

MID-AMERICA SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST NEWS & INSPIRATION

# OUTLOOK

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SHARING OUR  
SPIRITUAL  
JOURNEYS



**PRAISE GOD!**  
He saved my life! P. 8

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JAN 2022





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“My life was just spiraling out of control.”  
—p. 8



OUTLOOK (ISSN 0887-977X) January 2022, Volume 43, Number 1. 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 \$12 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@maucsd.org](mailto:info@maucsd.org) or phone: 402.484.3000.**





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NEWS AND INSPIRATION



**Good at Creation, Still Good**  
outlookmag.org/the-bible-is-body-positive



**Managing Burnout**  
outlookmag.org/tuesdaytalk-managing-burnout



**Student Wellness Journal**  
outlookmag.org/union-college-students-partner-with-adventhealth-to-produce-wellness-journal

## THERE'S MORE...

Our OUTLOOK theme for 2022 is There's More: Strengthening Our Spirituality. As we look at the world around us, we can see how important it is to live so closely with God that no matter what happens we are at peace.

I've been studying the life of Enoch and his vivid sense of the companionship of the Divine Presence. Ellen White wrote: "He [Enoch] communed with God. When we do this, our faces will be lighted up by the brightness of His presence, and when we meet another, we shall speak of His power, saying Praise God. Good is the Lord..." *Manuscript 17, 1903.*

As you read Pastor Taariq Patel's story and hear him saying "Praise God! Good is the Lord!" I hope you will be inspired to treasure the sense of God's presence every moment of every day throughout 2022.



BRENDA DICKERSON  
editor



## ON THE COVER

**Taariq Patel** currently pastors the Des Moines Church and Jordan Crossing Company in Iowa.

More on p. 8  
Photo by Christina Coston

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# Q&A with the President

## MAUC vote on ordination without regard to gender

**T**he Mid-America Union Conference Executive Committee voted on Nov. 16, 2018, to place on its agenda for the MAUC Constituency Session in 2021 the topic of ordination without regard to gender. Therefore, on Sept. 12, 2021, delegates considered the topic of pastoral credentialing and voted 82 percent in favor of approving ordination for women pastors serving in conferences in Mid-America territory if a conference requests it.

Because there is some misinformation and misunderstanding, in this interview between OUTLOOK editor Brenda Dickerson and MAUC president Gary Thurber we review the history, state facts, and take an honest, in-depth look at this topic that has in the past been emotionally laden and divisive. We also examine the meaning, history and practice of pastoral ordination in the Adventist Church.

**OUTLOOK:** When did MAUC start talking about ordaining women pastors?

**Gary Thurber:** The MAUC Executive Committee was the first union in North America to vote support for ordination of women during its March 8, 2012, meeting. However, at that time, the union was not ready to move forward with the practice of ordaining women.<sup>1</sup>

Nine years later, on Sept. 12, 2021, after continuing to only ordain male pastors and commission female pastors, delegates to the union's regularly-called constituency session voted to recognize the right and responsibility of each local conference to recommend to the union the names their conference executive committee chooses for ordination.

### ORDINATION EXPLAINED

#### What exactly is pastoral ordination?

The General Conference Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC) defines pastoral ordination this way:

*“Ordination is a formal acknowledgment and authentication of one’s call to service ministry by God. Authentication should be understood as ratifying what only God can dispense. Ordination neither supersedes God’s call nor enhances it. Ordination affirms the genuineness of the call as having borne the proper fruit of the Holy Spirit’s work. God initiates the call and equips the recipient for enacting it. God’s person accepts the call. God’s people affirm the call.”*

#### How does the ordination process work for

#### an Adventist pastor?

When an appropriate amount of time has gone by (normally around four years), a candidate’s name is taken to an ordination review committee set up by the conference to review the pastor’s ministry journey. When criteria is determined to have been met, the ordination review committee then recommends the pastor’s name to the conference executive committee, which then votes to send the name to the union executive committee for further review and a final official vote. If approved, an ordination service is scheduled for the pastor.

### HISTORY OF ADVENTIST ORDINATION

#### Let’s look at our Adventist history. What did early church pioneers do?

Women served as leaders in the local churches, as evangelists and held many

leadership positions in the church until around 1920 when women leaders pretty much disappeared from leadership. To see a timeline of women in ministry and leadership in the Adventist Church, read this recent *Adventist Review* article.<sup>2</sup>

#### Some people refer to the GC Session vote in 2015 in San Antonio and ask why we’re still talking about women’s ordination when “it was voted down again.”

While the GC has never voted a theology of ordination, in 1990 the GC delegates in session in Indianapolis voted “not to ordain women at this time” by over 90 percent. In 1995, at Utrecht in the Netherlands, GC delegates in session voted that divisions could not decide to ordain women in their territory by 76 percent of the vote. In 2015 in San Antonio GC delegates in



session voted 58 percent not to support divisions deciding on women's ordination for their territory. The issue of women's ordination is dynamic and fluid in the Adventist Church. The fact that we continue to revisit this subject says that as a body we still have more to study and dialogue about moving forward.

**How does TOSC factor into all this?** In 2010, the GC TOSC was created and tasked with gathering input from the 13 divisions of the World Church. TOSC spent over two years conducting Bible study and examining the materials sent from each division. In 2014, when the TOSC presented its findings to the GC Annual Council, the 106 committee members were divided fairly evenly into three groups representing three positions:

1. that the Bible forbids the ordination of women,
2. that there is no biblical mandate to forbid the ordination of women, and
3. that while there is a biblical pattern of male leadership, the church should move ahead with the ordination of women to the gospel ministry where appropriate.

In a straw vote of the TOSC committee, 62 voted either for position 2 or 3 while 32 voted for the first position. Thus, roughly 2/3 did not see a Biblical roadblock to ordaining women.<sup>3</sup>

**Have GC delegates in an official session**

**voted other policies that didn't work well in certain times and places and aren't being followed by the majority today?** Yes.

One example is term limits, which was voted during the 1931 GC Session in Omaha, Nebraska. According to the *Adventist Review*, this policy was never rescinded but "died by neglect."<sup>4</sup>

## WHAT THIS VOTE MEANS AND WHY IT MATTERS

**Some members may ask, Who really wanted this topic brought to the MAUC Constituency Session?** Please know that not one female pastor in our territory requested that we discuss ordination. The request did not come from the North American Division, the union administration, or the conference presidents. It came primarily from two places: the male pastors who have witnessed their female counterparts' calling, and lay members who have spoken up, wanting change.

At their constituency meeting in April 2021, the Central States Conference delegates voted in session by a margin of 83 percent to ask the union to consider ordaining their female pastors. In addition, the Kansas-Nebraska and Dakota conferences' executive committees each voted to request women's ordination be included in the

2021 MAUC Constituency Session agenda.

The MAUC Executive Committee voted to place this item on the agenda to determine the constituents' support of equal credentialing of male and female pastors as a recognition of God's calling in their lives, and from a desire to eliminate discrimination and to advance mission in our territory.

**Does every conference in our union need to ordain women now?** No. Local conference executive committees choose the names to bring to the MAUC Executive Committee and whether the individual is being recommended for ordination or commissioning. Unions vote whether to approve ordinations, but conferences, as the employer, grant the credentials. It will always be up to the local conference how they would like their female pastors to be credentialed.

**But in doing this aren't we ignoring the vote of the world church?** Our delegates don't have the authority to change that vote. They do have the authority to vote a variance for our territory at a regularly-called constituency meeting, which is what happened on Sept. 12, 2021.

**What will happen with credentialing the women pastors who have already been commissioned?** The

vote taken at the MAUC Session was that conferences have the authority to decide which credential to issue their female pastors. The female pastors must have gone through the rigor of the established ordination process.

**Will this variance lead to other policy disagreements with the world church?**

Not likely, since it would take another duly-called constituency session to vote a variance. To date, the other two unions in the North American Division (Columbia Union and Pacific Union), which have ordained women for nearly a decade, have not varied from GC policy in other areas, and I don't believe MAUC will be any different. 0

*Read the full interview at [outlookmag.org/qa-with-the-president](http://outlookmag.org/qa-with-the-president)*



### Sources

1. [outlookmag.org/ordination-of-women-as-pastors-in-the-mid-america-union/](http://outlookmag.org/ordination-of-women-as-pastors-in-the-mid-america-union/)
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4. <http://archives.adventistreview.org/article/3838/archives/issue-2010-1534/term-limits>

# Preguntas y Respuestas con el Presidente

**E**l Comité Ejecutivo de la Unión de Mid-América votó el 16 de noviembre del 2018 incluir en la agenda de la sesión del Congreso de MAUC en el 2021, el tema de la ordenación sin importar el género. Por lo tanto, el 12 de septiembre del 2021, los delegados consideraron el tema de la credencial pastoral y votaron el 82 por ciento a favor de aprobar la ordenación a las mujeres al ministerio que sirven en conferencias en el territorio de la Unión de Mid-América, si una conferencia lo solicita.

Debido a que hay cierta desinformación y malentendidos, en esta entrevista entre la editora de OUTLOOK, Brenda Dickerson, y el presidente de MAUC, Gary Thurber, revisaremos la historia, los hechos y analizaremos honestamente y en profundidad este tema que en el pasado ha estado cargado de emociones y división. Gary Thurber también habla sobre el significado, la historia y la práctica de la ordenación pastoral en la Iglesia Adventista.

## ORDENACIÓN EXPLICADA

**OUTLOOK:** ¿Cuándo comenzó MAUC a hablar sobre la ordenación de las mujeres al ministerio?

**Gary Thurber:** El Comité Ejecutivo de MAUC fue la primera Unión en Norteamérica en votar a favor de la ordenación de las mujeres durante su reunión del 8 de marzo del 2012. Sin embargo, en ese momento, la Unión no estaba lista para seguir adelante con la práctica de ordenar mujeres al ministerio.<sup>1</sup>

Nueve años después, el 12 de septiembre del 2021, después de continuar ordenando solo pastores varones y comisionar a las mujeres al ministerio, los delegados a la sesión de congreso, votaron reconocer el derecho y la responsabilidad de cada conferencia local de recomendar a la Unión los nombres que su Comité Ejecutivo recomiende para la ordenación.

**¿Qué es exactamente la ordenación pastoral?** El Comité de Estudio de Teología de la Ordenación de la Conferencia General (TOSC) define la ordenación pastoral de esta manera:

*“La ordenación es un reconocimiento formal y autenticación del llamado de uno al ministerio de servicio por parte de Dios. La autenticación debe entenderse como la ratificación de lo que sólo Dios puede dispensar. La ordenación no reemplaza el llamado de Dios ni lo mejora. La ordenación afirma la autenticidad del llamado por haber manifestado el fruto apropiado de la obra del Espíritu Santo. Dios inicia el llamado y equipa al receptor para promulgarlo. La persona que está en comunión con Dios, acepta el llamado. El pueblo de Dios confirma el llamado.”*

**¿Cómo funciona el proceso de ordenación para un pastor**

**adventista?** Cuando ha pasado una cantidad apropiada de tiempo (normalmente alrededor de cuatro años), el nombre de un candidato se lleva a un comité de revisión de ordenación establecido por la conferencia para revisar el trayecto ministerial del pastor. Cuando se determina que se han cumplido los criterios, el comité de revisión de la ordenación recomienda el nombre del pastor al comité ejecutivo de la conferencia, que luego vota para enviar el nombre al comité ejecutivo de la unión, para una revisión adicional y una votación oficial final. Si se aprueba, se programa un servicio de ordenación para el pastor.

