

MID-AMERICA SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST NEWS & INSPIRATION

# OUTLOOK



SEPT 2021

OUTLOOKMAG.ORG

# Yes, Lord!

Yes Lord

I give

heart

to You

Yes Lord

love

me,

guide

me

**MID-AMERICA UNION**  
Constituency Report

**TOGETHER IN MISSION**





Mid-America Union Presidents' Council is comprised of the union's officers, conference presidents and the president of Union College (photo taken in 2018).

### WHAT IS A CONSTITUENCY SESSION?

All members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church are part of a constituency, which is defined as a group of voters in a specified region who elect representatives to a legislative body. Church members of the Mid-America Union Conference have designated 394 delegates who will gather at the College View Church in Lincoln, Nebraska, to represent them during the ninth quinquennial constituency session occurring Sunday, Sept. 12, 2021.

### WHAT HAPPENS AT SESSION?

As required by our Bylaws, every five years delegates elect union leadership, receive reports from union leaders and entities, and vote on general decisions and church business. Reports on

finances, church membership, audits and other statistics are also received and voted. Additionally, the delegates will vote on proposed changes to the union Constitution and Bylaws.

### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

It's about accountability. The union president, vice presidents and department directors will present reports and be available for questions. The president of Union College will also give a report, since Union College's Constituency Session is joined with the Mid-America Union's.

But there's more than business reports and votes! It's also a celebration highlighting mission, evangelism and the blessings of the Lord in the past five years. It's an opportunity to analyze the state of the Mid-America Union Conference—organizationally, financially and statistically—and to cast a vision for how best to advance God's work in the heartland of America.

### WHO IS REPRESENTING ME?

Please contact your local conference for a list of the delegates from your area.



OUTLOOK (ISSN 0887-977X) September 2021, Volume 42, Number 9. OUTLOOK is published monthly (10 months per year) by the Mid-America Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 8307 Pine Lake Road, Lincoln, NE 68516. Printed at Pacific Press Publishing Association, Periodical postage paid at Lincoln, NE and additional offices. USPS number 006-245. **Postmaster: Send all undeliverables to CFE.** Free for Mid-America church members and \$10 per year for subscribers. ©2017 Mid-America Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Unless otherwise credited, all images are iStock. Adventist® and Seventh-day Adventist® are registered trademarks of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. **CONTACT us by email: [info@maucsa.org](mailto:info@maucsa.org) or phone: 402.484.3000.**





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## CAN I GET LIVE UPDATES ON WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Yes! Follow the Constituency Session on Sept. 12 through OUTLOOK's Facebook or Twitter.

[facebook.com/OutlookMag](https://facebook.com/OutlookMag)  
[twitter.com/myOutlookMag](https://twitter.com/myOutlookMag)

## WHY DO UNIONS EXIST?

All levels of Adventist organization exist to support local churches and schools—from the General Conference with its world divisions, to the union conferences and the local conferences, to which the churches belong. No other level connects the parts of the church as directly as does the union. Nor does any other part have time to do what the union does.

The union conference serves by providing assessment tools, facilitating collaboration, offering mentoring and training, and providing a layer of communication and accountability between local conferences and the global church structure.

Union conferences are also shared service centers for teacher training and certification and school accreditation, regional Pathfinder camporees, ministerial conventions, religious liberty services, low-cost loans to build or renovate churches and schools, and coordination of humanitarian aid through Adventist Community Services.

In addition, union leaders provide counsel and support for the Board of Trustees of higher educational institutions, maintain lines of accountability with Adventist healthcare institutions, and publish the union paper that helps members be aware of and celebrate what God is doing in each territory.

*The Mid-America Union Conference would like to thank each member of the Executive Committee and the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for their term of service (Sept. 2016-Sept. 2021):*

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

#### CENTRAL STATES CONFERENCE

Roger Bernard  
Gary Collins  
Joann Herrington  
Dwayne Williams

#### DAKOTA CONFERENCE

Daniel Hanson  
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Darrel Huenergardt (secretary)  
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#### ROCKY MOUNTAIN CONFERENCE

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Darrel Huenergardt  
Hubert J. Morel, Jr.  
Troy Peoples  
Gary Thurber

#### UNION COLLEGE

Vinita Sauder

#### ADVENTHEALTH

Ken Bacon  
Sam Huenergardt

#### OTHER INSTITUTIONS IN OUR TERRITORY

Brad Forbes  
(AdventSource)

Diane Thurber  
(Christian Record)

Don Krassin  
Barbara Parrott  
Robert Wagley  
Kyoshin Ahn (NAD invitee)



# ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

## of Seventh-day Adventists in Mid-America



Union College established on 50 acres near Lincoln, Nebraska

1891



GC Session held at College View Church in Lincoln, during which Ellen White spoke to delegates and students

1897

Northern Union established with headquarters in Minneapolis. The territory included Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, Canada. In 1907 the Canadian provinces were restructured into the Western Canadian Union Conference, and Iowa was added to the Northern Union. The *Northern Union Reaper* was the official magazine.

Christian Record, the denomination's publishing ministry for the blind, moved from Battle Creek, Michigan, to Lincoln, Nebraska. The Central Union gave Austin Wilson missionary credentials and \$15 for preparing and distributing the *Christian Record*. By the 1950s the ministry was flourishing.



1902

1888-89

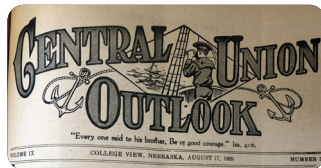
U.S. and Canadian mission work separated into districts (now called unions) by the General Conference

1895



Boulder Sanitarium founded by John Harvey Kellogg.

1902



Central Union established with headquarters in Lincoln. The territory covered Colorado (including San Juan County, NM), Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Wyoming. The official church paper was called the *Central Union Advance* (changed by 1911 to *Central Union Outlook*).

1932

Due to financial challenges during the Great Depression, the Central and Northern Unions merged into one union named the Central Union Conference. Five years later the unmerged and swapped magazine names.

1947

Central States Mission formed to lead the work among African Americans. First superintendent (president) was Thomas Milton Rowe. The mission began operations with 798 members.







Central Union headquarters moved from 4547 Calvert Street to 8550 Pioneers Boulevard and included Home Health Education Service established in the 1950s. When the union decided in 1993 to no longer manage the HHES program, the billing and distribution portion moved to Pacific Press Publishing Association.



Church membership total was 53,303 in 510 congregations spread within one million square miles of territory. In 2020 membership was 64,787 in 525 congregations.

Union College became the first private institution in America to install computer terminals in every dorm room.

## AdventSource

NAD Ministries Distribution Center started in 1982 in Lincoln, Nebraska, was rebranded as AdventSource, today an internet-based organization that offers over 5,000 ministry resources to Adventist churches and schools worldwide.



Shawnee Mission established in Kansas City as a one-story, 65-bed community hospital

1977

1980

1962

1983

1997

1952

Central States Mission received conference status with 17 churches, 2 companies and 20 full time employees. The territory covered six states: Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Colorado and Wyoming.



again for financial reasons. Headquarters were located in Lincoln and the magazine was named *Mid-America Adventist Outlook*. The first president was E.S. Reile.

1980

Central and Northern Unions re-merged,

1981

Mid-America Union held its first official constituency session at the Sheraton-Royal Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri.



1998

Mid-America Union headquarters moved to 8307 Pine Lake Road.



# MID-AMERICA UNION TODAY\*

## OVERVIEW

Headquartered in Lincoln, Nebraska, the Mid-America Union Conference facilitates the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church throughout a nine-state region in the Midwestern United States. Organized into six local conferences, the territory spans Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming and San Juan County in New Mexico.

The Mid-America Union is part of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist Protestant denomination with over 20 million members in more than 200 countries. There are 13 world divisions and nine unions in the North American Division.

The Adventist Church structure prioritizes local congregations, with the remaining organizations in place to offer support. The union level provides representation to the General Conference, along with administrative leadership and support to conferences, schools, healthcare networks and other ministries. Each year, MAUC organizations sponsor dozens of programs and projects that address human needs, improve quality of life and introduce people to Jesus.

### Mission

Strengthening local conferences and institutions

### Vision

Providing a steady flow of leadership, communication, mentoring, and training

\*Learn more at [midamericaadventist.org](http://midamericaadventist.org)

### Values



# MAUC AT A GLANCE\*

64,787

MEMBERS

6  
CONFERENCES

65

ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOLS/ACADEMIES

525

CONGREGATIONS

256

TEACHERS/  
ADMINISTRATORS

223

FULL-TIME PASTORS

8

HOSPITALS

3

ADVENTIST BOOK  
CENTERS

1

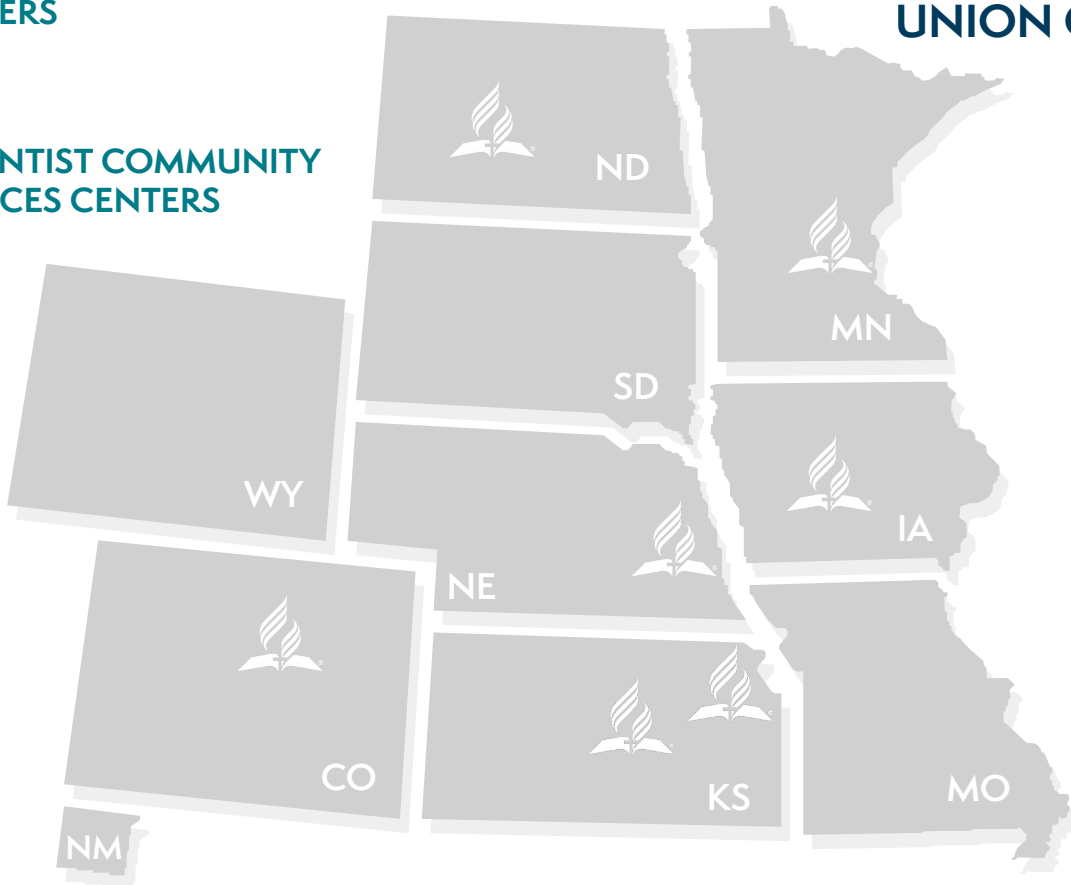
HIGHER EDUCATION  
UNION COLLEGE

8

ADVENTIST COMMUNITY  
SERVICES CENTERS

9

CAMPS



\*As of Dec. 31, 2020





# SUPPORTING OTHER LEADERS

Steve Nazario, June 2021



The Mid-America Union Conference staff are committed to serving Jesus Christ and building up His kingdom in the heartland by providing a steady flow of leadership, communication, mentoring and training.

I know it is a cliché to say this, but I am amazed at how fast five years can go by. Here we are preparing for another constituency meeting for the Mid-America Union Conference, and I just don't know where the time has gone.

As I reflect on the past five years, much has taken place which has brought changes to our world ... some good and some not so good. In the past five years, our country seems to be more divided than ever, especially around politics. We went through several contentious elections together and, unfortunately, we weren't as gracious and kind to one another as we should have

been. As a result, relationships have been bruised or broken, families quarreled and, unfortunately, some of our churches were also damaged.

Who can forget the George Floyd moment when time seemed to stand still on that awful day? I don't believe we will ever be the same individually or as a country again—which is not a bad thing. I hope that through this tragedy we learned, grew and became more Christlike, accepting everyone as loved, cherished sons and daughters of God.

Then who knew five years ago we would suffer through a pandemic, which closed down church and in-person school

for many weeks!

While thinking of these challenges we faced, a Bible text comes to my mind immediately. Romans 8:35-37 reads, "Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death? (As the Scriptures say, 'For your sake we are killed every day; we are being slaughtered like sheep.')

No, despite all these things, overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us."

What a promise! And honestly, we saw this promise fulfilled right before our eyes

these past five years. It has been nothing short of a miracle to watch how our church families rallied around their pastors and teachers. Every week, my wife and I attended a number of worship services with churches who made sure worshiping together still took place, even if it was online. Faithful members went out of their way to return their tithes and offerings to keep our schools, churches and ministries functioning, even if remotely. There is no doubt the Lord had His hands upon us, sustaining us and giving hope and peace, even during the darkest hours. Like Paul, I am convinced that nothing

can separate us from the love of God.

## STRONG TEAMS

In this president's report, I want to focus on the people who really make ministry happen here in Mid-America. My work as president is more about supporting the leaders around me than anything else. And let me tell you, I am blessed, and I know it because I am surrounded by some of the best leaders in the North American Division.

Let me start with thanking our conference presidents. Our six presidents are effective, spirit-filled workers for the Lord. They lead their team of pastors, teachers, departmental directors and office staff where the rubber meets the road in ministry. They are a joy to work with and are always advocating and doing all they can for their frontline workers. They love their ministry teams, and you can tell it by the way they talk about them and pray for them.

Next, I want to say a few words about the people I am blessed to work with here in our Mid-America Union office. I am grateful that my fellow officers hold me accountable to the mission of our church each and every day. Dr. Hubert Morel is new to our union, and he hit the ground running as executive secretary. His experience and love for people and the church make him a joy to work with. Troy Peoples, Mid-America Union treasurer, has skills most of us just don't have. He is excellent

with numbers and has done a superb job helping to keep the union fiscally sound.

In addition, I would like to acknowledge Pastor Gil Webb, who served as executive secretary during the first four years of the quinquennium. Pastor Webb served in this union his entire 45 years in ministry. What a gift he was in our office and field, and we wish him and his wife, Pat, the happiest of retirement days in the years to come!

Our departmental directors also give their all to their various roles. Each has committed to serve this constituency by being attentive and responsive to the needs of each of their counterparts in our conferences. I urge you to pay close attention to their reports on the following pages of the outstanding ministry that has taken place here in Mid-America as our Savior has worked through them.

I also want to say a word about Union College. Without a doubt, Union College is one of the greatest assets we have in Mid-America. The training and education going on there truly blesses every corner of our union. Dr. Vinita Sauder and her team do an outstanding job guiding the higher education ministry taking place there.

In addition, MAUC supports the medical ministry of AdventHealth which operates a number of hospitals and clinics across our territory. The leaders of AH are deeply committed to the Adventist Church and to blessing our communities through *extending the healing ministry of Christ*.

