

MID-AMERICA SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST NEWS & INSPIRATION

OUTLOOK

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COLLEGE
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SPOTLIGHT



Connecting Career and Calling

NOV/DEC 2021



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“When we are uncomfortable and challenged is when we learn the most.” —p. 4





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UNION COLLEGE: CONNECTING CAREER AND CALLING

In this final OUTLOOK issue for 2021, we conclude our series of “Celebrating God’s Gifts” with a focus on the gifts of knowledge and service demonstrated on a daily basis at Union College as they help students find the career they were created for.

Union College is the only Adventist institution of higher learning for the Mid-America Union. Founded in 1891, Union has educated and empowered for service multiple generations of Adventist students and church leaders currently working around the globe.

I hope you will be inspired and encouraged as you read about how Abigail Logan is making an impact on people’s lives as an occupational therapy assistant (p. 6), how Josemiguel Marin is combining theory and practice as a local church pastor (p. 4) and how three recent international rescue and relief graduates have stepped up to bring help and hope in a time of crisis (p. 8).



BRENDA DICKERSON
editor



ON THE COVER

Josemiguel Marin is now the associate pastor at Omaha Golden Hills and Fremont churches in Nebraska.

More on p. 4
Photo by Scott Cushman/Union College

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Connecting TO MINISTRY

Most college graduates leave school with one pressing goal: find a job. But that stressor was one Josemiguel Marin, a 2021 graduate, didn't face. He was hired in January of his senior year by the Kansas-Nebraska Conference and had his church assignments by March.

Now an associate pastor at the Golden Hills (Omaha) and Fremont Seventh-day Adventist churches, Marin credits his smooth transition to pastoral life to the support and preparation he received while at Union College.

"Union does a great job of preparing students for the future, especially those of us who are going to be pastors," said Marin. He cites the many ministry and leadership opportunities, from traveling with worship teams and working in Campus Ministries to serving as a student chaplain and mentor.

Also instrumental was the semester-long senior-year internship all theology students complete. Marin stayed in Lincoln and interned at College View Church, working alongside and learning from the pastors there. "I got to experience almost every area in ministry, and I learned from each of the pastors because they all do different jobs and have their own ways," he said. This gave him insight into youth pastoring, discipleship, church

organization, administrative and financial tasks and more. "It was such a great experience. They prepared me well and gave me a sense of what I'm doing and why I'm here."

He says that professors also instilled in him and his classmates a sense of both the practical and theoretical, sharing what they've experienced in ministry and helping students gain hands-on experience.

Combining theory and practice

"They send us out expecting us to grow," Marin said. "They know that when we are uncomfortable and challenged is when we learn the most." But, he said, he was never alone. "The teachers really think about where to send us because they want us to be with pastors who will mentor us."

Now that he's started his career, Marin is finding that his classroom, leadership and internship experiences are all

coming together to help him excel at every part of the job.

"The job changes every week," he said. "That's the good and the hard parts of ministry. But our teachers helped us learn time management, and my internship was a great way to experience all of the parts of church leadership and get a little taste of everything I'd be doing in my job."

Marin is grateful for the complete education he got at Union—one that prepared him to step into his career with confidence. "Union gives you connections," he said. "Connections are the biggest determining factor in where you get hired and how early. Our teachers helped us meet people, sent us on ministry trips, empowered us and built up our confidence, and gave us internships where we could make those connections so we are ready to serve." **0**

Lauren Bongard Schwarz is a Union College graduate and freelance writer in Bozeman, Montana.



Every theology major spends the first semester of their senior year doing an immersive internship where they work full-time in a local church under the mentorship of a senior pastor. This gives them the real-life experience of preaching, leading ministries, working with members and everything else that goes along with being a pastor. And, like Josemiguel, many of the students are hired before they even graduate by the conference who sponsored their internship.

Learn more at
ucollege.edu/religion

Occupational Therapy Assistant at Union College

Union's two-year Occupational Therapy Assistant Program offers a fast track to a growing career that pays an average of \$60,000 per year right out of college. But, like Abigail Logan, most OTAs choose this career path because they love to use their creativity to help people.

Learn more at
ucollege.edu/ota



Changing Lives

AS AN OTA

Abigail Logan graduated in May 2021 as part of Union's first cohort of OTA students, and now she has begun her career as an occupational therapy assistant at Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Logan decided she wanted to become an OTA because of videos she watched on a YouTube channel called Special Books by Special Kids (sbsk.org). The channel founder, Chris Ulmer, interviews disabled and neurodiverse people around the world to share their stories and normalize “the diversity of the human condition.”

Moved by the stories of the people she watched on SBSK, Logan discovered a desire to help. “I saw people with needs,” she said. “I wanted to be able to help people meet their needs, and I wanted to be able to do something for them that was out of the ordinary and creative.”

In researching a major with her parents, Logan discovered Union's new OTA program and learned about becoming an occupational therapy assistant.

“Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants look at people's lives and the things that they love to do, and they really work to meet that person in the middle and help them meet their goals,” she said. “That's what I want to do.”

Prepared to make a difference

Logan began her journey as part of the first cohort of the new OTA program in the spring semester of 2020. During her program, she worked one of her fieldwork rotations at Madonna. While she was still a student, Madonna had an opening for an OTA position. Logan worked with her professors through the application process, and she was offered the position.

Now as an occupational therapy assistant, Logan is fitting well into her new role. “I feel like I was well prepared, and I am very thankful that this is the path I chose,” she said. “And I've been really impressed with the environment at Madonna. The other therapists on the team I'm working on have been really helpful, giving lots of feedback. They've all been really kind.”

Working as an OTA has already impacted Logan's life, not only as a career path. “It doesn't quite hit you as hard until you're standing in a room with someone who has just experienced one of the most difficult traumatic times in their life,” Logan said. “Working with my patients has grown my empathy and given me a lot of perspective on my own life.”

One patient Logan

worked with was unable to communicate and struggled to participate in activities of daily living at the beginning of therapy. As time went on, the patient improved, learning to communicate through nonverbal means.

“It was wonderful to see this patient use the communication board to communicate with their mother and others around them and continue to form relationships in that new way,” Logan said. “It was amazing how much of a difference time and skilled care made. I've been able to see changes in patients' lives as they've improved in their abilities, and I love helping to make that difference.” 0

Maria Kercher is a senior communication major at Union College.

Ready TO SERVE ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD

When a 7.2 magnitude earthquake struck southwest Haiti on Aug. 14, 2021, the international community rushed to send aid. But for three Union College alumni, simply sending supplies wasn't enough.

International rescue and relief graduates Janae Schumacher, Justin Dena and Lauren Lombard volunteered with Educáre, a Haitian-run organization, to bring medical help to those most affected by the disaster.

Schumacher, a paramedic, assisted doctors with medical care, while Dena coordinated the mobilization of the team and other logistics from the ground in Haiti. Although Lombard was working remotely, she was able to bring her expertise in communication, organization and fundraising to assist Educáre's efforts.

Educáre's medical team trekked into the rural mountains surrounding the epicenter of the quake where aid was most needed and least available. "No one else went out there because if you went out, you had to hike into the mountains," Schumacher, a 2021 Union graduate, said.

"One day we hiked almost eight miles with all our clinical supplies to set a clinic up at the top of a mountain. Working with the local communities we were able to go to the areas with the most need. Our team answered the call despite the difficulties of accessing some of these areas. Our group went out and met the people where they were."

Doing a lot with a little

Educáre was founded after the 2010 Haitian earthquake. Lombard went to Haiti for seven weeks to assist with relief efforts and made many connections with the Haitians she served alongside. When they formed an organization to bring better education to children in the region, she joined the cause.

Since then, Lombard has continued to volunteer with Educáre even while working full-time at a nonprofit she cofounded, We Nurish, that provides access to food in her community in Minnesota.

Already connected to Haiti, Dena has worked extensively with Singing Rooster, an organization that provides support for small, Haitian-owned coffee farms. So when Lombard introduced him to Educáre, he was happy to get involved.

When the 2021 quake struck, Educáre pivoted to disaster relief to meet the current needs of the country. Dena contacted Schumacher, whom he had met at Union, and invited her to come join the team. Even delayed by a tropical storm, the two were able to join with the team of Haitian doctors and begin

holding emergency clinics within days of the disaster, treating more than 1,700 patients at 12 different clinics.

Lombard says her Union education helped prepare her for the challenges of working in disaster relief. "I paired communication and international rescue and relief, which ended up being a really good combination," Lombard said. "I didn't anticipate using the things we studied later, but they directly informed things I ended up doing. The problem-solving aspects of how you handle a crisis were definitely highlighted in the things we were studying and doing."

Although the Educáre team faced many difficulties, Dena, Lombard and Schumacher wouldn't have missed the opportunity for the world. "Even though we were limited by unreliable transportation, poor communication channels and a lack of supplies, we were able to do quite a lot with a little," said Dena.

Lombard summed up her experiences saying, "Any time you respond to a disaster, it's inconvenient and exhausting and challenging, but you see the people you're able to impact and each person makes it worthwhile all over again." **O**

Annika Cambigue is a sophomore communication major at Union College.



