

SERVING SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS IN THE LAKE UNION SINCE 1908

HERALD

JUNE/JULY 2021

The
GOSPEL
& MENTAL
HEALTH

*Are we losing
our minds?*

ILLINOIS MEMBERS
ILLINOIS FOCUS
INSIDE



The challenges of the last year have disrupted our lives in ways we could have never imagined. At the end of 2020, the Gallop organization released a study indicating that Americans' assessment of their mental health is worse than it has been at any point in the last two decades.

This comes as no surprise. You only have to turn on the news to witness the stressors: pandemic, social unrest, poverty, political polarization, gender dysphoria, and the list goes on. Where can we find help?

Studies indicate that 25 percent of those seeking help will go to a spiritual leader before going to a mental health professional because they think they're more approachable. This fact bears out why our churches can help fill gaps left by the public and private sector. While we may not all know the medical side, it's in our DNA to show care for people who are ill.

As you read through this issue, maybe you'll find solutions to making our churches reflect a place of healing. Drop us a line and let us know what you think. ■

Debbie

Debbie Michel
Director of Communication

ONLINE NEWS



Lake Union president Maurice Valentine was elected North America Division (NAD) vice president for Media Liaison, effective June 1. In this role, he'll oversee the Division's media entities, including Breath of Life, Faith for Today, It Is Written and Voice of Prophecy.



Zack Payne was named Youth director for Wisconsin Conference. Ministering in Wisconsin Conference since 2012, he most recently served as senior pastor of Wisconsin's Southeastern Network of Seventh-day Adventist Churches (WISEN) in Racine and Kenosha counties.



After evaluation of current state health department policies regarding COVID-19, it was unanimously decided to postpone the 2021 Lake Union Camporee. A full refund will be returned to those who already have purchased 2021 tickets unless a written request is made to rollover tickets to the 2022 camporee.



Indiana pastor and physician, David DeRose, shares how he struggled about whether or not to get one of the new mRNA vaccines, but he does far more than that: he provides insights into five common myths. You can watch this and other videos on his YouTube channel, Compass Health Consulting.



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CONTENTS

TELLING THE STORIES OF WHAT GOD IS DOING IN THE LIVES OF HIS PEOPLE

PERSPECTIVES

President's Perspective	4
Lest We Forget	8
Conexiones	9
Conversations with God	36
One Voice	38
On The Edge	39

EVANGELISM

Sharing Our Hope	10
Telling God's Stories	12
Partnership With God	37

LIFESTYLE

Family Focus	6
Alive & Well	7

CURRENT MATTERS

AdventHealth	23
Andrews University	24
News	25
Mileposts	31
Announcements	34
Classifieds	35
Calendar of Events	35

FEATURES

15

Faith and Medical Care

By Julie Busch

19

The Gospel and Mental Health

By David Sedlacek

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. 5. 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
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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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What Makes Adventism Adventist?

Is it our penchant for wholistic living that causes us to live as many as 7 to 10 years longer than we would if we didn't have our health-transforming, Bible-informed, plant-based, dietary plan the world is now discovering?



▲ Maurice Valentine

Is it our many doctrines we hold so dear, especially the Sabbath, State of the Dead, Sanctuary, Spirit of Prophecy and Second Coming of Jesus? Or is it our linear view of the Great Controversy theme which helps us understand the prophetic timeline that begins with the crafting of the plan of redemption to the restoration of mankind to face-to-face communion with God? Is it our laser-like focus on end-time events as informed by the Three Angels of Revelation 14 that tell us what milestones to look for on this timeline, helping us know what's soon to come on all mankind? Is it the faithfulness of our lay-leaders and members? Could it be the tremendous burden we have to practice prayer, study God's Word, and share our faith?

Is it our organization and institutions? As for organization, through the dedication of missionaries, our message has reached around the globe in less than 150 years. As for institutions, in 11 years of service as a church administrator, I have been honored to sit on many boards, every one of them doing nothing less than extraordinary work. Just from following God's blueprint for Christian education, we are blessed to have what are likely some of most committed people on the planet running these institutions.

And how does a church so young have one of the largest religious education and healthcare delivery systems in the world? As I look at where our people land in places of employ — be they blue-collar or white-collar workers because all are co-laborers with Christ who was both a blue-collar and white-collar worker, carpenter

and teacher respectively, innovation abounds in all that we do. Our organizations and institutions rise on the thermals of God's grace even as we individually also excel in agriculture, private business philanthropy, entrepreneurship, government and in the corporate setting.

Is it because all of our institutions globally are interconnected? A healthcare leader of another faith community recently said, "We have a lot to learn from you in the way that you work so closely together." Today's corporations and franchises turn out high-quality products because they maintain high standards and quality controls for all of their wares and outlets that represent their brand. I've noticed the same is true of our many institutions. Because we have core values that leaders are admonished to attain to in every institution, our level of high-quality delivery of health, educational, publishing, media, and church level training and products causes us in many respects to be recognized by our friends in the public arena who say, "You have something special."

There's not a board meeting I've left where I haven't been absolutely inspired at the grace of God as demonstrated by how He has filled the leadership ranks in each institution with visionary, creative, innovative, dedicated, committed and inspiring leaders. Repeatedly, I leave these meetings saying to myself, "Wow, look at what God hath wrought!"

But what is our product?

Our product is the proclamation of the gospel in the context of the Three Angels' Messages which

is transported by the wavelength of God's grace as demonstrated by His giving His only Son, Jesus. In other words, we have much more than a product — we have a Person! What makes Adventism Adventist? It's Jesus! He's central to all we do. That's what is Adventist about Adventism. Because of His equality with God and equality with man, in the heavenly Sanctuary scene of Revelation, He's the only One that can open the book sealed with seven seals.

You may retort, but every church in Christendom has the same thing we do. Our hymns are Christ-centered, but so are theirs. Our liturgy is Christ-centered, but so is theirs. Our institutions are Christ-centered, but so are theirs. Is it really a Christ-centered message that sets us apart? I respond emphatically, "Yes!"

Healthcare leaders from other faith-based institutions tell ours repeatedly, "What we have learned from our interaction with you in your hospitals is that you still intentionally live out the mission of Jesus, and we are better for having associated with you as we realize what we were missing." For us, it's a living, loving relationship with God and our fellow man that is to be lived out in all that we do. Ivy league schools were once faith-based. Yet ours, although very much imperfect, are still rooted in Jesus so young adults go out and make a Daniel-like difference in the marketplace and missionaries still go like streams of light from our schools to distant lands to share our compelling message to *come out of Babylon* (see Rev. 18:4-8).

Yes, Jesus has blessed us to be the head and not the tail for the same reason as ancient Israel. He said, *If you obey my commands, I will bless you when you come in and when you go out* (Deut. 28:6). Jesus places a high priority on commandment-keeping because it is the best litmus test of our love for Him and that's what makes us Christ-centered. That's why Jesus said, *If you love me, keep my commandments* (John 14:15). Then He restates its importance in Revelation 14:12 where

it's clear that those who sidestep the Mark of the Beast are those who do His commandments. Lastly, this powerful prophetic book concludes with *Blessed are they that do His commandments*. . . (Rev. 22:14). Our name, Adventist, implies a great love of Jesus and a yearning for His return.

Our doctrines are Christocentric, but it is keeping Jesus' commandments from a heart of love that makes us the most Christ-centered movement on earth. While the enemy would have the world believe we are working our way to heaven because he doesn't want others to attain this love for Jesus, I'm glad to be a commandment-keeper because I love Jesus. I'm so grateful He died for me. Keeping His commandments is the least I can do to please Him. Remember, Jesus loved the Father so much that He kept His Father's commands. But, rest assured, Satan labeled Him before the heavenly host as a legalist. It's hard to be labeled the exact opposite of who you are and what you stand for, and that's what the Great Controversy is all about.

Hopefully, by now, you have figured out that in my final editorial I want to shine the light on Jesus as never before. Many times, I've failed to do this so, in my final years of service, I'm determined to make up for my mess-ups. Jesus is all in all! There's no one like Him! He's still the fairest of ten thousand that everybody ought to know!

As Sharon and I depart to serve at the North American Division, please know that we love the Lake Union, and we love you. Please continue reading *Patriarchs and Prophets* that illustrates many leadership transitions in ancient Israel and trust that God is giving you in a new president, just what you need. Please pray for your new leader. And from God's Word, may we all experience a Holy Spirit-led Revival and Reformation in our love for Jesus and may we never forget He is the true head of our church. We are simply feeble co-laborers with Him. ■

Maurice Valentine is president of the Lake Union Conference.

Jesus is all in all! There's no one like Him! He's still the fairest of ten thousand that everybody ought to know!

Raising a Well-balanced Family

For many years, I believed the myth of a “perfect” family — the one shown on television and all forms of media, consisting of two biological parents, 2.3 children, 1.5 pets, and a white picket fence.



▲ Melissa Ponce-Rodas

Everything gets resolved in 30 minutes and everyone goes to bed happy. I can only imagine God laughing at my over-simplification of His great design. Media portrayals are not realistic and can do more harm than good. There is no perfect family. Romans 3:23 (NLT) reminds us that *everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard*. But a God of love does not leave us without guidelines for a healthy family and many biblical examples from which to draw!

First, the Bible shows us that all types of family structures — biological and blended, one or multiple generations, old and young — can be healthy. Jesus Himself comes from a blended family. He was not Joseph's biological son, and he lived with Joseph and Mary's biological children. Beautifully blended! Even after Ruth marries Boaz, Naomi stays with them. Then, Naomi bears children with Boaz. Three generations in one household, including the mother of the wife's late husband. Again, beautifully blended. Hannah and Elkanah faced infertility. John the Baptist never married. Yet all of these examples, showing many family structures, could be healthy because of how they functioned.

There are many pieces that work together in healthy families. One is unconditional love. When the prodigal son left home and claimed his inheritance, his father waited daily for him to return. When he saw him approaching, he did not ask questions — he just hugged his son and welcomed him home. Do our family members know that we will love them through the difficult and the ugly? Having worked with our young people for decades, I can tell you many of them fear, or know, that messing up means being kicked out. We must follow the example of our heavenly Father and how He forgives our sins, time and time again.

We also need healthy individuals to make up healthy families. Health incorporates our physical, mental and spiritual well-being. When we neglect ourselves, it becomes much harder to keep others healthy. Like the flight attendants tell us on the airplanes, “Always put on your own oxygen mask first, then help others.” That doesn't mean we won't have illness or challenges, but it means we will work through them.

Research shows that there are many other elements that contribute to healthy families. These can be clear roles and rules, with realistic boundaries. Healthy communication is also included. We need to be able to voice our opinions, agreements and disagreements, while respecting ourselves and each other. If there are children, elderly or cognitively different people in your family, routines might be very helpful for healthy families. Routines help people know what to expect and become more independent. Support, safety and security are also essential elements for healthy, functioning families.

Now the hard part. There is no perfect recipe for how much of each you need and, as we grow, how much of each element we need changes. Every child, adolescent, adult and older person needs their own special blend. This is why healthy communication and healthy individuals are essential to the process. Be gentle with each other. Meet each other where you are at. Don't compare or judge. Ask God for discernment, study the Scriptures, get counseling help if you need it, then thrive like you were designed to, as you create and enjoy your little piece of heaven on earth! ■

Melissa Ponce-Rodas is an assistant professor of Psychology at Andrews University. She and her husband, Segundo, have twin boys, Samuel and Jonathan. Her research and advocacy revolve around the intersections of religion and domestic violence.

The Balanced Life

We live in a topsy-turvy, fast-paced world. It's easy in the rush of crammed, hectic schedules to neglect life's most important priorities.

There is more to life than increasing its speed.¹ Our lives can easily become so busy. . . , but, oh, so barren. God has a special four-part “peace plan” to guide, strengthen, and inspire you with hope and energy. Let's explore these vital elements of stress protection, physical and mental health, and spiritual vitality. Daily applying these four principles will help you flourish instead of flounder as you face life's challenges and demands.

Awareness: Be aware of stress traps that you set for yourself. Managing stress involves making choices, forming priorities, adopting attitudes, and taking actions that enable you to maximize your potential without overloading your abilities.

Pare down: People who are chronically stressed often feel that their lives are out of control. Balancing your life puts you back in control and helps you avoid unnecessary stress. Here are some tips: **Limit** the number of decisions you make in a day. **Monitor** your schedule, including the amount and intensity of your activities. **Avoid** clutter. **Regulate** the rate of change taking place in your life at one time, including jobs, moving, travel, and even holidays. Set a realistic schedule. **Eliminate** personal debt, especially credit card debt, and don't buy on impulse. **Identify** your most important goals and prioritize your time accordingly. **Take time** to help others — it's a good way to put your own life in perspective.

Lifestyle: Take time to **eat nutritious food** at regular mealtimes. It lowers stress, boosts immunities, and punctuates your busy day with pleasure and satisfaction. It reduces cravings for unhealthy snacks between meals. Drink plenty of **water** between meals to keep the blood free-flowing and help nutrient transport.

Exercise regularly. It will not only improve physical health but also lower stress and improve your mood.

Don't neglect sleep. Determine how much sleep you need and make sure you get it. Going to bed early is the best way to get deep, refreshing sleep. **Relax.** Find a relaxing, stress-reducing hobby or pastime that refreshes and distracts you from your daily routine. **Connect.** Spiritual needs must be met as well as physical needs. Take time with God in His Word and connect with others of like faith — and don't forget to ask Him for balance in your life!

A balanced life is a gift from God. Temperance is a fruit of the Spirit. It is not something you *do*, it is a Divine trait implanted in the heart by the Holy Spirit, just like joy, peace, love, gentleness and meekness. In my flesh, I cannot be temperate, loving or gentle. But God, working through me, can. ■

1. *Ghandi.*

Vicki Griffin, MS, MPA, is director of Michigan Conference's Lifestyle Matters ministry.