## PLANNING AND PREPARING

As I look ahead to the next five years, I see so much promise for our church here in the heartland of America. First, did you know the International Pathfinder Camporee, which has been held in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, since 1999, will be relocated to Gillette, Wyoming? Yes, nearly 60,000 people will gather from around the globe to be a part of this amazing youth event. I can't wait for all those young people to experience our part of the world! Secondly, the world church is coming to our territory not once but twice in the next quinquennium—to St. Louis for the General Conference Session in 2022 and again in 2025.

As exciting as these events are, still the most profound ministry will be happening in Mid-America at our local churches and schools spread throughout our territory. The truth is our pastors and teachers are there day in and day out, working alongside our members to provide

opportunities to encourage one another and bless those in our communities with the good news of what Jesus has done for each of us.

The General Conference has a new slogan they are using throughout the world for the next several years: "I Will Go!" The North American Division has adopted that theme along with the phrase "Together in Mission—I Will Go!" In Mid-America, we wholeheartedly embrace both of these rallying cries, along with our own simple banner of "Yes, Lord!"

This is really just a prayer we invite each one to pray. It is a prayer of willingness to work together in mission and to go wherever the Lord calls us to serve. Whether it is to a mission field on the other side of the globe, or in a children's Sabbath school room in Neligh, Nebraska, each of us is a needed member of the body of Christ—called into service for Him and for others.

What would the next five years look like if each one in Mid-America simply said, "Yes, Lord! I am yours. Love me, guide me, fill my soul, Yes, Lord, take full control." Just imagine ... 0



**GARY THURBER**

is president of the Mid-America Union.



**RAYLENE JONES**

is executive assistant to the president.



# SHARING THE DATA

It is with great delight and pleasure that I present to you the Ninth Regular Quinquennium Session report of the Mid-America Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. This report reflects the stellar work of the immediate past MAUC executive secretary, Elder Gil Webb. Since assuming this position as your new union executive secretary in January, I have had the unique privilege of seeing the indelible mark and solid foundation that Elder Webb laid in this office.

Today I stand on Elder Webb's shoulders, as I take up the mantle of leadership to serve you in humility of spirit. These past five years have not been without their challenges. However, I am grateful to God for the blessings and achievements we have experienced together as a union.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought the country—yea the world—to a standstill. For a moment, it appeared that ministry also experienced a shortfall. However, ministry, though slow, still made an impact in the Mid-America Union territory. Our theme “Yes, Lord!” gives us the undergirding to continue in spite of the challenges. The mission given to us by Jesus Christ over 2,000 years ago speaks to that theme and is still relevant to these times amid the various challenges we face.

The office of secretariat

has a unique and distinctive responsibility to gather and chronicle with accuracy the figures and data that emphasize the successes and gains, as well as the failings and inadequacies, of the conferences during this past quinquennium, thereby making this office a vital component to the effectiveness and growth of the union.

In this report, I will attempt to give you a snapshot of the progression of the union based on the reports received from the conferences. The account will show both gains and losses. You will notice that in spite of the challenges, pitfalls of the economy and the COVID-19 pandemic, we can still offer

our praises to God. He has been good to Mid-America. During this quinquennium 16,265 persons were added to the union and 5,981 were baptized, while 1,719 joined by profession of faith and 8,565 transferred in by letter. However, member transfers out by letter, deaths, dropped, and missing totaled 14,939. That reflects a 92% loss of the gain; hence an increase of 1,326 members.

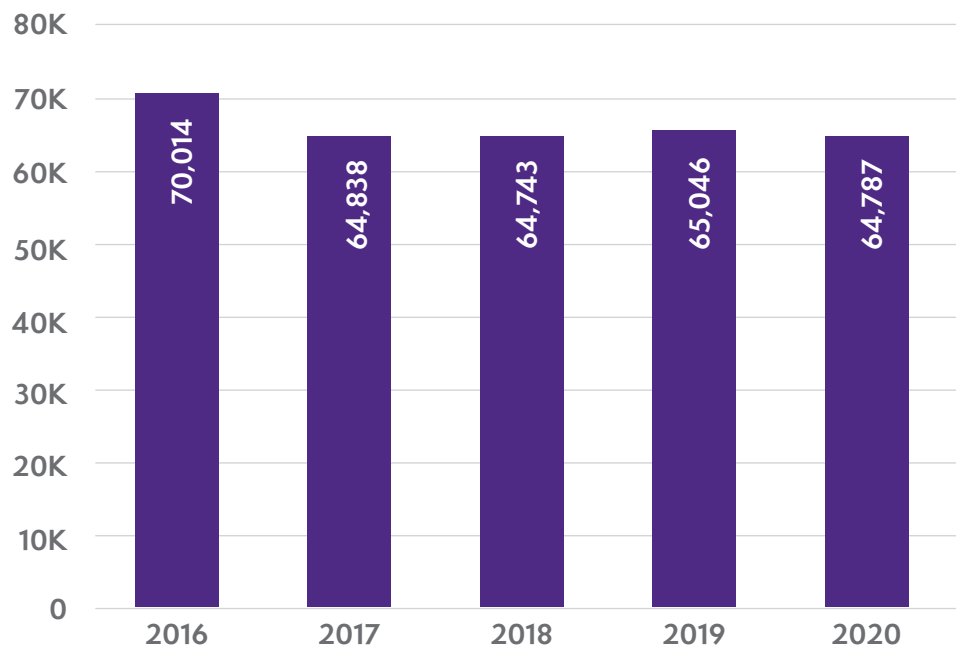
These facts and figures reflect the commitment and dedication of our pastors, teachers, Bible instructors, church officers and members filled with the Spirit of God. Through various mechanisms such as evangelism, reclaiming strategies and other

ministries, these individuals took to heart the mission of Jesus Christ, went out and did battle with the enemy of God and grew the kingdom of God in the process. They have courageously made an impact upon their church, community, conference and certainly Mid-America Union Conference.

## WORDS OF APPRECIATION

To my fellow Mid-America Union Conference officers, Elder Gary Thurber, president, and Elder Troy Peoples, treasurer, I express my deep and sincere appreciation

## MEMBERSHIP TOTALS 2016-2020





for having afforded me the privilege of working with you these past few months.

The efficiency of the day-to-day operation of my office is largely due to the coordinated services of my executive assistant Raylene Jones. I thank her for her commitment and dedication to making the office of secretariat run with top-notch performance. And I would be remiss if I did not say a word

of appreciation to Pennie Yesilcimen who served as the executive assistant to Elder Gil Webb and who also assisted me with information for the preparation of this report.

To my wife, Raquel, I express heartfelt appreciation for the support, encouragement, patience, understanding and honesty you have shared with me regarding my work in this office. I am

eternally grateful to you.

Finally, to you, the constituents of the Mid-America Union Conference, I thank you from the depth of my heart for the privilege and opportunity you have afforded me to serve you in this capacity. Again, I say thank you.

In Luke 19:13 we are reminded to occupy till He returns. My prayer and hope

is that when He does return, He will say to each one of us, "Well done thou good and faithful servant ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25:21).

May we say "Yes, Lord!" as we continue to grow in the grace of God and keep our minds and hearts focused on Jesus Christ and His soon return. Maranatha! 0

.....  
Hubert J. Morel, Jr.

## CARING FOR THE CHURCH'S PERSONNEL

The Human Resources director reports directly to the vice president for administration, and as HR director I work closely with administration to maintain healthy employee relations and help keep the day-to-day operations running smoothly throughout all departments. I am also responsible for ensuring understanding and implementation between employee and employer of the resources, policies and procedures that generally and legally govern the workplace environment. In addition, I serve as a resource to our conferences within our union territory as requested, providing legal best practices and offering emotional support through difficult situations.

### Specific Human Resources Responsibilities Include:

- Protecting interests of employees and the organization in accordance with NAD and MAUC policies and governmental laws and regulations
- Helping foster a wholesome work environment
- Coordinating the use of insurance carriers, health and wellness consultants, employee benefit providers and other outside resources
- Maintaining the system of employee service records
- Processing retirement applications (five over the past quinquennium)
- Reviewing applications and orienting new employees, assisting in maintaining the employee handbook, and conducting exit interviews (10 exit interviews and nine onboarding new employees over the past quinquennium)

People are the heart of every organization and I am most grateful for the privilege to serve in this role. My daily prayer is "Yes, Lord! May we follow wherever You lead as we go forward together in mission." 0

.....  
Raylene Jones



**HUBERT J. MOREL JR.**  
is vice president of administration for the Mid-America Union.



**RAYLENE JONES**  
is director of Human Resources and executive assistant to the vice president for administration.



# FUNDING OUR MISSION

“Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good! His faithful love endures forever.”

1 Chron. 16:34

God has blessed the Mid-America Union Conference in so many ways over the last five years that it's impossible to count. Every day brings new opportunities to give God the praise for how He works out what seems to be insurmountable challenges, which many times are blessings in disguise.

The last five years have seen their share of ups and downs. Including our fund balances. In 2016 MAUC was able to pay off half of the debt that was owed on the Krueger Center at Union College of \$2.275 million. That was a planned spend-down of our reserves to save interest cost. MAUC working capital went down to 115% that year and, with God's blessings, we have slowly built the reserves back to where in 2020 MAUC recommended working capital was 151%.

One third of our 2020 recommended working capital is allocated funds set aside for some exciting projects that are coming up in the 2021-2026 term. We are going to have the privilege to be the host union for the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists session in both 2022 as well as 2025 in St. Louis. Along with those large meetings, we are also going to host in the MAUC territory the next International Pathfinder Camporee in

Gillette, Wyoming, which was formerly held in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. In 2023 we will help our local conferences be able to send their teachers to the next national teacher convention. In 2024, the Ministerial Department will be holding the next union-wide pastors convention. One of the most exciting projects focuses on Union College's plans for a new wellness center. MAUC has committed to help fund that with at least half a million dollars in 2022.

As we look over the audited financial statements from the last five years, in the operating fund we had a net income gain every year except for 2016 when our Executive Committee voted to help reduce the college's debt. Some years that gain wasn't much, but it was a gain. Some of the extraordinary things the union was able to help our conferences with financially in the past five years were a return from union reserves of a little over a million dollars in 2018 in unrestricted money, and in 2020 a little over \$584,000 in COVID-19 relief money.

## GOD DOES ANSWER

As we look back, we can see the Lord blessing in other ways—not just financially—these past five years. Gwen Speak served as the MAUC

associate treasurer from November 2015 to December 2019 when she took a call to become the treasurer of the Gulf States Conference in the Southern Union. The search for her replacement was a bit of a challenge since she left right at year-end.

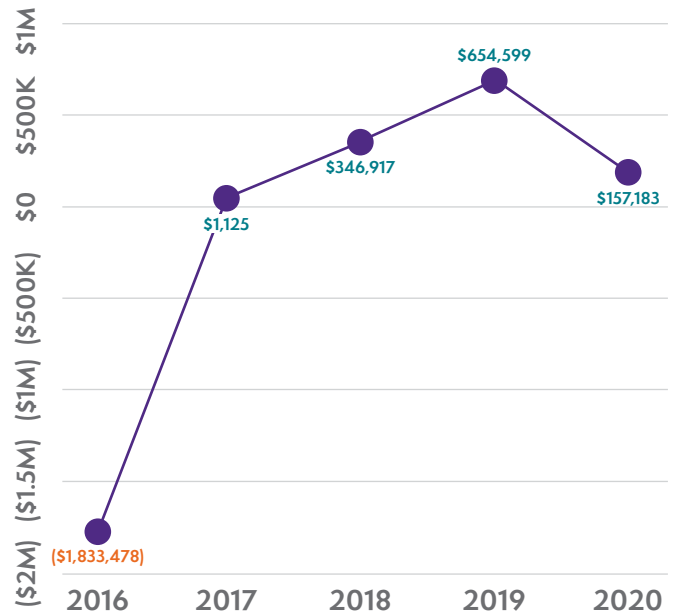
Then COVID-19 hit in March of 2020. The “unknown” became the norm for most people, as we had not lived through such before. However, the Lord knew what we needed, and in July of 2020 Garrett Holmes accepted the call to become the MAUC associate treasurer. Garrett came from General

Conference Auditing Services, and has been a great fit for our office. Our accountant Evelyn Cornforth retired in

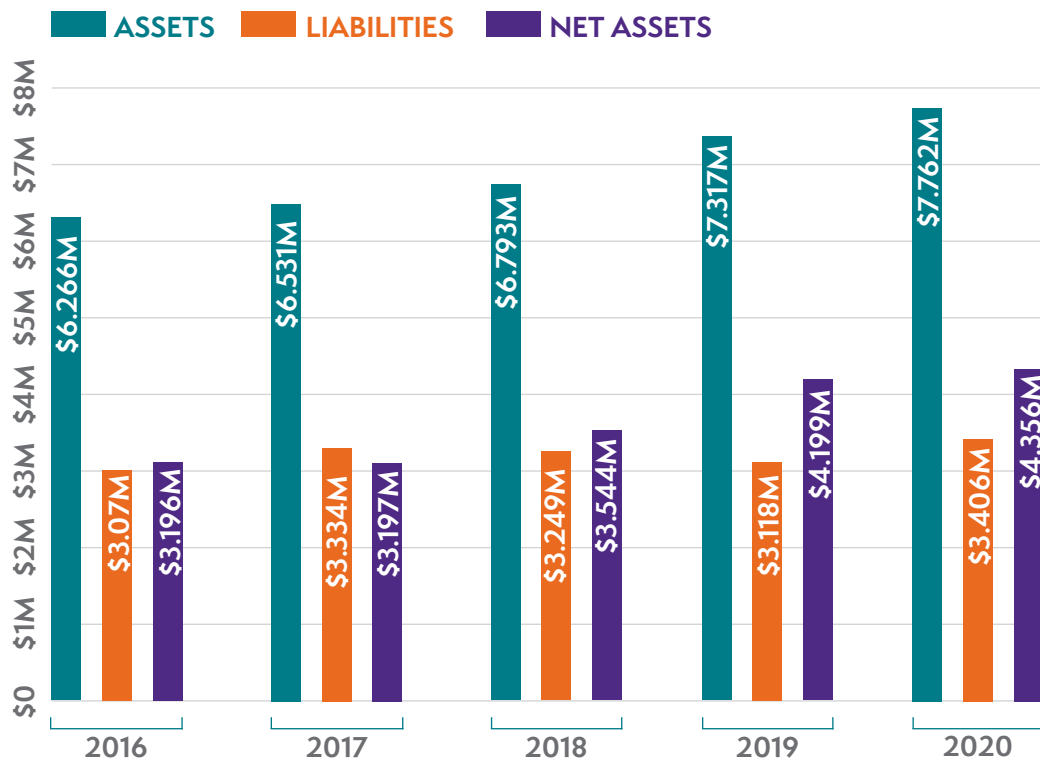


**TROY PEOPLES** is vice president for finance of the Mid-America Union.

## STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN NET ASSETS 2016-2020



# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION 2016-2020



2019, but graciously agreed to come back to help fill the vacancy when Gwen left till Garrett could make the transition. Pennie Yesilcimen and Abisai Arreguin help keep the Treasury Department working smoothly on a daily basis, and Roy Schaecher, who

maintains the office building and grounds, rounds out the team. I am very grateful for the team we have at MAUC, and what you see presented is because of all the hard work these people do every day to make it happen.

Our goal is to help assist in

making all kinds of mission projects become reality by budgeting conservatively and staying within budget. I am very thankful for our department heads and officers, who understand having to live within the funds available to us and are willing to make

adjustments to stay within the budget. Sometimes I don't make everyone happy when I say "No." However, we try to say "Yes" to as many projects as we can financially, with a few that stretch our comfort levels.

As MAUC's treasurer, I simply say that God has proven over and over when it comes to His church, and His faithful followers giving to it, that He sometimes chooses to answer our prayers only when we step out in faith. If Peter had not chosen to respond to the Lord's request positively as found in Luke 5:5, he never would have been blessed the way the Lord intended. God's way of growing us is to ask us to do things we're not completely comfortable with and that test our faith. I have learned to say "Yes, Lord!" more than I once did.