Saving Lives Around the World

International rescue and relief is a completely unique bachelor's degree that prepares students for careers in public safety, emergency management, global development and medical care. The program combines extensive classroom training with field training, including a five-week session in Colorado learning wilderness survival and rescue, along with a semester in a developing nation learning about global health and bringing medical care to remote areas.

More than 90 percent of IRR graduates find jobs in their field or pursue professional graduate degrees within six months of graduation.

[Learn more at ucollege.edu/irr](https://ucollege.edu/irr)



Dave VandeVere to Serve as VP of Finance for MAUC

Hugh Davis



David W. VandeVere has accepted the invitation to serve as vice president of finance for the Mid-America Union Conference headquartered in Lincoln, Nebraska. VandeVere brings experience in both pastoral ministry and financial leadership, having most recently served as the vice president of finance for the Potomac Conference in Virginia. VandeVere begins his new role in October.

“Dave VandeVere is really just coming home. He began his church service in Mid-America and it will be good to have him back. Dave is not only amazingly competent, but he loves the Lord and His church. He will be a blessing to our field,” said Gary Thurber,

president of the Mid-America Union.

Thurber added that VandeVere’s strengths include leadership skills, the ability to articulate ministry mission and vision, along with simplifying complex financial information and thinking creatively about the “big picture” of ministry.

Mid-America’s former treasurer, **Troy Peoples**, accepted a call to serve with the General Conference Auditing Services in Silver Spring, Maryland, as assistant director for budget and finance.

Education, experience, accomplishments

VandeVere graduated from Southern Adventist

University with a BBA in accounting. He earned a CPA license and Trust Certification from the General Conference Trust Committee, as well as having completed a Pastoral Coaching Systems program in 2006 from Ministry Advantage in Dallas, Texas.

VandeVere has served as a public accountant, treasurer/secretary in the Minnesota Conference, and lead pastor for the Damascus Grace Fellowship in Maryland for 10 years before returning to focus on financial ministry in 2014.

Some of Vandevere’s accomplishments at the Potomac Conference include leading in the recovery of adequate working capital reserves, developing an integrated finance committee for the conference and its

institutions, creating and implementing a debt-relief program for academies and developing a recruiting process for young college accounting graduates.

“I am grateful for this opportunity to serve as part of the Mid-America Union leadership team,” said VandeVere. “I am praying for the Holy Spirit’s blessing as we seek to grow and support our local church and institutional leaders in their development as godly leaders within the kingdom.”

He and his wife, **Cindy**, have two sons, **Ryan** and **Steven**, who is married to **Lachelle**. He enjoys backpacking, mountain climbing, running, reading and history. **0**

Stories on these pages were written by Brenda Dickerson, communication director for the Mid-America Union Conference.

David VandeVere, pictured with his wife Cindy, began his work for MAUC in October.



Courtesy Potomac Conference

Versacare Foundation Focuses on Community Engagement

Considers awarding \$2 million in grants for doing the gospel according to Matt. 25



The first Versacare Pastor Community Engagement Conference, hosted by AdventSource, was held last August in Lincoln, Nebraska. Fifteen Adventist pastors from across the United States were invited to participate with Versacare board members during this in-person event serving as a follow-up to the virtual sessions in which they have been engaging since October 2020.

The focus of this two-day event was to inspire and support a movement of greater member involvement in local communities and grow the network of pastors who are focused and passionate about community ministries. Specific topics included an exploration of the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church based on Matthew 25, identifying barriers to community engagement, finding means of removing those barriers, and identifying and accessing resources.

“This cohort of pastors is the tip of the sword,” said **Charles Sandefur**, chair

of the Versacare board and board member for the past 39 years. “Our goal is to grow a movement of marketplace ministries doing kingdom business every day. Not just on Sabbath.”

Who is Versacare Foundation?

Versacare, Inc. is a private foundation based in Riverside, California, and managed by a Board of Trustees composed of individuals with expertise in education, accounting, law, administration, international aid, medicine, cultural affairs and ministry. Its mission is to support Seventh-day Adventist ministry efforts with grant funding. Through the Versafund, this non-profit foundation has awarded \$28 million in grants to ministries around the globe.

Why focus on community engagement?

Sandefur shared that there are over 6,000 congregations in North America. Most are

rural. And many, if not most, are not actively engaged in their communities.

Tom Macomber, president/secretary of Versacare, pointed out how Adventism struggles with “doing” the gospel. He added that we emphasize the “telling” more than the “doing” of Matthew 25. Isolationism and attitudes of protectionism have tended to disconnect us from the community. Yet all around us the practical needs are great.

Why this group of pastors?

The pastors selected to participate in this cohort are already leading active ministries in their communities. They are passionate, energetic and committed to living out the gospel of Jesus Christ in practical ways every day in their locales with the members of their congregations.

Pastors who were able to participate in this event included: **Novella Smith, Taurus Montgomery, John Pooler, Jaime Kowlessar, Paulo Macena, Ronald Williams, Daniel Park, Rochelle Webster, Doug Hardt, Garrison Chaffee** and **David Jamieson** (virtually).

“One of the geniuses of this first year is building into the cohort the coaching and preparation elements,” said **Pastor Frederick Russell**, the principal of True North Leadership Group. Russell was a partner in the vision

of the process and facilitator of the cohort during the past year’s six Zoom sessions. He also facilitated the in-person conference.

What kind of grants are being awarded?

Recent grants from Versacare include funds for education, humanitarian initiatives, projects by local churches, local conferences, summer camps, and Adventist-laymen’s Services & Industries, to name a few.

Brad Forbes, Versacare board member and event coordinator, said that this cohort of pastors will potentially revamp the way the foundation is approving grant proposals.

Sandefur added that “there will be rigorous accountability for grants that are awarded, but Versacare wants to fund creative, innovative community engagement.” **0**



Read the full story at outlookmag.org/versacare-foundation-focuses-on-community-engagement.

For more information visit versacare.org.

ACS Hosts Pandemic-Proof Virtual Conference

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic there were thousands of articles encouraging us to limit our screen time and make sure we spent time outside in nature or at least interacting with other individuals in person. However, during the past 18 months, each of us has gone beyond the recommended amount of screen time just with Zoom.

We've joined Zoom for board meetings, business meetings, worship experiences, ordinations, installations, baby blessings, prayer sessions and graduations. We've attended presentations on social distancing regulations, vaccinations, organization closings, reopenings, reclosings and more during this time. We've talked about a lot as a church, but I've noticed that we haven't talked about our money.

When I say money, I don't mean tithe and offerings. I mean personal finances.

For better or for worse, we were all affected in some way financially during this pandemic. We've all had to pivot, to do things differently and to be creative. While studying Genesis 41, the story of Joseph and the plan he put forth to lead a nation through a pandemic, I developed a plan for an event that would do the same in 2021.

The idea was to allow individuals who have successfully navigated this pandemic to share their successes and failures to help attendees

prepare not just for now but the future. The result was a three-hour digital conference titled Pandemic-Proof.

I called one of my friends to share the idea and asked that person to be a presenter, but they said they couldn't. However, they offered me these words of advice: "If you want to do your audience a service, you have to have **Chanda Nunes** (lead pastor of Pacific Union College Church) share her testimony." So I reached out to Pastor Nunes and was encouraged by her passion and desire to help the community be better.

Before we hung up, she also gave me a few words of advice: "If you want this event to go well you have to include **Dr. Rudolph Peters**." I had worked with Dr. Peters before and he also agreed to present. Things were shaping up, and I could already see how attendees would be blessed by this conference.

As I was sharing this update with another friend, they asked me if I'd reached out to **Pastor Kymone Hinds**, who has been doing great things with young entrepreneurs. So I called him and he too agreed to join the team.

The more I watched and read the news I became convinced there was no way we would be able to do a financial conference without covering cryptocurrency. Additionally, the extended life expectancy of the average individual warranted a

discussion on preparing for the future. This led to another conversation in which a person declared, "If cryptocurrency is your desire, look no further than **Kris Perez**, and for legacy planning **Elder Seth Bardu**." After gaining their commitments, we had relevant topics and amazing presenters—but there was still something missing.

I've long been enamored by **Pastor Kory Douglas** and his ability to effectively generate multiple streams of income using his God-given gifts. I've had deep conversations with **Elder Toni Horton** about her years of service with the IRS and her annual practice of assisting the community with preparing taxes. I've worked with **Elder Steven Garner**, marketing expert extraordinaire, on several marketing campaigns for my church and have always appreciated his perspectives. So I reached out to each of them, shared with them the vision and they all agreed to join.

After months of planning and praying, on the afternoon of Oct. 26 we held the Pandemic-Proof Conference. It was attended by individuals from across the United States, and each presenter had their own Zoom breakout room and presented two sessions

of one hour length to allow for attendees to attend two different sessions. In between sessions, there was a "pepporally" where seven attendees won \$100 each for answering questions from the presentation they attended. All of this was spearheaded by the Central States Conference Adventist Community Services department and supported by the conference administration.