▲ Vicki Griffin



The “Advertising” of Adventist Education: The Avondale Experiment — 1

It is written in the prophets: “They will all be taught by God.” Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from Him comes to Me. John 6:45 NIV.



▲ George R. Knight

The first step in the transformation of Adventist schools took place at the Harbor Springs educational institute in the summer 1891. The next one began when Ellen White and her son, W.C. White, sailed for Australia in November 1891. Remaining there until 1900, they would have opportunity to work with some of the most responsive of Adventism’s reform leaders.

One of the most important endeavors of the Adventists in Australia in the 1890s was the founding of the Avondale School for Christian Workers (today known as Avondale College). Australia had the advantage of being beyond the reach of the conservative Adventist leadership in the United States. In addition, it was a new mission field for Seventh-day Adventists. Thus, the fledgling denomination there had no established traditions to contend with. As a result, it piloted several innovations in Australia during the nineties that would have been much more difficult to experiment with in the United States.

► Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, 27 August 1908.



Ralph Snowball (1849-1925).

The Church forged a new type of Adventist school at Avondale. By the end of the century, Ellen White was so impressed that she referred to Avondale as an “object lesson,” a “sample school,” a “model school,” and a “pattern” (LS 374; CT 349). In 1900, she categorically stated that “the school in Avondale is to be a pattern for other schools which shall be established among our people” (MS 92, 1900).

Milton Hook, the historian of Avondale, concluded that two main goals undergirded the Avondale School. The first was the conversion and character development of its students. “Higher education,” as defined at Avondale, was that which prepared individuals for eternal life.

The second goal was the training of denominational young people for Christian service both in the local community and in worldwide mission outreach. Both goals reflect a distinct move away from the strictly academic orientation of Battle Creek College and the schools that came under its influence.

Here’s a question that we will need to ask: Why do we value Adventist Christian education? The only important answer is that it makes a difference in the lives of our children. Its primary purpose is to introduce them to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. When it does so, Adventist education has a value beyond money. ■

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, p. 304. Reprinted with permission.

Cómo Conseguí Buena Salud

“El tema de la conservación de la salud tiene una importancia capital. Al estudiarlo en el temor de Dios, aprenderemos que lo mejor para nuestro progreso físico y espiritual, es atenernos a un régimen alimenticio sencillo.



▲ En un año perdí 40 libras.

Estudiemos con paciencia este asunto. Para obrar atinadamente en este sentido, necesitamos conocimientos y discernimiento. Las leyes de la naturaleza existen, no para ser resistidas, sino acatadas” (9TI 1230).

Deseo hacer una confesión. Siempre me ha sido difícil mantenerme con buena salud. He tenido la tendencia de estar con sobrepeso desde mi niñez. Sé que muchos tienen esa tendencia por razones genéticas, pero en mi caso era porque yo comía en exceso. Como resultado, he tenido varios problemas de salud, especialmente presión alta y niveles elevados de colesterol y triglicéridos. He sido vegetariano desde que me bauticé pero aun así seguía comiendo demasiado, en especial la carne vegetariana.

Cuando estudié en la Universidad Andrews pude cambiar mi estilo de vida. Comía de manera saludable y hacía ejercicio, así que durante mi estadía allí me pude mantener relativamente delgado. Pero durante los años que fui pastor de iglesia mi peso oscilaba. En el año 2001, mi esposa y yo fuimos a un centro de salud adventista en el estado de Oklahoma. Allí nos enseñaron los principios para tener buena salud. Después de dos semanas, salimos

de allí renovados y comprometidos en mantenernos saludables. No obstante, cuando comencé a trabajar en la Unión del Lago, caí gradualmente en la misma rutina de comer excesivamente y no hacer ejercicio. Nuevamente aumenté de peso y comencé a tener problemas de alta presión y altos números metabólicos.

Al llegar la pandemia del Covid-19 descubrí que las personas que sufren de presión alta y exceso de peso tienen una probabilidad cuatro veces mayor de fallecer del virus que los que gozan de buena salud. Comprendí entonces que era necesario que yo tomara control de mi salud. Primeramente oré al Señor y puse mi fe en el versículo que dice: “Todo lo puedo en Cristo que me fortalece” (Filipenses 4:13). Al comer contaba las calorías usando un programa (App) llamado *MyFitnessPal*. Recordé, además, los principios de alimentación que había aprendido en el centro de salud y me comprometí a mantenerme vegano. Luego, comencé a caminar un mínimo de cuatro millas diarias cinco días por semana. Sabía que necesitaba tener paciencia hasta poder ver los frutos de mi esfuerzo. Gracias a Dios, ya he bajado cuarenta libras, la presión está a nivel normal, el número del colesterol bajo se redujo de 203 a 150. Y el número de triglicéridos bajó de 325 a 102. Además, me siento con más energía y mi mente está más clara al leer y orar.

La Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día tiene un hermoso mensaje pro salud. Comprendo muy bien que no es fácil para una persona cambiar su estilo de vida, especialmente la dieta. Sin embargo, para su propio bien, le recomiendo al lector que además de orar, estudiar la Biblia y asistir al culto, que también tome muy en serio su salud. Al hacerlo, recuerde que “si coméis o bebéis o hacéis otra cosa, hacedlo todo para la gloria de Dios” (1 Corintios 10:31). ■

Carmelo Mercado es el vicepresidente de la Unión del Lago

Feeding Hungry Souls

'HOW DO WE NOT WASTE THIS CRISIS?'

"WHAT'S THE CATCH?" "WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?" "NO ONE DOES SOMETHING LIKE THIS WITHOUT WANTING SOMETHING."

The questions came from Bolingbrook residents who stood in disbelief that a church would rent a taco truck to provide free food to their community. This happened on Sunday, April 25, when 70 families showed up to eat tacos and socialize with members of the church located in the suburbs of Chicago.

The idea sprouted from Bolingbrook Church leaders sensing that God did not want them to simply go back to the pre-covid normal. Throughout the pandemic as they set out to reimagine what the next iteration of their church would look like, the phrase used among the staff and leaders has been, *"How do we not waste this crisis?"*

Bolingbrook's lead pastor, David Ocegüera, said that God reminded them that the church was not the building but the people. "We were convicted that God was

not just wanting us to build a bigger, better church," he said, "but instead build better relationships with the people He placed among us."

Initial conversations discussed what that would look like, with homes literally lining the perimeter of the campus. Plans were made to invite neighbors to a barbeque on the church lawn where they could play lawn games, enjoy really good food and organic conversations would happen.

Several weeks later, Ocegüera said they felt God asking them to change plans. One of the sermons during this time explored the words of Jesus when He said, *As the Father has sent Me, so I send you* (John 20:21 NRSV). "We realized that even though our barbeque idea was a good idea, that an even better idea was for us to go to the neighbors," he explained. "By inviting them onto our campus, we were still asking them to meet us on our terms, in our home. Instead, God was saying, 'Go to them.'"

This is when the idea of renting a taco truck and parking it in front of the clubhouse was formed. Unfortunately, the homeowners' association would not give permission to use its parking lot. The decision was then made to park the taco truck at the farthest end of the church lawn, which was 20 feet from the closest house.

The day before the event, members went door to door, dropping off flyers with a map of where the taco truck would be. Signs were made and placed in high visibility areas. The next day, members went out two by two, knocked on doors, and invited residents to come eat tacos.

On a partly sunny, cool Sunday afternoon, the families arrived — some took the food and left but many stayed. As questions were asked about the reason for the free food, members simply reassured them, "We just want to be good neighbors and bless you. We hope this community is better off because we are here." ■



Ivy Rodriguez

▲ Bolingbrook residents stood in disbelief that a church would rent a taco truck to provide free food to their community.

David Ocegüera, Bolingbrook's lead pastor, with Herald staff

DESIRE TO HELP DRIVES KENOSHA PASTOR TO FEED CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

ANY TIME A RESIDENT OR MOTORIST APPROACHES A ROAD CONSTRUCTION CREW, IT TENDS NOT TO BE FOR DELIVERY OF GOOD NEWS.

But when Kenosha pastor George Andrews III made the short walk from his house on 30th Avenue to the crews from A.W. Oakes & Son in Racine doing work in the 5100 block there, he had something completely different in mind.

Andrews decided to surprise the crew on Tuesday and turned to one of his favorite activities — his grill and a whole bunch of good food.

Citing a desire to do something positive at a time when he said the city can use it, Andrews fired up the barbecue and served lunch to the hungry crew that was working just a few feet from his front door.

“We’re always looking for things to do in the community,” Andrews said. “We play a big part in the community on some other things. When I walked out and saw the guys, I thought, ‘What can I do?’ And I love to barbecue. I said, ‘I’m going to cook them lunch.’ It was simple as that. It was more just for inspiration.”

Andrews said he approached project manager Jim Clements of Graef in Milwaukee about his surprise plan. Clements immediately thought the worst, but he quickly realized the plan Andrews intended to hatch — and even began to apologize for the noise the work created.

“I said, ‘We’ll be out here for the rest of the week, but we won’t be making this kind of noise,’” Clements said. “We were using a pretty loud machine getting through the pavement. It caught me off-guard. But it’s great.”

The gesture certainly was most appreciated, Clements said.

“It’s a great thing,” he said. “He doesn’t have to do this.”

Giving Back

Andrews, a pastor at Kenosha Seventh-day Adventist Church, 3223 Roosevelt Road, said being able to help the crews, even for just one lunch hour, meant a lot to him.



Sean Krajacic/Kenosha News

Giving back is just something he enjoys doing. “It does more, I think for me, than them, because it keeps me on a positive note,” Andrews said. “When I see so much and what’s going in this world today — and I have grandkids, I have a son — it keeps me practicing what I preach. The whole world (isn’t bad).”

Andrews said he feels now is a great time for pulling together things like a random lunch for a road crew, given what has happened in the city in recent months.

“It’s really important that people see, especially from the leaders, because we’re the ones who have influence,” he said. “They need to see that you (can’t) let the world eat you up, don’t let the negativity take you out. It’s real important that we do some things that people can see it . . . We can’t just get consumed by it, and we have to do something if we want it to change.”

A longer version of this story ran in the *Kenosha News*, 4/27/2021 https://www.kenoshanews.com/news/local/watch-now-desire-to-help-drives-kenosha-pastor-to-feed-construction-workers/article_fcfooa8f-21e5-5067-ae8a-ca876772b113.html. ■

▲ Kenosha Church lay pastor George Andrews III, left, is handing a construction worker a plate of food as they visit his home for lunch.

Dan Truttschel, Kenosha News. Adapted with permission.

'Do you love Me?'

CHANCE ENCOUNTER LEADS TO PURPOSE-FILLED LIFE

By Jayney Scandiff

IN 1976 I WORKED AS A SALES REP FOR A NATURAL FOOD DISTRIBUTOR. While there, our company participated in a huge weekend event with a booth in the Fieldhouse of DePaul University in Chicago. It was very well attended by crowds of people, going from booth to booth, trying samples.

On my first break I discovered that the booth two down from mine was selling vegetarian pizza slices with non-dairy cheese and whole wheat bread. I had recently become a vegetarian and was always looking for new things to eat that would fit my new diet. I had never heard of dairy-less pizza, but it smelled and looked so appetizing! A little later I finally got up the nerve to buy a slice and, after one bite, was convinced. It was the best I had ever tasted!

On Sunday, after the fair ended, everyone was busy taking down their displays and packing up to head home. As I finished my cleanup, the woman from the pizza booth walked up and handed me a loaf of their homemade whole wheat bread and said, "Here, we wanted you to have this." I was a bit surprised because no one in Chicago gives anything away for free! Then she said, "You should come visit us some time; we live in Michigan." Cautiously I asked, what it would cost? She replied, "Nothing. Just come visit and enjoy more vegetarian food. You'll love it." I asked, when, and she said, "In two weeks, come up Friday night and stay until Sunday afternoon." I heard myself say, "Okay, two weeks . . . I'll be there." After some directions and contact information, she returned to her booth leaving me in a daze. "What had I agreed to?", I thought.

Healthy Food Serves as Opening

I decided not to go alone so invited a friend to go with me. He invited another friend and, two weeks later, the three of us headed to this place called

Oak Haven. We drove up from Chicago to Pullman, Michigan, arriving Friday evening about 8 p.m. We went by these big entrance arches, then down through a wooded forest area to a retreat-looking building where we saw people had gathered. We had *no* idea that it was Sabbath or even what that meant. We walked in where about 50 people were seated in chairs facing the front where a man in suspenders was talking happily about someone named Jesus. At the end of his talk, he said, "Let's kneel for prayer to close our Sabbath meeting." I was confused and wondered what kneeling for prayer was about. I turned to my two friends and said, "We had better kneel because we are their guests!" They refused but I knelt and, for the first time in my life, listened to someone pray.

We stayed that weekend at one of the homes at Oak Haven and experienced many new things. The vegetarian food was fantastic and there was plenty of it, although the two meals a day took some getting used to. We left Oak Haven Sunday evening and drove back to Chicago. My mind was filled with all sorts of questions. "Who were these people? Where did their happiness come from?" I felt drawn to their healthy lifestyle, especially the vegetarian food.

Once a month for the next nine months, I "invited" myself back to Oak Haven. I would make these trips alone since my friends had no interest in finding out more about these "weird" people. I met many interesting people over the next few months.