It's been a pleasure serving you over the past five years, and I look forward to what new and exciting things the Lord has planned going forward. May God help us to be faithful till He comes back to take us home. 0



**PENNIE YESILCIMEN**  
is executive assistant to the vice president for finance.



**GARRETT HOLMES**  
is associate treasurer for the Mid-America Union.



**ABISAI ARREGUIN**  
is information technology and accounting assistant for the Mid-America Union.



**ROY SCHAECHER**  
is maintenance engineer for the Mid-America Union.





# COLLABORATING FOR MINISTRY

The MAUC director of Church Ministries coordinates a wide variety of initiatives, events and resources for local conferences and constituents. The areas of focus include Children’s Ministries, Pathfinders and Adventurers, Youth and Young Adults and Adventist Community Services.

## CHILDREN, ADVENTURERS AND PATHFINDERS

In early 2020 the Mid-America Union Conference hosted a Children’s Ministries Expo in Omaha, Nebraska, where 113 attendees participated in a new training format.

Adventurer clubs for children Pre K-4 are well established in all six conferences in the Mid-America Union and are a primary feeder for Pathfinder clubs.

Pathfinders is the Adventist camping/educational ministry primarily for grades 5-12. Fun and educational activities, along with the comprehensive training structure of the organization, make Pathfinders the single strongest ministry in the Seventh-day Adventist Church worldwide.

The annual Pathfinder Bible Experience competition challenges Pathfinders to learn Scripture, with teams memorizing entire books of the Bible in order to earn a first place award. Each year the MAUC hosts the union level competition of PBE, with the most recent event being held virtually due to the pandemic.

In July 2017 nearly 1,500 Pathfinders gathered in the Black Hills of South Dakota for the union-wide Pathfinder camporee with dedication services held in the amphitheater at Mt. Rushmore.

In August 2019, over 2,600 Pathfinders and staff from Mid-America joined approximately 50,000 from around the world for the International Camporee held in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. We eagerly look forward to the next International Camporee scheduled to be held in Gillette, Wyoming, in 2024.

Hubert Cisneros retired from serving as Church Ministries director in 2018 and returned to part-time pastoring with his wife and ministry partner Lucy.

## SUMMER CAMPS

Summer camp is a top priority for local conference youth departments, which have outstanding facilities and some of the most beautiful locations in the country. Hundreds of children and youth make important decisions for Christ and choose baptism every summer while discovering life-changing lessons in God’s second book of nature.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, our camps are on strong footing and continue to offer meaningful activities for our children and youth.

### Our nine camps in Mid-America are:

- Camp High Point
- Flag Mountain Camp
- Northern Lights Camp
- Camp Heritage
- Camp Arrowhead
- Broken Arrow Ranch
- Glacier View Ranch
- Mills Springs Ranch
- North Star Camp



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Roger Wade, MAUC Church Ministries director from April 2019-April 2021, coordinated multiple ACS efforts among conferences in metro areas.

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## YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

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MAUC Academy Leadership and Bible conferences are conducted yearly at various locations where academy students learn skills for leadership and outreach. A union-wide Bible conference for public high school students was hosted in the fall of 2016.

During the pandemic, Mid-America young adults participated in the virtual NAD Momentum Youth Sabbath School where they preached, led discussions and provided special music.

## ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES

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All Mid-America ACS/DR leaders were instrumental in mobilizing collection of items needed in impacted communities during the past five years. When the NAD COVID-19 Food Grant funds were disbursed, ACS leaders stepped up to assist those who have been most impacted by the pandemic across Mid-America. Many food pantries have collaborated with other community organizations to distribute additional food items during this time of crisis. 0



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# CONNECTING, INFORMING AND INSPIRING

When Ellen White was told “You must begin to print a little paper and send it out to the people,” the blueprint for communication in the Adventist Church was born. From that small beginning, the vision has flourished and today the vibrant tools of communication are many for sharing the good news of Jesus Christ and inspiring and informing His followers.

The Mid-America Union Communication Department exists to enhance awareness of Adventist mission, messages and activities throughout our nine-state region. We serve the dedicated and skilled communicators in our six conferences in helping local churches meet their goals for nurture and outreach by offering a steady stream of resources, mentoring and training.

Our goals are to inspire deeper relationships with Christ, build trust through transparency and increase member engagement here in the heartland of America.

## WAYS WE SERVE

1. We gather and share news and stories to keep members informed and engaged with sharing the hope of Jesus Christ with our communities.
2. We manage the communication aspects of a variety of projects through conducting research, developing strategies, drafting content and engaging audiences.
3. We seek to use our influence in raising awareness of the union’s mission, values and priorities through all our communication platforms.
4. We promote and protect the reputation of the Mid-America Union and all our entities by focusing on strategic planning and pre-emptive crisis communication efforts.
5. We create and share resources that inspire best communication practices and provide training to equip communicators to become more effective in telling our Adventist story.

## TOOLS WE USE

- OUTLOOK magazine (print edition)
- Outlookmag.org (digital news and inspiration)
- Midamericaadventist.org (organizational website)
- myOUTLOOK (weekly email news)
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- The Advance Podcast
- YouTube
- Vimeo

Sign up here:  
[bit.ly/myoutlook](http://bit.ly/myoutlook)

## KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### During the past five years we have:

- Created an onboarding manual for new conference communication directors
- Created a private Facebook group for Mid-America communicators
- Created a private Facebook group for OUTLOOK bloggers
- Began hosting an annual lay communication advisory
- Started recognizing outstanding communicators in our territory with an annual Award of Communication Excellence
- Celebrated 25 years of collaboration between OUTLOOK magazine and Union College student writers
- Conducted interviews and published Mid-America’s 40-year anniversary story
- Researched and wrote articles for the new online *Adventist Encyclopedia*
- Produced a digital discipleship video series
- Produced the 300th issue of myOUTLOOK weekly e-newsletter
- Launched The Advance podcast
- Gathered and shared data from our territory through Facebook polls, digital newsletter and print surveys
- Provided crisis communication training during the Adventist Student Personnel Association Convention
- Hosted multiple communication training seminars during the Minnesota Conference Leadership Summit





With the faithful assistance of other communication professionals and the great team we work with at Pacific Press Publishing Association, we produce 10 issues per year of the print edition of OUTLOOK magazine that are mailed to approximately 24,000 households.

Our volunteer blogging team continues to produce unique daily content for outlookmag.org, the online edition of OUTLOOK magazine that is read by over 29,000 people per month.

## INITIATIVES WE HAVE SUPPORTED

**Hear Their Voices:** Representatives from the Adventist Church collaborated with other organizations to host a community expo called Hear Their Voices in September 2017 in Kansas City. This two-day event raised awareness and provided education for the prevention of human sex trafficking and offered support for survivors.

**Miles to Minneapolis:** In June 2020 we collaborated with several of our conferences to host the live stream of the final leg of a seven-night virtual freedom ride starting in Washington, DC, and ending in Minneapolis focusing on prayer and community collaboration.

**10 Days of Prayer:** Last January we collaborated with the MAUC Church Ministries Department and our local conferences to offer a virtual in-depth time of prayer across our territory.

**What's Your Story? Video Series:** In May 2020 our MAUC president presented a statement on racism in response to the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. As a followup, Gary Thurber interviewed several Mid-America church members to learn more about their diverse experiences and their hopes for the future.

**Pathfinder Camporees:** It has been our privilege to provide communication support for both the Mid-America Union Pathfinder Camporee and the International Pathfinder Camporee.

As the communication team daily commits to saying "Yes, Lord!" we are thankful for the opportunities to serve the needs of our constituents and build up God's kingdom through sharing the distinctive Adventist message of hope and wholeness. 0



**BRENDA DICKERSON** is director of communication for the Mid-America Union, OUTLOOK editor and general vice president of the Society of Adventist Communicators.



**HUGH DAVIS** is associate director of communication and digital media manager for the Mid-America Union.



**BARB ENGQUIST** is administrative assistant for the Communication Department.





# LEARNING SOMETHING BETTER

“Something better is the watchword of education, the law of all true living. Whatever Christ asks us to renounce, He offers in its stead something better. . . . Bring them (the youth) in contact with truer beauty, with loftier principles, and with nobler lives. Lead them to behold the One ‘altogether lovely.’ When once the gaze is fixed upon Him, the life finds its center . . . to honor Christ, to become like Him, to work for Him” (*Education*, p. 296).

During the past quinquennium students, teachers, school boards and school constituencies have said “Yes, Lord!” to Adventist education even in the midst of a worldwide pandemic. We are excited to share what is happening in Adventist education in Mid-America.

Adventist education is learner-focused. It enables learners to develop a life of faith in God, and to use their knowledge, skills and understandings to serve God and others. We believe in an integrated educational experience where students encounter God throughout the day in all subjects.

## CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

In the past quinquennium, three exciting curriculums have been developed and implemented in Adventist schools across North America. First, the Bible curriculum, Adventist Encounter, is intentional about using the classroom to help build a meaningful lifelong relationship with Jesus, using the Bible as a source of truth with the goal of making a difference for eternity. It seeks to invite

students to be the disciples referenced in Jesus’ Great Commission. This grades 1-12 curriculum has been enthusiastically adopted across Mid-America.

Pathways 2.0: Journey to Excellence through Literacy is the English Language Arts curriculum for grades 1-8. This is an integrated curriculum that includes reading, writing, word study, grammar, spelling, handwriting, speaking and listening. It builds on the Adventist worldview and incorporates appropriately complex nonfiction texts that will engage scholars while incorporating research-based skills and strategies that enable them to become lifelong learners. Spiritual applications are intentionally included in the instruction.

In addition, a new biology textbook was developed in partnership with Kendall Hunt Publishing Company for high school students. This textbook includes a biblical perspective in examining a variety of understandings of nature. It aligns with the North American Division biology standards and is grounded in the faith-based beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Inquiry learning is a central instruction



strategy, and Scripture connections are made.

## THE NUMBERS

During the past five years, five schools have opened in Mid-America and 10 have closed. Many school constituencies struggle with the decision to close as they have seen enrollment decline. Most plan to reopen in a year or two. We are aware of at least two schools planning to reopen this year.

Enrollment in all our Mid-America schools declined 10%. Some of the decline is due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some is due to aging communities that do not have many school-age children. It is difficult to pinpoint exact reasons for the spikes or declines, but we are committed

to growing healthy, vibrant school communities.

Our teachers and administrators are well prepared: 37% of our teachers hold a postgraduate degree, 68% hold either a Professional or Standard NAD Teaching Certificate, and 71% of our administrators hold an NAD Administrator Certificate.

Our teachers continue to look for opportunities to grow professionally. The Mid-America Union is grateful for the support that allowed us to take all of our teachers, administrators and many support staff to the NAD Teachers’ Convention in Chicago. We look forward to the 2023 convention in Phoenix. Mid-America also supports elementary and secondary teachers going to other national conventions. Our secondary associate, Gerard

Ban, continues the plan of hosting our teachers at two subject-specific national conferences annually. We are also very thankful for our partnership with La Sierra University that allows teachers to get a master's degree in administration or curriculum tuition-free (to them).

During the past quinquennium, we have seen a decline in the pool of available teachers. Baby boomers are reaching retirement age and nationwide we see a definite decline in the number of college-age students who are choosing education as a career. Teachers are also choosing not to move, but to continue working in their school community. This has put added pressure on our schools and conferences when the need for teachers arises. However, we are appreciative of Union College whose Education Department trains sought-after teacher candidates who understand multi-grade classrooms and are well versed in the Adventist curriculum and best practices in education. Moreover, they ensure that Mid-America

is able to interview teacher candidates before superintendents from other conferences do.

## PANDEMIC IMPACTS

When COVID-19 struck, teachers quickly retooled into a different delivery mode. Our teachers said, "Yes, Lord" even though they had no idea how they would continue to minister to their students. Teachers learned to use Zoom, ensured that each student had access to technology, and generally within a two-week time frame were ready to meet with their students virtually. Additional resources were sought and provided by the division, union and conferences.

When classes resumed in the fall of 2020, classrooms were sanitized, partitions were created and social distance, mask, temperature checks and personal hygiene practices were implemented so that face-to-face instruction could begin. The emotional impact was great, but a quality education was still provided. Students, teachers, school boards and conference personnel all

showed great resilience. God has demonstrated His love and leading and we know He will continue to in the future.

## LOOKING FORWARD

Educational planning has not been put on hold throughout this pandemic. We anticipate exciting educational practices being implemented over the next five years. Our conferences, Mid-America Union, and the North American Division have collaborated in introducing standards-based learning. The NAD developed standards in each subject area that are based on the Adventist worldview. Standards identify what learners should know and be able to do, and serve as the framework for curriculum, instruction and assessment.

In an effort to fulfill our charge as Adventist educators, we are revising our grading practices to be aligned to the standards students must meet. That way, grades will be a clearer indication of what students have learned, not simply a measure of how much work they turn in or how hard they

might try in class. Learning is the indicator of success. Mid-America has included our superintendents in the NAD training. We have begun training with our Curriculum Committee who will assist us as we walk down this path. Each conference is also planning training for teachers. This will not be a quick implementation; we will take the time to ensure our teachers, students and schools are ready.

Mental health is another challenge. Learners come with varying backgrounds and experiences. Anxiety is one of the leading mental health conditions facing our children. We need to provide strategies and assistance where feasible to help meet these challenges.

We are thankful for God's innumerable blessings and the way He is daily leading in the education of His kids in Mid-America. We are blessed to know that there are Spirit-filled men and women who have dedicated their lives to bringing lifelong learners to the feet of Jesus. It is the goal of this department to see every student excel in faith, learning and service to honor God and bless others. ◻



### LOUANN HOWARD

is director of the Office of Education for the Mid-America Union.



### GERARD BAN

is associate director of the Office of Education for the Mid-America Union.



### KRISTI GRIFFITH

is registrar for the Mid-America Union.



### BARB ENGQUIST

is administrative assistant for the Office of Education.





# ENCOURAGING OUR PASTORS



**M**uch of the work of the Mid-America Union ministerial director is done out of the public eye, yet this person is highly visible to the ministerial directors of the six conferences. Much energy, support and encouragement pours directly into the team of six conference ministerial directors in Mid-America: Merlin Knowles, Dakota; Joseph Ikner, Central States; Lee Rochholz, Iowa-Missouri; Virgil Covel, Kansas-Nebraska; Karen Lewis, Minnesota, (who is one of only two women in a ministerial director position in North America); and Mickey Mallory, Rocky Mountain.

*Building a cohesive team*

*spirit has been among the highest priorities, since high-trust relationships foster an easy flow of resources, ideas and support, all of which better enable conference ministerial directors to support and care for local pastors.*

*For most of the past quinquennium, Mic Thurber filled this role. In August 2021, he accepted the invitation of the Rocky Mountain Conference Executive Committee to serve as RMC's president. Following is a report he prepared before accepting his new position.*

Though most of my work supports ministerial directors, there is much I do to directly

support our pastors. For example, I speak frequently to our pastors for training or devotionals, and I provide leadership coaching for pastors who request it.

We plan and host our union-wide pastors convention, like the one held in Omaha in July of 2017. Focusing especially on strengthening the home and family of the pastor, we brought in Mark Gungor, who is famous for his "Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage" seminars. Laughter often unlocks our defenses so that important things can be learned, which is especially Mark's gift.

One of the most memorable and moving times in our convention was during our opening meeting when I invited all the pastors and spouses to come to the platform to affix their family's picture to the cross. Bringing our families to the cross right from the start set a tone that lasted throughout our time together.

Our bi-annual union-wide pastoral intern retreats bring together new-in-ministry workers from around our territory to become acquainted with their peers, learn about the wider church, and gain insights and support as they navigate ministry that often turns out

to be quite different from what they expected. We have held three such retreats now.

