here I was, surrounded by people I didn’t know, discovering a church whose gospel message included a health message. It was nothing short of Divine leading.”

Today, LaVanture is Lifestyle Program director at Oak Haven Health (home of Country Life Natural Foods) in Pullman, Michigan, and Programming director for ASI. Anything that happens onstage during an ASI convention is, from start to finish, managed by LaVanture. She says she’s “the backstage person praying and helping people shine for Jesus,” knowing that what happens on that stage goes around the world, and may help others, like she did, find their calling.

Her work with Oak Haven Health gives her the opportunity to exercise her passion for healthy living through health evangelism. She’s led groups in reversing diabetes, depression recovery and healthy lifestyles, as well as training others at churches across the country to conduct their own health evangelism.

“I read somewhere from Ellen White years ago the idea that many people are searching for answers in health, but they don’t know that what they’re really searching for is God,” LaVanture says. “That’s what’s exciting for me because the thing about health education is that you can help people where their needs are and you can draw them closer to God through the

whole educational experience. It’s an opportunity that’s non-threatening to draw closer to people and help them get closer to God. That’s my mission.”

NOT JUST A CHRISTIAN

Each of these women has been called by God to serve Him in a very specific way, and each of them continues her personal journey with Him to fulfill that calling. Despite the apparent ease with which these women have filled their roles, their work, like that of any leader and minister, is not always easy.

Combined, these women supervise nearly 900 people spread across nearly every continent, doing everything from education to broadcasting, from housekeeping to writing, from healthcare work to volunteering. Most of them are up before the sun and are still awake long after it disappears in order to hold meetings across global time zones, keep up with emails, and make time for family and self-care.

And then there’s the obvious fact that they are women in a male-dominated world.

“To be honest, I wrestled with the decision to accept the executive director position at ASAP Ministries,” O’Carey admits. “We work among many strongly patriarchal cultures in Southeast Asia, and I felt the work might move forward more rapidly if a man with pastoral and administrative experience assumed the position. So, when ASAP’s board of directors initially asked me, I turned it down.”

A year later, however, they asked again. This time, O’Carey fasted and prayed, seeking the Lord’s will. She felt led to study the leaders portrayed in 1 and 2 Chronicles, and quickly picked up on a pattern of success.

“It was not their age, experience, heritage, inheritance, or any personal attributes that gave them success,” she concludes. “It was simply those who purposed in their hearts to be fully committed to the Lord and allow Him to lead through them who prospered.”

This newfound insight gave O’Carey the confirmation she needed to accept the position, and she resolved to always seek and follow God’s direction in prayer as she leads.

“It is important for us to keep in mind the calling and mission that God has given each of us,” LaVanture urges.

Behind these successful and confident women marches another generation of capable and willing women, ready to take the torch when it is passed to them.

“I am not just a Christian; I am a Christian *woman*, and that is a very special calling. As women, we are called to reveal Christ not only through our Christianity, but also through our femininity.”

Often, feminine attributes are considered to be “soft” with a negative connotation, but the truth is, there is a softer side to God which we sometimes overlook.

“We, as women, have been made in the image of God,” says Young. “As such, we possess unique attributes which play an important role in reaching the hearts of those with whom we interact. In my work at the hospital, my ability to listen well and extend a compassionate ear, to encourage excellence, and to communicate directly but with understanding, and seeking Divine perspective makes a difference.”

Ratsara points out that traditional roles for women in the Adventist Church have been teacher, doctor, nurse and mom. Certainly, her career in law would not be considered traditional.

“No one would say outright that those are the only options available, but the message we receive is exactly that,” she says. “The fact is, though, that women are making up more and more of the workforce. If God needs missionaries everywhere, that includes places of work outside the home, and outside of the church. It’s not unreasonable to expect God to call us to have multifaceted experiences because we will have more in common with other people as we widen our circle of influence. God needs people to shine their light everywhere.”

Being able to relate to a person’s experience always amounts to a stronger connection, and there are things women experience to which only other women can relate. Morikone’s infertility journey has taught her surrender and how to find peace in Christ, which is something most women need and long to feel.

“I’ve had the privilege of praying with many of my sisters in Christ — women who’ve come up to me after I speak at a women’s retreat and poured out their unanswered questions, their unfulfilled hopes and dreams, their pain and hurt.” She shares that there have been women whose children are in prison, women whose children were murdered, women who have endured abuse of many different kinds.

“Life is messy sometimes,” she concludes. “It definitely can be painful, but, in the midst of it all, our Savior is ready to heal and make whole. That’s the message I want to share through sharing my experience.”

PAYING IT FORWARD

Behind these successful and confident women marches another generation of capable and willing women, ready to take the torch when it is passed to them. The sisterhood of service must include those who come after.

Young knows this to be true because she regularly acknowledges and thanks those who have gone before her, both in radio and healthcare.

“What I have appreciated the most about women in leadership who have gone before me is the time they invested the time and love to pour into me tricks of the



Daniel Mendez



trade, cautions, encouragement and affirming my potential,” she recalls. “They have been conduits of blessing to me and I just want to pay it forward. The greatest compliment I can receive is the success of another who has taken advantage of the wisdom I’ve sought to impart from what I’ve learned.”

Mentorship is hugely important. Some of these women have been interviewed by university students seeking insight into what it looks like to climb to the top as a woman, and how they can do it, too. Most manage other women in their roles and are in a position to empower, uplift and inspire. Others have the opportunity to offer internships to the next generation of professionals and get them engaged in ministry before they even become part of the workforce.

“Paul talks about the older women mentoring younger women,” Morikone says. “In my position at 3ABN, I have the opportunity and privilege to make opportunities happen for other people. That includes women. This excites me! Something that was difficult for me is something I now have the privilege to freely extend to someone else, and that is thrilling!”

Although not every woman has the opportunity to be a mentor, sometimes just showing up is enough.

“I think just being there, being active, and doing a good job provides an example and role model for

younger women coming up,” Ratsara comments. “By following my own calling, I can be a light in the darkness for other Adventist women and girls wondering how they can contribute their various skills to the Lord’s work.”

Women bring something special to the table. The responsibility of the sisterhood of ASI is to work toward every woman, everywhere, being able to reach her highest potential.

“Women, in the home or in the world, can do a work that often men cannot do, because womanhood brings gifts and talents into God’s work, and a way of seeing, a way of doing, that men do not possess,” LaVanture asserts. “Womanhood is a gift in the hand of our Maker to a dying world — a world dying for a revelation of what God is really like. Many of these attributes He can and does reveal through the beautiful, tender heart of a woman.”

Ellen White once wrote: “Woman does not know her power for God. . . . There is a higher purpose for woman, a grander destiny. She should develop and cultivate her powers, for God can employ them in the great work of saving souls from eternal ruin” (*Testimonies*, Vol. 4, 642, and *Evangelism*, 465).

The sisterhood is called to a great work, and they have answered faithfully. ■

Becky St. Clair is a freelance writer.



Proclaiming Christ in the Marketplace

ASI is a Seventh-day Adventist organization of supporting ministries, businesses and professionals who are responding to the call of God to actively share Christ's love and hope with the world.

We are part of a global church, but it can be easy to forget that when only involved at the local church level. ASI was founded in 1947 to address the need for greater coordination of the mission work of lay people and is a window to what the church and its supporting ministries are accomplishing.

The best way to experience ASI is by attending an annual convention, which is held in a different U.S. city every August. Each day features breakout sessions on a variety of topics, such as business, medicine and practical evangelism. Each night, speakers like Mark Finley, Ted Wilson and John Bradshaw present the Word of God. A full children's program is available for every age group.

Between meetings there is an exhibit hall, featuring booths from over 100 ministries and organizations. Mealtimes facilitate the meeting of fellow believers from all over the world. The conventions have been

described as inspiring and leave members refreshed, but that is just the beginning. It's up to each individual to take what they've learned back to their corner of the world — and put it into action.