One time, I was sitting in a rocking chair after the afternoon meal when a girl came and sat beside me. In almost every sentence she included the phrase, "Isn't that a blessing?" As time went on, I began to understand what God's blessings were about. I learned about many of them from Cindy, a girl with whom I roomed at Oak Haven. Cindy blessed me by inviting me to her church and soon I attended regularly. The North Shore Seventh-day Adventist church family was



jessicamcknight.com

▲ Jayney Scandiff

so welcoming and friendly. Their pastor, Stan Cottrell, made me feel right at home. Cindy started encouraging me to stay for the Bible study.

Experiencing an Inward Peace

Another blessing was learning to pray. At the entrance to Oak Haven was something called the prayer gate; whenever people would arrive or leave, they would stop at the prayer gate and ask or thank God for safety as they traveled. People didn't just pray at the gate; they prayed at meals, at meetings, in their rooms, while they were walking — it was a genuine part of their life. They would address God as their Friend and thank Him for everything! Their prayer lives were a wonderful example to me and, because they prayed for me, too, I soon had an inward peace that was so different from that to which I was accustomed.

One Sunday evening, as I left Oak Haven to go home, I approached the prayer gate in my car and was suddenly impressed to stop and pray like all the others did. I stopped the car, got out, and knelt by the side of the road and prayed for the first time in my life. I thanked God for the beautiful weekend I had experienced and asked for safety on my trip home. As I ended my

prayer, a voice come out of nowhere saying, "*Jayney Marie Scandiff, do you love Me?*" I jumped up and looked around. There was no one in sight so I thought I was just hearing things. I knelt and started to pray again. Suddenly, the voice spoke again and this time I was sure I heard it! I looked around and still could not see anyone, so I shook my head as if to clear my thoughts and decided to start praying again. As I started to pray, the Voice spoke louder and clearer, "*Jayney Marie Scandiff, do you love Me?*" I jumped up this time, sure that I had heard the voice of God! I answered and said, "*Yes, God, yes, I love you!*"

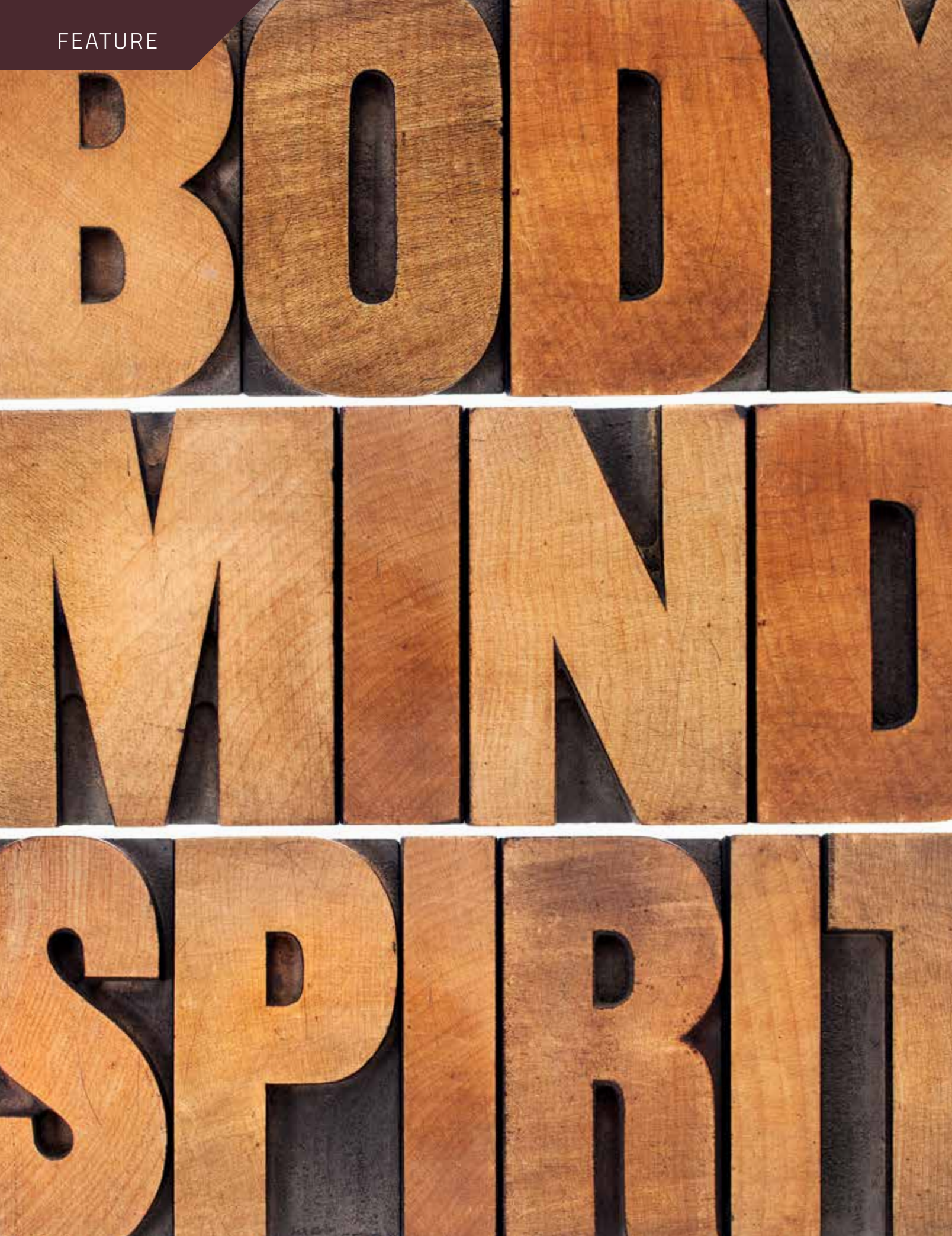
When I got home, I called Pastor Cottrell and asked to be baptized as soon as possible, on Sabbath. That was 45 years ago and, since then, I have been doing the work God gave me to do — health education. What a blessing being a Seventh-day Adventist has been! What a blessing our health message has been for me!

My story is really about the power of God reaching out to me. I often think where I would be today had it not been for the people in the booth two down from mine. God invites each of us to share the Good News. My "birth" took nine months; it may take years for others, or a day, and it starts when we tell others what Jesus has done for us. I was given the true "Bread of Life" by that one loaf of bread given to me that Sunday afternoon at DePaul University in 1976. When we have an experience with God, we are overcome with a desire to share Him with others. ■

Jayney Scandiff conducted health seminars and managed health clubs in Illinois for several years before moving to Clearwater, Fla., where she now resides.



▲ Jayney's entrance into the Seventh-day Adventist Church began at Oak Haven where she learned to make vegetarian meals and have a personal relationship with Christ.



Faith & Medical Care

AN INTEGRATED RESPONSE TO THE MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

CREATION Life, based on the foundation of Seventh-day Adventist belief, promotes a whole-person approach to health care, focused on meeting the needs of the body, mind and spirit. That belief inspired the Adventist hospital presence that is now part of AMITA Health.

Drs. David and Mary Paulson, Seventh-day Adventists, were ministering to the disabled, impoverished and criminal in Chicago. Then, believing that “patients should have fresh air, sunshine, suitable exercise, pure water, rest, a wholesome diet, a beautiful outlook and a mind at peace with God and man,” they opened a sanitarium in Hinsdale, Illinois, in 1905 that evolved into what

is now AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center Hinsdale. This integration of the gospel and health care is central to AMITA Health’s belief that the mind is as much in need of care as the body.

“Mental health is health. It is all a gift from God,” said Clifton Saper, PhD, lead psychologist for AMITA Health and director of clinical services for its Behavioral Medicine service line. “We are



▲ Clifton Saper

By Julie Busch

really talking about whole-care. We are not caring for the whole patient if we are not taking care of mental health.”

Saper said that some people see mental health problems as signs of a weakness of faith or self-discipline and believe that if people just prayed harder or tried harder, they could overcome those problems. But that is not the case, he said. Mental health issues are not signs of some kind of failure. Instead, they are part of what binds people together as human beings, and people should recognize that in themselves and in others.

“God wants us to support each other, to reach out to help each other and to reach out when we need support. There should be no stigma or shame,” Saper said. “We need each other, and by listening to and supporting each other, we can realize a better quality of life.”

As people begin to seek help for behavioral health issues, they find that they are not alone, that many people are experiencing the same things. “We are all in very similar boats,” Saper said. “That’s important for all of us to know. And unless you share and are willing to open yourself up for people to show caring and love and support, you are never going to know that.”

Treatment for behavioral health issues is as much a gift from God as is treatment for physical ills. Saper said. “God has given us tools as human beings, and you should be using those tools,” he said. “He didn’t create you to stick your head in the sand.”

When to Seek Help

People experiencing behavioral health issues should seek help in the same way that people with physical ills do. But when the body is sick, the signs are often obvious. The signs of mental illness can be more subtle and easier to ignore or mask. So when is it time to seek help?

“If you feel like what you are experiencing is interfering with your life, if you notice you’re not as productive as you want to be, if you’re isolating yourself or you can’t be empathic or caring with your family, if you’re not functioning the way you would like to function, that’s when you need to look for help,” Saper said.

The pandemic has worsened mental health issues for many people, Saper said. As much as three-quarters of the U.S. population has shown increased anxiety and/or depression, and there has been an increase in suicidal

ideation, addictions, sleep disorders and overdoses.

“Especially during this time of pandemic, it’s important for folks to realize that it’s okay to be not okay,” Saper said. “It’s appropriate and, in fact, desirable to allow yourself to have the feelings of anxiety, sadness, grief that all of us have. Unless you allow yourself to be aware of these feelings, you are going to end up ignoring them and then suffer later with behavioral issues, addiction and other problems.”

As the pandemic shows signs of easing, especially with more people getting vaccinated, some people are uncomfortable with the idea of returning to work or going into places where there are more people. They have spent more than a year trying to feel safe in their homes, and they have a lot of anxiety about re-entering society.

“It’s important to first realize that *that* anxiety is normal,” Saper said. “We have developed new routines, and changing those routines will be stressful. People who continue to avoid re-entry always will be anxious. We start with baby steps. We suggest that people have limited exposure at first, so they can see that they will be safe.” He added that this is an approach for people who suffer from anxiety or other disorders even in non-pandemic times.

Finally, Saper urged people to understand that behavioral health issues are much more common than they might think. He said that most people, at some point in their life, will reach out to a professional such as a psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker or counselor. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, about one in five American adults experiences some kind of mental illness.

A Personal Story

One of those people was Christina Lobraco, a Clinical Mission Integration program manager for AMITA Health based at AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center Hinsdale. More than 15 years ago, after struggling with various issues and having a major surgery, Lobraco became depressed. As part of her depression, she found herself getting irrationally angry and upset at times. That was unusual for her, and she did not like it. At a regular visit with her doctor, she discussed how she was feeling. He prescribed medication.



▲ Christina Lobraco

She was surprised when she read the material with the prescription and discovered she was taking antidepressants; she had described her symptoms as anger rather than depression. But her doctor suggested she just take the medication for a while to see if it made a difference.

It did help her feel less angry. But it also made her feel less like herself, and she did not want to feel that way. So she began to explore other ways to deal with her anger and sadness, including seeing an herbalist and a homeopathic doctor.

“At about the same time, I was getting more curious about God and my relationship with Him,” Lobraco said. She continued to explore and expand her relationship with God, and she also became interested in pursuing a career in behavioral health. Eventually, through a combination of her growing spirituality and various therapies, she was able to move to a place of greater behavioral wellness. She began to work at connecting other people to the kind of resources that had helped her.

One of the main parts of her role at AMITA Health is to help employees identify and reach out to the resources they need, especially for their spiritual or mental health growth. She directs people to the employee assistance plan or other options based on their needs. And she often starts by telling them about her own experience.

“When people come to me, if I get the sense it will make them feel better or feel less isolated and alone, I ask if I can share my story,” she said. “Sometimes people think they are the only people going through a

behavioral health crisis. The first things that makes some people open their eyes and their mind and their heart to a different idea is when somebody else says, ‘Me, too. That has happened to me, too.’”

Lobraco said her interest in and passion about behavioral health are outgrowths of her own experience, especially her journey toward a stronger relationship with God. She believes faith is not an impediment to mental health care but is, instead, a critical part of being well mentally and physically.

“God says we are beautifully and wonderfully made, and He certainly is not going to turn His back on you if you seek out counseling or other help,” she said. “That’s not the kind of God we report to.”

Self-care for Mental Health

The first step in behavioral health self-care is for people to become more aware of how they are feeling and take steps to feel their best. Saper suggests that everyone should:

- Be grateful for the things they have rather than focusing on the challenges and worries of life. “Be able every morning when you wake up to think about things for which you’re grateful,” he said. “That’s a good way to start the day.”
- Practice mindfulness. “Whether you pray or whether you meditate, that breathing and being mindful of remaining in the present is another way to take care of yourself,” he said. “Doing it every day is important, so we stay in the present and don’t get hung up on

worrying about the past or about what might happen to us in the future. Instead, think about what we need to do in terms of our thinking, our physical health and our behavior in the present.”

- Understand what is possible to change and what cannot be changed. “It’s important to change the things we can change, but when things are out of our control, we need to let them go,” Saper said.
- Take care of their physical body. Get enough sleep, exercise and healthy food. See the doctor regularly, and do what he or she recommends. In these times, it is particularly important to get vaccinated, wear a mask, practice social distancing and wash your hands.
- Be part of a community. “It is important that we not feel isolated,” Saper said. “Humans are meant to be in a community, and being involved with others keeps us from getting caught up in our own problems.”
- Be of service. “Volunteering or helping others is a good way to be part of a community,” Saper said.

- Finally, people who feel they need help should ask for it. They can reach out to their doctor, their pastor or a trusted friend. If their company has an employee assistance plan, that can be a good place to start. There also are local, county, state and national organizations that offer various kinds of help, much of it free.