## HISTORIA DE LA ORDENACIÓN ADVENTISTA

**Veamos nuestra historia adventista. ¿Qué hicieron los pioneros de la iglesia primitiva?** Las mujeres sirvieron como líderes en las iglesias locales, como evangelistas, y también ocuparon muchos puestos de liderazgo en la

iglesia. Alrededor de 1920, las mujeres líderes prácticamente desaparecieron del liderazgo. Para ver una línea de tiempo de las mujeres en el ministerio y el liderazgo en la Iglesia Adventista, lea este reciente artículo de la *Revista Adventista*.<sup>2</sup>

**Algunas personas se refieren a la votación de la Sesión de la Conferencia General en 2015, en San Antonio, y preguntan: ¿Por qué todavía estamos hablando de la ordenación de las mujeres cuando “fue rechazada nuevamente?”** Si bien la Conferencia General nunca ha votado una teología de la ordenación, en 1990 los delegados de la CG en sesión, en Indianápolis, votaron “no ordenar mujeres en ese momento” en más del 90 por ciento. En 1995, en Utrecht, en los Países Bajos, los delegados de la CG votaron que las divisiones no podían ordenar a las mujeres en su territorio por el 76 por ciento de los votos. En 2015, en San Antonio, los delegados de la CG en sesión votaron



que las divisiones no podían ordenar a las mujeres por el 58 por ciento de los votos. El tema de la ordenación de las mujeres es dinámico y fluido en la Iglesia Adventista. El hecho de que sigamos revisando este tema dice que, como órgano, todavía tenemos más que estudiar y dialogar para avanzar.

**¿Cómo influye TOSC en todo esto?** En 2010, se creó el CG TOSC y se le encomendó la tarea de recopilar aportes de las 13 divisiones de la Iglesia Mundial. TOSC pasó más de dos años realizando estudios bíblicos y examinando los materiales enviados desde cada división.

En 2014, cuando el TOSC presentó sus hallazgos al Consejo Anual de la CG, los 106 miembros del comité se dividieron de manera bastante uniforme en tres grupos que representan tres posiciones:

1. que la Biblia prohíbe la ordenación de la mujer,
2. que no existe un mandato bíblico para prohibir la ordenación de las mujeres,
3. que, si bien existe un principio bíblico de liderazgo masculino, la iglesia debe seguir adelante con la ordenación de mujeres al ministerio del evangelio cuando sea apropiado.

En una votación del comité TOSC, 62 miembros votaron por la posición 2 o 3, mientras que 32 votaron por la primera posición. Por lo tanto, aproximadamente 2/3 no vieron un obstáculo bíblico para ordenar mujeres.<sup>3</sup>

**¿Los delegados de**

**la CG en una sesión oficial han votado otras pólizas que no funcionaron bien en ciertos momentos y lugares y que no están siendo seguidas por la mayoría hoy?** Sí. Un ejemplo son los límites de mandato, que se votaron durante la Sesión de la CG de 1931 en Omaha, Nebraska. Según la *Revista Adventista*, esta póliza nunca fue rescindida, sino que “murió por negligencia.”<sup>4</sup>

## ¿QUÉ SIGNIFICA ESTE VOTO Y POR QUÉ ES IMPORTANTE?

**Algunos miembros pueden preguntar: ¿Quién realmente quería que este tema se llevara a la Sesión del Congreso de MAUC?** Por favor, sepan que ninguna mujer dedicada al ministerio en nuestro territorio solicitó que discutamos la ordenación. La solicitud no provino de la División Norteamericana, la administración de la Unión o los presidentes de las Conferencias. Vino principalmente de dos lugares: los pastores varones que han sido testigos del llamado de sus contrapartes femeninas, y los miembros laicos que han hablado, queriendo un cambio. En el Congreso de la Conferencia de los Estados Centrales, en abril del 2021, los delegados votaron en sesión por un margen del 83 por ciento para pedirle a la Unión que considerara ordenar a las mujeres al ministerio. Además, los comités ejecutivos de


las conferencias de Kansas-Nebraska y Dakota votaron solicitar que la ordenación de las mujeres se incluya en la agenda de la Sesión del Congreso de MAUC 2021.

El Comité Ejecutivo de MAUC votó colocar este punto en la agenda para determinar el apoyo de los constituyentes a la igualdad de credenciales de pastores masculinos y femeninos como un reconocimiento del llamado de Dios en sus vidas, un deseo de eliminar la discriminación y avanzar en la misión en nuestro territorio.

**¿Es necesario que todas las conferencias de nuestra Unión ordenen a las mujeres ahora?** No. Los comités ejecutivos de la conferencia local eligen los nombres para llevar al comité ejecutivo de MAUC y si el individuo está siendo recomendado para la ordenación. Las Uniones votan si aprueban las ordenaciones, pero las conferencias, como empleador, otorgan las credenciales. Siempre dependerá de la conferencia local cómo les gustaría que sus pastoras fueran acreditadas.

**Pero al hacer esto, ¿no estamos ignorando el voto de la iglesia mundial?** Nuestros delegados no tienen la autoridad para cambiar ese voto. Tienen la autoridad para votar una variación para nuestro territorio en una reunión del Congreso en sesión regular, que es lo que sucedió el 12 de septiembre del 2021.

**¿Qué pasará con las acreditaciones de las mujeres al ministerio que ya han sido comisionadas?** El voto tomado en la Sesión MAUC fue que las conferencias tienen la autoridad para decidir qué credencial emitir a sus pastoras. Las pastoras deben haber pasado por el rigor del proceso de ordenación establecido.

**¿Conducirá esta variación a otros desacuerdos con las pólizas de la iglesia mundial?** No es probable, ya que se necesitaría otra sesión del Congreso debidamente convocada para votar una variación. Hasta la fecha, las otras dos Uniones en la División de América del Norte (Columbia Union y Pacific Union) que han ordenado mujeres durante casi una década, no han variado la póliza de la CG en otras áreas, y no creo que MAUC sea diferente. 



## Fuentes

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2. [www.adventistreview.org/2107-36](http://www.adventistreview.org/2107-36)
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4. <http://archives.adventistreview.org/article/3838/archives/issue-2010-1534/terms-limits>

# PRAISE GOD!

## He saved my life!

*“Every time I tell my testimony I feel grateful to be alive,” says Taariq Patel.*

## Taariq

was born to a Muslim father and a non-practicing Adventist mother. For many years Taariq and his brothers studied the Quran and went to mosques. However, after his mother was reintroduced to Adventism, Taariq began to see a different picture of God.

“My mother started to introduce God to [my siblings and me], but for the most part, we were

still Muslim,” Taariq said.

Taariq’s Muslim father was unhappy that Taariq’s mother was teaching their children Christian beliefs. After speaking with some friends at the local mosque, Taariq’s father decided he wanted to move the family to Saudi Arabia. Taariq’s mother agreed after praying over the matter.

Before the family left, they attended a going away party at the local Adventist church. There, the congregation gave the family a gift.

“The church presented us with this big Bible,” Taariq recalled. “And on the Bible’s cover was Jesus.”

Taariq’s mother packed the gifted Bible and many Christian books in the family’s bags. As she prepared for the move, she felt impressed to wear a hijab, something she had never done before.

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## *Undercover* AGENT

When the plane landed in Saudi Arabia, Taariq, his siblings and parents waited for their suitcases in the blazing sun. When their first bag came off the plane, an armed guard opened it.

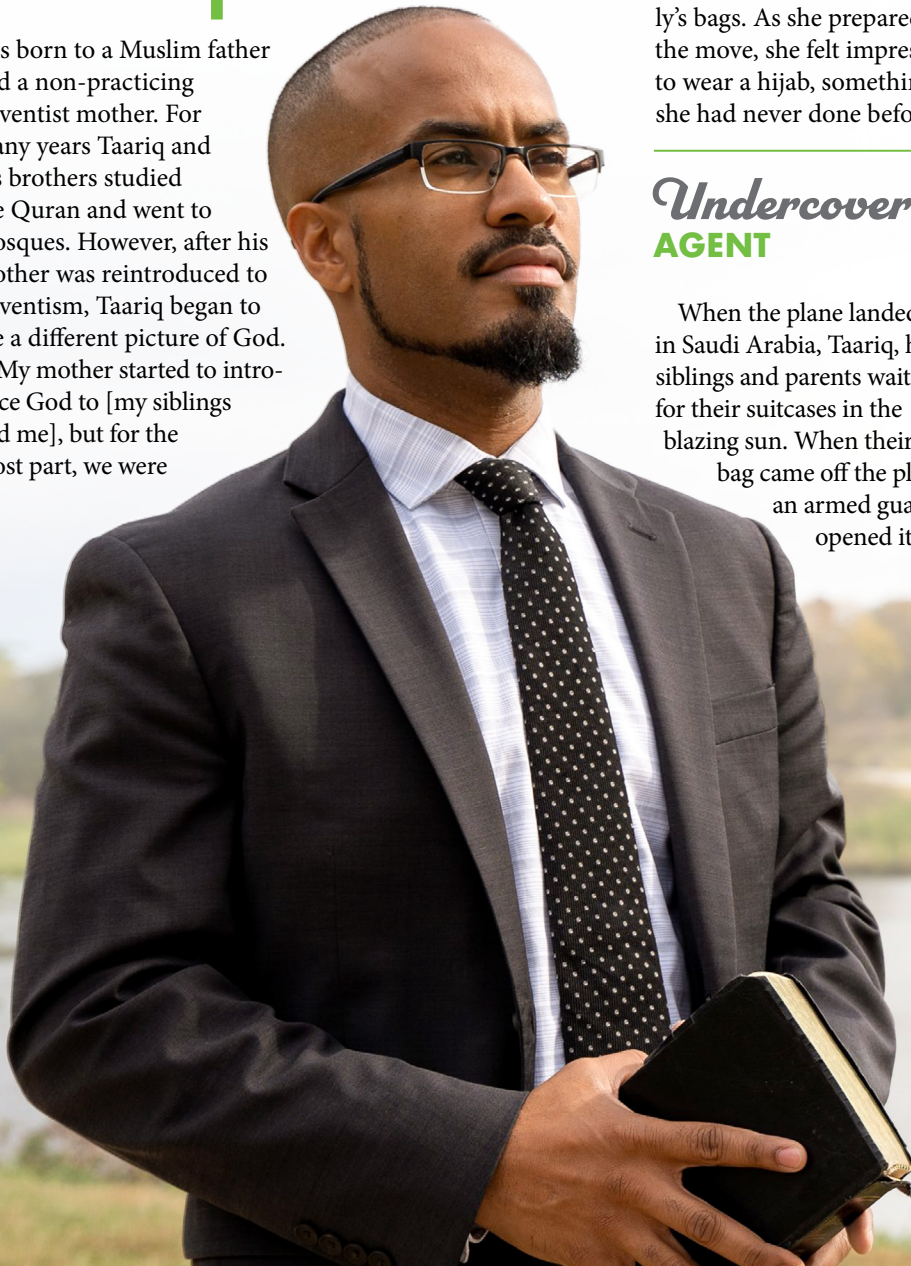
Inside he discovered the gifted Bible. At that time, bringing Christian literature into Saudi Arabia was an offense punishable by death.