When asked why it was done through Community Services and not another department, I replied, "This is community service! If it affects our community, it is our responsibility to assist by providing the resources necessary to contribute to a resolution of the issue. I believe a lot of financial issues will be resolved because of the information shared in this conference."

For those who missed the event, the videos will be uploaded to YouTube once they are edited. The planning committee is already considering the next Pandemic-Proof event to be held in early 2022.

Pastor Keith Hackle Jr. is Adventist Community Services director for the Central States Conference and pastor of the Agape Church in St. Louis, Missouri.

Wichita Members Serve Tacos, Offer Haircuts

Photos: Pastor Kim Bulgin



What should a church do when its primary membership is African American, but the community around it is increasingly becoming more Hispanic? The New Beginnings Church in Wichita, Kansas, came up with an answer: partner with those who already have a connection in the community and a heart for being the face, hands and feet of Jesus.

Next, create an optimal time and space where communities can come together to share their similar interests. This is where the idea was birthed for a new outreach ministry called Tacos and Haircuts. The initial event was held on Saturday afternoon, Sept. 25, at the New Beginnings Church.

Elder Chiffonda Hampton Veal, personal ministries leader for New Beginnings Church, worked with other members to put together an outreach event that would help engage the Hispanic community and other cultures in ways that simple food distribution could not. Instead of individuals only coming to receive free

food and then leaving back out the door, she wanted to find a way where the community could come and feel like they mattered—to create a setting where different cultures could gather, conversations could be had, prayers could be given, meals could be shared and a simple need could be met, such as getting a haircut.

This was important to Veal, who remembered the passage in Rev. 7:9 that describes a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. “No one will be excluded because of race, so we should be working toward creating that kind of environment now,” shared Veal.

The idea came about when Veal became aware that a Hispanic family she had helped bring into the church, the Rodriguez family, had conducted community events that provided free haircuts to children on Saturdays. Veal asked if they would be willing to help be a part of a similar event at

the church. Next she discussed it with her pastor, **Kim Bulgin**, who gave full support. The week of the event, flyers were created, shared with local businesses around the church and posted on Facebook.

Guests from a variety of backgrounds and cultures attended. Three barbers were present, the youngest being a teenager. Tacos were made fresh with all the fixings, as well as rice. Approximately 100 people were served and about 30 haircuts given. Veal recalls her pastor saying that outreach events like these make a pastor’s heart so happy.

One participant was a mother planning on attending a funeral for her father, who had been killed in a shooting. When the mother heard about Tacos and Haircuts, she brought her boys so they could receive a haircut before her father’s funeral.

Veal said there was a sense of unity surrounding the event. “We got to minister to people, pray with people and have conversations with people.”

If she were to offer others advice for holding outreach events, Veal said to “Surround yourself with a good team, people you can rely on, people who love the Lord, people who are going to be there to support your cause, not sabotage it. It was the team that made all the difference to me.”

Veal added that she was excited by the involvement of the young women and youth. “A group of young people who love the Lord will make your



cause even more effective,” shared Veal.

Pastor Bulgin shared, “It was truly a blessing to serve our community in such a tangible way. And I loved how our church family came together to make this outreach event a success. We are excited to continue making an impact in our neighborhood in the near future.”

Hugh Davis is associate director of communication for the Mid-America Union Conference.



Paulette Bullinger

South Dakota Farmer Preserves Adventist Cemetery

Paulette Bullinger, Dakota Conference Women's Ministry leader and cemetery liaison, had the opportunity to work with **Wesley Tschetter**, a kind gentleman from South Dakota who wanted to preserve a Seventh-day Adventist cemetery located on his property.

Although not a member of the Adventist faith, he knew much of the history of those who attended the Westford Church, now gone and buried under a cornfield on his property. He remembered stories of the people and did not want to see the small cemetery with about 10 plots plowed under. Tschetter paid for the cemetery site to be covered with concrete, the remaining

stone burial marker set in place, as well as for the stones that would hold a chain fence around the perimeter. The Dakota Conference added the metal sign.

At Mr. Tschetter's request, a re-dedication ceremony for the site was held in August. Following services at the Mitchell Adventist Church, a group of church members and **Pastor David Moench** drove out to the site. There, Bullinger and the church group met with Tschetter, his family and friends, as well as members of the Hutterite colony—neighbors who had worked on the cement cover.

Pastor Moench gave a prayer, Bullinger gave a brief explanation of the

importance of preserving Adventist heritage, and Tschetter gave a detailed history of the area as well as shared what he knew of these early Adventists buried at the location. The dedication ended with stories shared of the area's history, and several photos being taken. Following the dedication, Tschetter's son, an attorney, handed Bullinger the deed to the cemetery to take to the Dakota Conference office. What an amazing gift by one very generous man!

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Paulette Bullinger is Dakota Conference Women's Ministry director and cemetery liaison.



Former Dakota Conference communication director Jacquie Biloff did extensive work locating and mapping Adventist cemeteries across the Dakotas. For more information visit: dakotaadventist.org/community/adventist-cemeteries.

Melody Melchior



(top left) Westford Cemetery dedication

Wes Tschetter



(bottom left) Preparation for the concrete slab at Westford Cemetery

(right) President Mark Weir accepts the Westford Cemetery deed from Paulette Bullinger.



Julie Brude

Dakota Summer Campers Experience New Reality

Seeing the world in wonder

Summer camp 2021 was one for the books. In the span of six weeks, a total of 162 campers registered, with 82 at Flag Mountain Camp and 80 at Northern Lights Camp. Eleven baptisms were celebrated throughout the summer.

The theme for camp this summer was “Wonder” which focused on returning to a spirit of awe and amazement of the Godhead. It is well known that this past year has been exceptionally trying in more ways than one, and it seems as though bad news, division, and hardship are around every corner.

Campers were invited to ponder the possibility of a new reality: What if we lived in wonder of a good and beautiful God? What if God was actually inviting us into collaboration with Him—inviting us to be part of the wonder in the world?

The year 2021 has been an absolute demonstration of the

outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Childlike wonder has reawakened in the hearts of Dakota youth, allowing them to see the world through the lenses of goodness and redemption.

Summer camp truly has been the highlight of the year. Campers and staff sang, played, worshiped, exploded some confetti, and dared to dream of a world brought to life again, vibrant with the color of the gospel.

Ask your camper or a child you know about their experience this summer, and prepare to hear something WONDERful!

Pastors Brooke and Ricky Melendez (bottom right) have served in the Dakota Conference over the last eight years in the capacity of church pastors, campus ministries, and most recently youth and camp directors. Though they have accepted positions in the Rocky Mountain Conference and will soon move, the impact they have made on Dakota’s youth will live for years to come.



Caleb Haakenson

Fun facts from the 2021 Dakota camp season

- 71** brand new campers attended
- 91** were returning campers
- 26** were not from Adventist families
- 6,252** meals were served from staff training through the end of the camp season
- 11** campers were baptized
- 21** staff members worked **24,124** combined total of hours
- 19.5** was the staff’s median age
- 44** people volunteered



Miguel Manzo



Caleb Haakenson



Miguel Manzo

Wagleys Say Goodbye to Iowa-Missouri After 23 Years of Service

After 23 years of ministry in the Iowa-Missouri Conference, executive secretary **Robert Wagley** and his wife **Peggy**, who served as an administrative assistant, said goodbye to the Iowa-Missouri Conference in October.

After much prayer, Robert accepted a call to serve as a pastor in the Gulf States Conference. He will be pastoring the Gulf Coast Adventist Church in Biloxi, Mississippi and the St. Elmo Church in Irvington, Alabama. This will put them closer to most of their family.

“We felt it was the right time to take advantage of the opportunity to serve God’s people at a local level and do evangelism while also enjoying the blessings of ministering to family and friends in an area they really like and appreciate,” Robert said.

The couple has been serving the Adventist Church since 1978. They have lived abroad and in multiple states while serving in various capacities.

Robert first served the Iowa-Missouri Conference in 1983 in pastoral ministry. The couple served elsewhere for a few years and returned to the Iowa-Missouri Conference in 2000 when Robert served as ministerial director. He later accepted the call to be the executive secretary for the Minnesota Conference. Five years later Robert accepted the position of ministerial director and Peggy

Photos: Christina Coston



Peggy and Robert Wagley are moving to the Gulf States Conference, where Robert will pastor churches in Mississippi and Alabama.

accepted the position of administrative assistant in the Iowa-Missouri Conference. In 2016 Robert was voted as executive secretary for the conference.

During his 23 years of service, Robert said he implemented two programs which he believes are some his most significant accomplishments for the Iowa-Missouri Conference. The first program developed evangelism and ministry zones which sought to connect pastors of specific geographical areas so they could meet regularly to encourage one another.

“I think it really helped build camaraderie and fellowship and team spirit for our pastors,” Robert said.

Robert, with the help of Peggy, also introduced a portfolio-based approach to the ordination process for pastors within the conference. According to Robert, this allowed the pastors to keep a

record of their involvement and experience in various areas of ministry. The portfolios also allowed Robert to identify strong and weak areas in a pastor’s ministry so he could better assist pastors.