The MAUC Ministerial Department helps coordinate the annual theology student interviews with the Religion Department of Union College. Before COVID, we hosted a nice dinner for the students, faculty and conference leaders to enable them to become personally acquainted with each other before the more formal interviews took place.

## SERVING THE WIDER CHURCH

Of course, some work does come into public view, such as preaching in local churches throughout our union when invited—as well as for camp meetings, special weekends and training sessions for local church leaders and members.

And duties occasionally reach outside our union's territory. During this last quinquennium I was asked by the NAD Ministerial Department to take the lead in creating a new manual for ministerial directors across North America. I chaired its development committee and served as its editor and principal writer. The project was completed as an online resource that can be easily updated as new practices emerge. In addition to writing

the new manual, I have served as both a formal and informal coach for ministerial directors in various parts of the NAD.

## YES, LORD!

My last words are about the group of people for whom my heart beats most—pastors. I love my work because I love our pastors, and I love the work of pastoral ministry. Though rarely easy, it is truly rewarding. Because humanity's needs are vast and growing wider every day, the work of ministry is constantly changing, and that requires an unbroken connection with the Source of power.

And that was *before* the pandemic hit.

When COVID started, our pastors could well have just given up, but instead they said "Yes, Lord!" and worked even harder in the face of significant difficulty. I've been amazed at how adeptly pastors adapted to ministry under a whole new reality that no one saw coming. So I want to thank and affirm them for the extra hours they have worked to stay connected with you, provide online services, and for remaining faithful in their service for Jesus.

Finally, I hope each of us will say "Yes, Lord!" and commit to faithfully gather as the body of Christ whenever



we are able. I know the pastors have missed you! Just as my heart beats for pastors, I know their hearts beat for you.

And if you haven't done so lately, please speak a word of love and support to your pastor. I know that will mean a lot to them as they continue to do their best to serve you and the risen Christ.

A final note: Since preparing this report I have received and accepted an invitation to

serve in the Rocky Mountain Conference (see p. 43). It has been pure joy and an honor for me to have been Ministerial director in this great union for the last 8.5 years. We have a wonderful ministerial team in our conferences, and I wish them and the MAUC office team every blessing as they continue to serve God and you in our union. 0



**MIC THURBER**  
is outgoing director of the Ministerial Department for the Mid-America Union.



**PAULA CORREA**  
is incoming administrative assistant for the Ministerial Department.





# EMPOWERING LOCAL LEADERS



God has blessed us richly during these past five years. We thank our Hispanic congregations, members, leaders and pastors for what they've contributed to our conference during that time.

Our growth has been consistent for the past few years and we're happy to report that by the grace of God our Hispanic membership in the Mid-America Union Conference now exceeds 8,500.

Our department now oversees 100 churches, companies and groups. All these congregations are led by a fervent team of 37 pastors who work untiringly and faithfully where God has placed them to enlarge His kingdom and to make a difference in their communities.

We are currently focusing on the GPS for LIFE program that we hope will mobilize approximately 350 small groups in evangelism. Not even the coronavirus could stop the small group ministry since many of them kept meeting via Zoom, not losing their purpose.

We continue to train our members in evangelism, minister to elders and spouses and strengthen lay leadership. Almost every conference in Mid-America, in collaboration with Andrews University, offered a training school for lay members who desire to go deeper in Bible knowledge and become better equipped to do God's mission in their territory. These initiatives have allowed us to have a better interrelation between

churches and the conferences and the union and to respond to the concerns of the field.

Financially, the Lord has blessed us abundantly. The economic crises of recent years have not held back the generosity of our members. We recognize that, even in difficult circumstances and insecurity, our members have shown fidelity to God and His work.

Hispanic members have a passion for evangelism. Every Hispanic church hosted an average of two reaping series per year. For Hispanic churches, evangelism is not an event; it's a lifestyle. For the next five years we are putting together a program to train newly baptized members to share the gospel with their relatives and friends.

## CHALLENGES AND GIFTS

Many Hispanic youth do not have the opportunity to attend Adventist academies and relate to other Adventists their age. To help them connect with other Adventist youth, our department organizes and promotes an annual Hispanic Youth Congress. It has been very popular among attendees, and as leaders we are learning to minister to the second and third generations of Hispanic youth.

We continue to focus strategically on the areas where our presence is lacking, especially in large cities. We hope we can have more Adventist presence in large cities where the immigrant population is



concentrated. Many immigrants get to know Jesus in the United States and then they share the Adventist message with their families in their country of origin.

Finally, we thank God for the administrative team of our Mid-America Union Conference and for the spiritual, strategic and economic support they have given us to carry out our work. The Hispanic Ministries Department looks forward to making even greater gains during the next five years.

“Yes, Lord!” is the response of Hispanic members in

gratitude to our Savior Jesus Christ for so many blessings received in the past. We are marching with total confidence knowing the presence of Jesus will be with us and His church to the end.

Even though every Sabbath the Lord is praised in different languages across the vast territory of our union, we anticipate the great day when all together we will praise the Lord in the same language. 0



**ROBERTO CORREA**  
is director of Multilanguage and Hispanic Ministries for the Mid-America Union.



**PAULA CORREA**  
is incoming administrative assistant for the Multilanguage and Hispanic Ministries department.





# EMPODERAR A LOS LÍDERES LOCALES



**D**ios nos ha bendecido ricamente durante estos últimos cinco años.

Agradecemos a nuestras Congregaciones hispanas, miembros, líderes y pastores por lo que han contribuido a nuestro conferencia durante ese tiempo.

Nuestro crecimiento ha sido constante durante los últimos años y nos complace informar que por la gracia de Dios nuestra membresía hispana en la Unión Mid-America supera los 8.500.

Nuestro departamento supervisa 100 iglesias, compañías y grupos. Todos estas

congregaciones están dirigidas por un ferviente equipo de 37 pastores que trabajan incansable y fielmente donde Dios los ha colocado para hacer crecer su reino y hacer una diferencia

en su comunidades.

Nos estamos concentrando en el programa Grupos Pequeños Saludables que esperamos movilizar aproximadamente 350 grupos pequeños en evangelismo. Ni siquiera el coronavirus pudo detener el ministerio de los grupos pequeños ya que muchos de ellos siguieron reuniéndose vía Zoom, sin perder su propósito.

Continuamos entrenando a nuestros miembros en el área de evangelismo, entrenando a ancianos y líderes, fortaleciendo sus liderazgos en sus iglesias. Casi todas las conferencias, en colaboración con Andrews Universidad, ofrecieron clases de teología para sus miembros que deseaban profundizar en las verdades bíblicas. Estas iniciativas nos han permitido tener una mejor interrelación

entre las Iglesias, Conferencias y la Unión respondiendo a las necesidades de cada campo.

Financieramente, el Señor nos ha bendecido abundantemente. Las crisis económicas de los últimos años no han frenado la generosidad de nuestros miembros. Reconocemos que, incluso en los tiempos difíciles e inseguridad económica, nuestros miembros han seguido siendo fieles a Dios y a Su obra.

Los miembros hispanos tienen una pasión por evangelismo. Cada iglesia hispana tuvo al menos 2 campañas de evangelismo por año. Para las iglesias hispanas, la evangelización no es un

evento; es un estilo de vida. Para los próximos cinco años estamos armando un programa para capacitar miembros recién bautizados para

compartir el Evangelio con sus familiares y amigos.

Muchos jóvenes hispanos no tienen la oportunidad de asistir a las academias adventistas y poder relacionarse con otros jóvenes adventistas de su edad. Para ayudarles a conectarse, conocerse con otros jóvenes adventistas, nuestro departamento organiza y promueve un Congreso anual de la Juventud Hispánica. Ha sido muy popular entre los jóvenes, y como líderes estamos aprendiendo a ministrar a la segunda y tercera generación de jóvenes hispanos.

Seguimos enfocándonos estratégicamente en las áreas donde nuestra presencia es deficiente, especialmente en las grandes ciudades. Esperamos poder tener más presencia adventista en las grandes ciudades donde se concentra la



mayor población de hispanos. Muchos inmigrantes llegan a conocer a Jesús en los Estados Unidos y luego comparten el mensaje adventista con sus familias en sus países de origen.

Finalmente, damos gracias a Dios por el equipo administrativo de nuestra Union de mid-America y por el apoyo espiritual, estratégico y económico que nos han dado para llevar a cabo nuestro trabajo. El Departamento de Ministerios Hispanos espera seguir creciendo aún mas durante los próximos cinco años.

“¡Sí, Señor!” es la respuesta de los miembros hispanos

en agradecimiento a nuestro Salvador Jesucristo por tantas bendiciones recibidas en el pasado. Marchamos con total confianza sabiendo que la presencia de Jesús estará con nosotros y su iglesia hasta el final.

A pesar de que cada sábado el Señor es alabado en diferentes idiomas a través del vasto territorio de nuestra unión, esperamos el gran día en el que todos juntos alabaremos el Señor en el mismo idioma. **U**



**ROBERTO CORREA**

es el director de los ministerios hispanos y multilingüe para Mid-America Union Conference.



**PAULA CORREA**

es la secretaria administrativa para el departamento hispano y multilingüe para Mid-America Union Conference.





# COMING TOGETHER, TRUSTING JESUS



(l-r, top-bottom) Paulette Bullinger, Tabitha Isaboke, Sue Carlson, DeeAnn Bragaw, Donna Brown, Patty Rivera, Gail Coridan

**W**omen's Ministries is about supporting women in the church and community. And when COVID-19 hit in 2020, we realized we had to do things in a new way. Our retreats were just around the corner and how to manage getting together for spiritual renewal and fellowship was uppermost on our minds.

Every conference managed to host some very special events for their women. Rocky Mountain held an outside retreat at Campion Academy.

Minnesota, Iowa-Missouri, Kansas-Nebraska and Central States held virtual retreats. Elizabeth Talbot was the speaker for Iowa-Missouri's, and I feel like God was showing Himself strong in discouraging times when more than 1,000 ladies attended Elizabeth's presentations.

The Dakota women met in person at Abby of the Hills, and Sue Carlson from Kansas-Nebraska Conference was their speaker.

Women's Ministries is not just about retreats; we have

so many other ministries and events that bring women together. Women who have been unable to attend these events in the past were able to take part in virtual meetings.

Sue Carlson has embraced Zoom in ministering to her conference by holding Bible studies, bread baking classes, Project Shield, Bags of Love and several other classes online.

DeeAnn Bragaw, from Rocky Mountain, and her team have implemented The Gal Pal Blessing Challenge, which is a way of encouraging women by just a simple, small gift.

Tabitha Isaboke and her team in Minnesota have held several *Jesus Calling* Zoom meetings, including "A Call to Lean" and "Who am I: A Search for Identity."

Paulette Bullinger, working in the Dakotas, has planned regional meetings in Dickinson, Fargo, Aberdeen, Sioux Falls and Bismarck. This has enabled her to get better acquainted with her large territory and find out how Women's Ministries can best serve church and community women.

Despite all of the adversity in the last year we feel we are connecting better with our large union, and we have become aware of more devotional needs for women.

We are also more aware that domestic violence does exist in our church. We know there is a need for all of us, not just pastors, to know how to deal with sexual, mental, spiritual and emotional abuse. Sadly, it does exist among our church members and we must know how to help and what to say—not just sweep it under the carpet.

Trusting Jesus is the most important thing we have learned—trusting that He is in control, that He knows the beginning all the way to the end. And as we say "Yes, Lord!" we choose to believe He is all we need.

In every stage of life, trusting Jesus is an easy way to live, and we want our women to embrace that and lean on the Good Shepherd. ☺

Gail Cordian, from Iowa-Missouri, hosts the Bold2Pray program on KPOG 102.9 FM LP out of Grimes, Iowa, which airs every Thursday for eight hours. April 8 was the one-year mark for this program of conversational prayer manifesting God's amazing grace.

The Central States Conference has been without a director for a length of time, and now we are pleased to welcome their new director, Donna Brown, to our team.

In March 2021 each conference participated in the Mid-America Union virtual Ministries Convention. We held six English seminars, and Patty Rivera, Spanish director for Rocky Mountain, planned five Spanish seminars for the convention.

## LEANING ON JESUS

During COVID, the conference directors and I met monthly via Zoom for encouragement, prayer and support. This has been a blessing, and we are planning to continue these meetings.



**NANCY BUXTON** is director of Women's Ministries for the Mid-America Union, a part-time position.



# STRENGTHENING MEMBERS' COMMITMENTS

The role of religion in society has long been debated. The past year with its regulation impacting church attendance has intensified the debate.

Government has historically been involved with religious organizations and has exercised some form of control over them. Scripture is filled with examples of the involvement of government with religious practices. Control of religion and religious organizations was common in the early history of this country. Patrick Henry supported the use of taxation to pay ministers. A license was required to engage in preaching the gospel.

The principle of government involvement in religion in this country is set forth in two provisions of our constitution. Article VI states that no religious test shall be required as a qualification to hold an office in the government. The second principle is in the First Amendment which states that Congress shall make no law establishing religion nor shall it make any law prohibiting the free exercise of religion.

Where do we find the proper association between government, society and religious organizations? Rather than searching historical statements of our nation's founders, I'd suggest that we look at the reasonableness of the positions. There are two different circumstances involving the relationship of government and churches. One is the involvement of government in religious activities, and the other

is government regulations that impact religious practice.

## THE BIG QUESTION

So, the question must be faced: How should we as Seventh-day Adventist Christians react to this separation principle?

First, I hope that we would be sensitive to the religious beliefs or non-beliefs of others. We should understand that the government is not the vehicle for spreading the gospel.

Second, we should not want prayer to become a ritual instead of an intimate conversation with God.

Third, and perhaps most important, is understanding what Jesus said about the issue in Matt. 6:5-6: "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men ... When thou prayest, enter into thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father in secret."

This topic has also been addressed in the *Great Controversy* page 297: "Thus again was demonstrated the evil results of attempting to build up the church by the aid of the State, of appealing to the secular power in support of the gospel of him who declared, 'My kingdom is not of this world'. The union of the church with the state, be the degree ever so slight, while it may appear to bring the world



nearer the church, does in reality, but bring the church nearer the world."

But what about the recent regulations regarding attendance at churches and the spread of the coronavirus? Does the government have authority to protect its citizens from harm, including spread of disease? Of course! Government has many regulations dealing with the safety of gatherings—including churches—such as maximum capacity, location of emergency exits, and use of certain materials that create a fire hazard.

Yet churches must not be targeted in a manner that is different from gatherings of a similar nature. The central questions must be: Does the regulation address the harm in a manner that is least restrictive while adequately dealing with the danger? And does the regulation apply to all similarly situated organizations?

I'd suggest that as Seventh-day Adventist Christians, when we are faced with questions regarding the impact of our actions on others, we would ask if love and concern for others is more important than personal feelings or inconveniences.

As Christians, we should realize that the government has a responsibility to society to protect it from harm in a reasonable manner. And sometimes that protection has an impact on religious practice. So long as that impact is not singling out religion and is a reasonable reaction to the potential harm, we as Seventh-day Adventist Christians should support protecting society from the harm. "Yes, Lord, I do not like the imposition, but I understand that as a Christian I have a responsibility based on Your principle of love to care for my neighbor even to my own inconvenience." 0



**DARREL HUENERGARDT** provides religious liberty education and legal counsel for the Mid-America Union.



# BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

While the core mission of Union College hasn't changed since students first walked the halls of the administration building in 1891, we recently adopted a new brand promise to students: "The Union College community pushes you to go deeper into your faith and prepares you for life-long fulfillment—in your career, your community and your life."

We are thankful God continues to bless Union College and allows us to keep that promise to provide an excellent, Christ-centered educational experience for the young people of Mid-America and beyond.