However, when the guard looked at the family, he was confused. The family resembled a typical Muslim family. After a few minutes the guard laughed and released the luggage to the family.

“It began to make sense why my mom felt impressed to put on the hijab. The guard thought that we were a complete Muslim family,” Taariq explained.

The family soon settled into their new routine. When Taariq’s father would go to work, Taariq’s mother brought out the Bible and Christian books. Daily Taariq or one of his siblings would watch from the window to signal when Taariq’s father was returning. One day, however, they did not see him.

“My father came in and he tried to beat my mom up [because of the Christian literature],” Taariq recalled. “My siblings and I were screaming, holding his arms and legs — we were trying to tell him not to hurt our mom.”





## Family DIVISION

Taariq's father then formed a plan to separate his sons from their mother and her Christian beliefs.

"We went to the market, got some suitcases and we were going to India," Taariq said. "The plan was for us to go to Islamic boarding school so that we [could] learn Islam there, and my mom had no clue where we were the whole time."

While in India, 9-year-old Taariq and his brothers experienced many hardships including lack of hygiene, molestation and malnourishment. Meanwhile, in Saudi Arabia Taariq's mother was facing her own hardships.

"My mom was being tested in Saudi Arabia," Taariq explained. "The equivalent to pastors in Islam were knocking on my mother's door and telling her, 'Convert to Islam and then you get to have your sons back.'"

Taariq's mother refused to change her religion and instead prayed for the soon

and safe return of her sons.

"My mom was praying for an army to deliver us from India," Taariq explained.

A few months after they arrived in India, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. This caused instability in Saudi Arabia which resulted in Taariq's father removing Taariq and his brothers from India.

Shortly after Taariq and his brothers returned to Saudi Arabia, Taariq's parents divorced. Taariq's father stayed in Saudi Arabia and Taariq's mother and the children all moved back to the United States.

## Substance ABUSE

Initially Taariq was "on fire" for God. Over time, however, he was less engaged and became involved in drugs. This continued through high school and into his career in the military, which he joined shortly after high school. In the military Taariq began taking harder drugs and became an alcoholic.

"When I was in the military, my behavior was good," Taariq added. "But my life was just spiraling out of control. I was able to process out of the military early."

Taariq continued his usage of drugs and alcohol after the military. His twin, Adam, who also struggled with drugs and alcohol, moved in with Taariq. The two termed Taariq's apartment "The Dungeon" because of its dark atmosphere.

Adam had two daughters at the time, and they would come over to the apartment. "It was a bad environment for those kids," Taariq admitted.

Concerned for her granddaughters' spiritual health, Taariq's mother insisted Taariq drive his nieces to her house every Friday night so she could take them to church on Sabbath. Incidentally, every Friday night a group met for Bible studies at Taariq's mother's house. Taariq thought the attendees were crazy but began listening to the devotionals and testimonies. So did Adam.

## Shifting PERSPECTIVES

One Friday night, after the Bible study, Adam decided to stop using drugs cold turkey. Taariq woke up night after night hearing Adam in the living room praying to God through his withdrawals and quoting Scripture. Taariq questioned where Adam was getting that kind of strength.

While Adam was going through withdrawals, Taariq faced other struggles. He had not been to work in months, but was receiving workers compensation. However, his workers compensation had recently ended and Taariq was behind on his rent. He also feared he would soon be fired from his job.

Taariq decided to make a deal with God: If God could help him keep his job and pay for his apartment, he would make some life changes.

"I just said, 'Lord, help me,'" Taariq recounted with deep emotion. "I promised God that I'd go to rehab. I promised that I would read my Bible and pray to Him every single day."

When Taariq arrived at work the next day he was not fired. Taariq confided to the HR director about his drug

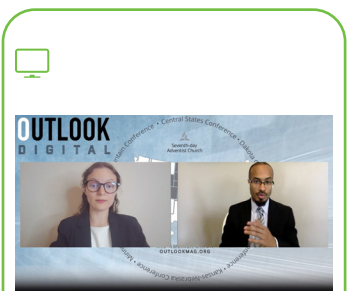
addiction and the director commended his honesty and said the company would pay 80% of the rehab costs.

A couple months later Taariq was in the Adventist hospital in St. Helena receiving rehab. There he honored his deal with God and prayed and read his Bible daily. Taariq became a leader in rehab, encouraging fellow patients with scripture and counseling them with prayer.

After successfully completing rehab, Taariq began studying the Bible with a childhood friend, Igday. After months of Bible studies and spending time together, the two were married. Taariq earned his theology degree from Pacific Union College then completed seminary at Andrews University. Today Taariq lives in the Des Moines area with his wife and three children. He pastors the Des Moines Church and the Jordan Crossing Company.

"God changed my life. He saved my life. Praise the Lord!" Taariq exclaimed. **O**

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



Watch the video interview with Pastor Taariq at [outlookmag.org/taariqpatel](https://outlookmag.org/taariqpatel).

## Craig Carr to Serve as MAUC Ministerial Director

**E**lder Craig Carr has accepted the invitation of the Mid-America Union Conference Executive Committee to serve as director of the union's Ministerial Department. He begins his new role Jan. 1, 2022.

Carr, who holds a Master of Divinity degree from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan; and a Doctor of Ministry from Denver Seminary in Littleton, Colorado, has served the Washington Conference since 2017 as vice president for administration.

Carr was ordained to the gospel ministry in 2003 while pastoring in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.

"We are so blessed to have Craig Carr moving to Mid-America!" said MAUC president **Gary Thurber**.

"This is much like coming home for him and his wife, **Carisa**. They are both graduates of Union College, and are thankful for the excellent education they received.

Craig served in the Rocky Mountain Conference for over 10 years as lead pastor of the Boulder Church, and then Ministerial and Church

Ministries director for the conference. He comes with a wealth of experience in leadership, but most of all he loves ministry and he's giving his life to it."

Carr said he is looking forward to doing everything he can to support the six conference Ministerial directors as they grow their ministry with their pastors. "I have a deep love for pastors. And I hope to support them by being a prayer partner to their directors, a sounding board and a chief encourager in the good times and challenges that ministry brings," he stated.

emphasizing the lyrics of the love and grace of Jesus," Carr said. His favorite scripture verse is Gal. 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Carr believes some of the best things about being an Adventist are being messengers of God's grace to a world in need of the healing and wholeness that can only be found in Jesus Christ; the gift of salvation; Sabbath rest; and the hope of Christ's soon return.

What gives Carr hope for the future of Adventism? He says it is "every young person who says 'Yes' to Jesus and lives out the gospel in authentic and practical ways by serving in their community and touching the lives of others out of love for God and nothing more."

Craig and Carisa (Retzer) have been happily married for 25 years. "Carisa is my partner in life and ministry, a master teacher, super mom and friend to many," added Craig. They have two children: **Cassie** (preschool teacher married to **Blake Unsell**) and **Christian** (crew chief in the U.S. Air Force). **0**

### Experienced, passionate, hopeful

In addition to preaching frequently, chairing many committees and providing support to numerous departments, Carr has experience with a wide range of activities, including facilitating *Restore the Joy of My Vocation* seminars on emotional and spiritual maturity. Carr credits his mentors, including his dad Curtis Carr (deceased), father-in-law **Gordon Retzer** and friend **Joe Kidder**, for developing his passion for ministry.

"My earliest memories of knowing Jesus bring to mind our family singing hymns around the piano and my dad



Hugh Davis

As graduates of Union College, Craig Carr and his wife and partner in ministry Carisa Carr are happy to be returning to Mid-America.



## Tyrone Douglas to Serve as Church Ministries Director for MAUC

**P**astor Tyrone D. Douglas has accepted the invitation of the Mid-America Union Conference Executive Committee to serve as Church Ministries director for their nine-state territory. He begins his new role Jan. 1, 2022.

Elder Douglas comes to Mid-America from the Southwest Region Conference headquartered in Dallas, Texas, where he has been serving as director of Children's Ministries/Sabbath School and associate pastor of City Temple Church.

In addition, he previously served the conference as director of Youth and Young Adult Ministries and as treasurer of the Black Adventist Youth Directors Association.

"We once again are blessed to have someone join our MAUC family with such a wide array of church ministries experience," said MAUC president **Gary Thurber**. "While Pastor Douglas has spent much of his ministry with our youth, from children through young adults, he also brings experience with community services and disaster relief. He will be a wonderful blessing to our field."

### Education, accomplishments, spiritual focus

Douglas was born on the island of Barbados in the West Indies. There he was first exposed to the influences of Adventism, as his young,

impressible mind was introduced to the gospel as presented in Revelation 14.

After graduating from Shiloh Seventh-day Adventist Academy in Chicago, Illinois, Douglas enrolled at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama. There he had the distinction of being the recipient of the Mosely-Warren Homiletics and Preaching Award. He also spent a year as a student missionary in the Marshall Islands, where he taught high school religion and physical education at Ebeye Seventh-day Adventist Academy.

Following his graduation from Oakwood University with a religion major and communication minor, Douglas served for five years as a bi-vocational pastor before continuing his educational pursuits at Andrews University Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan, where he graduated with a Master of Divinity degree. For the next 20 years he pastored various churches in Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas before being called to conference departmental leadership.

Pastor Douglas has had the privilege to minister in a number of other capacities, including as the founder and speaker of The Word Only radio broadcast. He has preached and conducted seminars and weeks of prayer across the United States, in the Caribbean, Bermuda and the Philippines. In

Courtesy Tyrone Douglas



Pastor Tyrone Douglas, pictured with his wife Venus Decano-Douglas, comes to Mid-America from the Southwest Region Conference and brings many years of experience in various ministry roles.

addition, he has coordinated Pathfinder and Adventurer events, youth retreats, youth summits and summer camps.

Douglas stated that one of his goals as MAUC Church Ministries director is to utilize his gifts and talents in ministry through faithful service to God by nurturing, mentoring and facilitating the development of Spirit-filled leaders. He added that he plans to integrate his "strong belief in the priesthood of all believers in organizing and mobilizing for ministry." He believes that victory is realized through prayer and time

spent in communion with God through His Holy Word. His favorite text is Psalm 16:8: "I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."

He is married to the lovely **Venus Decano-Douglas** of the Philippines and is the proud father of **Arielle Jolie Douglas**, a graduate of Andrews University. **O**

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

# Mid-America Union Hosts In-person and Virtual Meetings to Wrap up 2021

After almost two years of working around the challenges of COVID-19, the Mid-America Union Conference invited a limited number of individuals to participate in-person during annual Year-End Meetings, hosted at the union's headquarters in Lincoln, Nebraska. The week of Nov. 15-18 saw a level of activity akin to pre-pandemic times, as Adventist educators, youth directors, ministerial directors, Hispanic ministry coordinators, treasurers and communication professionals met in separate groups to celebrate accomplishments and lay plans for the future. Attendees followed local health guidelines throughout the week, including wearing masks and using hand sanitizer frequently.

Human Resources personnel and executive secretaries hosted virtual or hybrid

gatherings. The MAUC Board of Education and the MAUC Executive Committee also met virtually, since there is not room to socially distance large groups in the union's office building.