“I believe it’s one of the most significant things we did while we were in the Ministerial Department,” Robert said.

Peggy was actively involved in several ministries including camp meeting, Women’s Ministries, Shepherdess and Religious Liberty.

“It’s been fun to do, and I’ve very much enjoyed working with the pastors, their wives and members throughout the conference for so many blessed years,” Peggy said.

The couple said they have enjoyed serving the Iowa-Missouri Conference in their various ministry roles and will miss the conference.

“We will be leaving a part of our heart here,” Peggy said.

The couple also said while serving in the Iowa-Missouri Conference they have made friendships that will last a lifetime.

“We have wonderful friends from Iowa to Missouri that will be lifelong friends,” Robert said. “They have become like family, a home away from home.”

Fellow Iowa-Missouri Conference officers said Robert and Peggy will be missed and they hope God blesses their transition.

“They have been a major part of our office family,” said **Rhonda Karr**, conference treasurer. “They have always been willing to serve in whatever task was at hand.”

Iowa-Missouri Conference president **Dean Coridan** said the Wagleys have been both great friends and colleagues.

“Robert and Peggy Wagley and my wife **Gail** and I have been friends and colleagues for 35 years and have ministered together for many years in this conference,” Coridan said. “We have appreciated their work and they will be greatly missed.”

At this time the conference has not yet filled either position vacated by the Wagleys but are actively looking to do so.

Stories on these pages were written by Christina Coston, communication director for the Iowa-Missouri Conference.

“Around Town” Delivers Food and Hope to Hundreds with Support from Community



(left) Around Town deliveries coordinator Karen McCarthy delivers food to Jaymie Underkafler, a customer of about 10 years.



(right) Students of the Des Moines Adventist elementary school help pack boxes of food for Around Town customers.

Around Town Mobile Food Pantry, formerly Van Ministries, delivers food to over 350 people in the Des Moines area the second Tuesday of every month.

The ministry is supported by several area churches: Des Moines, Jordan Crossing, Ankeny, Ames, Nevada, Winterset and Knoxville. Local Pathfinder clubs occasionally do food drives for the ministry. Monetary donations are also collected at the area churches to purchase food.

The ministry relies on volunteers from local churches and the Des Moines Adventist elementary school to both pack and deliver food.

Each month students in grades five through eight from the Des Moines elementary

school come to the storage facility to help pack boxes for Around Town customers. The students normally pack about 75 boxes per month. Many students said they enjoy working at the food pantry.

“It’s pretty fun actually,” said **Philip Onek**, an eighth grader. “I like it because everyone comes together and helps each other out.”

An additional 90-100 boxes are packed one Sunday a month by church volunteers.

Once the boxes are ready for distribution, volunteers drive their personal vehicles to deliver food to Around Town customers.

Bruce Christensen, a member of the Des Moines Church, began volunteering six years ago after hearing

about the ministry in church. Despite a back injury, Christensen continues delivering food.

“I love doing it,” Christensen said. “Because of my back injury I’m always in pain when I’m done, but the emotional happiness overpowers that. It’s worth it.”

Many of the volunteers said they continue working for the food pantry because they enjoy connecting with the customers every month.

Taariq Patel, pastor of the Des Moines Church, said his favorite part of the ministry is connecting with people.

“I think it’s a great opportunity for me and my family to get out there and build relationships with people,” Patel said.

In addition to support from local churches, Around Town receives 1,900 pounds of food each month from their partner Food Bank of Iowa. In 2017 Around Town was inducted into the Food Bank of Iowa’s Hall of Fame for distributing over 1 million pounds of food.

“Around Town Mobile Food Pantry provides an invaluable service to our community and we are proud to partner with them,” said **Lexie Prigge**, regional partnership manager for Food Bank of Iowa.

Around Town has also received grants in the past couple years which helped them purchase new freezers and refrigerators for the storage facility located near the conference office. The grants also assisted Around Town in purchasing food, a new air conditioning unit, food packing supplies and carts.

“A lot of our volunteers are retired or elderly and so [the carts] make it physically easier to transport things to our vehicles,” said **Karen McCarthy**, Around Town deliveries coordinator.

Around Town director and Ankeny Church member **James Hansen** said he hopes the pantry can continue its partnerships for years to come.

“We want to continue and grow our relationship with the food bank and hopefully provide even more meals to our community,” Hansen said.

Conference Welcomes New Vice President for Finance

Hugh Davis



Roger Driver was elected as the new vice president of finance for the Kansas-Nebraska Conference at the Constituency Session held on Sunday, Aug. 29. Following is an interview with Elder Driver.

Tell us a little about your experience working for the church.

The Lord always watches over his children in all kinds of circumstances. This has been evident to my wife **Carol** and me during our careers working for the denomination. As you look back over your life, you can usually spot instances where the outcome of a particular event had to be a “God thing.” God only wants the best for

His children, and He has led Carol and myself throughout our careers.

Please share your philosophy on managing tithes.

Tithe is God’s money. Members and visitors alike place their tithe in the offering plate week after week trusting that it will be used wisely. I take that trust very seriously. The Seventh-day Adventist denomination has been very clear about how tithe is to be spent and how it is not. When you follow policies already in place you can rest comfortably knowing you have done your best to safeguard the Lord’s money.

Roger Driver, pictured with his wife Carol, takes seriously his new responsibility to manage and safeguard the funds being contributed to the Kansas-Nebraska Conference

What new challenges and opportunities do you think the role of vp for finance in this conference will bring?

Throughout my career as a conference vp for finance, it is amazing to see how God can bring you to a spot where your skills can be improved and enhanced. I am sure working in the Kansas-Nebraska Conference will be no different. It is amazing to know that when God places you in a position, He gives you the tools and the skills to accomplish the tasks in front of you. We need to remember that God does not call the qualified; He qualifies the called. I am looking forward to the new skills the Lord will teach me while working here in the Kansas-Nebraska Conference. Life is a series of learning experiences. We should try to learn all we can.

Over my career, I have had the opportunity to

work with several different individuals. Each of them brought their own skills and abilities to the table. God has placed us in situations where the skills and abilities of the workers within a given office all complement each other. It is amazing what can be accomplished when your team works together.

The Kansas-Nebraska Conference has a good reputation within the Seventh-day Adventist church. Have they had their challenges? Absolutely. Yet God still provides solutions that strengthen and build on what is already in place within the conference.

Tell us about your family.

Carol and I have been married for 41 years. We have two daughters who have each married a wonderful spouse.

Heather is married to **Travis Furst**. Heather and Travis have provided us three grandchildren: **Annabelle**, **William** and **Emma**. They live in Belton, Missouri.

Heidi married **Seth Dunkin**. They live in Firestone, Colorado. Heidi and Seth provided us another grandson, **Adam**.

Agape Blanket Ministry Blesses Children in Omaha

“Would those around our church miss us if we were not here?” **Efoui Abotsi**, adult Sabbath school leader at Omaha Memorial Church asked. “What can we do to let our community know Jesus?”

It was a thought-provoking challenge that stuck with me for weeks. As I contemplated his questions, an idea began to formulate in my head. I had seen an article in the conference newsletter about a church in Great Bend that had made shower baskets for new mothers. Why couldn't we do something similar?

The Holy Spirit would not let me rest. **Marilyn Caughlin**, personal ministries leader, inspired me again when she shared these thoughts one Sabbath: “The

Carpenter's hand, the touch of Jesus. They must have been rough, the hands of a carpenter. But, Oh! What gentle hands! What powerful hands! The hands of Jesus. Our God is a hands-on God. With His hands He formed man from the dust of the earth. The trace of a single finger could restore sight to the blind, heal a leper and bring life to the dead. Jesus wasn't afraid to touch others. Leprous skin didn't repulse Him. He did not hesitate to wash the feet of His disciples or touch the eyes of the blind beggar. And He wants to use our hands to send the same message of love, humility and acceptance.”

I shared my ministry idea with Marilyn, and Agape Blankets was born.

The Holy Spirit reminded me that this is God's project, not mine. I understood this to mean it will “fly or die” on its own. Even when I journaled the names of the “giants” blocking this project and petitioned God to remove the obstacles if it was according to His will, I really had no idea what a faith-building and spiritual exercise I had signed up for.

As the skeleton idea began to flesh out, I began to see doors opening: Church Board approval, a 60 percent off sale on fabric and growing interest from the church. Just when I thought the giants were falling, an unexpected giant appeared: we needed to find a home for these blankets.

My mind went to the children who are taken to a safe place because something went wrong in their home. They don't know why they must leave—all they know is they are being taken from the people they love and cannot take their doll, truck or stuffed toy with them. I pleaded with God to find a trusted authority who could distribute the Agape Blankets

to the little ones at risk.

God did remove all the obstacles. Douglas County Sheriff's Department in Omaha became the home for the Agape Blankets for children at risk. Church members showed up to pray over the blankets as they completed them. Coloring books and crayons were volunteered along with funds to purchase the fleece fabric.