Saper and Lobraco stress that God has made these resources available, and it is up to individuals to reach out and take advantage of them.

“I always have had my relationship with God and never felt that I was ‘less than’ because of any struggles I was experiencing,” Lobraco said. “I always held fast to the idea that my God loves me no matter what, and He also gives me the tools and guides my steps to do whatever I need to do. There is no shame in that.” ■

Julie Busch is an associate vice president for AMITA Health.

RESOURCES

National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) provides advocacy, education, support and public awareness so all individuals and families affected by mental illness can build better lives (www.nami.org).

HOTLINES

Many organizations run hotlines and online services to provide mental health support. These are just a few of the available services:

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline** (www.thehotline.org) offers phone support to people experiencing domestic violence.
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** (<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>) offers phone support to people in emotional distress.
- **SAMHSA’s National Helpline** (www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline) provides treatment referrals and informational support to people coping with substance abuse or other mental health conditions.
- **Veterans Crisis Line** (www.veteranscrisisline.net) provides support to veterans and their loved ones.
- **Mental Health America** (<https://screening.mhanational.org/content/need-talk-someone-warm-lines>) operates “warmlines” across the country, where callers can receive support when they just need to talk to someone, usually a person who understands what it’s like to struggle with mental health problems.

BY DAVID SEDLACEK

The Gospel and

MENTAL HEALTH

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), about one in five adults in the U.S. — 43.8 million — experiences mental illness in any given year. Many of these individuals turn to their church or their personal faith in search of support and guidance in times of emotional distress.

Despite the prevalence of mental health concerns, there is still a stigma attached to mental illness in many of our churches. The predominant culture of silence along with mistaken expectations and misguided attitudes often cause suffering believers to feel shamed, blamed and alone in their experience of mental illness. Additionally, in spite of a growing desire to help those suffering with mental illness, church communities often report feeling ill-equipped to address the issues of mental

illness and mental health in their pastors, church leaders and congregation members. A major factor that contributes to communities of faith not being open to the need to embrace mental health and mental illness as real issues is the failure to see how the gospel is intimately connected to the workings of the mind and heart. However, mental health and the origins of mental illness are woven throughout the Bible, beginning in the book of Genesis.

In the Garden of Eden before sin, Adam and Eve were in a perfect covenant relationship with God. There was no stress, no dissension, no brokenness in this Edenic peace characterized by perfect love, empowerment and intimacy. With the advent of sin, however, this love equilibrium was broken. Satan was successful in planting doubt about God's goodness, justice and love in Eve's heart. As Adam followed suit, the sentence of death was

they likely experienced some level of depression. The Bible says: *Adam had sexual relations with his wife again, and she gave birth to another son. She named him Seth, for she said, "God has granted me another son in place of Abel, whom Cain killed"* (Gen. 4:25). This passage aptly describes the longing in a mother's heart related to the loss of a child.

Sin created a new mental norm in the human race. No longer able to rest securely in God's perfect love, we began living a life of fear. No longer securely attached to God, humans began living with chronic doubt, anxiety and suspicion of one another. Relational insecurity became the norm. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM), 5th edition, "is the product of more than ten years of effort by hundreds of international experts in all aspects of mental health. Their dedication and hard work have yielded an authoritative volume that defines and classifies mental disorders in order to improve diagnoses, treatment and research." This manual describes well the state of the post-fall human race with diagnoses such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Major Depression, or Adjustment Disorder. The point is that, from the beginning of time, humans have experienced symptoms of what is now codified by mental health professionals as mental health diagnoses.

The Bible is filled with other examples of what today would be called mental illness. Job, when afflicted with sores, expressed profound despair and grief. *"Why, then, did you deliver me from my mother's womb? Why didn't you let me die at birth? It would be as though I had never existed, going directly from the womb to the grave. I have only a few days left, so leave me alone, that I may have a moment of comfort before I leave — never to return — for the land of darkness and utter gloom"* (Job 10:18–21). Like many other humans who don't understand why they are suffering, Job was depressed to the point of wanting to die.

Similarly, Elijah, after the magnificent demonstration of God's power on Mount Carmel, responded to Jezebel's threat of death with anxiety and depression. *Elijah was afraid and fled for his life. He went to Beersheba, a town in Judah, and he left his servant there. Then he went on alone into the wilderness, traveling all day. He sat down under a solitary broom tree and prayed that he might die. "I've had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life, for I am no better than my ancestors who have already died"* (1 Kings 19:3–4 NLT).

Remember that the Great Controversy being waged right now is a battle for our minds and hearts.

required as God must be faithful to His Word. Even though God's covenant of love never waived even as He pursued our first parents in Eden (Gen. 3:9), we humans began to experience anxiety manifested as blame, shame and mutual victimization (Gen. 2:10–14).

One tragic result of this contention was the death of Abel at the hands of his brother, Cain (Gen. 4:8). Can you imagine the depths of grief and self-condemnation that Adam and Eve felt when they knew that they were responsible for this death? Not only did they lose Abel, but also Cain in the judgment that he would be from then on a homeless wanderer on the earth (Gen. 4:12). The Bible does not describe the emotions of our first parents upon learning of the death of Abel. However, since depression is a part of the normal grief process,

This is a small sampling of persons in the Bible who have struggled with some form of mental illness. As we have gotten closer to the end of time, tragedies, war, illness and death have become more commonplace, requiring intervention for the destructive thoughts and emotions that accompany these events.

However, the Good News (Gospel) is that God predicted that a way of healing would come for a world wracked by mental disorders. In Isaiah 61:1–3 (NLT), we read, “*The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me, for the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed. He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time of the Lord’s favor has come, and with it, the day of God’s anger against their enemies. To all who mourn in Israel, He will give a crown of beauty for ashes, a joyous blessing instead of mourning, festive praise instead of despair.*” Jesus quoted this passage in Luke 4:18–19 when He described the mission statement for His ministry. Unfortunately, His own people did not comprehend the prophetic meaning of His words or ministry, but Jesus immediately began His ministry of healing. The Scripture notes that His healing was complete or comprehensive. Matthew 9:35 states that *He healed every kind of disease and illness*. That would include mental illness.

As we look at the life of Jesus, we see that He suffered greatly many of the afflictions that are common to us today. He was *despised and rejected – a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief* (Isa. 53:3). He also was abandoned by His followers, betrayed by one of His own disciples, physically abused, sexually abused, emotionally abused and ultimately chose death in His amazing act of redemptive love so we might live! He understands our suffering, but not only that, Isaiah 63:9 records that *in all their suffering He also suffered*. Whatever we experience even now, He is with us suffering our pain. In His heart of love, He would never, could never, leave us or forsake us (Heb. 13:5).

One of Satan’s cunning deceptions is to distort our view of God and His goodness. Not only was he successful using this tactic with Eve, but he also is successful today in insinuating that God doesn’t care, that He has abandoned us, that He expects perfection and is waiting to punish us if we fall short. This kind of thinking creates a chronic anxiety/fear in us and turns our focus inward

to our own performance. A focus on ourselves and our performance is one of the major contributors to mental illness.

Remember that the Great Controversy being waged right now is a battle for our minds and hearts. Proverbs 23:7 says that *as a person thinks in his heart, so is he*. We are what we think. Christian psychiatrist Curt Thompson in his book, *Anatomy of the Soul*, describes the working of the human brain in response to what we believe. Another Christian psychiatrist, Timothy Jennings in his book, *The God-shaped Brain*, explains the negative impact that a fear-based view of God has on the brain. Jennings’ sequel, *The God-shaped Heart*, shares research on the healing power of love on the brain. It is interesting that Jesus gave His disciples power to cast out demons as well as heal all types of disease. While we may not often do hand-to-hand combat with demons as Jesus did, I would suggest that every time we bring our thoughts into captivity to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:3–6), we are casting demons out of our minds even now.

One of the most powerful therapies used today is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) or its Christian version (CCBT). This therapy suggests that thought distortions lead to toxic emotional states, such as anxiety and depression, which lead to self-destructive behaviors. Recent research on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) clearly confirm that childhood trauma can not only result in chronic emotional illness, but also chronic physical illness and self-destructive behavior such as addictions of all types. Satan uses the brokenness of human beings to continue the victim/victimizer cycle that began in Eden. There is a common truism that “hurt people, hurt people.” As a result, there are often cognitive distortions based in fear and shame that we believe about ourselves. Some of the more common lies we believe are that you are not enough, you will never measure up, and God cannot love you. John 8:44 describes Satan as the father or originator of these lies. However, Jesus promises in John 8:32 that *we will know the truth and that the truth will make us free*. This is the Good News of the Gospel!

What is the truth about you? You are loved with an everlasting love (Jer. 31:3), you are precious to God (Isa. 43:4), you are not condemned, you belong to God (Rom. 8:1–2), you are God’s child (Rom. 8:16), and that you are chosen (Eph. 1:4). When Jesus was speaking

about knowing the truth, He was not only referring to the truth of our identity as revealed in God's Word but to know Him as the Truth! The greatest longing of God's heart (and ours as well) is that we would know Him (John 17:3) and that He would make Himself at home in our hearts when we have been rooted in His love (Eph. 3:16–19). Spending time meditating on these truths found in God's Word heals our broken brains by rewiring the destructive pathways that have been built based on lies. Experiencing God each day in our own lives takes us beyond a cognitive conception of God and into a personal, living, "knowing" of God. The Gospel continues to be written each day in the renewed minds and hearts of God's children.

We cannot ignore the reality that generations of sinful, destructive thinking and living has created in many of us unhealthy hormonal and neurochemical environments in our bodies and brains that result in chemical imbalances which contribute to mental illness. Likewise, genetics and epigenetics play their role and we must become more knowledgeable about these factors and how to overcome them to whatever degree we can.

For some of us, the use of psychiatric medications can be helpful and should be used as a way of assisting in the healing process. Many of us are overly suspicious of counseling, seeing it as nonbiblical or a lack of faith. However, David and Beverly Sedlacek in their book, *Cleansing the Sanctuary of the Heart: Tools for Emotional Healing*, quote Ellen White as follows:

"The true principles of psychology are found in the Holy Scriptures. Man does not know his own value. He acts according to his unconverted temperament of character because he does not look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of his faith" (p. 17). Seeing our own value as persons who Christ loved enough to die for and looking outwardly to Jesus rather than inwardly dwelling on our problems is tremendously therapeutic to mental wellbeing.

A Christian who has heart disease would consult a cardiologist who would provide appropriate therapies such as surgery or medication to correct the condition. Likewise, good counselors today, especially Christian counselors, perform heart surgery to remove pathological thoughts and emotions that many of us do not even know exist. Just as Jesus came to give sight to the blind (Luke 4:18), competent counselors help us to see ourselves as we are. Our motives, hurts and hang-ups are brought from darkness into the light so that we can see them as God does (Psalm 139). The prophecy of Malachi 4:2 has been fulfilled and continues to be fulfilled each day *the Sun of Righteousness will rise with healing in His wings*. This Scripture was fulfilled in the life of Jesus and His love for fallen humankind. The Gospel of God's love is as healing today as it was to those whom Jesus encountered centuries ago.

David Sedlacek, PhD, is professor of Family Ministry and Discipleship as well as chair of the Department of Discipleship and Religious Education at the Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University.

Spending time meditating on these truths found in God's Word heals our broken brains by rewiring the destructive pathways that have been built based on lies.

Podiatrist goes extra mile to help patient walk pain-free

PATIENT AND MOM MEET DOCTOR AT AMITA HEALTH'S MISSION AT HOME CLINIC



▲ “Dr. McKanna understands my daughter and she listens to him,” said Davis, noting her daughter has ADHD and autism. “The GlenOaks surgical nurses were friendly and helpful. This was a blessing in a challenging year [with COVID-19].”

Alex McKanna, D.P.M., pursued podiatry so he could help patients overcome problems. To Aja Brown, a 12-year-old patient with chronic, painful foot and leg problems, he is more than a doctor – he’s a “superhero,” she told him.

Brown and her mother, Zita Davis, linked up with Dr. McKanna at the AMITA Health Mission at Home clinic in September 2020 in Glendale Heights, Ill. More than 150 AMITA associates and providers volunteered to staff the clinic, including Dr. McKanna.

Zita heard about the clinic offering free medical care and services to the

community. The home health worker and daughter, who don’t have health insurance, planned to attend for a free back-to-school physical and flu shots.

“We went over to talk with Dr. McKanna,” Davis said. “He wanted to see Aja walk without shoes. He said, ‘I see the problem.’ He asked if we could come into his office that week for x-rays. I started to cry. I told him we didn’t have any money or health insurance. He said not to worry – we’d figure something out.”

It turned out Brown had severely flat feet, and joint and bone deformities causing pain. She also had shin splints and tendonitis in her ankles. She would need surgery to correct the problem. He would start with her left foot.

Dr. McKanna is on staff at two Adventist medical centers -- AMITA Health Adventist Medical Centers GlenOaks in Glendale Heights, and AMITA Health Adventist Medical Center Bolingbrook.

“The mom was ecstatic but concerned she couldn’t afford surgery,” Dr. McKanna said. “I told her I’m not going to charge you and Bruce Christian (GlenOaks president and CEO) said the medical center will donate the surgery. I wanted to make sure Aja was happy and healthy, and walking without pain.”

The single mom couldn’t believe the news. “I started crying,” Davis said. “I thank God for them.”

In October, Dr. McKanna performed the 1.5-hour reconstructive surgery on Brown’s foot, lengthening the outside of the foot and muscles, and using bone grafts to create a larger arch. With physical therapy, Brown went from a knee scooter to boot to walking in a regular shoe in seven weeks.

In February, Dr. McKanna performed surgery on her right foot. By March, she was wearing regular shoes on both sides without pain. Brown headed back to in-person school in April after being remote during the pandemic.