The ministerial directors met on Union College's campus with theology students to become acquainted and discuss potential job opportunities, while the educational superintendents and principals met with education majors at Union for the same purpose.

"The highlight was the Union College Pizza Feed on Tuesday evening where we enjoyed good food and shared the mission and value of working in Adventist education with our pre-service teachers," said **LouAnn Howard**, education director for the MAUC.

The conference youth directors met with incoming MAUC Church Ministries director **Tyrone Douglas** and together the group decided that the Mid-America Pathfinder Camporee that had previously been

scheduled for August of 2022 will not be held, due to lack of time for the new team to plan and prepare for it.

As usual, the MAUC Presidents Council convened the day before the Executive Committee, meeting to discuss ideas and proposals. "It's good to be able to meet in person again," said MAUC president **Gary Thurber**. "Our team is committed to working closely with all other church entities in preparation for the General Conference Session to be held in St. Louis and the International Pathfinder Camporee scheduled for 2024 in Gillette, Wyoming."

Thirty-three individuals attended the virtual MAUC Executive Committee meeting on Nov. 18 to receive reports, vote on the minutes of previous meetings and approve scholarship and internship applications as presented by **Hubert J. Morel, Jr.**, vice president for administration of the Mid-America Union. The group also received the

Compensation Review Committee's recommendation and voted the appropriate credentials for all union employees, along with parsonage exclusions for the six ordained ministers employed as administrators for the union for 2022.

MAUC vice president for finance **David VandeVere** presented a review of the union's finances (his first since taking office on October 1), and an update on the 2022 budgeting process. "There's a learning curve for me," said VandeVere, who is accustomed to working with a significantly larger budget. "It's a different kind of budget," he added, in comparing a conference's budget to a union's budget.

During his report on the progress of Hispanic Ministries in Mid-America, **Roberto Correa** stated that membership was at 8,234 to date, with the newest Hispanic group meeting in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The Hispanic coordinators are planning for over 200 local sites to host evangelistic meetings in 2022. In addition, a youth congress is being planned for 2023. Correa pointed out that since many Hispanic young people are not currently attending Adventist schools there is a special need for hosting the youth congress. **O**

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

Eduardo Jacobo



(top) Hispanic Ministry leaders gather to lay plans for 2022.

(bottom) Savannah Carlson (right), HR director and assistant communication director for the Minnesota Conference receives the Excellence in Communication Ministry Award during the MAUC Communication Advisory last November for her outstanding work in creating and sharing digital content during the pandemic.



Hugh Davis



# Enrollment Climbs in Iowa-Missouri Conference Schools



The 2020-2021 school year was a challenge for our schools. Coming out of a quarter of the previous school year totally online, there were great concerns about student academic progress and the enrollment for the new school year. However, our teachers did a great job handling the online teaching and the students did a great job learning remotely.

Several stories are related to the enrollment growth in the Iowa-Missouri Conference which came from community families placing their children in an Adventist school rather than public school.

The Maranatha Adventist School in Moberly, Missouri, had five students, with four having little to no connection with the church. The students didn't know the Bible and the various characters it presented. The teacher at our school began each day with Bible stories to start the process of teaching the students about the wonderful characters of the Bible including the story of Christ and salvation. The students were impacted by the stories and were thankful for Jesus. By the end of the year, they knew the main characters

of the Bible and that we are saved through the sacrifice of Jesus. Their prayer requests became more focused and they were excited to share about answers to prayers.

College Park Christian Academy in Columbia, Missouri, had a growth spurt in the middle of the school year with several community families sending their children to the school. The families appreciated the caring teachers and the school's spiritual focus. As these students participated in worship, Bible class, Bible studies and chapels, some felt the tug on their hearts to follow Jesus. Several students and their families were baptized because of their experience at College Park Christian Academy. Although these baptisms were not into the Adventist Church, their

commitment to publicly proclaiming their wish to follow Jesus was most important.

Another story coming from College Park Christian Academy was experienced by the first and second grade teacher. Near the end of the school year, a second grade student wanted to talk to the teacher. This student shared that before she attended College Park she was not a Christian. She then said that after being in College Park she would like to become a Christian. What a terrific testimony!

As the 2021-2022 school year was about to begin, the coronavirus was surging. The question on everyone's mind was how this would impact enrollment. As schools shared their enrollment numbers with the Iowa-Missouri Conference Office of Education, numbers were not down, but up. In fact, the opening enrollment was the highest in 20 years. God continues to take care of our schools in this pandemic.

What accounted for this growth? There seems to be a couple of factors. Several schools continue to serve refugee families who may or may not be Adventists. Fifty-two

students in five schools are assisted by the conference's Refugee Immigrant Family Education Assistance Fund. This fund provides a \$1,500 scholarship for each student to assist families who want an Adventist Christian education for their children.

Community families are continuing the trend from last school year and sending their children to an Adventist school. There are many reasons—dissatisfaction with their local public school, caring teachers, Christian teachings and principles, the small class sizes and the ability to keep students isolated from other classes, and a safe environment. Not only are families sending their children to an Adventist school, but they also promote the school to their extended family, friends and wider circle of influence.

God has kept watch over our schools these past two years of the pandemic. Although there are still challenges, the blessings we have received outweigh them all. **O**

Joe Allison is education superintendent for the Iowa-Missouri Conference.

Photos Courtesy Iowa-Missouri Conference



# Two Pastors Ordained in Conference-Wide Ceremony

Members and leaders of the Central States Conference of Seventh-day Adventists gathered at the G. Alexander Bryant Youth Center in Kansas City on Sabbath, Oct. 23, 2021, for the ordination ceremony of **Pastor Kimberly Bulgin** and **Pastor Brian Irby**.

Central States Conference administrators and a number of CSC pastors and their spouses participated in the ceremony, along with officers from the Mid-America Union Conference. The entire service, which was live streamed to every church in the Central States Conference that wished to participate, was filled with music, prayer, Scripture reading, smiles, tears and warm wishes.

The featured speaker was **Dr. William T. Cox, Sr.**, executive director of the Regional Conference retirement plan. “You never know what God has in store for you,” said Elder Cox. “You think you know, but you don’t. We are soldiers in God’s army and He is the one

who gives the directions.”

After the sermon **Elder Cryston** and **Sister Karen Josiah** presented the candidates, and the prayer of ordination was offered by **Elder Eddie** and **Sister Donna Polite**. **Elder Roger** and **Sister Ivona Bernard** presented the credentials and gifts. A number of other musical selections and prayers were shared, including a prayer in Spanish by **Elder Pedro Vargas**.

## The ordination process

The process for pastoral ordination includes participation in a structured conference program that better prepares a candidate for ministry. The conference’s administration brings names to their Executive Committee, who votes on them and sends them to the union Executive Committee. When that committee approves the recommendations, the local conference—as the employer—issues the appropriate credential.

On April 18, 2021, delegates to the Central States Constituency Session voted 83 percent in favor of asking the Mid-America Union Executive Committee to approve ordination of their female pastors.

As voted by 82 percent of delegates to the Mid-America Union Constituency Session on Sept. 12, 2021, the MAUC Executive Committee is now considering ordination recommendations brought by its conferences without regard to gender. Pastor Bulgin’s credentials will only be recognized in conferences that currently ordain both female and male pastors.

In reference to Pastor Bulgin being the first female pastor to be ordained in the Central States Conference, Elder Roger Bernard, president of the conference, said, “We are not asking any other conference to do as we have chosen to do. We are not asking anyone to go against their conscience. Bernard noted that not everyone in the

conference approves, and that it’s okay to disagree.

“Central States has said that we need our women to work alongside our men in all phases of ministry because it is our desire to finish the work,” Bernard added. “With people dying from diseases and disasters and many walking off their jobs and picketing, I don’t know about you, but all I see is the end. And God is calling everyone to get on board and sound the battle cry and move forward in His name.”

## “We need all hands on deck”

“I’ve always believed that God is the One who makes the decision on who is filled with the Holy Spirit,” said Elder Cryston Josiah, vice president of administration for the Central States Conference. “Joel chapter 2 is our marching order for the last days. We need all the hands we have on deck to spread the everlasting gospel of the Three Angels Message. And



Hugh Davis



because our church is made up of approximately two-thirds women, we would do well to utilize them in ministry.”

Josiah pointed out that in the *Review and Herald*, Jan. 2, 1879, Ellen White says that “the refining, softening influence of women is needed in the great work of preaching the truth.” Josiah sees that

statement as confirmation that in these last days we need *all* our saved and sanctified men-servants and maidservants to finish the work.”

**Elder Tonya Brown Anderson**, vice president of finance for the Central States Conference, said, “I think that because it’s been a male-dominated world for so long you

just do what’s been the norm when you don’t want to think about things. Sometimes it’s hard to do what God has called us to do. But Pastor Bulgin has been called to be a pastor and that doesn’t diminish her role because she is female.”

One person who participated in the ordination ceremony commented, “Today is a sacred,

transcendent moment carved out in eternity.” Another attendee said, “It’s a historic day. I’m just praying that we will all keep listening to the Holy Spirit.”

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



## Brian Irby

**Pastor Brian James Irby** was born in Springfield, Illinois, to **Alan** and **Paula Irby**. He has one older brother, **Mark Irby**, who played an integral role in him accepting Jesus as his personal Savior.

Pastor Irby fell in love with Jesus when he was 17 years old and soon after answered the call to ministry, enrolling as a theology major at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama. There he fell in love with the former **Carolynn Bishop** and they were married in August of 2010. Irby later graduated from Andrews University Theological Seminary with a master’s degree in divinity. He has traveled to six different countries around the world preaching the gospel.

He began his pastoral ministry as an assistant pastor at Harbor of Hope Church in Benton Harbor, Michigan. In 2018 he had the privilege of accepting a call to pastor in the Central States Conference, and loves pastoring the Philadelphia Church and the New Life Christian Ministries Company, both in Iowa. He is also pleased to serve Central States as the Prayer Ministries coordinator.

The Irbys have two beloved children: **Caleb** (5) and **Christynn** (2).



## Kimberly Bulgin

Born and raised in Toronto, Canada, **Pastor Kimberly Bulgin** is a graduate of Andrews University with a bachelor’s in music education, and a graduate from Trinity Lutheran Seminary with a master’s in music and theology.

For over 15 years, Pastor Bulgin has been blessed to travel extensively throughout North America, Africa, the Caribbean and Europe spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching and singing.

In 2013 Bulgin released her highly anticipated debut full-length album *God Chose Me* with much success. In 2016 she released her first devotional book titled *Wild Worship: Setting People Free to Worship God*.

Bulgin is currently the senior pastor of New Beginnings Adventist Church in Wichita, Kansas. As a pastor, evangelist, music educator, songwriter, pianist, workshop clinician and life coach, it is her desire to see hearts set free to wholeheartedly love God with everything within them.

# Dakota Adventist Academy Students Experience Poets and Prophets

Zak Adams



The 1989 film *The Dead Poet's Society* tells the story of an all-boy's boarding school in New England whose literature teacher, Mr. Keating (played by the late Robin Williams) challenges his students to engage with their classwork on a deeper level. It was a culture and time where studying the mechanics of meter and rhyme were more important than wrestling with one's emotional response to the verse.

In the film Mr. Keating recalls to a small group of students his own experience as a young man at the same school. A group of young men would gather together in a cave, and drink deeply from the richness of experience

and thought found in their literature textbooks.