Since 2015, Douglas County Sheriff's Department has received 185 blankets for children at risk during the year and during the holiday season. During the past two years, we have even repurposed scraps of leftover fabric to make lap blankets for the elderly living at Maple Crest Health Center in Omaha.

I echo Marilyn Caughlin's comment: “Our God is a hands-on God. And He wants to use our hands to send the same message of love, humility and acceptance.” I praise our Lord for all the willing hands and willing hearts that help this ministry fly!

Pauline Blumenthal is a member of the Omaha Memorial Church in Nebraska.



Courtesy Omaha Memorial Church

Volunteers from the Omaha Memorial Church have created over 180 blankets since 2015 for at-risk children.

Community Outreach at Work



Courtesy Minnesota Conference

It was 1996 when a small Adventist group in Kansas City, Kansas, determined to reach out to the Hispanic community by organizing a Vacation Bible School. **Rosemaris**, her older sister **Gladys**, and other members began knocking on doors and passing out invitations. As they knocked on one door enthusiastically explaining the invitations, the woman responded very seriously, “My children will not go anywhere.” Rosemaris persisted, offering details about the VBS (games, crafts, snacks and, most importantly, knowing the love of Jesus). Still, the woman declined.

The Valenzuela family had just arrived in the U.S. from Mexico. Rosemaris, from the nearby Adventist church knew they were in need and began arriving with food. She asked

Pastor Ray Valenzuela reconnects with Mrs. Rosemaris Campos, who knocked on his door when he was a child and invited him to attend VBS.

the mom if she was interested in having her pastor visit the family, but the mom declined, explaining that she was Catholic. Rosemaris, though disappointed, was respectful and continued to drop off helpful items.

A few weeks later a man by the name of **Celerino Cortez Sr.** showed up to the Valenzuela house and said he knew their cousin who had just gotten baptized in the Adventist Church. Mr. Cortez was wondering if he could study the Bible with them. The mom was hesitant but allowed the man to come in since he knew a family member.

While he was inside, the VBS ladies decided to stop at the Valenzuela house once again. “Hello! We will start in a few minutes. Would you like to come?” Rosemaris asked.

That’s when she saw a curious face behind the door, whispering to his mom, “Yes, Mom, please ... Can we go?” The mother persisted in saying “No,” but the persuasive boy continued asking until he convinced his mother. That was the first big step that

eventually led to this entire family being baptized.

That little boy eventually became a pastor. Today, **Pastor Ray Valenzuela** is one of our new bilingual pastors in the Minnesota Conference. Coincidentally, Rosemaris—who first knocked on his door when he was a little boy—also works for the Minnesota Conference as an administrative assistant for the Treasury Department.

Seeing Pastor Ray again has brought her so much joy. Experiencing firsthand how the Holy Spirit works on hearts and being able to see the fruit of her labor in community service is so rewarding.

Pastor Ray is thankful, as well, for the persistent ministry of Rosemaris, Gladys and Celerino in bringing his family to Christ. He is thankful for a God who knocks on the door of our lives many times because He has something better to offer us—Himself!

Since that time, community service has been very important to Pastor Ray. Recently, some of the young adults in his district expressed a desire to reach out to their own community. As they discussed it further, they thought the best way to help would be to collect backpacks for kids going back to school.

All three churches participated in collecting backpacks and bringing food to host

a Back2School Backpack Giveaway. It was decided to hold the event at a park close to the church and across the street from the local high school. The event would also offer free watermelon, corn and fun for the kids with the addition of a bouncy house and three different Paw Patrol costumes for kids to wear while getting their pictures taken.

One specific family from the community attended and was especially grateful for the experience. The mother mentioned to the pastor’s wife, **Alyssa Valenzuela**, that she had just moved to the area from the east coast, and because of the pandemic and no other family in the area, this was the first time she and her son attended a social event. She mentioned they both really needed a community and were glad to connect, especially since she only lived a couple blocks from church.

Pastor Rays’ churches had a great time putting this event together and are excited about making an even bigger impact next year.

Pastor Karen Lewis is Ministerial director for the Minnesota Conference.

Remembering Rebekah Knapp

Northwest Minnesota, Northeast North Dakota and many more places and homes beyond have been enriched and blessed by the all-too-short life of Rebekah Knapp. She died unexpectedly in a tragic car accident at the age of 41, her life touched by numerous others.

Rebekah was the oldest child of seven, and took her energetic, can-do, big sister heart wherever she went. She delivered over 1,000 babies in her extremely busy rural midwifery practice. Her care extended to moms of varied descriptions, social statuses, ages, belief systems and ethnicities.

It is estimated she drove 1.4 million miles in her care for others during her 23 years of service. Each year she gladly held a baby birthday party for all the families she served.

Rebekah was happy serving in the capacity to which God called her.

Her knowledge of herbs and natural remedies was extensive and used freely in her practice. Yet she knew if a mother needed to transfer to a hospital and she would take the necessary steps to make sure the mother got there.

Rebekah was willing to be paid in produce and eggs, if that is what her clients had. If a baby was delivered on Sabbath, she would not accept payment for that delivery. Her service extended into EMT; she was not afraid to give of herself in the messiest situations. Her life was truly her witness.

The strength of her parents' Christian faith—in the wisdom, love and sustaining power of God—during their time of loss has been truly



Rebekah Knapp, a midwife, delivers a new little bundle of joy.

inspiring! Their influence on Rebekah's life of faith is clearly seen, even in this tragedy. God is holding them close during this time and encouraging them with love and support from the community.

We, at Rebekah's small church in Crookston, Minnesota, will miss her deeply. We have been richly

blessed by her life of loving, willing service. In church she offered to help in any capacity she was able: treasurer, song leader and other roles. Praise God for the blessed hope we have of someday seeing her again!

Julianne Pickle and Eunice Jahn are members of the Crookston Church in Minnesota.

Vietnam Veterans Honored in Farmington at The Wall That Heals



The 150-member Piñon Hills Adventist Church in Farmington, New Mexico, was front and center in the local community and surrounding area Sept. 7-11. Church members were initiators and sponsors of The Wall that Heals, a three-quarter-sized traveling replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Lillian Clopine, church member, got the idea several years ago that sponsoring The Wall That Heals would be a positive way for Adventists to be involved in their community. She and her husband, **Bill**, along with members of the Piñon Hills Church, applied to host The Wall That Heals as it traveled across the country. They were elated when the application was approved. The Wall did not travel in 2020, and few new applications were approved for 2021. In November 2020, they received word that they would be one of 37 communities across the United States where The Wall would be displayed in 2021.

The Clopines and the Piñon Hills Church enlisted support from a wide range of local individuals and organizations. **Jennifer Halphen**, a church member

and vice-chair of the Host Committee, was deeply involved from the beginning and led site logistics. Soon **Gary Smouse**, owner of the local Chick-fil-A, joined as the second Host Committee vice-chair. His meticulous planning helped bring in an additional Host Sponsor, the Blue Star Mothers of America New Mexico Chapter One. Many community members and local businesses came forward to provide financial and other support.

“This event was both rewarding and humbling at the same time,” said Lillian Clopine. For her, as the chief organizer, “this event has clearly brought attention and increased visibility to the Piñon Hills Church.”

As community members, the church and citizens, they wished to honor the veterans. They also desired “to sponsor an event that would serve the Four Corners in a meaningful way. I believe the Holy Spirit has guided us through this process, and these goals have been achieved,” Clopine added.

The Wall arrived in Durango, Colorado, on the afternoon of Sept. 7. An honor guard escort of more than 70 motorcycles assembled to

accompany The Wall from Durango to Farmington.

Vietnam veterans led the procession, followed by the 53-foot semi, which transports The Wall. The rest of the honor guard of motorcycles and vintage vehicles with flying flags followed.

Colorado State Patrol escorted the procession to the border where the New Mexico State Patrol took over the rest of the way to the San Juan College athletics fields in Farmington, where volunteers would assemble The Wall on the following day.

Dr. Dick Stenbakken, Chaplain (Colonel) U.S. Army, Retired, former director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries at the General Conference and a Vietnam veteran, spoke at the volunteer breakfast held at the Piñon Hills Church on the day of The Wall’s arrival and was also the keynote speaker at the honors ceremony the evening of Thursday, Sept. 9.

The breakfast honored the many volunteers who were on site to assist those visiting The Wall for the duration of the event. The San Juan County sheriff’s office provided a 21-gun salute that echoed back from the large wall following a bagpipe playing taps.

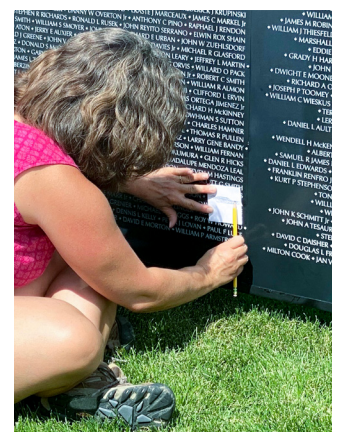
The Thursday evening Honors Ceremony hosted more than 850 people, including presentations by **Rear Admiral Bruce Black**, **State Senator William Sharer**, and Chaplain Stenbakken. The

opening event closed with a spectacular, low-level helicopter fly-over from Kirtland Airforce Base in Albuquerque, New Mexico. They had received final approval from the FAA only 24 hours before the scheduled fly-over.