ASI membership has been opened up greatly in the last couple of years, allowing retired business owners or professionals and young professionals to join. The full list of membership categories can be found on our website; it includes categories such as sole proprietors, executive professionals, non-profit and for-profit organizations. ASI Young Professionals is a resource for those looking to start a business or ministry, or network for their existing organization. It offers the opportunity to connect with like-minded individuals and leaders who are actively using their talents to serve Christ.

The Lake Union chapter of ASI hosts a fellowship each spring. This is a great way to get a taste of ASI

➤ By Kathleen Morrissy ➤

without having to go too far. Until we can safely meet in person again, tune into ASI Hour Thursdays at 8 p.m. EST. You can register for free and watch replays of previous sessions at asiministries.org/asihour. This weekly series offers on-going tools, training and testimony from presenters who are experts in health, evangelism, business and ministry. Non-members are just as welcome to take part in the programs ASI offers.

As outlined in 1 Corinthians Chapter 12, we are all part of one body. Each one of us serves a different purpose, and each role is necessary. Whether you are a dentist

who is looking for ways to minister in your practice, or a ministry looking for ideas to become self-supporting, ASI may be of interest to you. The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to make disciples and share the Three Angels' Messages with all people. Join us in committing to becoming actively involved in this mission. For more information, visit www.asiministries.org and www.asilakeunion.org. ■

Kathleen Morrissy, pictured below, is the Lake Union ASI chapter Communication director.

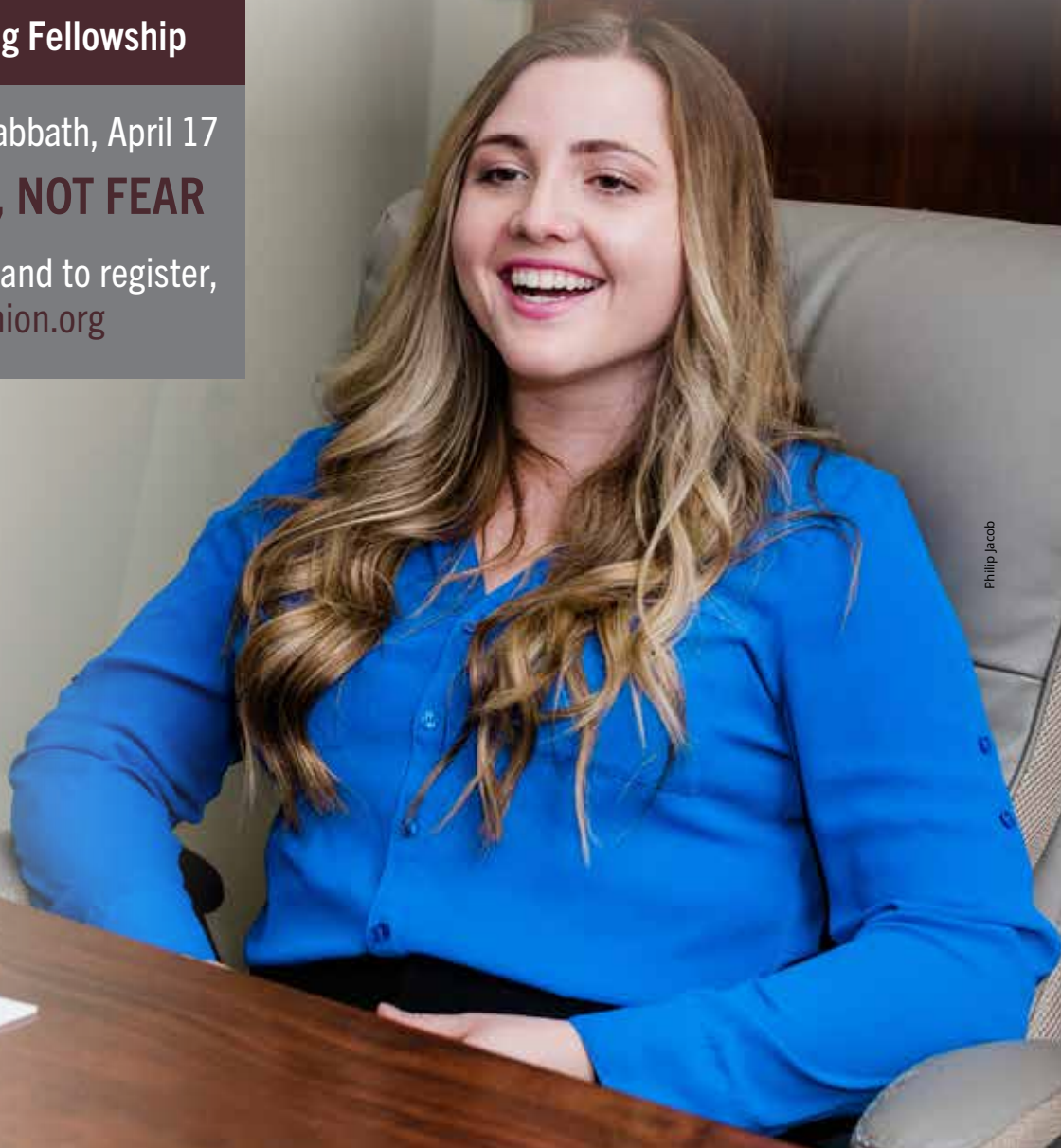
You are invited to the first virtual Lake Union ASI Spring Fellowship

Friday, April 16 and Sabbath, April 17

THEME IS FAITH, NOT FEAR

For more information and to register,
please visit: asilakeunion.org

IT'S FREE!



Philip Jacob

Hinsdale Medical Center earns prestigious award from AdventHealth



▲ Leaders from AMITA Health Hinsdale include (Left to Right): chief medical officer Bela Nand, M.D., Kristine Gleason, Lynda Lentini, Mary Sinkhorn, Andrea Miller, chief nursing officer Mary Murphy and Jillian Omahen

AdventHealth has named AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center Hinsdale as a recipient of the 2020 Triumph Award for Clinical Excellence.

The prestigious award recognizes AdventHealth facilities that achieve clinical excellence by receiving a four- or five-star rating from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, an “A” Safety Grade from The Leapfrog Group, and a top quartile mortality ranking from Premier, Inc., a leading healthcare improvement company. AMITA Hinsdale was one of 17 AdventHealth facilities across the nation to earn the award by meeting all of these standards.

“This tells the public that when you get admitted to AMITA Hinsdale, you will receive the highest quality care, and you will be safe,” said Bela Nand, M.D., chief medical officer, AMITA Hinsdale and La Grange.

After AdventHealth announced the award at its 2020 Virtual AdventHealth Clinical Excellence Conference in October, Nand and Mary Murphy, R.N., M.S.N., chief nursing officer, AMITA Hinsdale and La Grange, and regional chief nursing officer

for AMITA’s South Region, thanked and congratulated AMITA Hinsdale’s physicians and associates, saying their collaborative efforts had led to the recognition.

“Together, we all spend considerable time analyzing quality and safety data, identifying areas for improvement, and pursuing strategies to achieve clinical excellence, such as our initiatives to reduce hospital-acquired infections and to use eCART and other early warning systems to respond sooner to changes in patients’ conditions,” Murphy and Nand said in a joint memo to physicians and associates. “Although our most meaningful reward is seeing positive patient outcomes, it also is satisfying to know that our efforts have made AMITA Hinsdale a top performer among all AdventHealth hospitals.”

Kristine Gleason, M.P.H., R.Ph., director, Quality and Patient Safety, AMITA Hinsdale, La Grange and Bolingbrook, credited the hospital’s physicians, staff and executive leaders supporting the efforts to achieve clinical excellence. “All of these pieces have to align well to earn an award

like this one,” Gleason said. “It takes ongoing vigilance and teamwork, always challenging yourselves and not being complacent. That’s what our patients expect, and that’s what we expect of ourselves.”

AMITA Hinsdale also emphasizes deference to expertise, an AMITA patient safety principle that calls for involving experts — including those on a hospital’s front lines — in the development of patient-safety strategies and tactics. “Inviting them to the table and understanding their barriers and workflows help drive our quality and safety processes,” Gleason said. “I’m really proud of our organization for doing that. We don’t sit at a table, come up with something and push it forward. It’s really a collaborative approach that emphasizes deferring to our experts and involving our teams.”