But we don't do it alone. Your support is integral to the success of our students as they graduate and live the life to which God has called them.

- Your financial support through direct conference subsidy makes up nearly 10 percent of our operating budget and allows us to offer competitive tuition rates.
- Your leadership support from conference and

union administrators on our Board of Trustees helps strengthen our decisions for the future.

- Your young people make up the backbone of our student population and create a welcoming learning community that attracts students from around the world.
- Your prayers give us courage and strengthen our resolve to provide the highest quality spiritual and academic experience for your young people.

Please keep Union College in your prayers as we continue to improve our top-notch educational experience and make it available to anyone who wants it.



**VINITA SAUDER**  
is president of Union College.



## Celebrating 125 years

Union College celebrated its 125th birthday for the entire year—with a special logo, a birthday celebration on Sept. 30, 2016, and other special events that carried over through the summer of 2017.

**Did you know?** Union is the only Adventist college in North America to have never changed its name.

## Residential upgrades

The lobby of the women's residence received a complete remodel for the first time since Rees Hall was built in the 1950s. Twenty-two student rooms were also renovated in Culver Hall, the men's residence attached to the Ortner Center.



2016

2016

## Bouldering cave

Although it officially opened in January 2017, the glassed-in Bouldering Cave was built under the west balcony in the Don Love Building Atrium in 2016. Instead of pushing climbers to ascend 20 to 30 feet into the air, the Bouldering Cave presents lateral climbing challenges with a variety of routes around several angled walls along the eight-foot ceiling.

### Did you know?

International Rescue and Relief ([ucollege.edu/irr](http://ucollege.edu/irr)) students learn rock climbing and bouldering as part of their rescue training.





## A new front door

Union dedicated a new entrance to the campus at the corner of 48th Street and Prescott Avenue. Decorative brick walls surrounded by gardens grow into arches over the sidewalk on Prescott, and large lettering on both sides of the street welcome visitors to Union College. The new entrance not only provides a “front door” to campus, but also gives the college and the church much greater visibility for those passing on 48th Street.



**Did you know?** At the dedication ceremony on Sept. 30, Union buried a time capsule containing messages from students, employees and alumni near the entrance, to be unearthed in 2050.

2017

## Simulating the hospital experience

The Nursing Simulation Center expanded to four interconnected hospital rooms with high-tech patient simulators that mimic the reactions of real patients. Instructors use the center to emulate a real hospital by creating simulations that require students to work together as a team to care for several patients in multiple rooms—just like they will in a hospital unit.



**Did you know?** Union’s patient simulators look like people and mimic human bodily functions, allowing students to feel a pulse, assess pupil reaction, listen to lungs, respond to a patient’s voice and see reactions to medication.



## Warrior soccer

Union relaunched a varsity men’s soccer team after a 20-plus year hiatus. The new Warrior team plays a fall schedule concurrent with women’s volleyball. Union also expanded the fall high school tournament to include boys soccer in 2017.

2018

## A digital focus on art

The Art and Graphic Design Program refocused on the demand for digital creatives by adding an associate degree and minor in Photo and Video Imaging. This new program teaches students how to produce professional-quality photography and videos and can be paired with most majors. ([ucollege.edu/photo-video-imaging](http://ucollege.edu/photo-video-imaging))



**Did you know?** The demand for film and video editors is projected to grow by nearly 20 percent over the next 10 years.

2017

## Online learning

Union added two online courses to its summer catalog, allowing students more flexibility to take courses while working elsewhere over the summer. Each summer Union has added more options and students could choose from over 30 online courses in the summer of 2021 in addition to the classes offered on campus.



**Did you know?** All Union College nursing graduates have passed the national board licensure exam (NCLEX-RN) on their first attempt three out of the past four years. That’s the best rate among both Nebraska colleges and Adventist colleges.

2018

## Kettering nursing pipeline

Kettering Health Network, an Adventist healthcare system in Ohio, guarantees a job for any Union College nursing graduate and includes a signing bonus up to \$10,000

(\$2,500 for every year they attend Union). This bonus has now grown to \$30,000. ([ucollege.edu/nursing/tripleguarantee](http://ucollege.edu/nursing/tripleguarantee))





## Renovating Rees Hall

Maranatha volunteers converged on Union's campus for three weeks to renovate 31 rooms in the women's residence hall. Rees Hall was built in the 1950s and this project updated flooring, lighting, fixtures, cabinetry and windows. After a break due to COVID, Maranatha returned in the summer of 2021 to renovate another 27 rooms. ([ucollege.edu/learningandliving](http://ucollege.edu/learningandliving))

**Did you know?** A number of alumni helped fund the project by giving the \$5,000 needed to renovate their own former rooms.

## Recognized for disaster response at home

After taking a leadership role in the Nebraska relief efforts when flooding ravaged a significant part of the state, the Union College International Rescue and Relief Program was awarded the Step Forward Award by the State of Nebraska for their efforts.

**Did you know?** The IRR program also sent a team to help with cleanup efforts in Port Arthur, Texas, after Hurricane Harvey in September 2017 and in Belle Plaine, Iowa, after a derecho blasted through the town in August 2020.

2019

2019

## Expedition Malawi

After training senior international rescue and relief majors in South and Central America for several years, the program shifted to a semester in Malawi, Africa. While there, students learned global health medicine, project development and provided healthcare in remote areas. When a massive typhoon caused extensive flooding in the country, the government flew the IRR students to refugee camps isolated by the flooding to provide medical care for the residents. ([ucollege.edu/malawiflood](http://ucollege.edu/malawiflood))



## Persevering through a pandemic



Much like the rest of the country, Union went online and closed campus in March 2020. But with an adjusted schedule and safety protocols in place, Union held in-person classes the entire 2020-2021 academic year, culminating with in-person graduation ceremonies for both the class of 2020 and the class of 2021 in May 2021.

## AdventHealth endowed chairs



AdventHealth began funding an AdventHealth Endowed Chair of Nursing in 2020, which they completed in 2021. They also completed funding two AdventHealth Endowed Chairs of Business in 2020—held by program director Lisa Forbes and business faculty member Jodie Trana. The Florida-based Adventist healthcare system gave a total of \$6 million to Union College over the last five years to fund the three endowed chairs.

## A new program for a growing career

Union launched an associate degree for occupational therapy assistants that offers a two-year path to a fast-growing career paying nearly \$60,000 per year right out of college. A section of the Don Love Building next to the IRR facility was renovated for the program complete with a classroom, meeting space and learning lab. The program achieved full, seven-year accreditation in April 2021 and graduated its first class in May 2021. ([ucollege.edu/ota](http://ucollege.edu/ota))



**Did you know?** Occupational therapy assistants partner with occupational therapists to help patients engage in the activities they value and return to independence after injury or illness.

2020

2020



## Student Success Center

Thanks to a \$2.1 million Title III grant, Union opened a new Student Success Center that combines the Teaching Learning Center and Career Center with a new, expanded team providing key services to help students succeed in college—a life coach for every freshman, free embedded and one-on-one tutoring services, accessibility and disability services, a focus on landing internships for every student, and career preparation. A renovated space in the library provides students a great place to connect with each other and their life coaches. ([ucollege.edu/success](http://ucollege.edu/success))



## A new symbol of Union

Union kicked off a brand update to represent the college's leading-edge approach to student success. A new logo and tagline, "Finding purpose. Unlocking potential." highlight Union's commitment to helping students discover lifelong faith and career fulfillment through the unique Christian community, personal mentorship and learning experiences offered by the college. A new shield symbol replaced the old athletic emblem and represents the college as a whole. Red and black have been the school's official colors throughout its history, and those two colors were updated in the new brand to a bright cardinal red and anthracite gray. ([ucollege.edu/2021-brand-update](http://ucollege.edu/2021-brand-update))



2021

2021



## Bridge to Union

The new Bridge to Union Scholarship covers the tuition after federal aid of any incoming freshman whose family makes \$60,000 or less. This is the first

in a series of planned new programs focused on making college more affordable. ([ucollege.edu/bridge-to-union](http://ucollege.edu/bridge-to-union))

## Continuing accreditation

Union received 10-year accreditation—the maximum term allowed—by both its accrediting agencies: the Higher Learning Commission and the Adventist Accrediting Association.

**Did you know?** Besides institutional accreditation, a number of programs renewed accreditation for the maximum term between 2019 and 2021, including education, nursing, physician assistant, social work and occupational therapy assistant.

## Fit for the future

Union publicly announced a \$13 million fundraising campaign to fund an expanded wellness facility next to the Larson Lifestyle Center. Over \$9 million has already been raised for the project. The planned 54,000 square foot building will contain a new field house for Warrior athletics complete with locker rooms for home and visiting teams, an additional recreation court, a turf practice area, a walking track and large cardio and strength-training gyms.

Scheduled to be completed for the 2024-2025 school year, the entire building will be called the AdventHealth Complex, thanks to a lead gift by the Florida-based Adventist health network and its regional Midwest hospitals. The complex will contain the Reiner Wellness Center, named for Rich and Lynett Reiner, the Larson Aquatics Center, the Nursing Program and the Health and Human Performance Program. ([ucollege.edu/fit](http://ucollege.edu/fit))



# BLESSED TO BE ACTIVE AND GROWING

Over the past four years I have had the privilege to serve the Central States Conference as president, and together we have been able to accomplish great work as we focused on the following initiatives.

**1. Unity:** As administrators and pastors, we have chosen to be intentional about fostering interpersonal pastoral relationships. We are also passionate about encouraging a family environment. We are working to foster this spirit among our workforce and with our lay family. We believe Jesus' words in John 13:35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

**2. Seasoned seniors:** We want our seniors to know that we love and care for them, so we are intentional about listening to them, honoring them and making it possible for them to have fun. We have great seasoned seniors, and we will continue to pour love and respect on them.

**3. Growth and retention:** Central States was one of the entities that honored the NAD's request for conferences to clean up their membership books. Once the figures were in, we saw that we had much work to do. In consultation with our pastors, we decided that we not only wanted to gain new family members through baptism, but we also wanted to keep them. So, we challenged our pastors to create strategies for "closing the back door."

We now see steady gains in membership growth, with people we can account for.

**4. Christian education:** We have qualified, passionate, committed teachers, a more developed infrastructure, a safe environment and our students are receiving a quality education. We were able to furnish our schools with smart boards, good working computers, iPads and Chrome Books.

**5. Debt elimination:** We want to be debt free, so together with our Central States Conference family we have been tackling conference debt and we have been able to make considerable headway.

**6. Conference development:** We are pleased to be realizing our dream of having affordable senior housing on Central States property. We now have 24 single-story units (two bedroom, one bath, full-sized washers and dryers, furnished kitchens, and one-car garage).

## THE FUTURE

As we plan for the future, there are six objectives I would like us to focus on:

**1. Debt elimination!** We must make sure that there are no impediments to mission and ministry.

**2. Millennial engagement:** We started a Millennial Advisory Committee led by Jonathan Green, our Central States Conference senior

accountant. We look forward to fully engaged young adults who are participating in the life of the church during the next four years.

**3. Generation Z advisory caucus:** This caucus will give young voices an opportunity to share what they would like to see happening in their conference and how they can be a part of it.

**4. Conference growth:** Evangelism, evangelism, evangelism! Our theme for evangelism over the next four years will be "Let's Grow in Four." We have a goal to begin new work in one of the three areas in our territory that currently does not have a Central States Conference church, to build up our smaller congregations, and to plant five new churches. We would like all our members to be involved in evangelism: Total Member Involvement.

**5. Christian education:** While we have made some great strides, we are still not finished revamping our schools, growing their numbers, assisting our staff with their development, upgrading infrastructure and making sure our teachers are properly compensated.

**6. Conference grounds development:** We would like to continue to develop our conference grounds by adding a sports field for flag football, baseball and soccer, go-kart tracks, zip lines, horse trails, an archery range and pickle ball courts.

Our mission in the Central States Conference is to live and proclaim the Three Angels Messages in the heartland of America, growing healthy, Bible-based, multicultural communities of faith.

Our congregations have been active during this past quadrennial. There have been renovations, community forums held in our buildings, peaceful social justice protests against violence, mission trips, worship services in the park, the development of powerful Children Ministries and children's Bible studies which resulted in baptisms, partnerships that produced physical health programs for the community, mall evangelism, and prayer walks, just to name a few of our activities.

We are blessed to have added 10 new congregations to the Central States family. We look forward to the growth of each of these congregations, and we are excited to see how each will do their part to hasten the Second Coming of Jesus.



**ROGER BERNARD**  
is president of the Central States Conference.



# PARK HILL CHURCH SAVING LIVES THROUGH COVID VACCINATIONS

The Denver Park Hill Church began conducting COVID-19 vaccinations in the African American and Latino community under the direction of **Dr. Erynn M. Burks** in late January of 2021. When asked about the purpose of the vaccination efforts, Dr. Burks stated, “It is incumbent on us as Christians to step forward and help underserved communities, particularly communities of color, that have been ravaged by the pandemic. We know from the data that blacks and latinos are more likely to experience adverse outcomes or death as a result of the coronavirus, and we have an opportunity to ease that burden through mass vaccinations.”

The church is making good use of Facebook to advertise

each vaccine event, and has established a vaccination line specifically for making appointments. As a church, the members set out to remind the community that they are seen and they will not be left out of the state’s vaccination efforts. As such, community members are assisted by volunteers and staff to schedule their appointments and have the opportunity to ask questions about clinic logistics and the vaccine itself. Community members continually express how grateful they are for the help and the ease of the scheduling process.

On Feb. 6, Colorado **Governor Jared Polis** visited the site and spoke with the patients in attendance. While some spoke with him regarding the need for a site like

this in the community, others took the opportunity to applaud the event as a whole and to publicly acknowledge the staff and volunteers.

**Pastor David James** spoke to Governor Polis specifically about the difficulty many older Coloradans are facing securing a place in line to receive the vaccine. Pastor James, as well as other community members, voiced concerns about the vaccine registration portals being online, as some do not have access to internet or are not as computer literate as their younger counterparts.

Dr. Burks addressed the pandemic’s disproportionate effects on black and latino populations with Governor Polis, as well as the need to accelerate vaccination efforts, and the need to expand the eligibility criteria to include those under 70 years of age in communities of color in order to achieve equitable distribution of the vaccine. In response, the governor expressed his

continued commitment to partnering with community organizations to ensure equitable distribution of the vaccine in black and brown communities.

Colorado **State Representative Leslie Herod** also visited the site in February, presenting another opportunity to advocate for communities of color, the impoverished and elderly.

The site has administered over 2,000 vaccinations to date. This endeavor required the full support of the church to make it successful. Thank you to the many staff, volunteers and contributors who are involved in this ministry of helping save the lives of our neighbors.

Isaiah 58:6 says, “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?”

.....  
Kelby D. McCottry formerly pastored the Park Hill Church in Denver, Colorado.

(right) Colorado governor Jared Polis (center) discusses the COVID-19 vaccine clinic with Dr. Erynn Burks and her team during a site visit last spring.

(below) Dr. Erynn Burks (left) coordinates the vaccine clinic at the Park Hill Church in Denver, Colorado.



Photos courtesy Central States Conference



# HOPE FOR TOMORROW

**We are a people of HOPE. All we do is designed to focus on one thing and one thing alone—the soon return of Jesus.**

**W**hen I listen to the news, a sinking feeling comes over me—division, contention, rivalry, hostility, destruction and despair seem to dominate the discussion. The steady barrage has an impact, and for too many people hope begins to wane. The sense that nothing will ever be better can paralyze even the best intentions. A “why bother” outlook on life begins to cloud people’s thinking and darken their perspective.

As believers, we should listen to a different news source, a different information perspective that impacts our understanding. We need to have our thinking influenced by a different reality. What I am referring to is HOPE.