One of the current students remarks, "So you sat around in a cave reading poems?" To which Mr. Keating replies, "We didn't just 'read poems'. We let them drip off our tongues like honey."

If such inspiration can be gained from Thoreau, Walden and Emerson, what sort of inspiration could be gained from reading the Bible in such a way? If poets can inspire us, why not prophets?

There is a place for deeper, comparative, analytical study. Certainly, when forming doctrines or studying theology we should be as scholastically responsible as possible. But there is also a

place for letting the Spirit of God simply speak to us through His Word.

I found myself in a similar situation when I attended Seminary as a young adult. Theology, hermeneutics, exegesis ... these things were—and are—important. But I came to the realization that I was so invested in analyzing Scripture that I had forgotten how to let it speak to my heart. So, in no small way inspired by the aforementioned film, a small group of three friends set out late one night into the woods armed with flashlights and Bibles. We didn't just read verses. We let them drip off our tongues like honey.

It revived our souls.

## Powerful, beautiful, faithful

Fall Week of Worship just ended at Dakota Adventist Academy. One of those same three friends from Seminary, **Pastor Jonathan Burnett** (above) of the North Shore Adventist Church

in Chicago, joined us and shared from Scripture and from his heart about some broken people who found that God is more beautiful and faithful to us than we deserve or can imagine.

It was powerful. But Pastor Jon and I would both testify that the most powerful thing that happened during the week was not his preaching. It was when a group of a dozen students met with us after worship Friday evening to read the Bible together.

We were reminded that God's word is powerful. We were reminded that the God *behind* the words is more beautiful and faithful than we imagine. We were reminded that even though the glow of our spiritual high will fade, and we will once again find ourselves in the valley, He will finish the work He began in us. He is good!

I personally was reminded of what it looks like to grab hold of the promises of God with the faith of a child—to actually believe what He says. To allow it not only into my



Halie Garrett



## Regional Meetings Provide Worship and Warm Fellowship

Regional meetings are a scheduled time of spiritual rejuvenation and act as mini mid-year camp meetings in the corners of the conference. This year, Spring Regionals were held in Dickinson and Fargo, North Dakota. With fall came the Aberdeen and Sioux Falls, South Dakota, meetings.

Sabbath school and church services are a combined effort from conference workers and Dakota Adventist Academy music students. After lunch, breakout sessions focusing on church life and ministries are presented by various conference personnel. The day ends with a light supper and a question and answer time with president Mark Weir.

Occasions such as these provide members a positive and inspirational time to get together and reconnect with friends.

mind, but into my heart. I was reminded that there is a deeper experience of joy and worship that comes as a response to what God has done in my heart. I was reminded that God's word, and God himself, are just better. Better than I—even as a believer—often give Him credit for.

Have you lost your first love? Can you recall a time when you read Scripture and let it drip off your tongue like honey? Have you recently connected with the heart of God, or have you relegated Him to the lower levels of religion?

No matter how you answer these questions, I suggest you find a few friends, choose a night, and bring your flashlights and Bibles.

Pastor Rob Carlson is Dakota Adventist Academy's chaplain and upper grades Bible teacher.



(top left) Dakota Adventist Academy provides music in Aberdeen.

(above) Elder Mark Weir assists Paulette Bullinger with the children's story in Sioux Falls.

(left) Members gather for worship at the Dickinson Regional.

## Dakota Conference 27th Annual Men's Retreat

*Growing in Christ*

Speakers:  
Jony Hajaj  
Ed Dickerson  
Mark Weir

**MARCH 11-13, 2022**

For more information  
& to register use the  
QR code:



**Rough Rider Hotel  
301 3rd Avenue  
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To access Protestant University materials, go to [imsda.org/protestant-university](https://imsda.org/protestant-university)

Study guides are formatted similarly to workbooks.

Christina Coston

# Conference Launches Video Series About Protestantism

After years of research and production, the Iowa-Missouri Conference recently launched its online resource, Protestant University, on its website. Five videos with accompanying study guides, facilitator guide and terminology list were available upon launch.

Protestant University script writer and team member **Rob Alfalah** said the first video series, which focuses on the Five Solas, was created with the hope that Adventists would better understand Protestant values so they could live and share these values more easily.

“I summarize [Protestant University] as educating on the principles of Protestantism within a Seventh-day Adventist context,” Alfalah said. “The curriculum is tailored for Seventh-day Adventists.”

Fellow Protestant University team member **Kent**

**Dunwoody** said one of the most important aspects of the series is examining how Protestant values apply to Seventh-day Adventists today.

“Our purpose is to educate people on what it means to be a Protestant ... and also how that applies to us today,” Dunwoody said.

The series was created for group settings like Sabbath schools or LifeGroups, according to Dunwoody. Each of the five videos include times for discussion. Protestant University offers accompanying study guides and a facilitator’s guide for the videos to help facilitate conversations.

“We are hoping that Protestant University encourages discussion—that’s the big thing,” Dunwoody said.

Protestant University was formed after several pastors in the conference began researching and discussing Protestantism in 2017, the

500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation.

“That process enriched us and educated us on some of the historical aspects of Protestantism and we wanted to share what we learned,” Dunwoody said.

The group decided to record a video series to share their findings. Conference members helped fund the purchase of video equipment (now located at Sunnysdale Adventist Academy) necessary for the production.

“It’s the donations from our members themselves that helped fund this project,” Dunwoody said.

The team produced three videos then presented these videos to three focus groups: pastors, SAA students and churches in the Kansas City and St. Louis areas, according to Alfalah. Taking into consideration the feedback from these groups, the team created the last two videos in

the series and added a terminology list.

“I had [SAA] students coming up to me asking, ‘What does this mean?’” Dunwoody said. “I thought, ‘Well, if we have students [asking these questions], I wonder how many members might ask the very same thing.’”

Protestant University team members plan to continue creating content, which will be added to the Protestant University’s webpage, [imsda.org/protestant-university/](https://imsda.org/protestant-university/), upon completion.

“It’s been a fun project and a hard project,” Alfalah said. “I am looking forward to what other things God might want to do through this curriculum. I am excited about those possibilities.”

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



## Rob Alfalah to Serve as Executive Secretary

In November 2021, **Rob Alfalah** accepted the invitation to serve as executive secretary for the Iowa-Missouri Conference, headquartered in West Des Moines, Iowa. He is filling the position vacated by **Robert Wagley**, who accepted a call to pastor in the Gulf States Conference.

“I am grateful that Rob Alfalah has agreed to serve the conference in this capacity,” said **Dean Coridan**, president for the Iowa-Missouri Conference. “I personally have full confidence he will continue to serve this conference in the same effective manner he has demonstrated in his previous roles.”

Alfalah said he hopes to “improve on the foundation that has already been laid” by those who were previously in

this role. Additionally, he said he looks forward to using his talents in his new position by supporting others.

“My main objective is to help people fulfill their ministry potential and help them fulfill God’s vision for this conference,” Alfalah said.

### Iowa-Missouri Conference experience

Alfalah has served the Iowa-Missouri Conference for over 13 years in multiple positions including senior pastor, district supervisor, camp meeting youth division director, Adventist Ministerial Alliance in St. Louis member, Protestant University team member, conference Board of Education member, and conference Executive Committee member.

Iowa-Missouri Conference Ministerial director **Lee Roccholz** believes Alfalah’s experience has equipped him for his new position. “The role of executive secretary is very important, and I believe Pastor Alfalah’s demonstration of servant leadership and organization will serve the departments and constituents of the Iowa-Missouri Conference well,” Roccholz said.

### Education and personal life

Alfalah graduated from Central Michigan University with a Bachelor of Science in business administration with a concentration in logistics management and a minor in accounting.

While in college Alfalah converted to Adventism and was actively involved with his



Courtesy: Iowa-Missouri Conference

local church. After about 10 years in the private sector of corporate America, Alfalah received a call from the Iowa-Missouri Conference asking him to serve as a pastor. Alfalah accepted, and four years later was ordained.

In his free time Alfalah enjoys playing sports, traveling, cooking and spending time with family and friends.

## Church Partners with YFC to Feed Hungry Youth

Four years ago, Mason City Church member **Joyce Pinke** heard the local Youth for Christ organization was looking for a church to provide meals for young people during their weekly meeting.

According to YFC’s website, it is an organization that works with local churches and “like-minded partners” to reach young people with the love of Jesus. In Mason City, Iowa, young people meet at the YFC building every Thursday evening.

After attending one of the Thursday evening meetings, Pinke knew she wanted to get

involved. She recruited members from the Mason City Church to help her prepare food for the young people.

Over the years, the volunteers have developed relationships with the young people and believe their weekly meals provide more than nutrition to YFC attendees.

“The kids know this is something for them to come

Janet Cleveland, Mason City Church member and YFC volunteer, prepares food for the evening’s meal.

to every Thursday night,” said **Carrie Engel**, Mason City Church member and YFC volunteer. “They know we’ll be here. It gives them a sense of stability.”

Greater Iowa YFC ministry director **Katie Zickefoose** said she is appreciative of the service provided by the

volunteers from the Mason City Church.

“The Mason City Church volunteers serve with such humility and kindness,” Zickefoose said. “I’m beyond grateful for our partnership—I can’t imagine YFC without them.”



Christina Coston

# Young Adults Surrounded with Support after Tragic Accident

Last September the Lincoln Northside Church hosted a benefit concert to support medical costs for four young adults who were involved in a tragic vehicle accident that took place earlier in the month.

The accident happened on Friday night, Sept. 17, 2021, on Highway 2 in Lincoln, Nebraska, where the vehicle carrying **Allen Stafford, Anna Wood, Tegan Smith** and **Marcus McConaghy** was involved in a high-speed head-on collision with another vehicle that had veered into their lane. According to reports from local news agencies, the occupant of the other vehicle died on the scene. The four young adults, three of whom attend Northside, sustained significant injuries and were taken to area hospitals for surgeries and other forms of medical treatment.

There was a huge outpouring of love and support at the concert, and many wonderful items of music. The attendance on that evening looked like a full Sabbath morning, and over \$7,000 has been raised to help those who were in the accident. Another highlight of the evening was the opportunity we had to publicly thank some of the first responders. The crowd gave them a standing ovation as those representing the team came forward, and we expressed our appreciation and prayed for them.

Two of those who are recovering from the accident



Courtesy Lincoln Northside Church

During a recent benefit concert, Pastor Deneil Clark takes a moment to thank a few of the first responders who arrived on the scene of the terrible accident on Sept. 17, 2021.

were able to attend the concert for a while, and their mothers, **Andrea** and **Misty**, came up and spoke on their behalf saying how much they had been blessed by all the community support their families have received since the accident.

Andrea, thinking about that night when she heard the news from their home in Yakima, Washington, said, “For us it was stressful, but God gave us peace through the night.” Although they wanted to head to Lincoln right away, she now recognizes a blessing in their brief delay. “Because we didn’t rush out, we were able to be on the phone and hear what was going on during the surgery,

otherwise we would have been flying and not knowing.”

Misty also recalled lots of students and faculty members from Union College being present in the hospital lobby throughout their first couple days there, as well as members of the Northside Church preparing meals for the families. “It’s been a hard experience but a really good experience in a lot of ways, and it increases your faith in the Lord,” Misty shared.