It’s an approach that plays out every day at AMITA Hinsdale, with physicians, nurses and other front-line staff working together to follow quality and safety protocols and procedures and to identify opportunities for improvement. “We develop the plans, protocols and procedures with our quality and patient safety leaders, and we are very intentional toward decreasing patient harm and improving quality every day,” said Nand.

Although the Triumph Award celebrates the success of these efforts, Nand and Murphy said it also serves as a reminder that the journey to zero patient harm is ongoing. “We don’t sit on our laurels and say, ‘Okay, we’ve done it,’” Nand said. “We continuously change, modify and adapt. Just because we’ve reached a metric, it doesn’t mean that’s the end of our journey.” ■

Julie Busch, associate vice president, Internal Communications, AMITA Health

Rhonda Tomenko joins faculty of Andrews University



Saint Mary's College

▲ Rhonda Tomenko

Rhonda Tomenko has joined the faculty of Andrews University as an assistant professor in the School of Communication Sciences & Disorders.

Rhonda was born in Reykjavik, Iceland, and lived there until attending the Adventist academy in Norway. She earned two bachelor's degrees at Andrews University — a B.S. in Speech-Pathology & Audiology and a B.A. in Music.

After completing her Ph.D. in audiology from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Vir., she did a post-doctoral year at the University of Michigan, then worked as a clinical

audiologist in South Bend, Ind., for four years. She transitioned to academics, teaching for 10 years at Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Ind., then worked again in the clinical setting, this time in nursing homes and long-term care facilities in Michigan and Indiana. It was at this point that Andrews reached out to her regarding a faculty position in their School of Communication Sciences & Disorders.

"I loved the clinical work I was doing and appreciated having my evenings and weekends to spend with my husband and three young children," she says. "Going back into academia meant that my job would not be done at the end of the workday. There is a lot of preparation for classes, grading and research that fill one's evenings and weekends. However, I felt that if God were leading me to Andrews I would definitely consider and pray about this position. I have always loved Andrews University and felt that it would be an honor to serve God on this campus."

At Andrews, Rhonda now teaches audiology courses in the undergraduate program as well as the clinical practicum in audiology. She also teaches one course in the speech-language pathology graduate program.

She says, "I have enjoyed so many things. I love being in the classroom interacting with students again. My favorite course to teach is our clinical

practicum course; I love seeing how students pull together the knowledge and skills they have gained in their courses and finally get to interact with clients in our clinic. I also love the group of faculty and staff in our department. It is an honor to work with such an incredibly talented and caring group of people."

For Rhonda, true education means more than pursuing a certain course of study. Instead, it has to do with the whole being — developing physically, mentally and spiritually. She has appreciated the idea from Ellen G. White's book *Education* that the highest aim of education is training individuals for service. She especially wants students to realize that, having been created in the image of God, they have the power to think, to do and to influence character.

"I believe that one cannot truly serve God and man in the best way without having a relationship with God, which in turn allows God's spirit to restore in us the image of God in which we were created," says Rhonda. "My hope is to turn the minds of our students to God so that their knowledge, skills and education will enable them to serve God and man to the best of their abilities." ■

Gillian Panigot, Communication manager and FOCUS editor

"MY HOPE IS TO TURN THE MINDS OF OUR STUDENTS TO GOD SO THAT THEIR KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND EDUCATION WILL ENABLE THEM TO SERVE GOD AND MAN TO THE BEST OF THEIR ABILITIES."

WISCONSIN ELECTS NEW PRESIDENT

On December 6, Titus Naftanaila accepted the call to be president for the Wisconsin Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, after serving in many capacities, most recently as pastor for the Green Bay district and coordinator for both Personal Ministries and the Lay Pastor Training program in Wisconsin.

Upon taking this new responsibility, he said, "I am humbled and privileged to pick up the mantle of servant leader for the Wisconsin Conference."

Naftanaila was born into a faithful Adventist family in the country of Romania. Although his parents raised Titus and his siblings under a dictatorial communist regime, God helped them remain faithful even though deprived of basic religious freedom. During his high school years, Naftanaila was delayed in his studies because an important exam was scheduled on Sabbath, a normal school day in Romania. Not until five years later was he finally able to resume his education and fulfill his dream to study theology and become a pastor.

After earning his B.S. in Theology from Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca in Romania, he began his pastoral ministry in 1995 in the Targoviste District, pastoring 600 members. Naftanaila says that his call to pastoral ministry was manifested gradually and steadily. His parents, pastor and other mentors all encouraged him to pursue full-time ministry. He always has been passionate about studying the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy, preaching and being involved in outreach activities.

In 1998, Naftanaila was elected as the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director for the Muntenia Conference in Romania. At the same time, he served as the senior pastor of the Dynamis Church in Bucharest and hosted a weekly radio program at "Vocea Sperantei" (Voice of



Zack Payne

▲ Titus Naftanaila

Hope). One year later he was invited to teach for the undergraduate program at the Adventist Theological Institute in Romania (Adventus University). He also coordinated conference-wide training programs for elders and young people who wanted to pursue a career in pastoral ministry. In the spring of 2001, he was transferred to the Adventist Theological Institute as the senior pastor of the campus church and to continue as a teacher.

FROM ROMANIA TO THE U.S.

The summer of 2001 radically changed the course of Naftanaila's personal and professional path. The Romanian Church in the suburbs of Chicago obtained the approval from the Romanian Union Conference for his transfer to be their pastor. Following God's call, he moved his family to the United States. Here he served the local church and the Romanian community through regular pastoral services and a weekly radio program. Meanwhile, he worked toward and graduated with a Master of Arts in Pastoral Ministry from Andrews University and

obtained Clinical Pastoral Education at La Grange Adventist Hospital in Illinois.

Naftanaila's ministry in Wisconsin began in 2007. After serving in the Chicago area for several years, he accepted a call from Don Corkum to pastor the Superior district in the Wisconsin Conference. In Wisconsin, he also served as senior pastor for the Madison East and Green Bay districts. In addition to pastoral ministry, he has been involved in many conference-wide ministries and programs, including leading the Stewardship and Religious Liberty ministries as well as coordinating the Volunteer Lay Pastor training program.

Naftanaila has served as a member of the executive committees of the Wisconsin Conference and the Lake Union for several years. This has enabled him to be part of the collective leadership, assisting in visioning and executing strategic plans for mission and church administration on both the Conference and Union level.

As a pastor, he has always been passionate about preaching God's Word as well as mentoring new and existing

leaders. While learning the culture of every new ministry setting, he also has been passionate about promoting excellence and innovative ideas.

As the newly elected president, Naftanaila is excited to promote the mission of the Wisconsin Conference: To grow passionate disciples of Jesus prepared for Christ's soon coming. Following the legacy of those who came before him, he plans to continue to promote a positive environment for discipleship and church growth. His personal ministry statement is: Preaching the message of Elijah while performing the ministry of Elisha (Proclaim – Heal – Connect – Equip – Mentor – Affirm).

When asked what message he would like to share with the people of Wisconsin, he referenced 2 Chronicles 7:14 and said, "I invite all pastors, teachers, lay leaders and church members to join our leadership team to 'humble ourselves, pray, seek God's face, and repent.' Let us continue to be His ambassadors in our communities, loving and serving each and every one of His precious children, in every stage of life."

Naftanaila is married to his hometown sweetheart, Rozina, and they have served together in ministry for 25 years. Rozina currently works as a registered nurse at Bellin Hospital in Green Bay, Wis. They have an adult son, Sebastian, who works in the retail industry. ■

Laurella Case, assistant for Communications, Wisconsin Conference

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU! PLEASE SEND US NEWS FROM YOUR CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS. HERALD@LAKEUNION.ORG



Kathleen Morrissey

▲ Care for Cuba, founded by Fernando Ortiz (left), has been equipping pastors and lay workers in Cuba with training and materials since 1998. FARM STEW, founded by Joy Kauffman (right), is a ministry dedicated to improving the health and well-being of poor families and vulnerable people throughout the world. In the photo are FARM STEW Southwest Michigan officers Rosie Nash (holding farm tool) and Debi Anvik (with wheelbarrow), along with international board member, Sherry Shrestha.