I have enjoyed observing the people of the Dakota Conference. They are a people of HOPE! Bad weather, difficulties and setbacks are just a part of life. The people here keep moving forward, planting when things are less than ideal, harvesting in the snow, looking out for one another during blizzards. Dakotans just keep going. I love that honest, realistic yet hopeful outlook on life. Today may have its challenges, but tomorrow is going to be better.

We as Adventists have historically been a people who look toward a better tomorrow. We have proclaimed “the blessed HOPE” from our inception. At the same time, we have realized that people need a HOPE that is tangible and that helps face

the challenges of life here and now. HOPE is a both/and proposition. We live with HOPE today because of the HOPE of eternity we hold.

Here in the Dakota Conference we have taken the word HOPE and are using it as an acronym to describe our goals, what we are striving toward. I would like to share that with each of you.

## H stands for our Homes

The home is the foundation of a solid society. Homes are where life lessons are taught, where worship is demonstrated, where values are instilled. Strong homes demonstrate appropriate interactions and curb destructive tendencies. As our homes go, our communities go. Many of our homes are facing tremendous challenges. We want to find ways to strengthen our homes.

## O stands for Outreach

All around us are people in need of solutions. They need to know they have worth and value as well as a purpose to exist. They need to know that they are not some biological accident, but rather a unique and important individual made in the image of God. Many people do not think scripture addresses their current needs, but have they ever really looked? We need to be answering the questions people are asking. We need to be creative. We need to go and share with others the wonderful things God has done. We want to reach people more effectively for Jesus.

## P stands for Prayer

Several years ago I read the following: “When we work, we work. But when we pray, God works.” There are things I am able to do, but I am unable to do the things of eternal worth. I cannot change hearts. I cannot change thought patterns. I cannot break the chains that bind, but I know Someone who can. Prayer is the power we desperately need permeating across our land. We want to make prayer a vital reality among our people.

## E stands for Education

Our schools—and the students who attend—are so important. Faithful teachers come alongside parents to instill values and principles for life. They give a gift of incredible value. We want to make Adventist Christian education available to as many as possible.

We are a people of HOPE. All we do is designed to focus on one thing and one thing alone—the soon return of Jesus. That is my HOPE for tomorrow.



**MARK R. WEIR**

is president of the Dakota Conference.

# PRAYER TAKES CENTER STAGE IN DAKOTA

A prayer anointing service was held at the Dakota Conference camp meeting in June. About 20 people presented various prayer requests and were prayed for and anointed by pastors **Sam Thomas, Terry Pflugrad, Mark Piotrowski** and **Barry St. Clair**.

The service had three main parts. First, a prayer of humility and confession was offered by Dr. Piotrowski, conference vice president of administration and education superintendent, inviting every person to yield their hearts to Christ in confession. Then, those gathered prayed with and for one another, and for the collected prayer requests posted throughout camp meeting week on the board in the prayer room. Finally, the pastors prayed for each



Mark Piotrowski

participant and personally anointed them with oil, asking in faith for God to move upon each life as He saw fit.

“The anointing service was powerful. The pastors took their time and prayed for each person requesting anointing,” said **Janice Koslowski-Dickhaut**. “There were all ages participating, which was touching. Afterwards, one participant was relieved; burdens lifted. The whole service was

very powerful.”

Pastor Sam Thomas shared, “Four people, four different situations, and four solutions. God gave me the opportunity to anoint and pray for all four people. We lifted up their request believing God would answer in the way that He knew best. Each one was experiencing physical pain and emotional baggage which they left in the hands of the Almighty. God heard and

answered their prayers that day, that moment, there is no doubt in my mind.”

For many, the number of hours spent in prayer during the past year has likely increased. The challenge we now face is guarding this special and sacred invitation by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to participate with Him in the ministry of intercession and reconciliation as our schedules start to fill up again.

Future plans include forming a Dakota Conference Prayer Committee and hosting a prayer conference annually.

Barry St. Clair is associate pastor of the Fargo/Red River/Wahpeton church district in North Dakota and serves as Dakota Conference prayer ministries coordinator.

## 33rd Annual Dakota Conference Women's Retreat

**When:** September 24-26, 2021

**Where:** Mandan, North Dakota

**Speaker:** Suzie Sendros

For more information and to register use the QR code:



For you are my help;  
I will sing for joy  
in the shadow of your wings.

Psalm 63:7







# A SEASON OF GRATITUDE

The Iowa-Missouri Conference is blessed to have many ministries which are only made possible with the support from members, employees and department directors of the conference. I want to extend a huge thanks to the Executive Committee for their dedication to carrying out the mission of the Adventist Church in Iowa and Missouri. While COVID-19 has presented many challenges, we trust God will faithfully bless us as we diligently share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Here is a snapshot of what was accomplished over the past five years, thanks to the support of all those involved.

## Youth ministry

We have been blessed to experience an increase in enrollment at Sunnydale Adventist Academy, where we consistently saw students on the waiting list to attend. Our elementary schools have also increased enrollment from an average of 266 during 2011-2016 to an average of 292 students during the past

five years. The Iowa-Missouri Conference constituency is giving more support than ever to help provide for students' tuition.

Not only have our schools grown, but Camp Heritage also experienced an increase of almost 10 percent in campers over the past four years. In the fifth year, 2020, there was no in-person camp. However, the camp did host a staff training for a new program called DiscipleTrek. Many of these trainees returned this year as camp staff.

Also in 2020, Magabook participants did not go door-to-door but instead hosted five Vacation Bible Schools in Kansas City, where they ministered to more than 500 children. We are thankful to Shawnee Mission Health for the donated CREATION Health materials, which helped make each VBS a success.

## Refugee ministries

On average we fund-raised \$80,000 a year for our refugee ministries. Some of these funds helped over 70 Pathfinders and sponsors from

the NC4Y (New Change for Youth) Pathfinder Club go to Oshkosh. Refugee participants said prior to this event they had never seen so many young people together in one place peacefully. NC4Y Oshkosh participants loved the skits and songs and continue to sing some of those songs to this day.

## Overseas mission

Over the past five years there were several short-term mission trips led and attended by individuals from the conference. Students and staff from SAA continued their ministry to India, which began in 2007. Teams from SAA also went on mission trips to Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Additionally, many members and pastors went on short-term mission trips to Bulgaria, the Philippines, Dominican Republic, Nepal and Cuba. In total, the Iowa-Missouri Conference sent missionaries to four continents during this quinquennium. While COVID-19 postponed mission trips during 2020, we hope to begin this outreach again shortly.

## Health ministries

The Cape Girardeau Church collaborated with Remote Area Medical in 2019 to bring a healthcare clinic to Cape Girardeau, Missouri. In total this clinic helped about 450 patients receive free medical, dental and vision care. This was only possible through the leadership and support of the local churches.

## LOOKING FORWARD

While COVID-19 has caused many setbacks, it has also provided us with many opportunities. Before COVID-19 one of our churches had a prayer group that had five attendees, but once the group shifted to Zoom, attendance rose to about 40. COVID-19 has pushed us to incorporate technology in ways we never would have tried previously. Moving forward we plan to intentionally integrate new technology and seek innovative methods of delivery for our ministries.

We pray God will continue to lead and bless us as we strive to lift Him up through our numerous ministries. "Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land" (2 Chron. 7:14, NLT).



## DEAN CORIDAN

is president of the Iowa-Missouri Conference.

James Bokovoy (courtesy North American Division)



# IOWA-MISSOURI CONFERENCE WELCOMES NEW COMMUNICATION DIRECTOR

Courtesy Christina Coston



**C**hristina Coston, a graduate of Southern Adventist University, has accepted the invitation of the Iowa-Missouri Conference to serve as communication director. Coston, who holds degrees in Communication Studies and International Studies—Spanish emphasis,

began her work in mid-June. She steps into the position vacated by **Randy Harmdierks**, who has taken a job in Minnesota.

“I’m pleased to join the Iowa-Missouri Conference team in spreading the love of Jesus,” said Coston. “I look forward to sharing stories of individuals, schools, churches and the conference. I believe storytelling is a powerful tool that can truly impact people.”

Coston worked with Southern Adventist University’s student newspaper for one year, editing over 300 articles that were published in print and online. In addition, she has

seven years of general office experience and also managed social media accounts for a year.

During the past year, Coston conducted primary research on how students at Southern Adventist University felt about the inclusion of the word Adventist in the university’s name. She presented her findings at Campus Research Day and won first place for the humanities category. She also received a Scholarly Achievement Award from Southern’s School of Journalism and Communication in 2020 and 2021.

“The Iowa-Missouri Conference is very happy to

welcome Christina as our new communication director. We are grateful God led her to us,” said **Dean Coridan**, conference president.

**Rhonda Karr**, treasurer for the Iowa-Missouri Conference, said she is pleased Coston accepted this position. “We had a pleasant week working together orienting Christina to her new job. I feel she has a bright future,” Karr added.

Coston can be reached at [communication@imsda.org](mailto:communication@imsda.org) or by calling 515.223.1197.

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Brenda Dickerson is communication director for the Mid-America Union.

# HEALTHCARE CLINIC SERVES OVER 145 PATIENTS

**R**emote Area Medical, in collaboration with Des Moines area churches, hosted a free health clinic at the Des Moines Church June 26-27. The clinic provided medical, dental and vision care as well as COVID-19 vaccines. In total the clinic served 148 individuals, some of whom received two services. There were 88 medical patients, 51 dental patients and 83 vision patients.

**Jessie**, a dental patient, learned about RAM two years ago when she was searching for a free dental clinic online. She saw the Des Moines RAM clinic on the online schedule and put a reminder in her phone. Two years later Jessie’s phone reminded her of the clinic, and she knew she still wanted to attend.

Jessie arrived at the Des Moines Church at 5:30 pm on June 25. She stayed overnight in the parking lot and was one of the first patients to be seen. “Everyone here has been really nice,” Jessie said.

According to RAM digital media specialist **Haley Harbin**, due to COVID-19 RAM limited the number of dental patients per day. Some who sought dental care were unable to be seen because of these limitations.

**Cristina** was one of these patients. She decided to receive vision care instead. When she arrived at the Des Moines Church at 3 am on the first day of the event, there were already many cars in the parking lot. “I think it is great [RAM is] offering free services, because healthcare is expensive,”

Cristina said.

To help patients like Jessie and Cristina, RAM relied on over 160 volunteers to assist in organizing the event and providing care to patients. Among these volunteers were several local church members who helped in many areas, including preparing food for volunteers, assisting patients with eye care and dental care, interpreting and triage.

**Darlene Rhodes**, a member of the Des Moines Church, and a small team prepared breakfast,

lunch and dinner on both clinic days to feed volunteers.

Another volunteer was **Bob Carr**, president of Des Moines Metro Adventist Radio. Carr was responsible for recruiting and organizing RAM at the local level. “It’s hard to find free stuff. Everyone wants to make a dollar. That is not what this is about; it’s about helping people and providing people with a service they need,” said Carr.

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Christina Coston is communication director for the Iowa-Missouri Conference.



Christina Coston



# CONFIDENCE IN GOD'S LEADING

As I gratefully review our journey together since 2016, here are a few things that give me wonderful confidence in God's gracious leading into the future.

## Engaged congregations

Through intentional encouragement, local congregations are taking more and more personal responsibility for the influence they have in their communities. As helpful as "programs from the top" may be, the message of Christ is to be personalized to the individuals we serve. Church boards are praying for guidance. New and creative ideas are becoming realities and more members are becoming engaged in the outreach of the church.

## Dedicated pastoral leadership

Leadership makes a difference. Those with the biblical gift of pastoring were never intended to do all the work, but to enable congregations to be noticeable lights in their communities.

With our churches closing in March 2020 because of COVID-19, our pastors stepped up to the task of ministering from a distance. They quickly learned about Zoom and live streaming and

continued to minister to their congregations.

We continue to intentionally offer young pastors opportunities to serve. As important as experience is, we have confidence in the next generation to not only continue the work, but to advance it. We continue our commitment to inviting qualified and called women into pastoral ministry.

## Committed, loving Adventist teachers

Our deeply caring, professional teachers who are responsible for nearly 500 students in our Kansas-Nebraska schools are daily influencing young lives for Christ. The pandemic greatly complicated their lives and the lives of their students. Yet they did what they had to do—with no complaints—and helped their students learn and grow, even online. We cannot thank them enough.

The conference Scholarship Program is supporting about 45 young people attending Adventist boarding schools outside our conference each year. Without this program, many of these teens would not be able to attend an Adventist academy. Our conference schools are also receiving significant scholarship money to assist families with their tuition costs. Our

commitment to excellence through Adventist education will remain a high priority for our conference. This investment in our youth is worth it, now and into eternity.

## New opportunities

We are unable to predict how the Spirit will lead. Who would have imagined that the mission field would come to us? The growing immigrant population in our territory is eager to hear the gospel. Many were taught about Adventism in their homeland. The Karen (formerly Burmese) people are a growing population in Omaha, Lincoln, and parts of Western Kansas. They now have their own building, purchased in 2019, and their influence continues to grow.

## Financial stability

The Kansas-Nebraska Conference is currently operating well within the denominational guidelines of fiscal health. God has blessed with tithe increases in each of the past five years, including 2020 during the pandemic.

## Streamlining and accountability

The conference officers regularly evaluate how effectively we are using the tools and resources given us. Pastoral staffing to our 95

congregations is reviewed annually. School appropriations are increased whenever possible. Budgets are monitored. Conference departments are evaluated as to their effectiveness in the field. Our desire is to see the highest possible amount of funds dedicated to front-line ministries, our churches and schools.

Our conference is made up of ordinary people. We are Seventh-day Adventist Christians, yet so varied and diverse. We may not agree on everything. Yet Jesus urges us to be united (Eph. 4:1-6). We are called to circle tightly around Jesus. May this be our deepest desire as we move forward into the future.



**RON CARLSON**  
is president of the Kansas-Nebraska Conference.



*Kansas-Nebraska  
Conference Presents:*

**FIGHT, LIVE,  
WALK & PRAY  
LIKE A WOMAN**

*Women's Retreat*

**OCTOBER**

**8 - 10, 2021**

*Junction City, KS*

*Speaker:*

**Dr. Heather  
Thompson  
Day**



**Welcoming Ages 14-114**





# KEEPING OUR EYES ON JESUS

January 1, 2016 through December 31, 2020 were times both exciting and challenging for the Minnesota Conference. We saw new areas of both need and opportunity. Some aspects of ministry became extremely complex in 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic; the killing of George Floyd and the associated trauma and unrest; and the general social context surrounding the presidential election cycle. Further, because of the pandemic, the conference Constituency Session has been delayed multiple times. This also affects the ministry planned and provided. Still, the Minnesota Conference presses forward in mission with our EYES on Jesus! EYES is an acronym for Evangelism, Youth ministries, Education, and Spirituality, stewardship and service. Recognizing that we don't have space to report all that the Lord is doing, here are some highlights from the past five years.

## Evangelism

We cooperated with major media ministries during this period to bring coordinated efforts to Minnesota. Breath of Life, It Is Written, La Voz de la Esperanza and the Voice of Prophecy each had a part to play in the big picture. There were 133 conference-subsidized evangelistic events; 104 of those were considered non-traditional either because of brevity or content. During this time, we established our

literature evangelism ministry which consists of Minnesota Youth Rush (a canvassing program delivering magazines) as well as a network of churches committed to distributing GLOW tracts.

Through these means, as well as the various other ministries, we saw 2,092 members baptized or added through profession of faith. We hope that all these members are also disciples of Jesus. We organized six churches and planted 22 new groups and companies. Our membership grew by 11.6 percent, even in some difficult contexts.

## Youth ministries

The biggest event during the past five years was the Chosen International Pathfinder Camporee. Minnesota sent 687 Pathfinders and staff to the camporee. The number of clubs varies from year to year, but at the peak we had 32 Pathfinder clubs in operation, and a peak of 20 Adventurer clubs.