Marcus, another of the young adults who is back home recovering in Colorado, joined us briefly by video chat during the concert to share his experience and gratitude. He spoke of the presence of angels on the

accident scene, and while they were waiting for first responders to arrive, he said, “What we did was we prayed, and we also sang.” Reflecting on his own state of mind in the vehicle that night, Marcus shared, “The one thing that kept me through the entire ordeal is the promise that God has a plan.”

Three of the young adults are currently students at Union College, and the other, Anna, has graduated from Union. Although the healing journey will be long, all four are expected to make a full recovery.

Deneil Clarke serves as lead pastor for the Northside and Holland churches in eastern Nebraska.



# Ryan Watson Ordained to the Gospel Ministry

**R**yan Watson was ordained to pastoral ministry last September at the Garden City Church in Kansas.

Ryan first attended a Seventh-Day Adventist church in Duluth, Minnesota, when he was seven years old. On that first day, Sabbath school lessons about the Old Testament sanctuary and stories about Ellen White captured his attention and ignited in him a personal interest in reading the Bible. His love for Jesus led to his decision to be baptized at the age of 11.

At 16, while his family was working with an evangelistic team in northern California, Ryan renewed his commitment to follow Jesus, and took a large step out of his comfort zone to participate in a

summer of literature evangelism in Modesto. It proved to be a challenging, yet spiritually significant, experience.

It was during that summer that Ryan first sensed a call to ministry. He went on to work in literature evangelism for two more summers.

It was several years after returning to Minnesota, however, before Ryan answered his call to full-time ministry. Having worked in various construction fields for more than five years, he felt that he was not where God wanted him. At 21 years of age, he enrolled at Union College to study music. Following his freshman year, he felt a definitive call to pastoral ministry. As a sophomore, he changed majors so he could study theology. That year, he

also met his wife **Emily**. Both Ryan and Emily continued to wrestle with the call to ministry as they both worked to finish college while also starting a family together, as **Eden** (now 13) and **Lewis** (9) were born along the way. After eight years, Ryan completed his undergraduate studies.

In 2013, Ryan served briefly as a pastor in the Pittsburg, Fort Scott, Galena and Hepler churches before returning to Union so Emily could complete her degree. After she graduated in 2015, Ryan and Emily accepted

the invitation to serve as the pastoral family in Garden City, Dodge City, and Liberal where they have been pleased to serve for the last six years.

“We are proud of their commitment to ministry and look forward to working with them for years to come,” said **Virgil Covel**, Ministerial director for the Kansas-Nebraska Conference.

Information compiled by Stephanie Gottfried, publications director for the Kansas-Nebraska Conference.



Sue Carlson

## Upcoming Kansas-Nebraska Events

**February 11-12 | Kansas City, KS**  
Kansas City Convocation

**March 4-5 | Wichita, KS**  
Wichita Convocation

**March 19**  
Global Youth Day

**April 1-3 | Broken Arrow Ranch**  
Men's Retreat

**April 8-10 | Nebraska City, NE**  
Revive Us Again  
Kids' Connection Prayer Conference

**April 29-May 1 | Junction City, KS**  
Hispanic Women's Retreat

**June 1-5 | Lincoln, NE**  
Camp Meeting

# Minnesota “Youth Rush” Thrives Despite Challenges

Summer literature evangelism program breaks records

It was a typical summer afternoon. Melody had been canvassing in Minnesota for four weeks. But today, as she was going from house to house, people were very unreceptive. Everyone seemed to be either uninterested or homes were empty. This began to wear on Melody. She recalls, “I was thinking, *This is not funny anymore.*”

So Melody sent up a prayer to God. “God, this isn’t about me. It’s about You.” She remembered a quote from Ellen White she read the day before: “The Savior longs to give a greater blessing than we ask, and He delays the



Courtesy Darrell Conway

answer so that He may show us the evil of our own hearts and our need of His grace. He wants us to turn away from the selfishness that leads us to

seek Him.”

She thought to herself, *Maybe I am seeking God for my own selfish wants.* Then she prayed and said, “God,

allow someone to be blessed by me going to their house. Allow me to be a blessing not because I want to reach my book goal or for me to earn money but allow it to be an experience that is truly going to bless someone and it’s not just for my own selfish wants.”

By this time, it was almost noon. Melody approached her next door and knocked. A lady came out with dripping wet hands. She said, “I am cooking dinner right now, what’s up?” Melody was tempted to just leave at that moment, but she remembered her prayer and boldly said, “Okay, I’ll be really quick.” She

## 2021 Minnesota Youth Rush Stats

Last summer 32 young people joined the program, and we had the most financially successful program to date. Here are a few stats from 2021:

**59,208**

doors knocked on

**11,799**

total books distributed

**5,338**

homes received books

**2,444**

people prayed for

**286**

total contacts (for Bible studies, cooking school, stop smoking, etc.)

God is finishing His work, and we want as many as possible to be a part of this inspiring adventure! Jesus says, “The harvest is great, but the laborers are few.” We hope to soar even higher next summer and pray many more young people will get an opportunity to experience working with Jesus by joining Minnesota Youth Rush this coming summer!

For more information contact Darrell Conway: [darrel.conway@mnsda.com](mailto:darrel.conway@mnsda.com).



## New Rangers for North Star Camp

### Scott and Tammi Baker take on roles



Courtesy Scott and Tammi Baker

gave a brief talk about each book and flipped through them quickly.

The woman said, “Okay. I will be right back with a donation!” She went inside and Melody prayed for God to impress her to give a large donation. She came back out and said, “Today is your lucky day!” And she handed Melody \$80.

The woman had taken \$80 out of the ATM and told a friend she needed to find somebody to donate that money to. Her friend suggested she go online and donate it, but she said, “No. I want somebody to come to me and get it directly from me at my house.” So, she began to pray about it. The lady told Melody when she came to her house it was an answer to her prayer!

**Gilead** also had an interesting experience. As he was canvassing one evening, he met a young man around his age. The young man was a Lutheran. Knowing this, Gilead thought that *The Great Controversy* would be a great book to show him. As Gilead placed the book in his hand and began to explain, the young man said, “Wow! I swear I have seen this book before. This is like a déjà vu moment!”

Gilead was wondering what he meant. He told Gilead he has had moments like this before. He would have dreams about personal life events before they would happen, and these events would come to pass. He explained to Gilead that he felt like this was

one of those moments. “God is telling me to get the book. As you were explaining about this book, I started getting goosebumps.”

Next Gilead asked him if he ever wondered why, if God is a God of love, there is so much sin and suffering. He said he had really been struggling with this, especially since his dad passed away last year. The young man was really touched by the whole conversation. They exchanged Snapchat to keep in touch as he reads the book. Gilead thought, *This shows me that God really loves His children, and He is using us to draw a fallen world back to Him.*

Stories like these reveal that we serve a miracle-working God. It shows us that door-to-door ministry is not outdated. “The canvassing work, properly conducted, is missionary work of the highest order, and it is as good and successful a method as can be employed for placing before the people the important truths for this time” *Colporteur Ministry*, p. 6.

The preceding experiences, and other experiences like them are a daily occurrence with Minnesota Youth Rush. Young people from all over come to Minnesota to engage in a special kind of ministry going door-to-door. They learn how to have faith, and how to trust God while having fun doing it.

Darrell Conway is the Literature Evangelism coordinator for the Minnesota Conference.

“Clogged toilets distract people,” said **Scott Baker**, “I do what I can to remove distraction so people can make their way to the cross.” This statement shares well Scott and **Tammi Baker’s** humble hearts and their calling to serve in camp ministry.

Scott and Tammi Baker started in camp ministry in 1995 when **Pastor Gary Thurber** asked Scott if he would be willing to serve as camp ranger at Camp AuSable in Michigan. Without hesitation or asking any questions Scott said, “Yes.” Pastor Thurber told Scott he needed to think about it and talk it over with Tammi first, to which Scott replied, “If you think I can do it and God’s calling me, I am in.”

Growing up, Scott worked with his father in a painting and decoration business that required a great deal of home repair work before they could get to the painting. Always determined to know how things work, Scott is always watching and learning. And even though he has done everything from tree milling to bobcat repair, Scott loves learning new things

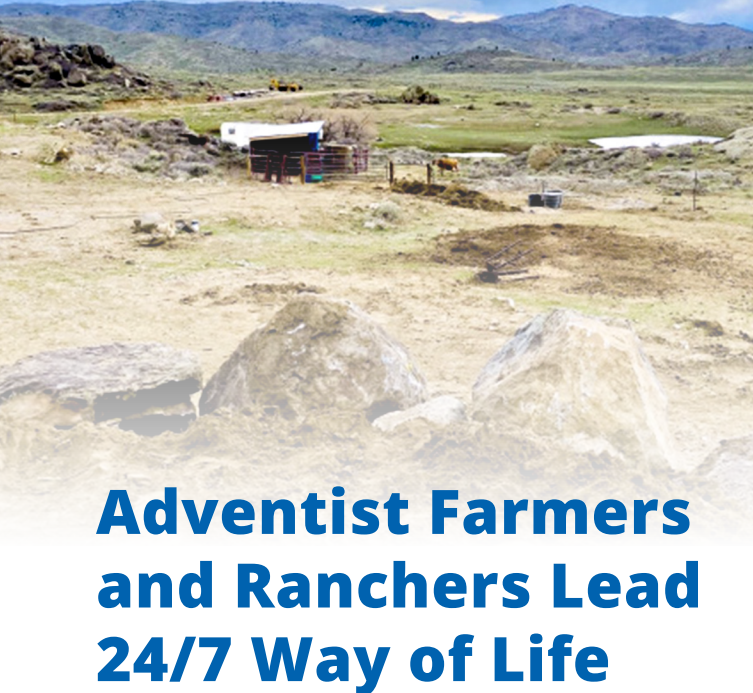
and coming up with solutions to problems.

Over the years, Scott and Tammi have served at Camp AuSable, Sunset Lake Camp in Washington, and Camp Wakonda in Wisconsin. In each location they have served as partners, with Tammi leading out in hosting, hospitality, housekeeping, reservations and invoicing, to name a few of her many duties.

Gifted in organization, attention to detail and problem solving, Scott has been a blessing to each camp he has served. But when asked, Scott says that Tammi’s gifts are really what has grown the camps where they have worked, as Tammi is so great at making everyone feel welcome and comfortable.

When not busy with camp, the Bakers enjoy camping, fat biking, kayaking and spending time with family. The Minnesota Conference team welcomes Scott and Tammi and looks forward to witnessing God at work in them.

Shelina Bonjour is Youth Ministries director for the Minnesota Conference.



## Adventist Farmers and Ranchers Lead 24/7 Way of Life

For many, a job is a five-day workweek consisting of eight hours per day before going home. However, for the farmers and ranchers of Wyoming, their job is a 24/7 way of life.

Tilling the soil and caring for the animals God created can be challenging, but for most people who work in agriculture the benefits outweigh the hardships. Despite the challenges, the Ludemans and Pedersens say they wouldn't trade it.

**Joseph and Cynthia Pedersen**, cattle ranchers and members of the Wheatland Company in Wyoming, see their livelihood as a sustainable way of life. "Americans are fast losing hold of the food supply," they say. "Just seeing the COVID lockdown shows

how important it is to have American agriculture and its resources readily available. We need to be more sustainable on a grassroots level."