Two ministries partner to send critical care to Cuba

The pandemic forced Cuba to close airports and lock down borders to combat the spread of the virus, which caused tourist travel, an important source of hard currency, to plummet, plunging the nation into one of the worst food shortages in nearly 25 years.

FARM STEW's founder Joy Kauffman who is located in Princeton, Ill., saw this situation as an opportunity to expand the ministry by partnering with the Care for Cuba ministry, based at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Mich.

Kauffman, a trained health nutritionist, said that increasing food availability is one of the main objectives of FARM STEW. "With Cubans going hungry every day and residents not skilled or equipped to grow their own food, it was only natural that we would help," she noted, adding that they

are building on a ministry with established teams in Uganda, Zimbabwe, South Sudan and the United States. "That's the foundation of our ministry, to improve the health and well-being of poor families and vulnerable people by sharing abundant life throughout the world."

In light of the fact that the Cuban government has encouraged its citizens to plant gardens, FARM STEW donated 200 manuals and 200 flash drives with the FARM STEW curriculum, giving Bible workers the tools to address the root causes of hunger, disease and poverty. FARM STEW has now managed to start training in 18 Adventist churches, working with a total of 150 committed families, distributing 14 varieties of vegetable seeds to each family.

CARE FOR CUBA

Kauffman has teamed up with Care for Cuba, an established ministry which has been equipping pastors and lay workers in Cuba with training and materials since

1998. They are a support system for individuals in Cuba who are willing to go and make a difference in the world for Christ by giving Bible studies and participating in evangelism.

Since 2013, Fernando Ortiz, director of Andrews University's Master of Divinity Program, has organized a Cuba Study Tour every year during spring break, allowing seminary students to engage in personal and public evangelism. In Spring 2020, they were all packed and ready to go with 60 suitcases full of resources.

Although they were unable to travel due to the pandemic, they eventually found a way to still make an impact. A shipping container loaded with supplies was sent to Cuba in December 2020 by Care for Cuba.

Cuba has been greatly cut off from trade, travel and the world economy over the last sixty years. Pastors, Bible workers and people in general are lacking many resources we take for granted, including bicycles, Bibles, mobile phones, computers, the internet and ministry resources.

While there are 100 pastors and 300 Bible workers in Cuba, few have cars. Bible workers often need to travel a distance to get from one family to the next. "With a bicycle you can cover three or four times as much [area], giving three



Kathleen Morrissy

▲ In addition to the farming curriculum, FARM STEW donated 2,000 feminine hygiene kits, with generous support from Days for Girls, a global movement that prepares and distributes sustainable menstrual health solutions to girls who would otherwise miss school during their monthly periods. Kauffman (right) is pictured with FARM STEW board member, Sherry Shrestha.

times as many Bible studies, and probably three times as many baptisms," said Ortiz, who founded Care for Cuba. "You will see people going to church, daddy driving the bicycle, mommy on the handlebars, and then a child in front and another child on the back." One bicycle can make a big difference there, so they were thrilled when one hundred bicycles for Bible workers were donated.

ABUNDANCE OF HOPE

In addition to the farming curriculum, FARM STEW, with a generous assist from Days for Girls, a global movement that prepares and distributes sustainable menstrual health solutions to girls who

would otherwise miss school during their monthly periods, donated 2,000 feminine hygiene kits with reusable menstrual pads, underwear and soap. Ortiz explained that these kits provide items that you simply cannot get in Cuba. The support from Village Church in Berrien Springs, Stevensville Church and the surrounding Southwest Michigan community has been amazing.

If you'd like to learn more, visit careforcuba.org and farmstew.org. ■

Kathleen Morrissy, Lake Union of Seventh-day Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries Communication director

Nearly \$1 million raised to assist Andrews University students

BERRIEN SPRINGS, Mich.—"It was a Friday afternoon, and I was getting off from work."

Melissa Blemur, a freshman pre-Nursing student, recalls the moment she received word of her financial situation from Andrews. Her academic advisor had called with the promise of good news and proceeded to let her know that she was a recipient of the President's Student

Scholarship Fund. Melissa recounts, "I thank God that I was in my car because I started screaming on the phone. I was very happy and also shocked because, out of all the kids coming to Andrews, I was accepted. Hearing the news, I felt really blessed."

Melissa believes God brought her to Andrews. She remembers that at the end of her senior year of high school, she paused to pray about her next steps. Andrews immediately came to mind, but she prayed again to be sure. That next Sabbath she discovered that the visiting pastor at her church was an Andrews alumnus. Melissa states, "I took that as my sign from God and here I am now."

This past year, hundreds of students benefited from two key financial aids offered by Andrews: the Student Life COVID-19 Emergency Fund and the President's Student Scholarship Fund. Together, the two forms of support provided immediate crisis assistance and addressed the long-term financial difficulties stemming from the pandemic.

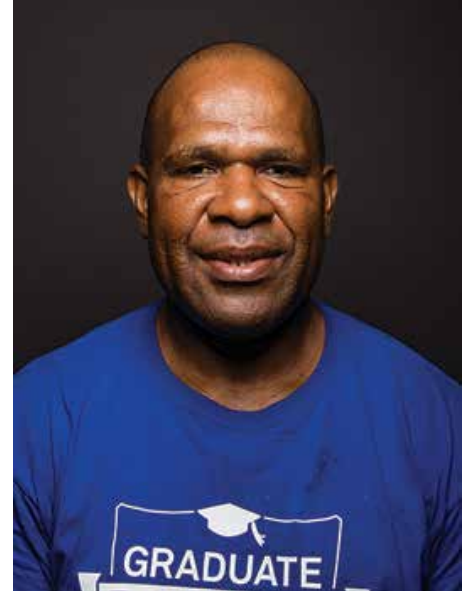
The Student Life COVID-19 Emergency Fund was created in direct response to the financial impact the pandemic had on Andrews students in March. Some students, unable to return home, lost their jobs on campus and in the community. The fund helps cover costs of rent



▲ Melissa Blemur



▲ José Antonio Alegria II



▲ Zuzai Hizoke

and groceries, providing much-needed support at the necessary times.

Originating in 1972, the President's Student Scholarship Fund assists students who have utilized all other financial aid resources — student loans, government aid, parent contributions, merit scholarships and employment — and still need a final push to complete registration. Awarded once per semester in the form of a specific sum, from \$500 to \$2,000, the scholarship allows students to complete their financial process and enroll at Andrews.

Communication about both funds was sent out this spring via emails, phone calls and social media to alumni and other willing individuals. In response, since April 2020, 532 donors have given gifts totaling nearly \$1 million. Thanks to this generosity, 460 students received essential financial assistance from one of the two funds.

Another student recipient of the President's Student Scholarship Fund, José Antonio Alegria II, joined the Andrews community this past fall as a freshman in pre-Nursing. José has a passion for his chosen career, community service and cars, and he recalls that he "wanted to come here [Andrews] since I was young." As he researched, it became clear that Andrews was the place that would foster the career he wanted to pursue.

He received the news of the scholarship at 2:30 a.m. the morning of his

journey from Chicagoland to Berrien Springs, remembering how he had to wait until the rest of his family awoke to share the good news. José admits, "I was feeling kind of scared and excited for this new college experience. This scholarship really reassured me and motivated me to put in more hard work."

One of his favorite things about campus so far has been the experience of meeting new people. He enthuses, "I love the campus, and the people here are great! I love the diversity." José is excited about the future and grateful for the part his scholarship has paid in helping him pursue his academic journey and future career.