We also operate North Star Camp. We finished construction of the Donna Ward Lodge in 2016 and opened the Rannow Welcome Center in 2018. We continue to fundraise for other capital improvements to the camp. North Star Camp earned accreditation by the American Camp Association for the first time during this reporting period.

During the height of the pandemic, the summer youth camp program went mostly

virtual. Onsite family retreats replaced the typical onsite youth activities. Still, over the past five years we have seen hundreds of youth decide to follow Christ, study the Bible or be baptized.

## Education

A new school opened in Rochester, and we closed zero schools in our system during this reporting period. Our boarding academy, Maplewood Academy, had accumulated a debt of approximately \$500,000 to the conference. That debt has been eliminated. MWA ended 2020 debt-free and is now operating "in the black," and the MWA Board intends to keep it that way. All our schools operated through the pandemic either virtually, onsite or in a hybrid mode.

## Spirituality, stewardship and service

We have held prayer conferences, camp meetings, training seminars and other events intended to revive, reform and strengthen the church for service. We have an accredited Gift Planning and Trust Services ministry which is serving hundreds of church members in the stewardship of their estates. Because of the pandemic and unrest, multiple churches dramatically ramped up their food and assistance distributions in 2020. Tithe income remitted by the churches increased in each of the five years. In

addition to the new buildings at North Star Camp, the conference purchased a new office building and sold the old office building, all while debt-free. There are six "new to us" church buildings in the conference, and one brand new school building.

## Mission and vision

Our mission is *To help people realize they are accepted in Jesus Christ, and come to know, love, serve and share Him.*

Our vision is *Recognizing that Jesus will return soon, we will all actively engage in ministry.* This happens through the combined efforts of church members, and the paid teachers, pastors and other ministers all working together in their various ways.

We give God all the glory for all the good accomplished. We praise Him for His grace, guidance, mercy and provision!



**JUSTIN LYONS**

is president of the Minnesota Conference.

# TRUSTING GOD'S PROCESS

Courtesy Pastor Jude Senatus



Micah, Carisse and Grace were recently baptized by Pastor Jude Senatus (right).

**G**ood and upright is the Lord; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. All the ways of the Lord are loving and faithful toward those who keep the demands of his covenant” Psalm 25:8-10.

Coming to Duluth district was challenging. After receiving a call to serve in the Minnesota Conference, the family and I moved from Michigan to Duluth in January 2021. Yes, I know what you are thinking; it was a brave move to relocate to Duluth in January. We did, however manage to settle in, not knowing one of our biggest challenges was yet to come.

Due to the COVID

pandemic, the churches were following strict rules and regulations to protect their most vulnerable members. Our attendance was minimal, and we had more pews than people every week. People were confused and wondering what would happen next.

Despite these circumstances, I trusted in God's process, and was convinced that there was no better time to preach the gospel. When the world is upside down it is best to call upon its Creator. Therefore, I decided I would center my sermons on the love, power, authority and faithfulness of our Lord Jesus Christ. No matter how bad things may seem, we can always seek solace in Christ.

God takes pleasure in delivering His children from the

enemy's ruse. He quickly took charge of both the Hinckley and Duluth churches, and as He called upon His children they responded with sincere hearts.

One Sabbath afternoon, a young lady name **Catherine** came up after the sermon and shared how she grew up in the Hinckley Church, but had not been in attendance for years. She had felt impressed to visit, and it happened to be my first or second sermon at that church. As we spoke, she tearfully explained that she desired to give the rest of her life to Jesus. The church and I were excited! We glorified God for His faithfulness.

Catherine was baptized a month later.

“Train up children in the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it” (Prov. 22:6). Testimonies such as Catherine's give ample reason to trust in God's process. He will never fail us, and always keeps His promises.

The next Sabbath, the living God orchestrated another fantastic moment. After my sermon in Duluth, **Dorothy**—one of our regular attendees and a Baptist—approached requesting to become a Seventh-day Adventist. Her husband **Felix** joined her, requesting to join the Duluth Church by profession of faith.

Around the same time, my ten-year-old son **Isaac**, who had been asking for baptism since he was seven years old, requested to attend baptismal

class. Upon asking him why he wanted to get baptized so badly he answered, “Daddy, I want to know more about Jesus and when He comes, I want to be with Him.” That was good enough for me!

After sharing the exciting news with our Stone Ridge Christian School, several students, including **Grace, Carisse** and **Micah**, requested to take the class. By July 2021, the Duluth Church had five baptisms and one profession of faith. To God be the glory! “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself” (John 12:32).

Trusting in God's process is the best thing anyone can do. His process guarantees a victory. God magnified His name in the Duluth district despite a pandemic, limited church attendance, and ever-changing rules and regulations. I'm sure He can and will do the same for you. Just trust fully in Him.

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Jude Senatus pastors the Duluth district, which includes Christ Our Righteousness, Duluth, Grand Marais and Hinckley churches.





# SHARING JESUS IS OUR MISSION



Kari Morrison

Over the last several years, our mission statement has been: *To know Him and to make Him fully known.* With this statement in mind, we carefully aim to filter whatever we undertake as a conference. It is our job to take Jesus to everyone in our territory and to let people see what Jesus is truly like so they can get to know Him.

One thing that makes the Rocky Mountain Conference such an interesting conference is its size, as we cover all of Wyoming and Colorado and a part of New Mexico. Our membership is very diverse throughout the Front Range, where a high percentage of our population is located, with more than 3.5 million people in just this area of our territory. Then consider Wyoming where the whole state has a population of 577,000. These facts make it very challenging to figure the best way to equitably distribute funds across the conference. Unique settings in our territory require flexibility in our mission.

During the past year, COVID has wreaked havoc in our

churches and schools. Our ministers and teachers have been careful with safety, but since March of 2020 close to 50 percent of employees in the office have come down with COVID. The pandemic created a unique set of challenges that God has been leading us through.

From our headquarters in Denver, we support a palette of ministries:

## Churches

Mostly in multi-church districts, we have 133 congregations across the conference, with nearly 18,000 members. Our group of pastors is very diverse, growing healthy churches and actively involved in their communities through service projects and health initiatives.

## Schools

Currently, we operate 18 schools, two of which are academies: Campion and Mile High. **Diane Harris**, the superintendent for education working with nearly 100 teachers, is dedicated to helping our students know Jesus and do well scholastically.

## Soul-winning

Wherever we can, we promote soul-winning! It looks different from church to church and school to school, but sharing Jesus is our mission. It is amazing how creative our pastors and teachers are in their outreach ministries.

Another important part of sharing Jesus is our Literature Ministry program running out of Campion Academy, both during the school year and in the summer months. A crew of kids travels from one city to another trying to connect with someone at every house in the territory. Our young people are sharing stories of lives being changed through this ministry.

## Health ministries

RMC is blessed with the witness through the presence of five AdventHealth hospitals. But there is more. When our Adventist Book Center was closed in 2019, it turned into a Health Ministries center called the Rocky Mountain Lifestyle Center. There are plans to employ an Adventist doctor to offer lifestyle presentations to the community, including providing tele-medicine consultations for individuals from around the conference.

## Communication

Communication is a ministry we strongly support. Every Friday, the *NewsNuggets* e-newsletter highlights events taking place all over our conference from Wyoming to New Mexico. We also publish *Mountain Views*, a quarterly

magazine presenting issues in the Adventist Church and some of the hot topics taking place around the globe, fostering conversation in our churches. Readers from all over the North American Division are asking for a subscription to *Mountain Views*.

## Finances

The Lord has blessed our conference financially in so many ways. Even last year during COVID, we were less than 1 percent behind where we had been the year before. We continue to praise God for the faithfulness of His people in their stewardship. We thank God for **George Crumley** and for the job he has done to keep us financially sound.

As we are eagerly waiting Christ's return, we feel privileged to be a part of the mission of Mid-America Union Conference's family of believers. Maranatha!



**ED BARNETT**  
is president of the Rocky Mountain Conference.

# DARIN GOTTFRIED JOINS RMC AS NEW VICE PRESIDENT OF FINANCE



Stephanie Gottfried

**O**n June 25, the RMC Administrative Committee

extended an invitation to **Darin Gottfried** to serve as vice president of finance, replacing **George Crumley** who left RMC on June 30 to serve in the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference.

“Darin has spent the last nine years in the Kansas-Nebraska Conference. He has done a tremendous job there and I know God will use him in a mighty way here in our conference,” **Ed Barnett**, RMC president, said. “George Crumley has

been such a blessing and we will miss him.”

Gottfried says he is excited about joining the team in Rocky Mountain. “You have a great group of people there that I am looking forward to working with and getting to know better. I hope I can support and help grow the conference as much as possible.” He assumes his responsibilities at RMC on Sept. 1.

Before serving as vice president of finance for the Kansas-Nebraska Conference for the last five years, Gottfried was an associate treasurer for the same conference, business manager for Wisconsin Academy, and worked at Fletch Adventist Hospital in North Carolina.

**Doug English**, vice president of administration, is looking forward to working alongside Gottfried. “We are very excited that Darin has accepted this call. We believe he not only has the skillset

we are looking for, but the mission-minded approach that matches the Rocky Mountain Conference.”

Born and raised in North Dakota, Darin Gottfried is no stranger to the Rocky Mountain area, where he spent many weekends exploring the scenery of the region.

He is a graduate of Union College, where he met his ministry partner, **Stephanie**. She is familiar with RMC as an alumna of Campion Academy, and her parents reside in Monument, Colorado.

The Gottfrieds have two four-legged children, including a Great Dane named Berg and a German Wirehaired Pointer named Otto. Stephanie said that “[We] have not been able to start a human family of our own, so our dogs are our kids.”

In his spare time, Gottfried enjoys photography, traveling, camping and working on cars. He is also expanding his

vocabulary by learning the German language.

Gottfried’s hope at RMC is that as treasurer, he is “able to help maintain a healthy and financially stable conference and to use the money that has been entrusted with us in the most effective manner, so that the church can grow and share the love of Jesus with every person in our territory.”

He further expressed his interest in “getting to know the members and employees of the Rocky Mountain Conference, learning their stories, and finding ways of supporting the ministry in every area.”

“Getting to travel the beautiful territory of the Rocky Mountain Conference is an added bonus,” he added.

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RMCNews

## MIC THURBER ELECTED NEW PRESIDENT

Accepting the nomination by a special executive session of the Rocky Mountain Conference Executive Committee on July 28, Mic Thurber will serve as RMC president following the retirement of Ed Barnett on Aug. 31.

“Jana and I are both thrilled to be invited to be part of the Rocky Mountain Conference. We feel that the Lord has led both us and your conference leadership team in making this possible,” Thurber said.

Thurber will assume his duties on Sept. 1.

Read more: [www.rmcsda.org/mic-thurber-is-the-new-president-of-rmc](http://www.rmcsda.org/mic-thurber-is-the-new-president-of-rmc)



Reinhard Delowski





# HEALTH EXECUTIVES PROVIDE GLOBAL

AdventHealth executives share a special connection with hospitals and educational institutions around the world

As part of the AdventHealth system, AdventHealth Shawnee Mission in Kansas and Centura Health Adventist hospitals in Colorado participate in mission opportunities in countries around the world through the organization's Global Missions program. AdventHealth Shawnee Mission hosts mission trips to Peru, and Centura Health executives sponsor locations in Peru, Nepal and Rwanda.

AdventHealth Global Missions fosters long-term relationships with select hospitals around the world with senior leaders who volunteer their time and expertise to facilitate strategic long-term planning. Global Missions is a reflection of AdventHealth's mission of *Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ*.

This mission has prompted healthcare teams across the system to volunteer on medical mission trips at 10 locations and participate through philanthropic

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Faustin, a young man from Rwanda, received surgery for clubfoot and is now pursuing a degree at a local university.

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# MISSIONS ASSISTANCE

assistance. This mission work has continued even amid a pandemic when hospitals have had to remain nimble when caring for their communities.

## EXTENDING HEALING IN RWANDA

According to the Global Clubfoot Initiative, about 500 babies are born with clubfoot in Rwanda each year. **Faustin**,

a young man from Rwanda, struggled with clubfoot for much of his life. This painful condition is characterized by walking on the ankles and can be a source of embarrassment. If left untreated, it can reduce a person's quality of life and inhibit their ability to provide for their family.

About 90 percent of Rwanda relies on subsistence farming, which provides some food for the family but little beyond that. Because farmers seldom use mechanized labor, a child

with clubfoot is unable to participate in manual labor, diminishing the productivity of the entire family.

Faustin's condition created a challenging situation for his family to make ends meet, until a team member from

Centura Health sponsored Faustin to receive surgery, which costs about \$4,000.

**Mike Goebel**, chief executive officer for Parker Adventist Hospital, and a team member from Centura Health visited Faustin and his family

(Continued on next page)

Charissa Mohnkern, RN (right) AdventHealth Shawnee Mission, and Livia Miller, RN Centerpoint Medical Center, with a young patient at Clínica Americana de Juliaca



Photos: Becky Fairchild, TGC Photography





on their most recent mission trip to Rwanda, which took place prior to COVID-19.

The family invited the group to their house to thank the mission team for their work at the hospital and the donor's contribution to Faustin's health.

"Faustin received surgery for clubfoot and now has a future," said Goebel. "He is pursuing a degree and can provide for his family, when prior to this surgery he was unable to help with farming. His father told our group, 'I have nothing to offer you except prayer. Can I pray for you?' It was incredibly touching that one of our team members contributed to Faustin's future."

Faustin is now 21 years old and pursuing a degree at a local university. The team member who donated to his surgery is now sponsoring his education.

Mugonero Adventist Hospital is located in a rural area, about a 3-1/2-hour drive outside the capital city of Kigali. This is a challenge to families who live in rural locations and rely on walking or motorcycles for transportation. If patients are seeking more specialized surgical procedures, such as orthopedic surgery, those are more accessible in Kigali.

Last year, a team of orthopedic and general surgeons traveled to Mugonero Adventist Hospital where they conducted surgery from 7 am to 10 pm.

Centura Health also

assisted healthcare workers at the hospital to receive additional training in orthopedic and general surgery. In addition, one of the chief nursing officers at Centura conducted leadership training to improve hospital operations at Mugonero.

Centura has donated resources for several projects at Mugonero in the past, including a new laundry facility, family waiting area, surgical supplies and equipment, as well as a new water distribution system. Mike Goebel and **Greg Hodgson**, director for Global Health Initiatives at Centura Health,

have continued to facilitate this relationship. The group is making plans to move forward in hiring a local contractor in Rwanda to remodel the main building of the hospital. This will expand the service line to provide obstetric services such as a new maternity ward.

Hodgson and the team from Centura Health continued their involvement during the pandemic through virtual meetings over Zoom and email to facilitate the process of launching these special projects forward.

## EXTENDING HEALING IN PERU

The AdventHealth Shawnee Mission team prays with a patient before a procedure at Clínica Americana de Juliaca in Peru.

In 2016, AdventHealth Shawnee Mission began sponsoring mission trips to Peru with the help of **Dr. Douglas Cusick**, a plastic surgeon in



Photos: Becky Fairchild, TGC Photography

Leawood, Kansas. Dr. Cusick, who had been on mission trips around the world along with his wife, **Barbara**, gave a \$1 million gift to AdventHealth Foundation Shawnee Mission to establish the Dr. J. Douglas Cusick Medical Mission Endowment. The proceeds help cover mission trip costs, including equipment, supplies and part of the travel expenses for team members.

In 2016 and 2017, about 20 team members from AdventHealth went to Iquitos, Peru, to provide care. During the second trip, Dr. Cusick performed surgery on a burn victim who was a mother of four children. She had lost mobility in her arm after it had been severely burned and bandaged in a way that the wounds didn't heal correctly. Because she lost mobility in that arm, she was unable to find work since most available jobs involved manual labor.