Saturday morning, a special Blessing Ceremony was provided by Navajo Nation representatives with more than 500 attending. The Navajo ceremony included the National Anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance in Navajo, Native American drummers, and a keynote speech by **Myron Lizer**, vice president of the Navajo Nation.

Volunteers were at The Wall even overnight to help people locate specific names from the more than 58,200 names engraved on The Wall.

For Chaplain Stenbakken, the invitation to participate in the event brought memories from the past. “Being at The Wall was very personal for me,” said Stenbakken. “The name of a young man I met two days into my first pastoral assignment is



Campion Outdoor School Provides Creativity, Contact with Nature and Fun



Courtesy Campion Academy

Campion Academy students escaped the classrooms, ditched the masks and discarded the textbooks in exchange for painting brushes, compasses and cameras as they attended outdoor school in the Rocky Mountain National Park.

The mission of the day was simple: to have fun while exploring and enjoying the beauty of God’s creation that surrounded them as they broke off into small groups for the first half of the day.

Reflecting on the trip, **Ruth**, a sophomore, commented, “It was a great stress reliever from our daily schoolwork while also being outdoors.”

Showing off their artistic side, pupils relaxed on a hillside while **Lindsey Santana**, Campion teacher and librarian, explained how to use watercolors when painting mountain landscapes. The challenge was to recreate landscapes from their point of view. “It was really fun. We learned how to create a sunset landscape using only the primary colors,” **Toby**, a freshman, said.

While some students were busy showing off their artistic skills and dreaming of becoming the next Vincent

van Gogh, others decided to get creative with the lens. Walking students around Sprague Lake, **Jill Harlow**, Campion teacher and communication director, provided lessons on how to take photos using different depths of field and perspectives.

Sophia, a junior, reflected, “I really enjoyed nature during our walk. We saw a female moose and elk, which made me happy.”

Another activity offered was to identify edible plants and ones that might taste okay at first but can quickly be toxic. “It was a great experience. We learned how important it is to check with multiple sources, such as books or the internet, before we eat anything in nature. We had a lot of fun while exploring and hiking up the hill,” **Elizabeth**, a senior, said.

Gwendolyn, a sophomore, summed up the day full of adventure: “I loved the trip in general and had a lot of fun, but boy was I tired when we got back. All I wanted to do was eat and sleep.”

Hyacinth Cookenmaster is a senior at Campion Academy in Loveland, Colorado.

there—panel 5-E, line 5. We corresponded regularly until he was killed in action. His face, his name, and his memory have never left me. I saw him off at the local airport, and I saw his flag-draped coffin return home to the same airport. When asked about representing the Adventist Church as an Army chaplain, his memory played a large part in my saying yes to that call and career.”

The semi-truck that transports The Wall opens to become a Mobile Education Center, which displays the history of the Vietnam war and the story of The Wall itself. This Mobile Education Center is a traveling museum with artifacts from the war, items left at The Wall in Washington D.C., and digital displays honoring local Hometown Heroes.

This event was a unique way for the local Adventist church to lead a major community event for the entire Four Corners region and is a testimony to what can be done with prayer, planning and hard work.

“Several Host Committee members expressed the conviction that they could see God’s hand throughout the process of preparing for this event and its success,” Clopine remarked.

It is estimated that more than 3,000 individuals visited The Wall while it was in Farmington. Local schools were also involved, and nearly 800 students visited and learned about this important part of American history.

Many Vietnam veterans who attended the programs expressed appreciation for being recognized for their service and this remembrance of people they knew whose names are engraved on the black stone of The Wall That Heals. The Wall also serves as a powerful reminder of Christ, who brings ultimate healing.

RMCNews with Dick Stenbakken, Chaplain (Colonel) U.S. Army, retired, former director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries at the General Conference and a Vietnam veteran



Photos Courtesy Rocky Mountain Conference

Health Equity Highlighted as Top Priority at AdventHealth's 31st Conference on Mission

The World Health Organization has, since its inception in 1948, endorsed health as a fundamental right for all regardless of race, religion, political belief, economic status or social condition. Falling short on this foundational concept results in health inequity, where unjust health outcomes negatively impact certain people groups. Therefore, AdventHealth's Conference on Mission 2021 provided an avenue for discussions around the state of health equity within the organization, as the topic remains one of the key pillars underpinning AdventHealth's mission of Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ.

"Today, we will embark on a journey of self-reflection and removal of our own unconscious bias," said AdventHealth President/CEO **Terry Shaw** in his opening remarks. "We will address critical areas of health equity through exploring examples like social determinants of health, statistics, actionable next steps and what we can do to promote health equity in our communities. We want to explore the complexity and discomfort in solving problems that will raise awareness of experiences and stories that do not look like our own."

The two-day virtual conference, held Aug. 27-28, convened more than 300 people, including AdventHealth Board members, executives, health equity experts and mission and ministry

leaders, as well as Seventh-day Adventist Church leaders across the country.

The inspiration for the conference theme "Healing Together" was drawn from the apostle Paul's words in Gal. 3:28: "We are all one in Christ Jesus," which depicts Christ's expectation of relating with one another beyond our differences.

Joseph Betancourt, MD, the keynote speaker on the first day of the conference, shared his top three lessons from leading health equity efforts in a conversation with Shaw. First, he emphasized that leadership buy-in is essential. He also mentioned that analyzing data is paramount to achieving health equity, and added that a strategic plan is always necessary to move aspiration into execution.

Commenting on the state of health equity within AdventHealth, **Alic Simmonds, MD**, chief health equity officer for AdventHealth, revealed that everyday discrimination among minority groups causes chronic stress, which in turn has a physiological impact on life expectancy.

"Compared to white women, the cumulative effect of the chronic stressors that affect black women reduces their life expectancy by seven-and-a-half years," he said. In central Florida alone, research has proven that black women have less access to prenatal care leading to pre-term births with low weight, and



Courtesy AdventHealth Shawnee Mission

AdventHealth leaders engage in a Q&A discussion during the organization's virtual Conference on Mission 2021.

consequently resulting in high infant mortality rates. Based on these daunting statistics, Dr. Simmonds called on healthcare providers to join the cause of making it easy for underserved populations to access care at AdventHealth.

Julie Zaiback, executive director of community advocacy and health equity for AdventHealth, noted that the disparities index, a technical indicator used to identify and measure the impact of healthcare disparities within communities, was helping AdventHealth to take action on issues arising within the communities it serves.

"Talking about others who are different from us isn't an easy conversation to have," said **Ted Hamilton, MD**, senior vice president and chief mission integration officer for AdventHealth. "This year's conference has brought attention to the significant work we still need to do in the health equity space as we strive to emulate Christ's healing ministry."

A group of six individuals were also recognized for their exceptional commitment to AdventHealth's mission during this year's conference awards ceremony.

The conference concluded with a Sabbath sermon by **Zina Jacque**, retired pastor of the Community Church of Barrington. She took the opportunity to entreat AdventHealth team members to become the healers God has called them to be.

Based on the words from John 3:1-2 and John 4:2-7, she said, "No matter who you are and your role at AdventHealth, you are called to be a healer and to be concerned about the body, mind and spirit. To heal is to offer your service. So, whether you are performing a surgery or opening a door, you are providing healing to someone. And you do this enabled by the spirit of God, not your own ability."

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Ama Akoto-Boateng is a corporate communications intern at AdventHealth.

Bringing Hope for the Holidays

The Christmas Store at Parker Adventist Hospital thrives despite COVID-19

Christmastime often evokes memories of snow, hot cocoa and Christmas cookies, caroling, spending time with family and, of course, presents. But while the holidays are a joyous time of the year for many families, for others it is a time of financial stress and struggles.

Douglas County, Colorado, has the highest cost of living anywhere in the state, and suburban poverty is an often hidden but quickly growing problem. It's not uncommon for those in the area to feel a financial strain during the most wonderful time of the year. That's why Centura-Parker Adventist Hospital, in collaboration with NewDay Adventist Church, is providing Christmas gifts at no cost to families in need through their Christmas Store.

The free shopping experience is hitting an important

milestone this year, celebrating its tenth anniversary. Since 2011, the church and hospital have worked together with social workers from local public schools to identify families who don't qualify for other types of aid but will have a hard time putting presents under the tree. The tickets are then distributed to the selected families, such as the Martins.* When they received their ticket, the family felt like a weight lifted off their shoulders.

When they arrived at the hospital, the Martins were greeted by friendly volunteers and ushered into a cheerily decorated room with presents piled high on tables. The parents went to a different room where they could enjoy beverages, snacks and relaxation while their children did the shopping. Each child is assigned a personal shopping assistant to help them navigate the tables full of high-quality gifts, sorted onto tables by age and gender, and curated all year by a group of volunteers. The children can pick out gifts for themselves and each member of their family, so volunteers ensure there are gifts available to appeal to all ages,

from infants to grandparents.