Graduate student Zuzai Hizoke journeyed to Andrews with his family from Papua New Guinea in 2017, believing that the school has been blessed with two especially great things: the best professors and the best library. After completing prerequisites, he is now a first-year student pursuing a Ph.D. in missions with a cognate in religious education and discipleship — and has experienced firsthand the financial difficulty in being an international student from a country with such a small economy. He affirms, "The scholarship came at a time when I really needed a miracle ... It was relieving especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and its serious effects. I can say, this timely scholarship has helped me to stay more focused on

my studies and not to worry about my fees. That is how powerful such timely assistance can be."

Zuzai participates as an active member of the campus community through preaching, Sabbath schools and Bible studies and plans to teach and minister back at home once he has obtained his degree. He and his family have a motto for when they leave Andrews: "Wherever the Lord calls." They remain open to God's guidance in future journeys.

For the time being, Zuzai voices his gratitude for Andrews. "Remember, it may be one of those normal things you do to give out scholarships like this to the so many that come your way, but please, be reminded, to some of us, it is a big thing — something that the family and our folks back home celebrate. It speaks highly of this country and its citizens and, more importantly, the University." He adds, "May I say, thank you to the masterminds behind this scholarship and prayers that our good Lord will continue to guide, lead and bless you all."

Individuals who are interested in giving to the President's Student Scholarship Fund can visit andrews.edu/go/give/pres. To contribute to the Student Life COVID-19 Emergency Fund, visit andrews.edu/go/give/studentlifeCOVID19. ■

Isabella Koh, University Communication student writer



Goodbye, Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Hello, Gillette, Wyoming.

INTERNATIONAL PATHFINDER CAMPOREE MOVES WEST

On January 26, the 2024 International Camporee Executive Advisory Committee voted to change the location and date of the 2024 Believe the Promise Camporee. This decision means the camporee will move from Oshkosh, Wis., to Gillette, Wy.; the new dates are August 5–11, 2024.

The rationale for the changes, which came about after countless hours of research, planning, site visits and prayer, was the fact that the camporee has grown exponentially over the years. The International Camporee was first held in Oshkosh in 1999 with the Discover the Power International Camporee. That camporee attracted about 23,000. In 2019, there were over 55,000 participants from 105 countries from around

the world at the Chosen International Camporee.

According to the Camporee director, Ron Whitehead, who also serves as the Lake Union Youth director, "For years we have been looking for another site to grow the International Camporee, but it was not until recently we found, or should I say that God found, a new campground for His camporee."

For months, evaluation teams visited the Cam-Plex Facilities in Gillette to determine if this new site offers more support for the International Camporee, and it was concluded that the new location will greatly improve the International Camporee experience for all attendees.

The Cam-Plex facilities regularly host large events that include camping and on-site activities much like the Camporee, and it boasts the largest campground of full amenities in the world. This means double the indoor activity space, more camping space, and over 25 new additional activities unique to the west.

Whitehead notes that the vote, representing Pathfinder leaders, conference presidents and others from around the world, was unanimous. "It surprised me that everyone was in one accord." For him this signaled it was indeed the right decision. "I had prayed that God would make it very clear where He wanted His Camporee, and I believe 100 percent vote from leaders all over the world gave me my prayerful answer," he says. "God made it clear He wants His International Camporee to go west."

Another benefit is that the date of the camporee could be changed to a week earlier. Due to date restrictions at the Experiential Aircraft Association's Aviation Center, that was never possible.

"This is a benefit to Adventist schools," says Whitehead. "This gives most students a week after the International Camporee is over to get back home for their school opening."

As expected, there are some who decry the move but Whitehead says that group doesn't include our Wisconsin Pathfinders. "They are excited. Now they can leave their state for an International Camporee."

You can also watch a video announcement at <https://www.camporee.org/>. ■

*Victory Kovach, Center for Youth Evangelism
Communication director, with Herald staff*





▲ The Session had been scheduled to be held at the Indiana Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium.

Leaders vote to postpone General Conference Session 2020 for second time

DUE TO COVID-19, WORLD CHURCH QUINQUENNIAL EVENT NOW SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 6–11, 2022.

For the second time in 10 months, members of the Executive Committee of the global Seventh-day Adventist Church have voted to postpone the quinquennial session of the denomination, originally scheduled for late June 2020, due to challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members of the General Conference Executive Committee (EXCOM) from around the world attended the January 12, 2021, virtual Zoom session, where they listened to reports from world church administration, health officers of the church, logistics coordinators and legal counsel. Leaders discussed the feasibility of adhering to the planned business session dates of May 20–25, 2021, in Indianapolis, Ind, United States, that had been previously approved by the same body.

The persistence of the deadly global COVID-19 pandemic and its enduring impacts on public health, travel and the availability of international visas persuaded the international body to postpone the session until June 6–11, 2022, also in Indianapolis. The new plan voted by church leaders and laypersons now postpones the date for the denomination's quinquennial business session for nearly two years from its originally scheduled dates, as allowed by the Adventist Church's constitution.

GC president Ted N.C. Wilson, who chaired the EXCOM committee, began the two-hour meeting by outlining the process of data collection and discussion that brought the recommendations to the governing body of the church. "A team of workers has been working diligently," Wilson said. "We have been carefully reviewing things, especially with those in session management and planning."

Wilson added that recommendations are coming from a consensus approach from various groups, including world division officers, health professionals, Adventist Risk Management, the Office of General Counsel, and other Adventist Church leaders. "This is not a recommendation directly coming from the three senior officers of the GC," he said. "This is something that has come from a plethora of information and counselors."

Current Challenges

Wilson introduced those who would provide background and context to the current and projected challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic.

Peter Landless, director of Health Ministries for the global Adventist Church, shared current COVID-19 statistics and concerns of moving forward with such a large gathering. Given the rising infection numbers, along with a new, more infectious and aggressive strain, Landless said the Health Ministries Department had to recommend delaying the GC Session.

"We've been consulting with international experts, and taking into account the needs and concerns. The GC Health Ministries Department believes it is prudent and practical stewardship to postpone the GC Session to 2022, given this difficult time," Landless said. "And it is with a heavy heart one makes this recommendation. However, it is a recommendation that comes because it appears there is no alternative."

GC meeting planner Sheri Clemmer outlined some of the current challenges

to a large meeting of delegates from around the world. She mentioned visitor visa difficulties and quarantine requirements, especially for those who use public transportation and transportation hubs. She also explained standard COVID protocols surrounding mass gatherings in Indianapolis.

G.T. Ng, executive secretary of the global Adventist Church, reported data collected from the division leadership about the likelihood of delegates being able to attend the May 2021 GC Session. Major challenges to achieving a large portion of delegates that were expressed by division leadership included travel bans, quarantine restrictions and problems obtaining visas to the United States. The General Conference constitution does not currently allow for electronic participation at a General Conference Session.

Tim Northrop, president of Adventist Risk Management, outlined various liability risks that could follow if EXCOM voted to not delay the 2021 Session.

"We have an important meeting for our church. What we have heard is that there are potential exposures and potential risks," Northrop said. "We have also heard our constitution allows us to weigh those risks and to consider moving the meeting to a later date. This business continuity plan we have as leaders is important. It allows us to be more nimble and allows us to continue the ministry of our church."

Following the presentations and discussion, the recommendation to move the dates of the General Conference to June 2022 was put to a vote by electronic polling. The motion passed with a vote of 185 to 9.

Following the vote, Landless concluded the discussion with a serious observation: "We have been brought to this point, not because it is something we would like to do, but something we have to do." ■

This article was originally published January 12 on the Adventist News Network and Adventist Review websites.