After Dr. Cusick and his team performed the surgery, she regained 80 to 90 percent of the mobility in her arm. The team also arranged for her to get post-operative care, including wound care and physical therapy, close to where she lives.

"The surgery really changed her life," said **Jimmy Bolanos**, regional director of strategy

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This mother of four in Iquitos, Peru, received surgery to restore mobility in her arm that had been severely burned.

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and business development for AdventHealth Shawnee Mission, who went on the mission trip. "It gave her the ability to not only have a job, but to help out around the home and even to get herself dressed. She was so thankful for everything."

Dr. Cusick and a team from AdventHealth Shawnee Mission have been traveling on mission trips to Iquitos every year since 2016. In 2018, they started partnering with a hospital in Juliaca, Peru. In 2019, they performed more than 50 surgeries in Juliaca, including general surgery, reconstructive burn surgery and surgery to repair birth defects like cleft palate and cleft lip.

In 2020, AdventHealth

Shawnee Mission sent personal protective equipment including protective clothing, masks and other gear for healthcare workers in Peru. In partnership with AdventHealth Orlando, they also provided the hospital in Juliaca with ventilators to help care for COVID-19 patients.

This year, AdventHealth Shawnee Mission is sending \$20,000 to help build oxygen plants in Peru to provide medical-grade oxygen.

"It will give Clínica Adventista Ana Stahl (a hospital in Iquitos) the ability to produce their own oxygen for respiratory issues, since oxygen has been in such short supply during the pandemic," said **Dave Kennedy**, administrative director of mission

and ministry at AdventHealth Shawnee Mission. "It will definitely save lives."

The next mission trip to provide surgeries and clinics is being planned for 2022, said Bolanos. This November, members of the leadership team from AdventHealth Shawnee Mission will also travel to Peru. "We want to let our partners in Peru know we're still supporting them," said Bolanos. "We also want to give our leadership team a chance to see the great work that's being done over there and how we can continue to help."

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Shannon Hill is a corporate communications resident at AdventHealth.  
Ann Muder is a writer for AdventHealth Shawnee Mission.



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For more information about AdventHealth Shawnee Mission's global outreach, visit **AdventHealthKC.com**.

To learn about the global work Centura Health is doing, visit **Centura.org/Global-Health-Initiatives**.

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**Applegate, Beverly H.**, b. July 11, 1935 in Manville, WY. d. June 5, 2021 in Worland, WY. Member of Worland Church.

**Arriola, Emmy Doohabel Williams**, b. Sept. 12, 1982. d. June 8, 2021. Member of Capitol View (NE) Church.

**Dickhaut, Clarence**, b. July 18, 1931 in Halliday, ND. d. June 28, 2021 in Hamilton, MT. Member of Bismarck (ND) Church. Preceded in death by sons Everett and Howard; 5 sisters; 3 brothers. Survivors include wife Harriet; daughters Belinda Schmidt and Charlene Twist; 1 sister; 4 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren.

**Fulton, Paul Edward**, b. Oct. 16, 1942 in St. Louis, MO. d. Jan. 20, 2021 in Salem, MO. Member of Salem Church. Preceded in death by 1 sister. Survivors include wife Violet; daughter Paula Korinek; son Tim; 3 grandchildren. Served in the U.S. Air Force.

**Gleason, Shirley Janet**, b. Feb. 13, 1935 near Kokomo, IN. d. Dec. 25, 2020 in Houston, MO. Member of Salem (MO) Church. Preceded in death by 1 sister; 1 brother. Survivors include husband George; daughter Winnie Bade; sons Terry, Steve, and Tim; 2 brothers; 4 grandchildren

**Gryte, Silva Louis**, b. June 18, 1926 in Maryville, MO. d. May 9, 2021 in Mariposa, CA. Preceded in death by husband Glenn; daughter Judy. Survivors include daughters Connie Needles, Susan Younker, and Rosemary McDaniel; sons Gary and Garth; 1 sister; 1 brother; 13 grandchildren; 22 great-grandchildren; 1 great-great-grandchild.

**Hershey, Juanita E.**, b. Nov. 10, 1926 in Picher, OK. d. June 14, 2021 in Hutchinson, KS. Member of Hutchinson Church. Preceded in death by 4 sisters; 3 brothers. Survivors include daughters Ilene Hougham and Thelma Herren; sons John McCormick, Jr., and Keith McCormick; 2 sisters; 1 brother; 5 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; 12 great-great-grandchildren.

**Hauck/Opp/Herzer, Barbara Ann**, b. Nov. 21, 1934 in Sioux City, IA. d. June 25, 2021 in Bismarck, ND. Member of Bismarck Church. Preceded in death by husbands Glenn Opp, Sr., and Fred Hauck; sons Jeffrey Opp and Glenn Opp, Jr.; 2 sisters; 1 brother; 1 granddaughter. Survivors include daughters Deborah Wollard, Lana Morgan, and Shondi Harp; 2 sisters; 8 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren.

**Jones, Laura "Jackie" Pearl**, b. Dec. 20, 1928 in Picher, OK. d. Feb. 10, 2021 in Claycomo, MO. Member of Gladstone (MO) Church. Preceded in death by husbands John and Randal. Survivors include daughters Janice Reintjes, Brenda Higgins, and Sherry Gillespie; son Brad Giles; 16 grandchildren; numerous great-grandchildren.

**Justice, Kenneth Edward**, b. June 27, 1934 in Williamstown, MO. d. June 15, 2021. Member of Kahoka (MO) Church. Preceded in death by 2 brothers. Survivors include wife Dolores; sons Rick and Randy; 3 grandchildren; 6 great-grandchildren.

**Krueger, Lillian Vietz**, b. Sept. 20, 2016 in McClusky,

ND. d. June 10, 2021 in Loma Linda, CA. Member of Bowdon Country (ND) Church. Preceded in death by husband Arnold; 4 sisters; 3 brothers. Survivors include daughters Jeannette McMurray and Judy Sparks; son Kimber; 1 sister; 3 grandchildren; 1 great-grandchild.

**Lehmann, Helen L.**, b. July 24, 1919 in Douglas, OK. d. April 15, 2021 in Wichita, KS. Member of Three Angels (KS) Church. Preceded in death by 3 sisters; 1 brother. Survivors include daughter Janine Schench; 3 sisters; 1 brother.

**Mechalke, Dick Duane**, b. May 5, 1934 in Greeley, CO. d. June 27 in Hot Springs, SD. Member of Hot Springs Church. Preceded in death by 1 brother. Survivors include wife RoseElla; daughters Wanda Sitzman, Janet Bell, Renee Privetera; 5 grandchildren; 2 great-grandchildren. Served in the U.S. Army.

**Correction: Miller, Darlene**, b. Oct 10, 1929 in Goodrich, ND. d. May 11, 2021 in Bismarck, ND. Member of Manfred (ND) Church. Preceded in death by husband Dale. Survivors include daughter Denise Weikum; son Lynn; 1 sister; 3 brothers; 1 granddaughter; 3 grandsons; 1 great-granddaughter.

**Olson, Vernon Duane**, b. Oct. 14, 1934 in Fillmore, ND. d. June 11, 2021 in Sawyer, ND. Member of Minot (ND) Church. Preceded in death by 1 sister; 1 brother. Survivors include daughter Valerie Brooke; sons Loris Vincent and Jerrod Boser; 5 grandchildren.

**Oster, Lelia Edith (Maguire)**, b. July 23, 1945 in Waterville, ME. d. May 19, 2021 in Greeley, CO. Member of Greeley Church. Survivors include husband Jim; son Marc; 2 grandsons.

**Simmons, Royal**, b. April 10, 1923. d. June 13, 2021 in Centerville, IA. Member of Centerville Church. Preceded in death by wife Patricia; 13 siblings. Survivors include sons Stephen and Mark; 3 grandchildren.

**Watson, Joyce**, b. Oct. 21, 1919 in Kingston, MN. d. June 18, 2021 in Grand Rapids, MN. Member of Blackberry (MN) Church. Preceded in death by first husband Clifford Peterson; second husband Oral; daughter Sharon Geissler; step-daughter Lynda; son Russell Peterson; 2 step-grandchildren. Survivors include daughter Merry Moody; son Merle Peterson; step-children Curtis Peterson, Suzy, Liz, and Leslie Reese; 13 grandchildren; 29 great-grandchildren; 19 great-great-grandchildren.

## Notice

Obituary information for OUTLOOK may be submitted online at [outlookmag.org/contact](http://outlookmag.org/contact) or emailed to [barb.engquist@maucsd.org](mailto:barb.engquist@maucsd.org).



**SERVICES**

**Free Planned Giving:** Maranatha Volunteers International Foundation can help with your estate planning needs. Personal consultations, online wills, trusts, annuities, providing protection for you and loved ones at no cost to you. For more info 916.774.7700; email: [estates@maranatha.org](mailto:estates@maranatha.org). Visit [maranatha.org/plannedgiving](http://maranatha.org/plannedgiving).

**Move with an award-winning agency.** Apex Moving & Storage partners with the General Conference to provide quality moves at a discounted rate. Call us for all your relocation needs! Adventist beliefs uncompromised. Contact Marcy Danté at 800.766.1902 for a free estimate. Visit us at [www.apexmoving.com/Adventist](http://www.apexmoving.com/Adventist).

**New/Used Adventist Books:** TEACH Services helps authors publish their book, including editing, design, marketing, and worldwide distribution. Call 800-367-1844 for a free evaluation. Visit [www.LNFBOOKS.com](http://www.LNFBOOKS.com) for used books and your local ABC or [www.TEACHServices.com](http://www.TEACHServices.com) for new book releases.

**Summit Ridge Retirement Village:** An Adventist community in a rural setting that offers affordable homes or apartments and caring neighbors with a fellowship you'll enjoy. On-site church, planned activities and transportation as needed. Also, Wolfe Living Center offering independent living and nursing home. Website: [www.summitridgevillage.org](http://www.summitridgevillage.org) or call Bill Norman at 405.208.1289.

**EMPLOYMENT**

**Looking for Certified Teachers** to join us in Christian online education (first-12th grades). Work part-time from home tutoring "live" in a Zoom environment. If interested, please call us at 817.645.0895.

**Natural Way Mills** (an Adventist-owned organic flour mill and whole grains processor since 1973) is **seeking a husband/wife team to work in production** and assist the office manager with various duties. Prefer Adventist, mission-minded couple. Located near Middle River, Minnesota. Wages negotiable. Country home possibly available. Natural Way Mills Employment, 24509 390th St. NE, Middle River, MN, 56737. [naturalwaymills2@gmail.com](mailto:naturalwaymills2@gmail.com). 218.222.3677.

**Pacific Union College is seeking a full-time Associate Vice President of Finance for Financial Administration.** Major duties include provision of leadership and guidance for all financial aspects of PUC and Howell Mountain Enterprises, ability to develop and implement long and short term financial goals consistent with the mission of PUC, budget and balance analysis, and development of strategic tools and systems for critical financial and operational goals. For more information or to apply, please call Human Resources at 707. 965.6231 or visit our website at [www.PUC.edu/campus-services/human-resources/current-job-postings](http://www.PUC.edu/campus-services/human-resources/current-job-postings).

**Union College is seeking candidates for Vice President for Academic Administration** to

provide strategic direction, leadership, and oversight for the college's academic programs and fulfillment of strategic goals. Earned doctoral degree required. Apply at [ucollege.edu/employment](http://ucollege.edu/employment).

**Walla Walla University is hiring!** To see the list of available positions, go to [jobs.wallawalla.edu](http://jobs.wallawalla.edu).

**FOR SALE**

**Caskets for Adventist—** High quality 20 gauge steel. Includes Second Coming picture, Ten Commandments, 1 Thess. 4:13-18 and Three Angels' Message. Priced under \$800. Website: [1844casketsfor-Adventists.com](http://1844casketsfor-Adventists.com). 865.882.0773/865.382.1834 (Harriet or Marvin).

**TRAVEL**

**Adventist Tours 2022.** Israel in Jesus' Steps March 9-7, June 12-21 (optional Jordan/Egypt); New Testament Alive/7 Churches June 2-12, African Safari & Service May 24-31, Germany-Austria: Luther to WW2 June 22-July 1 (includes Oberammergau Passion Play); Thailand July 27-Aug. 7. Adventist-led with excellent rates. \$1750+/person. Contact [tabghatours@gmail.com](mailto:tabghatours@gmail.com) or [facebook.com/TabghaTours](http://facebook.com/TabghaTours) or 423.298.2169. "The best trip I've ever had! Nothing comes close."

**EVENTS**

**Midland Adventist Academy Alumni 2021:** Friday and Saturday, Oct. 15 and 16. Honor Classes: '00/'01, '05/'06, '10/'11, '15/'16. Visit [www.midlandacademy.org/supporters/alumni](http://www.midlandacademy.org/supporters/alumni) for updated information.

		September 2021				
		SEP 3	SEP 10	SEP 17	SEP 24	
<b>SUNSET CALENDAR</b>	<b>COLORADO</b>					
	Denver	7:27	7:16	7:04	6:53	
	Grand Junction	7:41	7:30	7:18	7:07	
	Pueblo	7:24	7:13	7:02	6:51	
	<b>IOWA</b>					
	Davenport	7:31	7:19	7:07	6:55	
	Des Moines	7:43	7:31	7:19	7:07	
	Sioux City	7:55	7:43	7:31	7:18	
	<b>KANSAS</b>					
	Dodge City	8:05	7:55	7:44	7:33	
Goodland	7:13	7:02	6:51	6:40		
Topeka	7:49	7:38	7:27	7:15		
<b>MINNESOTA</b>						
Duluth	7:43	7:29	7:15	7:01		
International Falls	7:50	7:36	7:21	7:06		
Minneapolis	7:45	7:32	7:19	7:06		
<b>MISSOURI</b>						
Columbia	7:36	7:25	7:13	7:02		
Kansas City	7:45	7:34	7:22	7:11		
St. Louis	7:27	7:16	7:05	6:54		
<b>NEBRASKA</b>						
Lincoln	7:55	7:43	7:31	7:19		
North Platte	8:11	8:00	7:48	7:36		
Scottsbluff	7:24	7:12	6:59	6:47		
<b>NORTH DAKOTA</b>						
Bismarck	8:17	8:04	7:50	7:36		
Fargo	8:02	7:48	7:34	7:20		
Williston	8:30	8:16	8:01	7:47		
<b>SOUTH DAKOTA</b>						
Pierre	8:13	8:00	7:47	7:34		
Rapid City	7:24	7:11	6:58	6:45		
Sioux Falls	7:57	7:45	7:32	7:19		
<b>WYOMING</b>						
Casper	7:35	7:23	7:10	6:58		
Cheyenne	7:28	7:16	7:04	6:52		
Sheridan	7:40	7:27	7:14	7:00		
<b>OUTLOOK</b>		<a href="http://www.outlookmag.org">www.outlookmag.org</a>				



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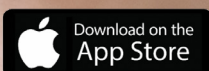


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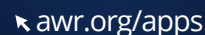
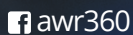
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Every freshman at Union gets a life coach to help keep their head above water

**You want to make a splash at college—but not in a panicked, I-can't-swim way. Don't worry. Union assigns every first-year student a certified life coach.** They'll help you keep your head above water as you choose classes, explore career options and adjust to college life.

Your coach can help with specific problems (*How can I keep from falling asleep while reading the English assignment?*) and talk through deep questions (*What is my calling?*). They'll even give you study strategies and tips for time management.

Besides life coaches, Student Success also offers tutoring for any subject—completely free. And if you're struggling to find the right major, they've got a test or two for that. Even if you don't need these resources, just know at Union College, you've got a team on your side.

You'll find extra support at Union as you reach toward your goals. So don't be afraid of college life. Jump on in. The water's fine.

**Note:** actual life coaches may not be as adorable as those pictured.

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