“I feel great about the outcome – this is exactly why I went into podiatry,” Dr. McKanna said. “I’ve wanted to be a podiatrist since age 12. I love my job and helping people.”

Davis couldn’t be happier and more grateful for surgery – not once, but twice. “I’m very pleased with the outcome. Aja would go to the gym and couldn’t do what other kids were doing, I felt so bad. It was heartbreaking,” she said.

“The opportunity for AMITA associates and physicians, from all over the system, to come together to serve our most vulnerable is a true blessing,” said Heather Hoffman, regional director, Clinical Mission Integration, AMITA Health. “The clinic offered physical therapy, labs, pharmacy, spiritual care and counseling, and connected patients to local community services, such as our local food pantries. The demand to volunteer always exceeds the number of positions needed and we have a waiting list of AMITA staff wanting to help. This truly is a testament to our values, and, ultimately, allows us to serve our mission outside the walls of our facilities.”

Hoffman said the fourth Mission-at-Home clinic will be held on June 19 in Glendale Heights. ■

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



▲ Ariel Solis (back), chair of the School of Architecture & Interior Design, working with a student

Pathways to Adventist education

Andrews University recently introduced two new academic degree programs that provide pathways for access to Adventist education. The School of Architecture & Interior Design and the School of Business Administration now offer two-year degrees, at highly discounted rates, that prepare students for a variety of careers and for further education.

The School of Architecture & Interior Design (SAID) will be offering an associate degree in architecture beginning in fall 2021. Inspired by the original Seventh-day Adventist education model promoted by Ellen G. White and others, the program emphasizes mission-minded, practical and character-building training to prepare young people for godly service. Students will gain skills in drawing, computer-aided

drafting, building information modeling, digital rendering, basic construction documents, physical modeling and introductory design in order to be effective in entry-level positions.

Ariel Solis, chair of the School of Architecture & Interior Design, says, “Our practicing faculty work to provide a creative, collaborative learning environment and are dedicated to helping students grow in their discipline and their walk with Christ.”

As the only Seventh-day Adventist school of architecture in North America, Andrews University is also committed to providing an accessible option for architectural education at a competitive cost. With a tuition reduction of up to 70 percent, the program seeks to enable a life of ministry by reducing the burden of student debt. Upon completion of the degree, students can choose to

enter the workforce, pursue a related field of study, or continue in the professionally accredited Master of Architecture program (MArch) at Andrews University.

The School of Business Administration has sought ways to innovate programs, as well. The redesigned associate degree (AS) in business is a two-year program that will hone a student’s knowledge and skills in accounting, management, information systems and marketing, preparing the student to thrive in any business environment. The student will learn Christian ethics and principles and develop the three key characteristics employers are looking for: management and accounting knowledge, business application skills, and marketing exposure. In addition, students develop integrity, collaboration, leadership and communication skills.

“We redesigned our associate degree (AS) in business to create a pathway for those students who would love to have an Adventist education experience but haven’t found a way to afford enrolling on our campus yet,” says Kimberly Pichot, associate professor of marketing in the School of Business Administration.

Andrews University is offering the AS in business at a fraction of regular tuition, with each semester priced at \$4,950. After completing the degree, graduates will be able to seek entry-level positions in business or in nonprofits, ready to join the workforce. If they decide to continue on to a four-year Bachelor of Business Administration or other bachelor’s program, they can seamlessly transition into two more years of college.

For more information on the AS in architecture, visit andrews.edu/said. For more information on the AS in business, visit andrews.edu/sba. ■

Compiled by Gillian Panigot, Communication manager and FOCUS editor

All nine Lake Union Pathfinder teams place first in PBE finals

On April 17, nine Lake Union Conference Pathfinder Bible Experience teams proved their knowledge of the books of Hebrews, James, and 1 and 2 Peter and received first place in the North American Division testing level.

Joined by 125 other teams from across North America and England, the teams participated virtually, answering 90 percent of the questions correctly.

"I could not be more proud of all of them all no matter their scoring outcome," said Ron Whitehead, Lake Union Conference Youth director. "They are all outstanding young Bible scholars."

Lake Union Club Ministries coordinator, Craig Harris, concurred: "I am very proud of our youth for sticking with the PBE program through very different and difficult times. They listened to the questions read over Zoom, used [the technology platform] Nearpod to answer the questions, and used a second computer to Zoom to their fellow teammates that may not be in the same location."

Organizers of this year's virtual testing used their ingenuity to pull off a program which had more than 1,000 participants, including volunteers and mentors behind the scenes.

"The fact that the NAD and local clubs pulled this off is extraordinary," said Harris. "They understand the importance of hiding God's Word in their hearts and persevered in memorizing the important letters."

The winning strategy for the several clubs, including Ann Arbor's, was memorization songs. They spent about eight hours a week since the end of last September committing verses to memory through song.

When one of their teammates who lives in Canada wasn't able to join the team for



▲ Both Ann Arbor Teams, left to right: Leah Canada, Joshua Lee, Aidan Winkler, Chea Hwang, Lily Canada, Elisa Mendez, Alex Winkler, Nicolas Ganza, Juan Mendez. Canadian members on screen: Daniel and David Gomez

their in-person practice because of the country's strict lockdown measures, the team improvised and found ways to still connect online.

This was the second year participating for 11-year-old, Lily Canada, and she said has learned several valuable lessons from her experience. "This proves that hard work pays off," said Lily who's a member of the team Ann Arbor – By Faith. "If you put a lot of work into something, God will help you. It's a nice experience to feel accomplished."

Her older sister, Leah, was captain of the Ann Arbor – Covid Conquerors team and, while she missed seeing her friends in-person, she feels it has been meaningful overall. "It's good to memorize these things in your head so, if the time ever comes, it's easy to remember the things that can help you at that moment."

Chicago's Shiloh Church team had a few relatively new members, such as 10-year-old Eden Nicholson. In her first year, she was responsible for studying 2 Peter and found that she has gained so much valuable knowledge from her studies. "In chapter one, it talks about how when Christ went to Heaven and that some people were short-sighted and then turned back to their old ways. Chapter two talks about judgment and that we need to read the Bible for ourselves. It's a great experience learning about God and how He can help you with your problems."



▲ Shiloh Trailblazers PBE team, left to right: Micah Nicholson, Kai Nave, Samir Donnejour, Dajon Greenwood, Bill Eze, Eden Nicholson



▲ The year's testing event was challenging, but organizers used their ingenuity to pull off the program which had over 1,000 participants, including volunteers and mentors behind the scenes. Pictured here is one of the two Lansing teams, left to right: Justine Klein, Umi Majee, Sam Calvelage, Coach Zamantha Hampton, Jessica Klein

Her older brother, Micah, is in his third year as a member of the PBE team and served as this year's captain. The daily drills have come to an end, for now, but in studying the entire book of James, he has learned about depending on God. "We shouldn't be quick to get angry. We should be quick to listen," said the 12-year-old. "If we have any problems, we should ask God for wisdom."

Youth leaders and PBE organizers emphasize that the point of the Pathfinder Bible Experience is not about winning but about storing God's Word in their hearts for eternity. Whitehead remarked, "I cannot wait to see how the PBE Class of 2021 will use their Bible study knowledge to tell the world about Jesus."

Below is a full list of the Lake Union teams that participated in the Division level testing:

Illinois

- Hinsdale Fil-Am Challengers – *Team Living Sacrifices*

Indiana

- Angola Hawks – *Team 1*

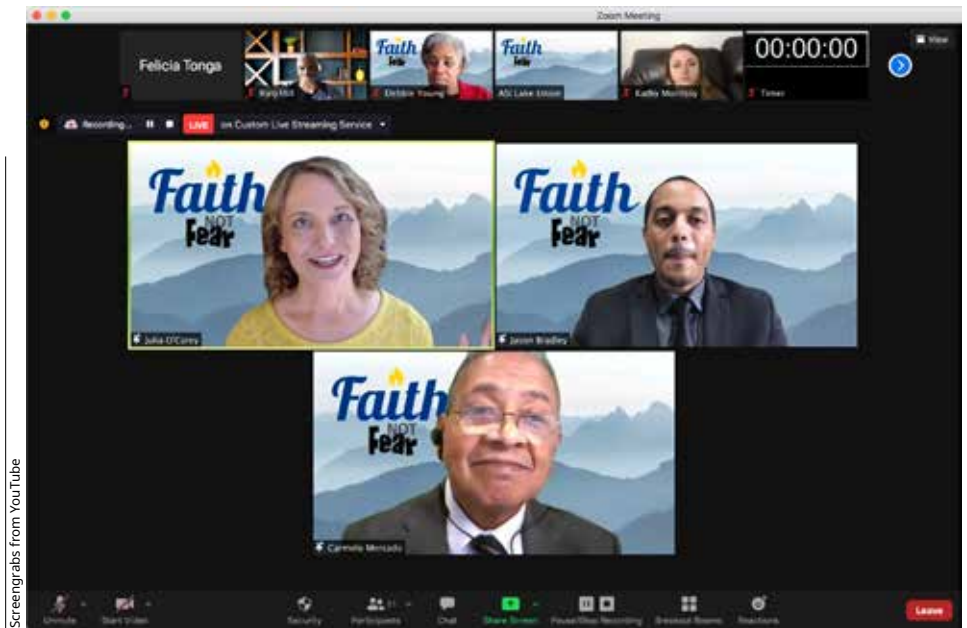
Lake Region

- Shiloh Trailblazers

Michigan

- Ann Arbor Anchors – *Team By Faith*
- Ann Arbor Anchors – *Team Covid Conquerors*
- Lansing Capitals – *Team Esther*
- Lansing Capitals – *Team John*
- Stevensville Challengers – *Team Living Stones*
- Stevensville Challengers – *Team New Borns* ■

Katie Fellows, Lake Union Communication assistant



Screenshots from YouTube

▲ The virtual spring meeting held April 16-17 featured multiple ASI Lake Union members sharing their health journey.

ASI Lake Union spring meeting spotlights health

With the backdrop of a global pandemic, the Lake Union chapter of Adventist Laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) hosted a virtual spring fellowship April 16–17 focused on health and wellness.

The weekend themed "Faith Not Fear" kicked off on Friday evening with the testimony of Chef Chew, owner of Something Better Foods. He shared how he used food and nutrition to bring people to Christ through The Veg Hub, a center of influence in Oakland, Calif. His plant-based protein, Better Chew, focuses on accessibility to healthy alternatives in all neighborhoods.

On Sabbath morning, mental health professional Magna Porterfield, Ph.D., discussed how our thoughts can bring us from illness to wellness as they affect our emotions, mental functioning, physical health, relationships and spiritual life. David DeRose, M.D., M.P.H., offered the message and pointed to Biblical principles as a foundation for peace and health. He highlighted the importance of the health message in furthering the Good News of the Three Angels' Message.

On Sabbath afternoon, Rico Hill shared his testimony of working in secular media for 20 years, including time at

Nickelodeon and Turner Broadcasting. He has since launched Beehive International, an organization that combines health education and humanitarian aid to develop relationships and reveal Christ's love in practical ways. His 3ABN Dare to Dream show, "From Sickness to Health," approaches health topics by addressing multiple points of view.

Many ASI members shared their health journey, including Carmelo Mercado, general vice president of the Lake Union Conference. He spoke about how the Adventist Church is blessed with the health message, but we often struggle to apply it to our lives. The COVID-19 pandemic was a wake-up call to use Adventist health principles to get his health in order, resulting in drastic improvements in his bloodwork results.

The weekend wrapped up with a lively interview of Wes Youngberg, M.D. He concluded with helpful actionable tips, such as walking after meals, to help everyone lead a healthier lifestyle each day.

The offering collected at this event will support six ministries within our union:

1. **ASAP Ministries** is reaching Karen refugees in Rockford, Ill., and Milwaukee, Wis. Bible studies, home visitations and assisting new arrivals with humanitarian needs allow them to build relationships that bring people to Christ.



2. Care for Cuba, a ministry from the Andrews University Seminary, equips pastors and lay workers in Cuba with training and materials. Cuba is going through the greatest crisis in decades due to COVID-19, and people are scrambling to find food and medicine. The in-land Care for Cuba project coordinator reports that food prices have tripled during the last year and people need to make their \$25 dollars a month salary stretch. The offering will help provide support to pastors and Bible workers.

3. FARM STEW is supporting a fishermen community of about 700 people in Entebbe, Uganda. The fishermen live on the edge of Lake Victoria but, due to several restrictions and the political climate, are not allowed to fish. Hence, they have no way to make a living and are barely surviving. They obtain their water from badly polluted Lake Victoria and have one latrine with four stalls for the entire village. FARM

STEW training is being used to help the people raise kitchen gardens, establish tippy taps and latrines and rubbish pits, and begin some sort of enterprise.

4. Harbor of Hope, an outreach ministry of the Pioneer Memorial Church on the campus of Andrews University, is leading a two-week holistic evangelism initiative. The RISE UP Challenge hopes to lead people to Jesus and introduce them to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

5. Oak Haven Health in Pullman, Mich., is creating a lifestyle program at their facility. The offering will help to renovate existing space into a fitness room and add a hot and cold contrast shower for hydrotherapy.

6. Strong Tower Radio, a network of stations in Michigan and Illinois, provides radio and television programming that teaches the truth about the character of God. New equipment will enable them to record interviews at Camp Au Sable for radio broadcasts, podcasts, and more.

You can get the full experience of the weekend by watching the replays on YouTube. Visit asilakeunion.org/local-projects if you would like to learn more about these projects or help support them. The ASI international convention will be held in Orlando, August 4 to 7. If you're interested in brainstorming with like-minded individuals, expanding your network, or finding tools and inspiration to share Christ in your career, you can register at www.asiministries.org. ■

Kathleen Morrissy, ASI Lake Union Communication director



▲ The key avenue for the South Bend Berean Church outreach ministry is through the "Touch 10k Souls for Christ Challenge," an initiative designed to motivate members to care for the community.