MARCH

ILLINOIS

March 20: *Global Youth Day*

April 2–4: *Adventist Christian Fellowship Retreat/
Hi-C Retreat, Location TBD*

INDIANA

March 19–21: *Hispanic Discipleship Retreat TBD,
Virtual*

March 27: *2021 LUC Bible Experience, Virtual*

LAKE REGION

March 3–7: *Regional Summit, Virtual*

March 6: *Pathfinder Bible Experience – Conference
Round, Virtual*

March 13: *Chicagoland Community Service
Federation, Location TBD*

March 20: *Health Ministries “Take Charge of Your
Health,” Virtual*

March 20: *Weekend of Compassion (Adventist
Community Services), Virtual*

MICHIGAN

March 1–15: *Camp Meeting Registration*

March 5–7: *Evangelism Training, Camp Au Sable*

March 6: *Pathfinder Bible Experience – Conference
Level*

March 27: *IMPACT – Literature Distribution Day*

WISCONSIN

March 6: *Pathfinder Bible Experience – Conference
Level, Madison East Church*

March 19–21: *Hispanic (JAHWI) Youth Rally,
Milwaukee*

March 20: *Hispanic Global Youth Day*

April 1: *Wisconsin Academy Music Fest*

LAKE UNION

March 27: *Pathfinder Bible Experience – Union
Level, Andrews University*

Note: *Venues may change to virtual*



**PROJECT
SAFE
CHURCH**

The Lake Union and its Conferences are participating in a ground-breaking initiative to deter, detect, and hold accountable sexual and physical abuse that impacts the church.

Project Safe Church involves training pastors and church leaders to create a visible reporting mechanism, as well as the ability to connect victims with trained practitioners.

The program also involves training panels of impartial, investigative decision makers who can resolve various allegations, as well as make recommendations for resolution of disputes.

For more information, visit www.projectsafechurch.org

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.

BIRTHDAYS



ANNA (GREAVU) DEAN was born on Sunday, Feb. 13, 1921, and celebrated her 100th birthday on Thursday, Feb. 11, 2021, with a card shower and birthday treats at the Brookdale Assisted Living Center, in Holly, Mich., where she is presently living. She is a member of the Holly Church in Holly where she has served in some capacity all of her life, be it church clerk, in the children's divisions, VBS or head deaconess. A homemaker who was married to the late Myrle Dean in 1939, they shared their 67 years on their dairy farm in Holly.



DOROTHY DORCAS (O'NEAL) WHITE celebrated her 100th birthday with a virtual family celebration on Sunday, Jan. 31, 2021, at her home in Calumet Park, Ill. Born on January 31, 1921, she is a 46-year member of the Beacon of Joy Church in Chicago. Married to the late Howard Dennis White in 1939, Dorothy has spent a lifetime serving and teaching children in her church and in early childhood education as her career.

Sharing in this celebration were her eight children: Howard Jr., Robert, Terry, Raymond, Carmen, Daniel, Gale-Marie and Lynette, plus many others.

OBITUARIES

BERG, Mary A. (Anderson White), age 86; born May 19, 1934, in Wisconsin; died Oct. 26, 2020, in Willowbrook, Ill. She was a member of the Burr Ridge Church in Darien, Ill. Survivors include her son, Charles; daughters, Nancy (Chuck) Slade, Barb (Bill) Barkstrom, Patty (Eric) Schultz, and Nereida Berg (Carlos) Martinez; brother, Frank (Carmie) White; six grandchildren; and three step-grandchildren. Services will be scheduled for a future date.

COPIZ, Pietro Emilio, age 89; born Aug. 23, 1931, in Sinaia, Romania; died Dec. 19, 2020, in Gland, Switzerland. He served as a teacher at Adventist University of France, and Andrews University, Mich.; and as director of Education of the Euro-Africa Division in Berne, Switzerland. His wife, Herta Kipp, predeceased him in June 1994. He is survived by two sons, Danilo and Stefan.

DePAEPE, Yvonne (Gould), age 78; born April 26, 1942, in Alma, Mich.; died Dec. 8, 2020, in St. Johns, Mich. She was a member of the St. Johns Church in St. Johns. Survivors include her husband, Roger DePaepe; daughters, Lori (J.R.) Ruff, and Angela DePaepe; brother, Larry Gould; sister, Janet (Wayne) Harr; three grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Services will be scheduled for later in 2021.

DEMEREST, Dorothy Alice (Symons), age 87; born Feb. 14, 1933, in Glenn, Mich.; died Dec. 21, 2020, in Douglas, Mich. She was a member of the Holland Church in Holland, Mich. Survivors include her son, David (Gail) Demerest; daughter, Marilyn (Lou) Hebert; sister, Norma (Don Jacobs); four grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. Funeral services were conducted by Pastor Sean Reed; interment was in Douglas Cemetery in Douglas.

FORTUNE, Karen L. (Aasheim), age 73; born Jan. 21, 1947, in New York City; died Dec. 20, 2020, in St. Joseph, Mich. She was a member of the Stevensville Church in Stevensville, Mich. Survivors include her husband, John Fortune; sons, Mark A. Fortune, Michael S. Fortune, and Matthew B. Fortune; daughter, Maegan A. (Fortune) Janevski; brothers, Richard Aasheim, and Roger Aasheim; and eight grandchildren. Inurnment was in Berrien Springs, Mich.

GILLILAND, Farrell L., age 78; born May 13, 1942, in Nevada, Iowa; died Dec. 5, 2020, in Niles, Mich. He was a member of the Pioneer Memorial Church in Berrien Springs, Mich. Survivors include his wife, Delores E. (Foll) Gilliland; stepson, Jeff A. Perry; daughter, Katharine J. (Gilliland) Horn; stepdaughter, Joelle A. (Perry) Ashley; five step-grandchildren; and six step-great-grandchildren. Memorial services were conducted by Pastor Dwight Nelson; private inurnment.

GRUESBECK, Phyllis A. (Skinner), age 80; born Aug. 14, 1939, in Battle Creek, Mich.; died Dec. 7, 2019, in Lansing, Mich. She was a member of the Grand Ledge Church in Grand Ledge, Mich. Survivors include her husband, Ronald M. Gruesbeck; sons, Ronald V. (Paulina) Gruesbeck, Richard L. Gruesbeck, and Brent A. Gruesbeck; and three grandchildren. Graveside services were conducted by Charles Hanlon; inurnment was in Robinson Cemetery in Gobles, Mich.

HIRSCHENBERGER, Jean E. (McClure), age 90; born June 4, 1930, in Saginaw, Mich.; died Nov. 29, 2020, in St. Charles, Mich. She was a member of the St. Charles Church in St. Charles. Interment was in Garfield Cemetery in St. Charles.

JOHNSEN, Timothy, age 61; born Oct. 28, 1959, in Milwaukee, Wis.; died Nov. 10, 2020, in Milwaukee. He was a member of the Milwaukee Northwest Church in Milwaukee. Survivors include his daughter, April Johnsen; brothers, Lee Johnsen, Jon Johnsen, and Patrick Johnsen; sisters, Cheryl, Judy, Lori, Linda, and Lisa; and three grandchildren. Funeral services are pending due to COVID-19.

KNOLL, Kenneth R. "Kenny", age 78; born April 23, 1942, in Milwaukee, Wis.; died Dec. 9, 2020, in Neosho, Wis. He was a member of the Wisconsin Academy Church

in Columbus, Wis. Survivors include his wife, Charmaine (Balk); son, Justin (Arica) Andera; daughters, Angie (Dave) Hall, and Rachel (Ben) Hotelling; brother-in-law, Les (Carri) Balk; sister, Sharyn Brewer; and five grandchildren. Memorial services were conducted by Pastor Steve Aust; interment was in Highland Memorial Cemetery in New Berlin, Wis.

MARSH, Barbara J. (Billiu), age 88; born April 14, 1932, in Belding, Mich.; died July 24, 2020, in Berrien Springs, Mich. She was a member of the Pioneer Memorial Church in Berrien Springs. Survivors include her husband, Harold V. Marsh; sons, Dan V. Marsh, and Lon H. Marsh; daughters, Judy M. (Marsh) Hamel, and Cindy S. (Marsh) Hornick; seven grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. Memorial services were conducted by William Fagal; inurnment was in Rose Hill Cemetery in Berrien Springs.