However, sustainability is only one of the reasons. "Our family tries to apply a clean-eating model with simple ingredients that are locally sourced. We like to know how our beef was raised, what conditions they lived their lives in, and that they were given the best possible care along the way."

For **Lee and Kimberly Ludeman**, homesteaders and also members of the Wheatland Company, their lifestyle is about being financially independent. "We raise chickens, dairy goats, cows and horses, and also grow a garden

and preserve our harvest. We are doing pretty well in this economy. We grow and raise most of our food, and that helps with expenses."

Yet challenges are always present for both families.

For the Ludemans, it's the long Wyoming winters. "The biggest challenge we have as homesteaders in Wyoming is providing grass and hay for our animals and keeping them warm in the winter," they state. For the Pedersens, it is trying to manage a ranch while also maintaining other work. Ranching isn't their only job, which leads to very long days and nights for the whole family.

To some, making friends and relating to homesteaders and ranchers can seem like a daunting task—mainly because many people's knowledge of sustainable living is confined to walking down the aisles of a grocery store twice a week.

**Shayne Vincent**, pastor of the Casper church district, which includes Wheatland, explains that becoming friends and discussing religious topics is often a long-term effort. "Ranchers and farmers are good people—shirt-off-their-back type of folk—where life is more about character and how you treat people than what you believe."

Vincent adds that in their part of the country, traditional values play a large role.

"Hard work and treating your neighbor right are what folks aspire to. In addition, taking care of your animals and the 4-H type activities are daily parts of life." Vincent also points out that, regarding the Pedersens and the Ludemans, "Their love for the Bible and their practical wisdom makes our [church] members integral and respected members of the community."

Since religion is one of those topics reserved only for the best of friends and sometimes family, evangelism is a long-term process of winning respect. "The agriculture community is uniquely aware of the blessings and provisions of God," the Pedersens say. "If you take the time to get to know these people, you will find a group with a profound respect for the Lord and His ways. Then the Spirit can open doors to share the messages of the three angels, the hope and joy we have as earth wraps up its final scenes, and can make you friends for eternity."

For the Pedersens, the best way to do outreach is by being part of the community. As homesteaders, they are able to provide fresh eggs, goat and cow milk, and organic garden produce, along with goat milk soaps and cheese.

For both families, their way of life is something they hope to pass along to future generations. They want their children and grandchildren to appreciate the land, understand where their food comes from, and learn how to honor God with their labor and integrity.

Jon Roberts is communication/media assistant for the Rocky Mountain Conference.



Photos courtesy Wheatland Company Facebook page



# Six Members Join Waterflow Church in New Mexico

## Miracle starts with one little boy



Susan English

Six individuals of varying ages and backgrounds were baptized last October and joined the Waterflow Church, greatly adding to the congregation's small membership. And it all started with a little boy. He was learning to love Jesus more every day and wanted to walk with Him throughout his life.

The Waterflow Church, located 16 miles west of Farmington, New Mexico, began baptismal classes with a couple of teenagers in late 2019. The classes ran concurrently with prayer meetings. The teenagers' aunt heard about the study group and asked if she could join because when visiting the church earlier she liked what she saw and was interested in learning more.

**Ezzack**, an eight-year-old, also heard about the classes and decided he wanted to be baptized. He talked to his mom about it, but she wasn't sure he was old enough; and surely with his reading

disability he wasn't ready for the big kid's baptismal class.

But Ezzack is nothing if not determined, and he would not let it go. He kept asking and asking until finally his mom approached church leaders in early 2020 with the idea. By then, COVID-19 had hit, and everything was being rearranged to accommodate the new reality—including church service, prayer meeting and, most importantly, the mission school. All services were moved online.

The church decided that Ezzack and his sister **Dyanna** would have in-person school one day a week and online school on the other days. During the in-person days, they would go through the junior edition of the baptismal class.

The teenagers were also attending school and received Bible instruction through their regular Bible classes. The English teacher used Bible topics to teach them how to write research papers as well.

Doug English (back row) baptized six individuals last fall into the family of Jesus Christ and membership with the Waterflow Church near Farmington, New Mexico.

Tentative arrangements were made with director Steve Gillham from La Vida Mission to baptize the kids in the spring of 2021. However, that plan fell through when Elder Gillham became sick and eventually was laid to rest in the Lord. So then the question was, *Who would baptize these kids?*

That is where things stayed for a few more months, but Ezzack would not give up! In September, a member brought the pending baptisms up again during prayer meeting. They discussed and agreed to contact the Rocky Mountain Conference office about the situation. During conversations, the church discovered that **Doug English**, RMC vice president of administration, would be in Piñon Hills soon and could baptize them if arrangements could be made on short notice.

**Pam Goldtooth** had attended the prayer meeting and mentioned that if there was going to be a baptism, her two teens would like to be part of it. Ezzack and Dyanna's mother asked if she could be re-baptized with her kids. This brought the total to five candidates, but God wasn't finished.

Pam mentioned to her sister, **Priscilla**, who had been taking classes with the teenagers before the pandemic hit, that there would be a baptism. Priscilla confirmed that she believed everything and was included with the existing group, bringing the total number to be baptized to six.

The service was planned for Sabbath afternoon, Oct. 2, 2021, at the Piñon Hills Church. Many individuals from surrounding churches came to support and witness the six baptisms. The crowd was larger than what the Waterflow Church could have accommodated, and members were thankful for the use of the Piñon Hills Church for the special occasion.

We know God has blessed us immensely here in Waterflow. We are a tiny church without many resources, and most of our members are older, so we are especially grateful to be baptizing young people! Please keep us in your prayers as we continue to nurture and grow these new members in the faith.

Cynthia Risk is clerk for the Waterflow Church and teaches at the Waterflow mission school.

# From Warrior to Coach

Former players pass on important life lessons as coaches

*Both of Union's varsity basketball coaches played on the Warrior men's basketball team as students and believe that athletics and wellness play an important role in education and in life.*

## Brian Carlson

Warrior women's coach

"I really enjoy the challenge of finding the right combination of people to match up against those five on the other side," said **Brian Carlson**.

"I love finding the best way to get five people to work together on the court. They're more than just players; they're like family, and I love each one of them in a different way."

Two years ago, Carlson joined Union's staff as a part-time basketball coach for the women's Warriors team in addition to his day job as a digital media manager for Christian Record Services. In his own experience as a student athlete, working on a team is important to building community.

"I played basketball on the varsity team for four years as a student at Union and made some great memories and friends," Carlson explained. Becoming a Union Warrior after playing high school

basketball for three years both challenged Carlson and enriched his life. "People picked and played defense harder and didn't call as many fouls as in high school. It was a much more aggressive and physical version of the game," he said. The men's and women's teams would travel together, sometimes as long as five hours. The long times they spent together traveling and working as teams fostered friendships among the players.

Now Carlson sees that same fellowship developing with the basketball players he currently coaches. "The more I've been involved with different levels of coaching, the more I see that the individual relationships with the players are more important than when you get the X's and O's right," Carlson said. "Some of them have come from the same school, so they're reigniting friendships they had in years past. They're working together building these relationships and memories that you don't get sitting in a classroom."

As a coach, Carlson is very

Brian Carlson hopes to create the same learning experience for Union's Warrior women basketball players that he shared for four years as a Warrior player.

excited about the *Fit for the Future* campaign and the new facilities it will bring. His team has struggled with getting in Union's Thunderdome for practice, as they share the single gym with three other teams and any health classes taking place during the day. "Having more availability to use the full court or full gym would be very helpful to me as far as planning practice," he said.

In addition, Carlson said that having new and accessible facilities will be a big draw for prospective students. "If you're trying to encourage someone to come to Union College, the nicer the facilities are, the more excited they will be," Carlson stated. But gaining the interest of prospective students isn't the only reason new facilities will be beneficial.

"As a coach building a team, your players have to be physically fit to play basketball," Carlson explained. "The players need to be in shape and have lots of opportunities to lift weights and have a place to run inside in the winter." Carlson also notes that greater access to maintain fitness would benefit students' mental health. "Physical activity and mental health have a close tie together. I want the mental health of all to be taken seriously; to be respected and supported."

## Drew Mekelburg

Warrior men's coach

"Coaching is bigger than basketball or wins and losses. It's about growing young men into leaders," **Drew Mekelburg** said. The 2016 Union graduate has coached the men's Warriors basketball team since his days as a player—first as an assistant and now as head coach. "It's developed me into more of a leader. I don't just go in with a vision for the team and push us toward that vision, I allow the players to cast their own vision as well. I want them to feel it's something they can buy into because they created it."

"I grew up being on campus," Mekelburg said. His parents worked at Union from when he was in kindergarten until he was in college. "I knew I wanted to be a part of that community someday. I visited a few other schools, but never seriously. I always knew I would end up at Union." Teaching and coaching were both things he knew growing up that he wanted to do. Now he teaches P.E. at Belmont Elementary and coaches the men's Warriors team at Union.

As a coach, Mekelburg places a high value on mentoring his team and helping them grow personally. "Being there for these guys when they're struggling with things on and off the court is great," he said.



Kim Peckham/Union College



“They’ve got to rise to the occasion and overcome those struggles, and I’m not going to do it for them but I am certainly going to encourage and help them along the way.”

One student Mekelburg coached came into his role as a Warrior wishing to be a star player without wanting to play as a part of the team. It was a hard road of butting heads, but Mekelburg saw that student grow into a better athlete. “He’s a strong leader on the team now, and it’s cool to see him in that role,” Mekelburg said. “He seems happy now and loves being around the team.”

One consistent challenge Mekelburg has faced both as a student and a coach has been the overcrowding of the Thunderdome, Union’s only gym. “When I played, there were times that we were practicing from 10 p.m. to midnight because that was the only time we’d get the court to ourselves,” he said. “Right now we share the gym with three other teams, sometimes four depending on the time of year, so having actual practice time can be difficult.” Union’s *Fit for the Future* campaign

Drew Mekelburg believes playing basketball helped him learn valuable lessons about being a man. Now he passes those lessons on to the players he coaches.

plans to rectify this problem by providing another gym and more weight room space for students and athletes to work out and practice.

“As a basketball coach, I’m excited for a bigger weight room so we can go in and have some team lifts,” Mekelburg said. “That’s something we’ve never done before because we’ve never had the opportunity. The research is there; being active helps you academically, emotionally and mentally and it’s also a big deal in terms of the Adventist mission. The health message is a big part. So if we can put our money where our mouth is, that’s going to go a long way.”

Maria Kercher is a senior communication major from Lincoln, Nebraska.



Learn how Union is building programs and facilities to help students grow physically as well as mentally and spiritually at [ucollege.edu/fit](http://ucollege.edu/fit).



Scott Cushman/Union College

## Warrior Reunion (and all other alumni)

Come back to Union again April 7-10 for Union's annual homecoming weekend featuring a special reunion for the Union College Warriors! Reconnect with your teammates, play some basketball and volleyball, and relive your best Warrior memories.

We're also hosting special gatherings for:

Nursing graduates  
ASB leaders from 2001-2016 (Linda Becker era)  
Honor classes of 1952, 1962, 1967, 1972, 1982, 1992, 2002, 2012

Learn more or register at [ucollege.edu/reunion](http://ucollege.edu/reunion)



Steve Nazario/Union College



## AdventHealth South Overland Park Opens to Serve Growing Community

AdventHealth South Overland Park officially opened its doors as a full-service hospital on Oct. 7, 2021. The hospital is the fourth of AdventHealth's hospital campuses in the Mid-America Region, which include AdventHealth Shawnee Mission and AdventHealth Ottawa, both in Kansas, and AdventHealth Durand in Wisconsin.