Community outreach expands while church building is closed

South Bend's Berean Church may have closed its doors as a result of the pandemic, but God has opened other doors for ministry to flourish throughout the city.

The key avenue for the outreach mission is through the "Touch 10k Souls for Christ Challenge," an initiative designed to motivate members to care for the community. The project was implemented after taking an assessment of the city's needs, which was found to center around issues related to health, gun violence, activities for children and youth, and single parent support. After examining the needs, the church was divided into teams with each of them responsible for planning monthly outreach activities and mobilizing the rest of the church. Started in July 2020, these activities have continued to this day:

- Thank essential workers in hospital units and nursing homes
- Provide gift baskets full of snacks, fruit, and a gift certificate to the fire department precincts
- Feed the homeless a home-cooked meal

- Join resources with an organization “Mamas Against Violence”
- Develop an afterschool tutoring program and other services in partnership with Andrews University Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary
- Link arms with other community leaders in the Faith in Indiana coalition with the goal of changing the South Bend Police Department’s use-of-force policy
- Expand the food pantry as a result of several grants received

Our new pastor, Claval Hunter, has been instrumental in helping us become a community-focused church committed to serving people, and not primarily on increasing our membership. It’s remarkable that all of this was accomplished despite our pastor arriving after our church doors closed. All the planning for the community outreach has occurred virtually. It is apparent that God is responsible for providing the increase.

To learn more about our ministry and even become one of our faithful partners, visit us at www.berean7.com; follow and subscribe to the YouTube channel, Facebook page, and Instagram. ■

Beverly Sedlacek, South Bend Berean Church member



▲ Berean Pastor Claval Hunter joined the Faith in Indiana coalition group.



▲ Dr. Abraham Henry, Youth director for Lake Region Conference (second from left), presented t-shirts and certificates to each baptismal candidate and mentor. Pictured left to right (back row): Dr. Timothy Nixon, pastor of All Nations and Niles Philadelphia churches; Dr. Henry; J.J. Martinez, Seminary student and intern pastor; Chaplain Philip Link; Clifford Wallace, Sabbath speaker for Week of Prayer; Daniel Milard; (front row) baptismal candidates: Michael Cox, Gabriella Milard, Ava-marie Milard, Mya Dunham, Caprianna Byrd, Ramona Minisee. Missing is Stephen Applewhite.

Area churches form club ministries partnership

In the midst of the coronavirus lockdowns, a group of churches in the Michiana area created a thriving Adventurer and Pathfinder Squad that allowed young people an outlet for socialization and spiritual growth, resulting in six baptisms.

The churches involved are all within two hours of each other in Michigan: Niles Philadelphia Church in Niles, All Nations Church in Berrien Springs, Bethel Church in Grand Rapids, Dowagiac Hispanic, Trinity Temple Church in Kalamazoo, Ghanaian Church in Niles, and Summit Church in Jackson.

“We grasped hands across county lines,” said Ramona Minisee, Niles Philadelphia Church Pathfinder leader who was instrumental in forging the joint venture. “I’m encouraged by the increased level of interest for spiritual growth. Parents are excited, and the kids are forming new friendships.”

The idea for the club coalition began in mid-July 2020 when Minisee was impressed to widen the partnerships between the clubs in the area.

The Niles Philadelphia Rising Stars Pathfinder Club had begun a partnership

with the Dowagiac Hispanic Church after the 2019 Pathfinder Bible Experience (PBE).

Later in the year, Minisee was appointed to the position of Master Guide coordinator for the Michiana area; part of her responsibilities was to help churches with their Adventurer and Pathfinder ministries. There are 22 churches in the Michiana area and she quickly realized, “This was a tall order” to meet the disparate needs of a relatively large group. Many churches within Lake Region’s Michiana area were struggling with maintaining Adventurer and Pathfinder clubs. “Some churches had two or three children that wanted to be part of a club but had no leader; and some churches had leaders but no children,” Minisee explained. “Then there were churches who had perhaps a leader and a couple of kids but did not feel that enough interest existed to even form a club.”

The looming question was, “Where would she get additional help?”

And then it happened.

Six individuals from different churches stepped forward and voiced a desire to complete the Master Guide requirements. One of the stipulations is to establish and lead out in either an Adventurer or Pathfinder club.

Minisee said she heard the voice of the Holy Spirit telling her: “Create a club that

will bring kids, leaders, instructors and parents together from across the Michiana area who are seeking friendship, networking and social opportunities.”

The idea for MAAPS, an acronym for Michiana Area Adventurers and Pathfinders Squad, was formed. But the next question was, “How to make it a reality?”

MAAPS Takes Shape

After getting buy-in from the Pathfinder Area coordinator, she attended the Michiana pastors’ area meeting to pitch the idea and it was well received. The pastors recognized that Club Ministries is an effective outlet for spiritual growth and engagement, as well as an evangelistic tool for unchurched youth.

When she met with the Master Guide candidates, a plan was forged. Two of the six candidates took leadership of an Adventurers club and inducted nine members; the remaining four candidates decided to work with the Pathfinder club. The Niles Philadelphia Rising Stars/Orion Constellations Club grew from 10 youth to a club of 24 Adventurers/Pathfinders known as the MAAPS Squad.

One of the goals of MAAPS is to disciple young people for baptism and, to that end, three separate Bible study groups

were organized to prepare for the PBE. A seminarian pastor completing his TFE at the Niles Philadelphia Church, J.J. Martinez, along with Chaplain Phillip Link from the Niles Philadelphia Church, helped the youth with Bible studies. The MAAPS team participated in PBE and went as far as the Union testing level, finishing in second place.

On April 3, at the conclusion of a 10-day spring Youth Week of Prayer organized by the Michiana Master Guide candidates, there was a baptism of six young people at the All Nations Church.

“I thank the Holy Spirit for helping us realize that Adventurers/Pathfinders doesn’t have to stop; it just needs to adapt during a pandemic era,” said Minisee. “This must be done in order to reach our children and prepare them for the Lord’s army.”

Lake Region Youth director Abraham Henry said he has appreciated the leaders going above and beyond during these challenging times. “Unprecedented times require unprecedented measures. These clubs have found a way to not only keep going but to also capitalize on their strengths. I’m just excited about this collaboration because it’s an ideal model for clubs that are struggling independently.” ■

Herald staff



▲ Jermaine Jackson

Lake Union welcomes new associate treasurer

Jermaine Jackson was elected on April 8 by the Lake Union executive committee to serve as associate treasurer, effective June 1. He replaces Jon Corder who is retiring after 41 years of exemplary service to the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Jackson has seven years of executive leadership experience and 17 years of denominational experience. He currently serves as chief financial officer/treasurer of Allegheny West Conference. Prior to this, he was the vice president/CFO for Adventist Risk Management (ARM) and corporate treasurer for Gencon Insurance Company of Vermont. In that role, Jackson oversaw the financial operations of ARM and GICV and its subsidiaries in Brazil and Gibraltar.

Lake Union treasurer Glynn Scott notes that he has had the privilege of working closely with Jackson over the past five years on financial committees at all levels of the Church structure and believes he will be a tremendous asset to the Lake Union. “I have witnessed Jermaine’s dedication as a faithful leader in the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” says Scott. “He is a visionary, strategic planner who is committed to excellence and understands



▲ All Nations Church member, Daniel Milard, with his daughter, Ava-marie, and son, Daniel

financial management. Based on multiple years of financial leadership, he enjoys helping people to seek creative ways to achieve mission and ministry.”

As a Midwest native, Jackson says he’s already used to the harsh winters and is looking forward to relocating from Ohio to Berrien Springs, Mich., to help move the work of the church forward.

“Throughout my career, I’ve had the opportunity to combine passion for service with my focus to ensure the growth of God’s Kingdom,” says Jackson. “To be able to continue that work in the Lake Union is both an honor and a privilege.”

Jackson has a Bachelor of Science in Finance from Oakwood University (Ala.), a Master of Business Administration from

Baker University (Kan.) and a Graduate Certification of Accounting from DeVry University (Va.). His wife, D’Andria, is a licensed clinical psychologist. They have a 9-year-old son, Braden, and a 6-year-old daughter, Chloe. ■

Debbie Michel is the Lake Union director of Communication.



▲ Prescott Khair

Prescott Khair joins chaplain team at Andrews University

BERRIEN SPRINGS, Mich.— Andrews University welcomes Prescott Khair as the new associate chaplain for the Center for Faith Engagement (formerly Campus Ministries) and as a member of the pastoral staff at Pioneer Memorial Church (PMC). He was hired by Dwight Nelson, lead pastor of Pioneer Memorial Church, with the support of the Michigan Conference. While the position is funded by the Michigan Conference, Chaplain Prescott Khair holds the same standing and responsibilities as the rest of the executive team at the Center for Faith Engagement (CFE).

Given the important role this chaplain position plays in connecting the University and PMC, José Bourget, University chaplain, says, “We are very excited to have Prescott Khair join the Center for Faith Engagement executive team as an associate chaplain. He also is uniquely positioned by his service to the pastoral staff at Pioneer Memorial Church.”

Khair graduated from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in 2018, completing a Master of Divinity, and is currently pursuing a Master of Business Administration from Raymond A. Mason School of Business at William & Mary. He worked for multiple departments on campus during his time at Andrews, including the Center for Youth Evangelism as administrative intern, the Department of Physical Therapy as administrative assistant and as seminary pastor. Most recently, Khair served as the lead pastor for the Bowling Green Church in Glasgow, Ken. He also has published multiple articles and devotional series, and recorded podcasts centered around devotions and the church.

To describe his approach to ministry, Khair explains, “I’m an outgoing introvert who loves seeing people flourish in their relationships with God and in life. I’m here to help people find their fit in this world and refine their relationship with God.”

Bourget highlights the strengths that Khair brings to this role. “Chaplain Khair’s experience as a pastor, along with his MDiv and MBA and his distinct ability to

help students identify and develop their passions and skills, makes him a perfect fit for our campus.”

As a campus chaplain, Khair will work directly with students, aiding them in their faith journey. He also will contribute his skills in organizational development to the Center for Faith Engagement’s movement toward a more integrated faith model. Bourget describes the changes taking place in CFE, noting the intentional pivot of “the university faith experience towards a mentoring and relational framework to inspire students to be disciples of God and fulfill their life’s calling.”

Bourget further explains CFE’s approach, “In order to have a vibrant and transformational faith experience as a university, we need chaplains who can work with students and offer resources and support to empower all employees to effectively engage students’ faith. Chaplain Khair’s philosophy of ministry recognizes that we are a university with thousands of students, three chaplains, and hundreds of ministering employees.”

Khair and his wife, Korissa, believe they were led back to Michigan by a call from God. Khair shares, “I really believe it was what God had planned for our next step. I am excited to see what’s next in our adventure with God because there’s nowhere better than being right at the front of where God’s leading.” ■

Isabella Koh, University Communication student writer

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.

ANNIVERSARY

David and Gwen BENTLEY will celebrate their 50th anniversary by visiting their 50th state of Vermont, destination: Lake Champlain. Married by Pastor Glenn Hill, they exchanged wedding vows on Aug. 22, 1971, in Urandale, Mich. While in the Lake Union Conference, they were members of the Madison and Wisconsin Academy churches in Wisconsin for one and five years, respectively.

David was both a teacher and/or principal at Ozark Elementary School in Arkansas; North Puget Adventist Junior Academy in Burlington, Wash.; Madison SDA School in Wisconsin; Tulsa Adventist Academy in Oklahoma; Peterson Elementary in Wisconsin; White Memorial, Los Angeles, Calif. He retired in 1998. Gwen, also a teacher, served at Ozark Elementary, Arkansas; North Puget Adventist School in Washington; Madison SDA in Wisconsin; Bristow Adventist School in Oklahoma; Peterson Elementary in Wisconsin; LaCanada School in California; White Memorial School in California; and Tulsa and Kellyville schools in Oklahoma. She retired in 2017.

Their family includes Eric (Whitney) Bentley of Fort Worth, Tex.; Amber (Timothy) Jemly of Jacksonville, Fla.; and Holly Bentley of Fort Worth, Tex.; and four grandchildren.

OBITUARIES

BERNET, John S., age 87; born Dec. 7, 1933, in Reading, Penn.; died Feb. 5, 2021, in Bridgman, Mich. He was a member of the Niles Westside Church in Niles, Mich. Survivors include his wife, Regina P. (Wapiennik) Bernet; daughter, Rochelle

R. Bernet; brother, Robert Bernet; sister, Nancy Fowler; two grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. A memorial service will be held at a later date in Pennsylvania. John retired from the Lake Union Conference after serving 25 years as the publishing secretary of the literature ministry.

BURLINGAME, Lori L., age 46; born Dec. 8, 1974, in St. Joseph, Mich.; died March 18, 2021, in Chattanooga, Tenn. She was a member of the Kalamazoo Church in Kalamazoo, Mich. Survivors include her partner, Kyle Pattock; son, Jeremy; stepson, Heath Pattock; daughters, Brianna, and Natalie; stepdaughter, Heather Arredondo; father, David Burlingame; mother, Polly (Gray) Bakkila; and sister, Lisa Burlingame. Funeral services were conducted by Pastor Moise Ratsara; interment was in Rose Hill Cemetery in Berrien Springs, Mich.