MURPHY, Jody L. (Smith), age 66; born Nov. 14, 1954, in Denver, Colo.; died Nov. 14, 2020, in Lansing, Mich. She was a member of the Lansing Church in Lansing. Survivors

include her husband, Robert "Bob" Murphy; sons, Dennis (Sue) Newman, and James "Jim" Newman; and brother, Charles (Karen) Smith.

SMITH, Beverly A. (Blanton), age 79; born Aug. 9, 1941, in Gary, Ind.; died Dec. 16, 2020, in Gary. She was a member of the Mizpah Church in Gary. Survivors include her husband, Donnell Smith; sons, Sheridan (Pamela) Smith, and Peter (Bonny) Smith; brother, William (Adrienne) Blanton; and seven grandchildren. Funeral services were conducted by LeeRoy Coleman; interment was in Oak Hill Cemetery in Gary.

STEPHENSON, Kenneth D., age 85; born July 19, 1935, in Kalamazoo, Mich.; died April 9, 2020, in Kalamazoo. He was a member of the Kalamazoo Church in Kalamazoo. Survivors include his wife, Nancyanne (Noteboom) Stephenson; his son, Orvil Stephenson; and daughter, Nancy (Mark) Clemmens.

STEPHENSON, Nancyanne M., age 77; born Feb. 21, 1943, in Kalamazoo, Mich.; died May 28, 2020, in Kalamazoo. She was a member of the Kalamazoo Church in

Kalamazoo. Survivors include her stepson, Orvil Stephenson; and stepdaughter, Nancy (Mark) Clemmens.

STRINGER, Gladys P. "Missy" (Covert), age 97; born May 9, 1923, in Goshen, Ind.; died Oct. 10, 2020, in Stevensville, Mich. She was a member of the Michigan City Church in Michigan City, Ind. Survivors include her sons, Robert B. Stringer, Kurtis Stringer, and Matthew Stringer; and her daughter, Linda (Stringer) Lockwitz. Memorial services were conducted by Pastor Dennis Page; private inurnment.

WINTER, Jean (Macomber), age 86; born March 30, 1934, in Berrien Springs, Mich.; died Dec. 18, 2020, in Adrian, Mich. She was a member of the Adrian Company in Adrian. Survivors include her son, Daniel (Pamela Curtiss) Hawk; and daughter, Karen (Aaron) Ricketts.

NBC EASTER SPECIAL
WATCH ON NBC

Pastor Donnie McClurkin

Crystal Day

Dr. Carlton P. Byrd,
Speaker

The Awakening

This NBC Television special, in collaboration with the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission (IBC), features an Easter message from Dr. Carlton P. Byrd, Speaker/Director of the Breath of Life Television Ministry, and Special Musical Guests: Pastor Donnie McClurkin, and the Jeremy Winston Chorale of Ohio, along with actress, Crystal Day.

Jeremy Winston Chorale of Ohio

Watch on NBC on April 4, 2021

For a list of stations and times, call **256.929.6460** or visit **breathoflife.tv**

Breath of Life

team. Interested individuals should contact Marva by email: marva@stallanthhealth.com.

SYCAMORE ACADEMY is looking for Tutors and Certified Teachers to join us in providing Christian online education (Grades 2–12). Work part-time from home tutoring “live” via Zoom. If interested, please call us at 817-645-0895.

MISCELLANEOUS

FREE PLANNED GIVING — Maranatha Volunteers International Foundation can help with your estate planning needs. Personal consultations, online wills, trusts, annuities, providing protection for you and loved ones at no cost to you. For more info, call 916-774-7700; email: estates@maranatha.org. Visit maranatha.org/plannedgiving.

CALENDAR OF OFFERING

- March 6** Local Church Budget
- March 13** General Conference
- March 20** Local Church Budget
- March 27** Local Conference Advance

**CALENDAR OF SPECIAL DAYS
FOCUS OF THE MONTH –
WOMEN IN THE CHURCH**

- March 6** Women’s Day of Prayer
- March 6–13** Adventist Youth Week of Prayer
- March 20** Disabilities Awareness Sabbath
- March 20** Weekend of Compassion
- March 20** Global Youth Day
- March 27** ARM Safety Sabbath

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>.

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REAL ESTATE

NEED SECLUSION? — In Arkansas for sale, 1.5-acre farm. Newly remodeled, three-bedroom and two-bath home with attached two-car garage. Formal dining and living rooms. Den with fireplace. Kitchen with laundry. Back mudroom and front screen porch. Certified well and rural water. Perimeter fence. Selling for \$93,000. If interested, call Maria at 870-841-0200.

EMPLOYMENT

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY SEEKS FACULTY — School Counseling-Program Coordinator and Professor. Oversee all aspects of the Counselor Education program. Responsibilities include managing the program to maintain accreditation standards with CACREP and the state, teaching graduate courses in the field of counseling and school counseling, providing academic advisement support to students in the program, responding to inquiries regarding the overall academic unit, participate in committees, maintaining an active research agenda as documented through publications and presentations, sitting on dissertation committees, and other duties as assigned to the position. See https://www.andrews.edu/admres/jobs/show/faculty#job_2.

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY, Department of Biology/Allied Health, beginning fall 2021. Prefer biology PhD to 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.

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY is currently seeking teaching faculty in the following: School of Education and Psychology, Biology/Allied Health Department, School of Computing, School of Visual Art and Design, School of Journalism and Communication. For a full list of job openings, summaries and qualifications, please visit southern.edu/jobs.

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY is currently seeking qualified candidates for the following salaried staff positions: Associate Director of Catering Services—Food Services; Mental Health Coordinator—Student Success Center, and Director of Adult Degree Completion—Graduate and Professional Studies. For a full list of job openings, summaries and qualifications, please visit southern.edu/jobs.

STALLANT HEALTH, a Rural Health Clinic in Weimar, CA is accepting applications for an Optometrist as well as an NP or PA to join the

Sabbath Sunset Calendar

	Mar. 5	Mar. 12	Mar. 19	Mar. 26
Berrien Springs, Mich.	6:41	6:49	7:57	8:05
Chicago, Ill.	5:46	5:54	7:02	7:10
Detroit, Mich.	6:27	6:36	7:44	7:52
Indianapolis, Ind.	6:41	6:49	7:56	8:03
La Crosse, Wis.	5:59	6:08	7:17	7:25
Lansing, Mich.	6:33	6:42	7:50	7:58
Madison, Wis.	5:52	6:01	7:09	7:17
Springfield, Ill.	5:55	6:03	7:10	7:17

Intercessory Prayer

IT'S A THREE-WAY STREET

Let us explore the true historical narrative of a wealthy man who the Christian world of his day deemed “heathen” and “off limits,” just the kind of person Christ loves to save.



▲ Rob Benardo

Yet this is a man who the Bible describes as “devout.” He was a man who loved to pray and was seeking truth. One day, as it was about the time of the evening offering, an angel came, calling him by name.

It was the love of Christ that was drawing this man to Him in the first place, and now the great Commander of Heaven sent His messenger to tell him that his prayers were heard. There was a man in nearby Joppa that would explain the truth about God to him. Specifically, his name was Simon (Peter) and he was staying with a tanner named Simon who lived by the Mediterranean Sea.

Well, by now you know that this man is the Roman centurion named Cornelius. But this prayer miracle has three sides, with God at the center. Not only was

Cornelius a man of prayer, but Peter was also. As Cornelius’ servants were on their way to Joppa, Peter was on the flat housetop of his lodging, looking out at the surrounding city and earnestly praying for the salvation of souls! Next, the Holy Spirit came to Peter and

spoke saying, *Behold, three men are seeking you. Arise therefore and go with them, doubting nothing, for I have sent them (Acts 10:19).*

You know the rest of the story. Peter went, Cornelius and all of his household were converted, and a new era

of ministry came upon the church. Let’s summarize this prayer miracle: Cornelius was pleading for someone to come to share the gospel with him, and Peter was praying for someone to whom to tell the gospel. With both of their prayers ascending to Almighty God, He answered them both and providentially made the connection. That situation would never have materialized in that way unless they had both prayed.