Options include a wide range of items from sports gear to clothing, personal care products to appliances. Once the gifts are selected, they are custom wrapped by a volunteer and taken home by the Martins to be opened on Christmas morning.

The store is almost entirely volunteer-driven. It takes a small army to pull off this event, starting as early as shopping the after-Christmas sales. Volunteers' roles include helping kids shop, wrapping gifts, restocking the gift tables, directing traffic, setting up, decorating and greeting families as they arrive.

The volunteers include associates at the hospital, members of NewDay Church, local community members and even some from out of state who love the Christmas Store so much they travel to be a part of it each year.

Last year the Christmas Store looked a little different. COVID-19 made it impossible to hold the event as usual, but that didn't stop the team from extending a helping hand to their community.

The store operated more like a call center, with volunteers manning the phones, finding out what children wanted and coordinating a time for the families to pick up their gifts.

According to **Matthew Mundall**, one of the chaplains at Parker Adventist, the team

looks forward to holding the event in person again this year. They are planning to have the Christmas Store as close to normal as possible while following local health directives. Last year, 125 families were served at the store, and the program is planning for even more this year.

"The program even grew during COVID-19, so you can only imagine how much it will grow in the future," Mundall said.

Whatever the future holds, so many people are invested in the store and its success, from families like the Martins, to the volunteers and associates who help it succeed. According to **Michael Goebel**, CEO of Parker Adventist, the Christmas Store benefits those who make it happen as much as those who receive gifts.

"We host the store every year because we're here for our community, and that goes beyond their physical health; it extends to every aspect of their lives," Goebel said. "Providing some Christmas joy to families who cannot afford gifts is just another way we make sure our community is whole and healthy. Getting to see kids light up knowing they will have a Christmas is worth more than words can describe."

Ann Muder is a writer for AdventHealth Shawnee Mission.

*The family's name has been changed to protect their privacy.



Courtesy AdventHealth Rocky Mountain Region

Volunteers work all year long to make the Christmas Store a success for families in need.

Armantrout, Katherine LaVonne Thomas Cox, b. Oct. 17, 1931 in Burt County, NE. d. Aug. 10, 2021 in Springfield, TN. Long-term member of churches in IA, KS, MO, NE. Preceded in death by first husband Burton Cox; daughter Katherine. Survivors include husband James Armantrout; son Burton Cox, Jr.; sister Margaret Rouse; brother Warren Thomas; stepchildren Pat Wright, Diane Kehm, Doug, and Jeff Armantrout; 11 grandchildren; 18 great-grandchildren.

Arredondo, Cristina Michel, b. July 24, 1941. d. July 18, 2021. Member of Maranatha (KS) Church.

Beck, Alvina Nevada, b. Sept. 5, 1932 in Median, ND. d. Oct. 3, 2021 in Bismarck, ND. Member of Jamestown (ND) Church. Preceded in death by husband Lawrence; 1 brother. Survivors include daughter Damaris Qual; sons Rodney and Randy; 4 sisters; 2 brothers; 9 great-grandchildren; 2 great-great-grandchildren.

Bedahl, Edwin Roger, b. May 2, 1937. d. April 18, 2021 in St. Paul, MN. Preceded in death by first wife Adriel Wixson; second wife Shirley Robbins; sisters Dorie Brunzell, Betty Thomas, and Kathleen; brothers Thomas and Carl; grandson Michael Peck. Survivors include daughter Elizabeth Peck; 4 grandchildren; 9 great-grandchildren.

Buchanan, Gerald "Jerry," b. Dec. 7, 1949, d. April 28, 2021 in Alexandria, MN. Survivors include 1 brother.

Christianson, Dennis, Sr., b. in Maddock, ND. d. Feb. 10, 2020. Preceded in death by first wife Lowella. Survivors include second wife Nina; children Dennis, Devin, Lorena, Linette, and Darrin.

Deede, Hildor Philip, b. Aug.

14, 1929 in Wells County, ND. d. Sept. 25, 2021 in Harvey, ND. Member of Manfred (ND) Church. Preceded in death by wife Nellie. Survivors include daughters Nancy Tarasenko and Kathleen Tebelius; sons Thomas and Wayne; 9 grandchildren; 8 great-grandchildren. Served in U.S. Army during Korean War.

Engeberg, Howard O., Sept. 25, 1929 in Glendale, CA. d. Sept. 17, 2021 in Durango, CO. Member of Durango Church. Preceded in death by 1 sister. Survivors include wife Carolyn; daughters Janis and Debbie; 4 grandchildren; 7 great-grandchildren.

Faul, Scott Alan, b. July 17, 1966 in Harvey, ND. d. Sept. 14, 2021 in Minot, ND. Member of Harvey Church. Preceded in death by 1 brother. Survived by mother Marjie.

Gane, Erwin Roy, b. March 18, 1931 in Oakleigh, Victoria, Australia. d. Sept. 26, 2021 in Fort Collins, CO. Member of Adventure (CO) Church. Preceded in death by wife Winsome. Survivors include sons Roy and Calvin; 2 sisters; 3 grandchildren; 7 great-grandchildren.

Gunia, Michel Lee, b. Dec. 31, 1957 in Bismarck, ND. d. Aug. 10, 2021 in Emmons County, ND. Member of Mandan (ND) Church. Preceded in death by 1 sister. Survivors include daughters Kimberly, Laura Beastro; stepdaughter Adrien Roehrich; son Joseph; 1 sister; 3 brothers; 11 grandchildren.

Henderson, Hazel Caroline Lovaas, b. April 6, 1929 in Berg, ND. d. Sept. 18, 2021 in Keene, ND. Member of Dakota Conference (ND) Church. Preceded in death by husband Paul; 1 sister; 1 brother; 1 grandson. Survivors include daughters Patsy Gabbert, Penny Pitman, and Donna Foreman; sons James,

Dennis, Larry, Steve, and Kimber; 2 brothers; numerous grandchildren; numerous great-grandchildren; several great-great-grandchildren.

Hickman, Carroll, b. May 13, 1932. d. July 25, 2021. Member of West Plains (MO) Church. Survivors include wife Diane; daughter Charlotte; son David.

Hinde, Beverly A., b. May 29, 1934 in Cedar Rapids, IA. d. June 14, 2021 in Keene, TX. Member of Keene Church. Preceded in death by husband Thomas; 1 sister; 1 granddaughter. Survivors include sons Mike, Tom Jr., and Dave; 1 sister; 4 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren.

Hollen, Raymond, b. unknown. d. Feb. 17, 2021 in Maplewood, MN. Preceded in death by wife Eunice; daughter Lisa; 1 sister; brothers. Survivors include daughters Linda and Laura; sons Dwight and Doug; grandchildren; great-grandchildren. Served as a medic in the U.S. Army.

Holmberg, Linda, b. unknown. d. March 23, 2021 in St. Paul, MN. Preceded in death by husband Jeffery; sister Lisa. Survivors include 2 brothers; 1 sister; many nieces and nephews.

Johnson, Judy, b. May 23, 1945. d. Dec. 20, 2020 in Crystal, MN. Survivors include 2 sisters; 1 foster brother.

Kargleder, Eugene, b. unknown. d. June 17, 2021 in St. Paul, MN. Survivors include wife Delores; daughters Sarah Bohair, Lah Holliday, Renee and Rachel; 2 sisters; 1 brother; 7 grandchildren.

Koch, Betty Louise, b. June 12, 1928 in Nowata, OK. d. Sept 4, 2021 in Hutchinson, KS. Member of Hutchinson Church. Preceded in death by husband Harold; 1 brother. Survivors include daughter

Del Jeane Nash; son Robert; brother Terry Kemmerer; 5 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren.

Laurence, Anita Naomi, b. April 8, 1923 in Watertown, SD. d. Sept. 28, 2021 in Watertown, SD. Member of Watertown Church. Preceded in death by husband Elmer; 3 sisters; 3 brothers; 1 granddaughter; 1 great-granddaughter. Survivors include daughters Bonnie Voelsch, Gayle Feuerstein, Pennye Peterson, Vikki; son Steve; foster son Jeff Muller; 3 sisters; 9 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; 12 great-great-grandchildren.

Martin, Jeannette Boyko, b. July 16, 1935 in McLean County, ND. d. Aug. 11, 2021 in Rochester, MN. Member of Minot (ND) Church. Preceded in death by 3 sisters; 3 brothers. Survivors include sons Neal and Jay; 1 brother; 2 grandsons.

Maruko, Robinson Motanya, age 94. Survivors include wife Ann Nyamwaya; daughters Alice and Brenda; sons Tom, Arnold, and David; 3 siblings.

Meekma, Suzanne, b. May 12, 1937 in Phillips, WI. d. April 14, 2021 in Thief River Falls, MN.

Mercer, Louise A. Fricka, b. Jan. 19, 1933 in Altamont, SD. d. Sept. 5, 2021 in Canby, MN. Member of Watertown (SD) Church. Preceded in death by husband Emmett; daughter Gaye; 1 sister; 1 brother; 2 great-grandchildren. Survivors include daughters Rebecka Buckingham and Vivian Fokken; sons Tennison, David, and Marvin; 18 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren.