CRUTTENDEN, Frank, age 80; born Oct. 12, 1940, in Hastings, Mich.; died Oct. 17, 2020, in Kalamazoo, Mich. He was a member of the Delton Church in Delton, Mich. Survivors include his wife, Patricia (Parker) Cruttenden; sons, Larry (Marian) Cruttenden, Steve (Annette Roth) Cruttenden, Russell (Dana) Cruttenden, and Bill (Beth) Cruttenden; father, Albert Cruttenden; mother, Avis (Benedict) Cruttenden; brothers, Dale Cruttenden, and Lynn Cruttenden; sisters, Jane Swisher, Alberta Ottinger, and Pearl Sipperly; 12 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. Funeral services were conducted by pastors Jeffery Dowell and Joseph Ottinger; interment was in Hickory Corners Cemetery in Barry Township, Mich.

DE PAS, Donna Jean (Dorgelo), age 79; born Sept. 15, 1941, in Holland, Mich.;

died March 7, 2021, in Holland. She was a member of the Holland Church in Holland. Survivors include her husband, Kenneth Ray De Pas; sons, Kenneth (Laurie) De Pas, and Thomas De Pas; daughter, Barbara (Seth) Holt; sisters, Phyllis (Andy) Garrow, and Nancy Hill; five grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. Memorial services were conducted by Pastor Sean Reed; private inurnment.

FARVER, Irene L. (Friesen), age 97; born Oct. 20, 1923, in Salina, Kan.; died April 16, 2021, in Cottonwood, Ariz.; She was a member of the Cedar Lake Academy Church in Cedar Lake, Mich. Survivors include daughters, Janis Farver, and Lahna Farver. Memorial services were conducted by pastors Bob Lawson and Vincent Woolsey; inurnment was in Prescott Veteran's Memorial Cemetery in Prescott, Ariz.

GREEN, Bea E. (Van Wyk), age 91; born Feb. 5, 1930, in Grand Rapids, Mich.; died March 1, 2021, in Holly, Mich. She was a member of the Midland Church in Midland, Mich. Survivors include her son, Richard Green; and four grandchildren. Memorial services were held; inurnment was in Midland Memorial Gardens in Midland.

HOWARD, Versia M. (Johnson), age 76; born July 31, 1944, in Memphis, Tenn.; died March 4, 2021, in Kalamazoo, Mich. She was a member of the Bangor Church in Bangor, Mich. Survivors include her daughters, Thelma Lynn (Carter) Howard, and Tracy Howard; brothers, Ruphos Johnson Sr., Larence Johnson, George Johnson, Chris Johnson, and John Johnson; sisters, Cora L. (Magett), Etta (Cannon), Thelma (Bernard), Mary (Pollock), Martha Johnson, and Ella Johnson; and three grandchildren. Funeral services were conducted by Pastor Julius Rey Everett; private inurnment.

JOHNSON, Lila G. (Miller), age 101; born April 15, 1919, in Eau Claire, Wis.; died

April 15, 2020, in Racine, Wis. She was a member of the Racine Church in Racine. Survivors include her daughter, Cynthia G. Johnson; and one grandchild. Funeral services were conducted by Pastor Zachary Payne; interment was in West Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Racine.

LUCAS, Johnny, age 65; born July 28, 1955, in Newark, N.J.; died Feb. 5, 2021, in Angola, Ind. He was a member of the Angola Church in Angola. He was survived by his wife, Beth (Rodefer). Funeral services were conducted by Pastor Don Greulich; interment was in Embrey Cemetery in Garrett, Ind.

LUNZ, Helen Ruth, age 97; born July 23, 1923, in Matteson Township, Waupaca County, Wis.; died April 29, 2021, in Collegedale, Tenn. She was a member of the Jackson Church in Jackson, Mich. Survivors include her son, Elwyn (Joy) Hyde; daughters, Karen (Maurice) Simpson, Christine (Ronald) Herr, and Jeanette (Douglas) Teller; father, Freeman Charles Lunz; mother, Ruth Myrtle (Cottrell); sisters, Lolitta Lucas, Hazel Sykes, Bernice Taylor, Bernita Rorabeck, and Ardyce Moravetz; nine grandchildren; two step-grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; and four step-great-grandchildren. Funeral services were conducted by Pastor Ronald Herr; interment was in the Jackson Church cemetery in Blackman Township, Mich.

MOORE, John L. II, age 61; born Nov. 2, 1959, in Antrim County, Mich.; died March 20, 2021, in Rothbury, Mich. He was a member of the Shelby Church in Shelby, Mich. Survivors include his wife, Cindy Lou (Peterson) Moore; daughters, Tonya (Herman) De Los Anto-Santiago; Charity (Luke) Crum, Amanda (Daniel) De Los Santo-Santiago; mother, Margaret Moore; stepmother, Sandra Moore; brother, James (Liz) Moore; sisters, Terri

Tyler, Jeanie (Ken) Rookus, and Brandy Hewitt; and nine grandchildren. Memorial services were held; interment was in Oak Grove Cemetery in Rothbury.

PETERSON, Edith B. (Hunt), age 95; born May 13, 1925, in North Branch, Mich.; died April 29, 2021, in Coeur d'Alene, Id. She was a member of the Edmore Church in Edmore, Mich. Survivors include son, James B. Swett Jr; daughters, Joyce F. (Swett) Yeager, Linda K. (Swett) Klinger, and Donna J. (Swett) Woods; eight grandchildren; and 12 great-grandchildren. Inurnment was in Cedar Lake Cemetery in Edmore.

RAGSDALE, Sylvia Mae (Schlagel), age 86; born July 20, 1934, in Indianapolis; died March 25, 2021, in Winter Haven, Fla. She was a member of the Glendale Church in Indianapolis. Survivors include her son, Frank Schlagel; stepsons, Russel Ragsdale Jr., and Carl Ragsdale; stepdaughter, Lisa; one grandchild; three step-grandchildren; and five great-step-grandchildren. Memorial services were conducted by pastors Frank Gonzalez and Walter Maier; private inurnment at Oak Ridge Funeral Care and Cemetery in Winter Haven.

SHULL, Vivion E., age 93; born May 26, 1927, in Berrien County, Mich.; died March 2, 2021, in Holt, Mich. He was a member of the East Lansing University Church in East Lansing, Mich. Survivors include his sons, Donn (Laila) Shull, David (Judy) Shull, and Brian (Talley) Shull; daughter, Julie (Donn) Clark; sister, Jeannine Engel; five grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren. Memorial services were conducted by Elder Jay Gallimore and Pastor Jermaine Gayle; private inurnment.

JUNE JULY

CALENDAR OF OFFERINGS

- June 5** Local Church Budget
- June 12** Women's Ministries (NAD)
- June 19** Local Church Budget
- June 26** Local Conference Advance
- July 3** Local Church Budget
- July 10** World Budget (GC)
- July 17** Local Church Budget
- July 24** Local Conference Advance
- July 31** Local Church Budget

CALENDAR OF SPECIAL DAYS

FOCUS FOR JUNE – CHURCH GROWTH AND EVANGELISM

- June 12** Women's Ministry Emphasis Day
- June 19** Refugee Sabbath

FOCUS FOR JULY – ADVENTIST LIFESTYLE

- July 10** Griggs International Academy
- July 24** Health Ministries Sabbath

English | Spanish | Portuguese | French | Tagalog | Afrikaans | Ukrainian | Russian | Bahasa | Mongolian | Tamil
Telugu | Hindi | Marathi | Malayalam | Bengali | Mizo | Bhojpuri | Santali | Cebuano | Nepali | And Many More!

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

JOIN UNION SPRINGS ACADEMY IN CELEBRATING 100 YEARS of ministry, service and God's blessings at our centennial weekend, **Sept. 17–19**. Sabbath service speaker is Ted Wilson, president of the General Conference of SDAs. Honored speakers include Bill Knott and John Thomas. Visit our website for details and updates — unionspringsacademy.org!

INDIANA CONFERENCE

Legal Notice: Notice is hereby given that a **regular Quadrennial Session of the Indiana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists** will be held in the Indiana Academy Gymnasium at 24815 State Road 19, Cicero, Indiana, 46034, on Sunday, **September 26, 2021**, at 10:00 a.m. Duly accredited delegates and delegates-at-large will be authorized to: receive reports; elect a conference president, secretary-treasurer, departmental directors, a Conference Executive Committee, a Board of Education, a Standing Nominating Committee, and a Standing Constitution and Bylaws Committee; enact, amend, or repeal Bylaws and vote recommended changes to the Constitution for the Indiana Conference and Indiana Academy; and issue credentials and licenses for the ensuing term. Delegates will transact such other business as may properly come before the delegation. Each church will be entitled to one delegate for the church organization and one additional delegate for each 25 members or major fraction thereof. The organizing committee will meet the same day, Sunday, September

26, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. in the Indiana Academy Chapel at 24815 State Road 19, Cicero, Indiana 46034. The first meeting of the Standing Nominating Committee is scheduled for Sunday, July 18, 2021, at 9:30 a.m. at the Indiana Academy Chapel. Elder Maurice Valentine, president of the Lake Union Conference, will serve as chair of the nominating committee. Vic Van Schaik, president
Mark Eaton, secretary-treasurer

INDIANA ASSOCIATION

Legal Notice: Notice is hereby given that a **regular Quadrennial Session of the members of the Indiana Association of Seventh-day Adventists, Inc., a corporation, will be held** in connection with the Quadrennial Session of the Indiana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists at the Indiana Academy Gymnasium at 24815 State Road 19, Cicero, Indiana, 46034, on Sunday, **September 26, 2021**. The first meeting of the Association will be called to order at approximately 1:30 p.m. The purpose of the meeting is to elect a board of directors for the ensuing quadrennial term, to restate and amend the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, and to transact such other business as may properly come before the delegates.

Delegates of the Quadrennial Session of the Indiana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists are likewise delegates to the Association meeting.
Vic Van Schaik, president
Vialo Weis, secretary

PLAINVIEW ADVENTIST ACADEMY, SHEYENNE RIVER ACADEMY AND DAKOTA ADVENTIST ACADEMY ALUMNI WEEKEND, Oct. 1–2, at Dakota Academy. Come and renew your friendships. Honor classes: 1946/1947, '51/'52, '56/'57, '61/'62, '66/'67, '71/'72, '76/'77, '81/'82, '86/'87, '91/'92, '96/'97, 2001/2002, '06/'07, '11/'12, '16/'17. Call 701-751-6177 ext. 212 or visit our website: www.dakotaadventistacademy.org.

CORRECTIONS

In the May issue we published an erroneous July date for the Michigan lower peninsular camp meeting. Those meetings are to be held June 18-26. More information on the camp meeting is available at: www.misda.org. We sincerely regret the error.

Our humble apology to the family of Vivion Shull for wrongly stating his gender in the obituary. Please see this issue for a corrected version.

Sabbath Sunset Calendar

	June 4	June 11	June 18	June 25	July 2	July 9	July 16	July 23	July 30
Berrien Springs, Mich.	9:17	9:21	9:23	9:24	9:24	9:22	9:18	9:12	9:05
Chicago, Ill.	8:21	8:26	8:28	8:29	8:29	8:26	8:22	8:17	8:10
Detroit, Mich.	9:05	9:09	9:12	9:13	9:12	9:10	9:06	9:00	8:53
Indianapolis, Ind.	9:09	9:13	9:15	9:16	9:16	9:14	9:10	9:05	8:59
La Crosse, Wis.	8:43	8:47	8:50	8:51	8:50	8:47	8:43	8:37	8:29
Lansing, Mich.	9:12	9:16	9:19	9:20	9:19	9:17	9:13	9:07	9:00
Madison, Wis.	8:33	8:37	8:40	8:41	8:40	8:37	8:33	8:27	8:20
Springfield, Ill.	8:23	8:27	8:29	8:30	8:30	8:28	8:24	8:19	8:13

JUNE/JULY

ILLINOIS

- June 12:** *Hispanic Evangelism Convention*
- June 20-27:** *Cub & Junior Camp, Camp Akita*
- June 27-July 4:** *Tween Camp, Camp Akita*

INDIANA

- June 13-19:** *Camp Meeting, Indiana Academy*
- June 20-27:** *Camp for the Blind, Timber Ridge Camp*
- June 23-27:** *Single Mom's & Kids Camp, Timber Ridge Camp*
- June 27-July 4:** *Cub Camp, Timber Ridge Camp*

LAKE REGION

- June 5-12:** *Ministerio De La Mujer - Semana De Oración*
- June 6:** *Ministerio Infantil, VBS Capacitación*
- June 15-22:** *Ministerio Juvenil - Semana de Evangelismo (Clubes)*
- June 19:** *Health Ministries "Take Charge of Your Health" (Virtual)*
- June 23-26:** *Camp Meeting (Virtual)*

MICHIGAN

- June 13-19:** *Adventure Camp, Camp Au Sable*
- June 18-26:** *Camp Meeting, Great Lakes Adventist Academy*
- June 20-26:** *Junior Camp, Camp Au Sable*
- June 27-July 2:** *Tween Camp, Camp Au Sable*

WISCONSIN

- June 11-13:** *Lake Union Hispanic Women's Retreat*
- June 18-26:** *Camp Meeting*
- June 27-July 4:** *Junior Camp, Camp Wakonda*

LAKE UNION

- June 4-6:** *Hispanic Youth Congress, Conectate*

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EMPLOYMENT

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Southern Adventist University, Box 370, Collegedale, TN 37315; 423-236-2929; fax: 423-236-1926; kasnyder@southern.edu.

STALLANT HEALTH, a rural health clinic in Weimar, Calif., is accepting applications for a **Family Practice physician, and an NP or PA** to join the team. Interested individuals should contact Marva by email: marva@stallanthealth.com

MISCELLANEOUS

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BOOK RELEASE — *The Autumn of Our Lives*, the delightful life story of Pastor Jim Hoffer, 150 pages, over 100 pictures, adventure, mission stories, family history, humor, and poetry. Details and ordering information at www.LostArkSeminar.com.