Now fast-forward around 2000 years. It’s 2018 and the church in Battle Creek, Michigan, is participating in the 10 Days of Prayer with the World Church. They are praying specifically for young families to move to Battle Creek. Nearly 2,300 miles to the west, in Santa Cruz, California, David and Samantha Mori are praying about where the Lord would have them move to work for Him.

Soon after the Week of Prayer, David and Samantha show up at the Battle Creek Tabernacle, convinced that, through prayer, God had led them there. The church also rejoiced, believing that God signally answered their plea. Today David and Samantha are fully engaged in the ministry of the church, and the church is strengthened and encouraged by the God who orchestrated it all!

What is God waiting to do for you and your church? After all, His promise is that, if we ask, He will answer. Why not take Him at His word today? ■

Rob Benardo currently serves at the Battle Creek Tabernacle and is the Prayer coordinator for the Michigan Conference. He enjoys jogging, creative writing, sunsets and playing with his Labrador, Rose. He is a devoted husband to his wife, Olga, and beloved father to his two daughters, Amaris and Alexia.



▲ David and Samantha Mori prayed about where the Lord would have them move to work for Him.

Courtesy David Mori

Stewardship and Forgiveness?

When it comes to stewardship, our minds generally gravitate to the areas of money, time, the earth, our health and the gospel.

All of these parts and more come under the realm of being a faithful manager. But have you thought of the stewardship responsibility we have when it comes to forgiveness?

For stewardship to work as God designed, there are two core components that must be understood and practiced. First, there must be something to manage and, second, there must be someone to faithfully manage it. In this system our Maker has put in place, He provides the something — which is life, and we provide the management.

When we apply the above model to forgiveness, we see that in Isaiah 1:18 God first offers His forgiveness to us. *“Come now, and let us reason together,” says the Lord, “though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”* Jesus repeats that invitation through the apostle John in 1 John 1:9. *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* The question is, how should forgiveness be managed?

Our heavenly Father invites us to experience forgiveness. What a blessing this is! What peace, joy and sweet relief we receive as we accept His gracious offer of reconciliation. But we must stop and reflect on this for a moment. There is no doubt God offers His forgiveness to be a blessing to us. But is it only for us or does He give it, like all other gifts, not only to bless us, but for us to also bless others through forgiveness to them? I believe forgiveness is given to be given.

Over my years of ministry, I have heard too many sad stories of unforgiveness and the bitterness that results from it. Families have been torn apart, relationships soured and churches divided all because of

the unfaithful management of God’s forgiveness. Who loses the most? The one who will not pardon.

Jesus makes it clear in Matthew 6:14, 15 *that* we are to be channels of forgiveness; that is, managers of His grace. *“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”*

That sounds serious and one might ask, “What if they haven’t asked to be forgiven? Does that release me from my responsibility to forgive?” Consider this counsel from the pen of inspiration. “He who is unforgiving cuts off the very channel through which alone he can receive mercy from God. We should not think that unless those who have injured us confess the wrong, we are justified in withholding from them our forgiveness. It is their part, no doubt, to humble their hearts by repentance and confession; but we are to have a spirit of compassion toward those who have trespassed against us, whether or not they confess their faults. However sorely they may have wounded us, we are not to cherish our grievances and sympathize with ourselves over our injuries; but as we hope to be pardoned for our offenses against God, we are to pardon all who have done evil to us” (*Mount of Blessing*, pg. 113).

I would encourage you to be a faithful manager of all that God has given to you, including forgiveness. Then you will experience the freedom of not only receiving, but also sharing, His grace. ■

Joel Nephew is Michigan Conference Stewardship director, as well as the Planned Giving and Trust Services director.



▲ Joel Nephew

Perfectly Strange

By Kendra Arsenault

MANY OF US ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE CHILDHOOD ALLEGORY, "THE UGLY DUCKLING." It is an all too familiar story about what it means to feel like an outsider. It captures that unsettling quandary about the insecurity we feel when we observe how different we are from the people around us. At the same time, it is a story about having the patience to allow time to vindicate our differences and the qualities that make us special, not defective. It captures the complexity of "becoming."

What I would give to listen to the exchange between a caterpillar and a worm as she tries to describe her unspoken knowledge that this is not where her transformation ends. I am sure many women in ministry can relate to this journey of self-discovery. Somewhere between encountering our differences and fully entering into flight, we have to learn to boldly stand in the knowledge of who we are without apology. Despite what our society, our communities, or even our church believes we should be, we must be what we cannot otherwise be: ourselves. And while our feathers are still jagged and molting, we desire the grace to look like the very strange creature we are for the time.

Sometimes there are no words to help us define just how we know the creature God has called us to be. We just know. Other times, we simply gain the courage to call ourselves by our own name. For me, it is taken me until this moment in time to validate the creative gifts with which God has endowed me. I have often wished

► Kendra Arsenault



Richard Arsenault

that God would have mercy and send marching orders from heaven detailing exactly how I should live my life and what precisely to do to bring Him the most glory. I am disappointed to report, no such note has ever dropped from heaven for me. I do take comfort in the fact, however, that even Jesus did not receive the full knowledge of who He was until a short period before His crucifixion. This year, my thirty-third year, I have finally begun to see myself form into who God purposed me to be: a writer, a poet, a storyteller, a thinker.

Despite this comfort, however, there are still many reasons why I continue to feel a little strange. Maybe like many of you, I harbor big dreams, dreams that sometimes seem so far away they appear unobtainable. Yet it is the impossibility of my great hope that causes me to cling to God's promises a little tighter, Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened unto you (Matthew 7:7). So, to all my odd ducklings who find themselves strange in the company they keep, this is my prayer for us: "God, give us the patience to not give up in the middle of our transformation. Give us faith to know that You are not

only the Author of our big unobtainable dreams but the Finisher of our faith, the Completer of these grand impossible hopes. Amen." ■

Kendra Arsenault is the host and director of Program Operations for Advent Next, a theological podcast curated for curious faith discussions. She is a graduate student at Andrews University pursuing her Masters in Divinity where she hopes to incorporate her two passions of theology and communication through visual arts.

Kendra 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

Desiring More

By Raquel Mentor



Randall Ulangca

▲ Jodi Sarno

FOR JODI SARNO, BORN AND RAISED IN THE ADVENTIST COMMUNITY,

the pattern of attending weekly church services, joining her local Pathfinder club and choosing baptism played out right on time. Jodi loved her community; she loved her church; she loved God. However, it wasn't until recently that she learned what it means to live out her faith.

For many years, her faith was cemented in the community and friendship: helping out with A/V on Sabbath mornings, doing special music, becoming a Pathfinder staff member. Little did she know that a summer camp experience would ignite a desire for more.

With a sweet hint of nostalgia in her voice, she shared: "I'm sure I've encountered [moments of faith] in the past, but I know I consciously told myself that I wanted to choose to live out my faith and

show others who God is to me almost two or three years ago on a Friday night at summer camp."

That Friday night at Timber Ridge Camp, the camp staff led out in worship songs and Indiana Youth director Charlie Thompson shared a powerful message. As the altar call echoed in her ears, she responded. Although she had thought about revisiting her baptismal commitment the previous summer, Jodi knew as she walked to the stage that this time it was different: this time she was committing to an entirely new relationship with God.

Since then, Jodi's involvement in the church reflects her inner commitment to reflect Jesus intentionally — day in, day out. Her outpouring into her community reflects the outpouring of the Holy Spirit into her life.

"I've been doing daily devotionals on a Bible app that I have, so I think that's part of what helps keep me connected to Jesus during busy weeks. Now, every week for the past couple of months, my youth group meets on Zoom for about an hour or two to pray together. It's been one of the biggest blessings I could ever ask for in such a busy, hectic, stressful week."

When church doors closed and community became digital, Jodi's goal remained the same: to show God's love to others. "I do strongly believe that, in my day-to-day life, the best way to live out my faith is to love the way Jesus did, the way Jesus *does*," she says. "I want to live my life in a way that God can work in me and others can see Him through me." ■

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

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20-COMM/CL-09/028

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