Nelson, Norman Arthur, b. Feb. 14, 1938 in Detroit Lakes, MN. d. Nov. 14, 2020 in Detroit Lakes, MN. Member of

Detroit Lakes Church. Preceded in death by 1 great-grandson. Survivors include life partner Diane Ericson and her son Craig; daughters Kimberly Sandberg and Heidi Orner; 1 brother; 5 grandchildren; 9 great-grandchildren. Served in U.S. Army.

Phillips, Paul, b. June 16, 1926 in Pittsburg, PA. d. Aug. 1, 2021 in Stephenson County, IA. Member of Waterloo (IA) Church. Preceded in death by wife Beverly; 3 sisters. Survivors include daughter Paula; son Charlie.

Pratt, Vernon, b. 1935. d. March 11, 2021. Member of St. Louis Central (MO) Church.

Sandoval, Ida C., b. Sept. 2, 1928. d. Jan. 1, 2021. Member of Alamosa (CO) Church. Preceded in death by husband Orlando. Survivors include children Nancy,

Sharon Hanlon, Daryl, Sam, Ben, Oneida Peskin and Reuben.

Stock, James C., b. Sept 14, 1938 in Wooldridge, MO. d. April 19, 2020 in Plymouth, MN. Preceded in death by son Dean. Survivors include wife Shari; daughter Pam Davis; sons Brad, Mark, and Greg; 1 sister; 10 grandchildren.

Stocker, Baylor S., b. Aug. 24, 1921 in Armstrong, MO. d. Nov. 6, 2020 in Columbia, MO. Member of Columbia Church. Preceded in death by wife Helen; 1 sister; 1 brother. Survivors include wife Laverne; stepdaughters Kay Dye and Sharilyn Reed; son Roger; stepsons Allan Barnes and Frank Barnes; grandchildren; step-grandchildren.

Stofer, Glen, b. June 14, 1928 in Albert Lea, MN. d. Nov. 18, 2020 in Faribault, MN.

Member of Faribault Church. Preceded in death by wife Kitty; daughter Laurie. Survivors include daughters Elizabeth Liebelt and Nancy Moore; son Robert; 4 grandsons; great-grandchildren. Served as a Lay Evangelist for the Minnesota Conference.

Stofer, Laurie Kay, b. June 29, 1959 in Waukon, IA. d. Oct. 21, 2020 in Faribault, MN. Member of Faribault Church. Survivors include 2 sisters; 1 brother.

Thuman, Lois J., b. Feb. 6, 1925 in Eagleville, MO. d. Sept. 5, 2021 in St. Joseph, MO. Member of St. Joseph Three Angels (MO) Church. Preceded in death by husband Glen Mathis; husband Roland; 4 sisters; 2 brothers; son Terry. Survivors include sons Ronald, William, and Christopher; stepdaughter Carole; 9 grandchildren.

Tidwell, Gloria V., b. March 14, 1941 in Rogersville, TN. d. Aug. 26, 2021. Member of Willow Springs (MO) Church.

Vandervort, Harry Ernest, Jr., b. March 26, 1929 in Nore Township, MN. d. Dec. 29, 2020 in Blackduck, MN. Survivors include wife Geneva "Jan"; son Harry Vandervort III "Duke"; former stepdaughter Wanda Wilson; 7 grandchildren; 7 great-grandchildren. Served in U.S. Navy as a commissioned officer and Naval aviator for over 20 years.

Zeeb, Fred Sr., b. Aug. 9, 1920 in Goodrich, ND. d. May 8, 2021 in Bismarck, ND. Member of Goodrich Church. Preceded in death by spouse Lorene; 2 sons; 2 sisters; 5 brothers. Survivors include son Fred Jr.; 11 grandchildren; numerous great-grandchildren; numerous great-great-grandchildren.

SUNSET CALENDAR	November 2021				
	COLORADO	NOV 5	NOV 12	NOV 19	NOV 26
	Denver	5:53	4:46	4:41	4:37
	Grand Junction	6:08	5:02	4:47	4:53
	Pueblo	5:54	4:48	4:43	4:39
	IOWA				
	Davenport	5:52	4:44	4:38	4:34
	Des Moines	6:03	4:56	4:50	4:46
	Sioux City	6:13	5:05	4:59	4:55
	KANSAS				
Dodge City	6:36	5:30	5:25	5:22	
Goodland	5:40	4:34	4:28	4:25	
Topeka	6:17	5:10	5:05	5:02	
MINNESOTA					
Duluth	5:46	4:37	4:30	4:24	
International Falls	5:47	4:37	4:29	4:23	
Minneapolis	5:55	4:47	4:40	4:35	
MISSOURI					
Columbia	6:04	4:57	4:52	4:48	
Kansas City	6:12	5:06	5:01	4:57	
St. Louis	5:56	4:49	4:44	4:41	
NEBRASKA					
Lincoln	6:17	5:10	5:05	5:01	
North Platte	6:33	5:26	5:20	5:16	
Scottsbluff	5:43	4:36	4:30	4:26	
NORTH DAKOTA					
Bismarck	6:21	5:12	5:04	4:59	
Fargo	6:04	4:55	4:48	4:42	
Williston	6:29	5:19	5:11	5:05	
SOUTH DAKOTA					
Pierre	6:25	5:16	5:10	5:05	
Rapid City	5:37	4:29	4:22	4:17	
Sioux Falls	6:12	5:04	4:58	4:53	
WYOMING					
Casper	5:52	4:44	4:38	4:34	
Cheyenne	5:49	4:42	4:36	4:32	
Sheridan	5:50	4:42	4:35	4:30	
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SUNSET CALENDAR	December 2021					
	COLORADO	DEC 3	DEC 10	DEC 17	DEC 24	DEC 31
	Denver	4:35	4:35	4:37	4:40	4:45
	Grand Junction	4:51	4:51	4:53	4:56	5:01
	Pueblo	4:38	4:38	4:40	4:43	4:48
	IOWA					
	Davenport	4:32	4:32	4:33	4:37	4:42
	Des Moines	4:44	4:44	4:45	4:49	4:54
	Sioux City	4:52	4:52	4:54	4:57	5:02
	KANSAS					
Dodge City	5:21	5:21	5:23	5:26	5:31	
Goodland	4:23	4:23	4:25	4:28	4:33	
Topeka	5:00	5:00	5:01	5:05	5:10	
MINNESOTA						
Duluth	4:21	4:19	4:21	4:24	4:29	
International Falls	4:19	4:17	4:18	4:22	4:27	
Minneapolis	4:32	4:31	4:32	4:36	4:41	
MISSOURI						
Columbia	4:47	4:47	4:48	4:52	4:57	
Kansas City	4:55	4:55	4:57	5:00	5:05	
St. Louis	4:39	4:39	4:41	4:44	4:49	
NEBRASKA						
Lincoln	4:59	4:58	5:00	5:03	5:09	
North Platte	5:14	5:14	5:15	5:19	5:24	
Scottsbluff	4:23	4:23	4:25	4:28	4:33	
NORTH DAKOTA						
Bismarck	4:55	4:54	4:55	4:59	5:04	
Fargo	4:39	4:38	4:39	4:42	4:48	
Williston	5:01	5:00	5:01	5:05	5:10	
SOUTH DAKOTA						
Pierre	5:02	5:01	5:03	5:06	5:11	
Rapid City	4:15	4:14	4:15	4:19	4:24	
Sioux Falls	4:50	4:50	4:51	4:55	5:00	
WYOMING						
Casper	4:31	4:31	4:32	4:35	4:41	
Cheyenne	4:30	4:30	4:32	4:35	4:40	
Sheridan	4:27	4:26	4:28	4:31	4:36	
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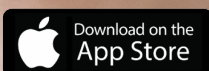
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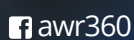
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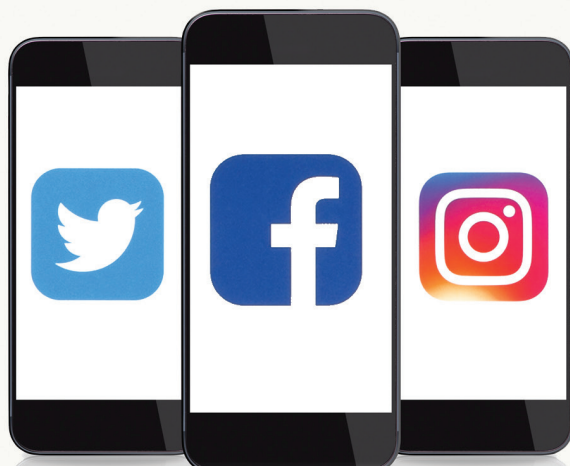
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EATION Life

Life to the Fullest

Meet Maftuha Adem

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Through the COVID-19 crisis, AdventHealth has continued to support our international partners. A major project in Peru helped acquire oxygen-generating plants for two hospitals. Donations of personal protective equipment and other supplies have protected staff and patients in countries around the world. Working together, we'll get through this pandemic.

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