The Book End Prayer

How have you changed over this past year? Lockdowns, school closures, church building closures, job changes and elections are just a few events that might have contributed to raised-stress levels.



▲ Joshua Voigt

So, again, I ask the question, how have you changed over this past year? Are you happy with the changes or would you like to erase 2020 from your life?

There are times in our lives when we will experience a number of crises at the same time, and how we handle them can change us dramatically. One tool I use to facilitate positive change is what I call the “Book End Prayer,” beginning and ending my day with God. It’s more than a random prayer. It’s planning and reviewing the day, and it has changed my life.

In the morning I will talk through my plans with God. I share the appointments, the goals, my hopes, and even my fears. This morning planning session with God puts my plans into a spiritual perspective. It even alters my plans for the day. I have kept myself from frivolous, impulsive purchases by talking to God about my planned purchases. I value this time with God and when I skip it, I can tell a difference in my day. Suddenly, events seem to annoy me more, I am less patient, and life seems more about me.

To end my day, I review the events with God. This can be painful because I do not hold anything back. My spiritual life changed when I started asking forgiveness for specific sins. Normally I would just pray the generic “forgive me for my sins” prayer. However, when I started reviewing my day with God, I had to talk with Him about specific sins. This time helps put sin into perspective; it is a time when I can surrender my will and desires to Him again. This reflection with God also helps my faith grow. I am able to see how God worked in my life, and I celebrate with God the victories where

I made the right choices. There will be times when I start this review session feeling terrible about my day but, once I start talking to God about all the good things, a bad day can change to a great day.

Paul closes his first letter to the Thessalonians by exhorting the hearer on how to live a Christian life; among this list is the charge to *pray without ceasing* (1 Thessalonians 5:17). The Angel of the Lord tells Joshua to meditate on the book of the law day and night (Joshua 1:8). David in Psalms 1 describes a person who is blessed as someone who *delights in the law of the Lord, and on His law he meditates day and night* (Psalms 1:8). The Book End Prayer is just part of the way I have applied these verses to my life.

I look back on 2020 and am glad for what God has done. I graduated, got to spend more quality time with my family, began a ministry partnership with a colleague that has changed my life, and working for God. This past year has been a good year in spite of all the external stress factors. How about yours? I invite you to try the Book End Prayer to see if it will change your life like it changed mine. ■

Joshua Voigt pastors the North Aurora Church in suburban Chicago.



Remember

The Israelites were about to cross over Jordan to the Promised Land. After forty years in the desert, the beautiful land of plenty was opening before them.

In their imagination, they could see a vision of a peaceful life and prosperity — a perspective so different from living in tents, sojourning from place to place, and owning only what was absolutely necessary.

In this very time, God reminded them of something that we also tend to forget in times of peace and prosperity.

Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God . . . , lest — when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; . . . then you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’ And you shall remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth . . . (Deuteronomy 8:11–13, 17–18).

We probably do not meditate daily on the idea that having a roof over our heads, a comfortable bed, running water, food and a car are great blessings. Yet, if we have those things, we are better off than most people living on planet Earth. Additionally, they open before us opportunities to make our life even better. The things that we take for granted are just a beautiful dream for many others who will never have them during their lifetime.

How does this relate to Christian stewardship?

First, let us recognize our blessings. It is our nature to complain and always crave for more, but even the most modest among us live in better conditions than previous generations.

Second, recognize God as the source of all blessings. Interestingly, we tend to cry to God in times of distress but forget about Him in peace and prosperity. God appeals, “Remember Me! I am your source of skills and

intelligence. Yes, you work hard, but you wouldn’t be able to do so, if I didn’t give you strength, health, and life. . . .”

Third, think about, Why we are here? What is the goal of our life? We are going through the motions of sustaining our daily existence, but is that all? The paradox of life is that, too often, people who have “got it all” are “not happy at all.” Why? Because deep in our hearts, there is a desire to live for something bigger than us, to live for God and others. God embedded this desire at Creation.

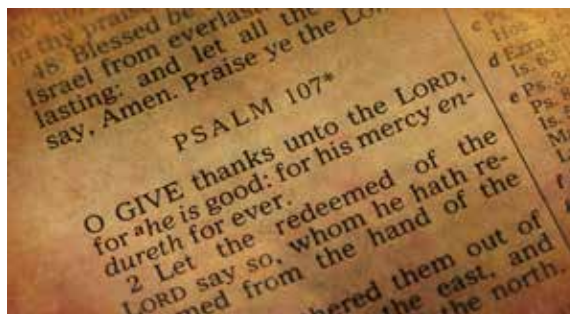
Christian stewardship is not only about returning God’s tithe. God’s stewards are gratefully content with what they have. They recognize God as the provider and owner of everything and give Him glory for every received blessing. It is not their goal in life to accumulate as much as possible, but to use their means as much as possible to glorify God and to bring God’s Kingdom closer to those whom He loves so much.

“Seeking the good of others is the way in which true happiness can be found. Man does not work against his own interest by loving God and his fellow men. The more unselfish his spirit, the happier he is, because he is fulfilling God’s purpose for him” (E.G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 24–25). ■

Arkadiusz Bojko is Illinois Conference’s Stewardship director and consultant for the Planned Giving and Trust Services Department.



▲ Arkadiusz Bojko



Chasing Life

By Stephanie Martinez

LAST YEAR I RECEIVED A DIAGNOSIS FOR WHICH MY FAMILY AND I BELIEVED MEDICATION WOULD HELP. However, 20 minutes after taking the first dose, my whole world changed. I fell asleep for 12 hours straight; I experienced terrible side effects, and it felt like every positive emotion was stripped from me. Each day it seemed to get worse and, at one point, I thought about ending my life.

It wasn't long afterwards that I was having a conversation with a friend, and she asked if I was going to Camp Au Sable. I initially didn't want to go but she convinced me to reconsider. There were so many obstacles to going: no funds, so little time to prepare. But as you would know it — God made a way for me to be there.

I arrived at camp and was happy to be in a cabin with some of my childhood friends who were attending Great Lakes Adventist Academy (GLAA). I didn't know much about GLAA, other than the fact that it's a boarding school without the use of phones. It so happened my counselor was a graduate from there, so I asked her what being a student at GLAA was like. She shared how the caring teachers and staff had helped her and made a difference in her life. In listening to her story, I was very interested because I was struggling with the very same things she shared.

In looking back at my camp experience, I can confidently say, God meant for me to be there. It was such a spiritual place, and everyone reminded me of Jesus. Without our phones as distractions, we were able to truly connect

► Stephanie Martinez

Christina Rogers



with one another and talk beyond the limits of social media. By the last day of camp, I was secretly hoping they'd keep us longer.

When I got home, I told my mom how much good, Christian fun I had with everyone, and how I wished I could experience more things like it. GLAA, I told her, was a school I believed could provide me with this kind of godly environment. Her very first concern was whether we could afford it. I told her not to worry about it because if God wanted me there, He'd make a way. I'll spare you the details but, similar to how God moved mountains for me to attend camp, He answered my prayers to attend GLAA!

By the time school started two weeks later, my spiritual life was back on track and so was my mental health. Since being at GLAA, I made the decision to give my life to Christ and was baptized last fall by our chaplain and Bible teacher, Jeff Akenberger.

You might feel sorry for what I had to go through but I'm actually grateful for the experience. While I still need to take medication, my faith has been strengthened and, as I look back, I can see that God was there for me all through it. Now, through sharing my testimony with my classmates and others, I can help more people reach out toward God. What a joy to be involved in that! ■

Berrien Springs resident Stephanie Martinez just completed her sophomore year at Great Lakes Adventist Academy.

Stephanie 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.

Relative Influence

By Miranda Delgado



▲ Merissa Erb

GROWING UP IN THE SMALL TOWN OF MOUNT HOREB, WISCONSIN, MERISSA ERB BECAME PASSIONATE ABOUT MINISTRY AS A RESULT OF STARTING NEW CHURCHES WITH HER FAMILY.

She grew up believing that she was being called to share her love for Jesus with others. As a child, she had many female role models who inspired her calling to ministry. The person that impacted her the most was her cousin, Pastor Lisa Isensee.

“I grew up watching my cousin, Pastor Lisa, in active church ministry,” Merissa said. “She mentored me in a lot of ways, and I was baptized by her. She definitely influenced me and inspired me to be involved with ministry. My family is super supportive of women in ministry and, growing up, I never saw it as an issue.”

In some of her classes at Southern Adventist University during the spring semester, Merissa is the only woman. Due to this, she is sometimes asked to give her “female” perspective on a given topic in class. Although Merissa doesn’t mind being in a classroom full of men all the time, she said she occasionally feels disconnected from the camaraderie that is shared between the male Theology majors.

Merissa has learned to stand more on her own because of the small number of women in her department and to lean on God as her “ultimate role model.”

Junior Theology major, Austin Bates, said he enjoys having classes with Merissa. “[She] adds a lot to all of the classes I share with her, and I respect her opinions on things,” Austin said. “I don’t view her comments in class as ‘a lady’s perspective,’ as our professors refer to her, but as a human with her own life experience, walk with Christ and worldview.”

He said he respects Merissa for seeking a career that is primarily sought out by men and hopes that the church will be more open to women in full-time pastoral ministry. Even with the topic of women’s ordination circling the Adventist Church, Merissa does not believe this dispute affects the calling God has given her.

As Merissa finishes her sophomore year, she is trying to figure out what she will do when she graduates. “I am not sure yet, but I would love to be part of a ministry that is unconventional, out of the box, and one that creatively and practically helps people.” ■

Written by Miranda Delgado. Reprinted from Southern Accent, the weekly student-run newspaper at Southern Adventist University.

Lake Union HERALD

Official publication of the
Seventh-day Adventist Church/Lake Union Headquarters
<http://herald.lakeunion.org> Vol. 113, No. 5

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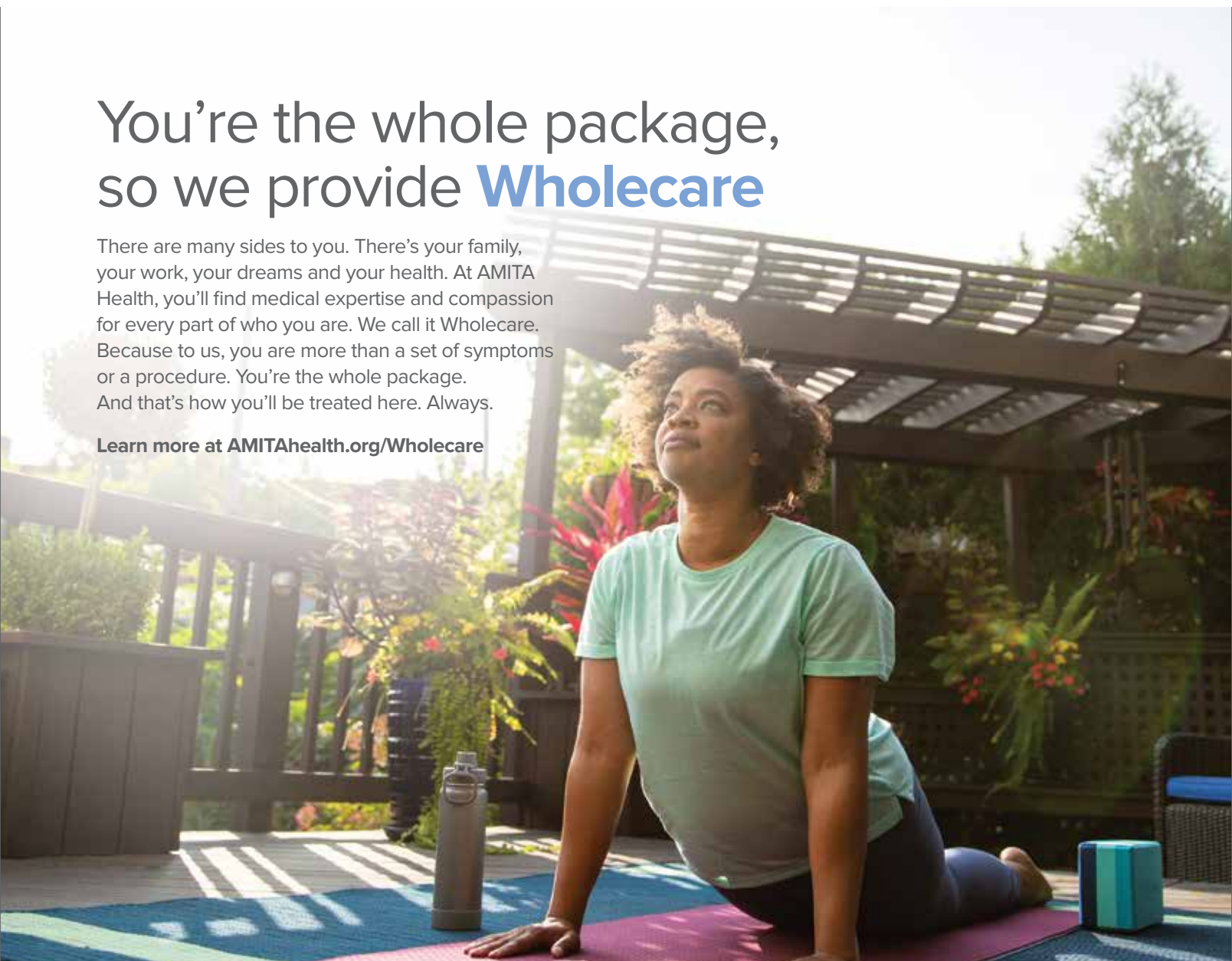
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