The hospital is located in Overland Park's growing Bluhawk development at 165th and U.S. 69 Highway. About 120,000 residents live within five miles of the hospital. Approximately 11,000 housing permits were issued in the past two years. The population in the area is also expected to increase by about 25,000, with 7,000 new homes projected.

"In the early 2000s, this area was a field in Johnson County, but there was an awareness that growth

was occurring," says **Alan Verrill**, MD, chief executive officer for AdventHealth South Overland Park. "Since then, that's certainly what's happened, including new middle schools, high schools, retail, fire departments, and sports facilities. There is a definite need for medical services to serve this community close to home."

The new hospital includes surgical services, heart care, an intensive care unit, and a birth center with maternity care services. The new facilities add to the already existing emergency, imaging and laboratory services onsite that opened in 2017.

"We've already seen growth in our existing services in the ER and medical offices since 2017," says Dr. Verrill. "We now have thousands of visits per year, which has indicated the increased need for medical services in the area."

The new facility is the first

full-service hospital to open in the Kansas City metro in 15 years. **Governor Laura Kelly** was at the ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening.

"Opening a hospital is a relatively rare event. We were honored to have Governor Kelly with us to mark the occasion," says Dr. Verrill. "Our community turnout and support were remarkable as well, and we're excited to help bring healthcare services to this growing area."

AdventHealth's mission is *Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ*. With the new hospital, that means bringing healthcare that helps to heal the whole person—body, mind and spirit.

"Christ saw the people He encountered not just as physical beings but tended to them on spiritual and mental levels as well," says Dr. Verrill. "It's our mission to center on whole care.

We're hiring physicians who practice that whole-person care and making sure our hospital is designed with a healing environment."

The new facility has been designed to incorporate that healing and mindful environment. AdventHealth partnered with HKS Architects for the design and GE Johnson for the construction.

"As you enter the lobby, you'll notice natural light plays a role in the design," says Dr. Verrill. "Bringing sunlight into the environment has aesthetic benefits and can help with that feeling of wholeness as well."

The lobby also includes a "Creation Walk" to help create a sense of peace for visitors. It starts with artwork that represents Day 1 of creation and visual representations of the next six days that continue down the hallway to the chapel.

Dr. Verrill says that the goal for the AdventHealth South Overland Park campus is to offer whole healthcare that meets the needs of the area and to become an integrated part of the community.

"It's our hope to be able to share in the good times and tough times, whether that's new beginnings in the Birth Center or a need for healing," he says. "We're continuing to grow our mission that started in the KC region almost 60 years ago."

Ann Muder is a writer for AdventHealth Shawnee Mission.



## Celebrating Every Milestone on the Road to Recovery

Caregivers at Centura—Parker Adventist Hospital in Parker, Colorado, know that healthcare is more than medicine. Treating their patients means caring for the whole person—mind, body and spirit.

When **Kelly Vice**, MSN, RN, found out her patient **Don** would be celebrating his 49th wedding anniversary at Parker Adventist, she knew she had to do something to make the day special. Don had been admitted several weeks prior after needing an emergency surgery, and had spent time going back and forth between the ICU and the medical-surgical unit where Vice works as he journeyed on a long path to recovery. Vice had cared for Don nearly every shift she had worked for more than a month, and had gotten to know not only Don but also his wife, **Linda**, their daughters, **Cassie** and **Mandi**, son-in-law **Wes**, and Don's grandchildren, who were constantly at his side.

"Forty-nine years of marriage is a huge accomplishment, and I knew we couldn't let the day slip by unnoticed," Vice said. "They probably would have preferred to have celebrated somewhere besides a hospital, but it was a milestone that shouldn't be missed, especially after everything they had been through together over the past few weeks. We knew even though he couldn't be home for it, we could help make it special."

Vice and her coworkers

brought in flowers for the couple and spent time talking with them about what makes a good marriage. Don and Linda reflected on how their relationship had weathered five decades: with a lot of listening and a good sense of humor.

"We really used a lot of those same skills to get through some difficult weeks in the hospital," Don said. "I learned a long time ago how important it is to always listen to Linda! And no matter how tough things are, she can always put a smile on my face."

Vice had seen firsthand how incredibly important the presence of Don's family had been for his healing process. "From advocating for his needs to seemingly simple things like bringing in homemade food he liked and would actually eat as he was adjusting to a new diet, their love and support made a huge difference," she said.

That's how she and her fellow caregivers at Parker Adventist also try to do their jobs—taking care of their patients as if they are family, whether that means taking time to truly listen to their needs or celebrating a birthday or anniversary or just

Flowers from Don's nurses join flower from the couple's daughters, along with mini bundt cakes family and caregivers shared together in honor of the anniversary.

being there to hold a hand.

"It meant so much to us that Kelly and her team took the time to help us celebrate our anniversary, and they really were wonderful the whole time we were at Parker Adventist," Linda said. "I tried to be there with him as much as I could, but when I couldn't be there, I knew he was in great hands, and that was a huge comfort."

Cassie said the relationships the family built with the associates at Parker Adventist during her father's time there were key. "Our nurses, transport staff, the surgery team, environmental services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, wound care... the list goes on and on, but everyone we came into contact with was wonderful," she said. "Someone would come in to clean the room, and would remember all of our names and stay to check on us and ask how my dad was doing, and I could tell they really cared about our answers. Their compassion made a scary time much

more bearable."

Don is now continuing his recovery at home, with the support of his family, as well as their family dogs, who he missed a great deal during his hospital stay. And, just like family, Vice remains in contact, checking to see how Don is doing and cheering his continued progress.

Don and Linda are already planning a trip to Hawaii to celebrate their 50th anniversary next year—which may just turn into a reunion, because before leaving the hospital Don invited every one of his caregivers to come along! In the meantime, they continue to celebrate every milestone, big and small, that is achieved thanks to the high quality healthcare they received at Parker Adventist and the love and support of a family that is 49 years strong.

Amy Thompson is a writer for Centura Health.



Courtesy AdventHealth Rocky Mountain/Centura

# FAREWELL

**Carlson, Roger J.**, b. Sept. 20, 1932 in Aitkin, MN. d. Aug. 1, 2021 in Palisade, MN. Member of Aitkin Church. Preceded in death by wife Lois; siblings. Survivors include daughters Cary Pearson, Susan Gibbs and Nancy Krumholz; sons Curt and Burt; 6 grandchildren; 8 great-grandchildren.

**Carnahan, Donna Jane**, b. Nov. 29, 1938 in Lebanon, KS. d. Oct. 15, 2021 in Collegedale, TN. Preceded in death by husband Marvin; brother Derral Prowant Jr. Survivors include children William Burkett, Leland Burkett, and Randi Buhl; 2 brothers; 8 grandchildren; 2 step-grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren.

**Goebel, Ellorine**, b. Dec. 5, 1934 in Manfred, ND. d. Sept. 22, 2021 in Minnesota. Member of Bowdle (SD) Church. Preceded in death by husband Clifford; 1 brother. Survivors include daughter Roxanne Gill; sons Michael and Steven; 2 sisters; 1 brother; 6 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren.

**Havelka, Gene**, b. Sept. 17, 1935 in Owensville, MO. d. Oct. 2, 2021. Member of West County (MO) Church. Survivors include wife Shirley; daughter Stacy; son Brian. Served in the U.S. Navy.

**Horst, Percy**, b. June 21, 1923 in Streeter, ND. d. Oct. 18, 2021 in Bismarck, ND. Member of Bismarck Church. Preceded in death by 4 siblings. Survivors include wife Rose; sons Gary, Stanley, Glenn, and Virgil; 1 brother; 9 grandchildren.

**Jackson, Kathleen R.**, b. Sept. 6, 1954. d. Sept. 25, 2021. Member of Enterprise (KS) Church. Preceded in death by 6 siblings. Survivors include husband Travis; daughter Juaacklyn; son Jameel; 4 siblings; 5 grandchildren.

**Kaiser, Donald Henry**, b. Sept. 23, 1930 in Denver, CO. d. Sept. 2, 2021 in Denver, CO. Member of LifeSource (CO) Church. Preceded in death by wife LouEtta. Survivors include daughters DeeAnn Bragaw and Sandra Heffner; 6 grandchildren; 3 great-grandchildren.

**Correction: Krueger, Lillian Vietz**, b. Sept. 20, 1916 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.

**McReynolds, Joyce Ann**, b. March 17, 1951 in Wharton, MO. d. Sept. 6, 2021 in Kansas City, KS. Member of Ft. Scott (KS) Church. Preceded in death by daughters Melissa and Billy Jo; 1 sister. Survivors include husband Oren; child Curtis; 2 sisters; 1 brother; 2 grandchildren.

**Nelson, Sarah C.**, b. Dec. 30, 1919 in Sharpsburg, IA. d. Oct. 17, 2021 in Ft. Collins, CO. Member of Ft. Collins Church. Preceded in death by husband Henry. Survivors include daughter Susan; sons Burrell, Darrell, and Herb; 10 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; 1 great-great-grandchild.

**Schield, Laramie Jay**, b. Oct. 23, 1958 in Bismarck, ND. d. Nov. 4, 2021 in Bismarck, ND. Member of Bismarck Church. Preceded in death by 1 sister. Survivors include mother Lorene; 2 sisters; 1 niece; 4 nephews.

**Schnell, Joseph L.**, b. Sept. 5, 1933 in Hooker, OK. d. Sept. 24, 2021 in Columbia, MO. Member of Sunnydale (MO) Church. Preceded in death by 2 siblings. Survivors include wife Barbara; daughters Cindi and Jolene; sons David, Larry, and Dennis; 2 siblings; 13 grandchildren; 5 great-grandchildren.

**Shuey, Kyla D. Casselman**, b. April 30, 1947. d. Nov. 3, 2021 in Mitchell, NE. Member of Scottsbluff (NE) Church.

**Smith, Harry E.**, b. Jan. 13, 1932. d. May 18, 2021. Member of Pittsburg (KS) Church. Survivors include wife Vera.

**Stulken, Marion**, b. Jan. 13, 1936 near Selby, SD. d. June 26, 2021 in Mobridge, SD. Member of Mobridge Church. Survivors include several sisters; 1 brother.

## How to Submit a Loved One's Obituary Notice to OUTLOOK Magazine

During the loss of a loved one we know you have a lot to think about, including how to let family and friends within the Adventist Church know about your loved one's passing. One way to do that is through OUTLOOK magazine, the official publication for members of the Mid-America Union Conference. Your conference does not publish obituary notices, but they do submit your notice to OUTLOOK for publication.

If you would like your loved one's obituary to be published in OUTLOOK magazine for free please consider the following options:

1. Notify your conference clerk and your information will be shared with OUTLOOK (*preferred method*).
2. Submit your information on the **CONTACT** page at **OUTLOOKmag.org**. (*Information will be shared with your conference clerk*).

Due to space limitations OUTLOOK is only able to print limited of information: name of deceased, date/location of birth, date/location of death, their church of membership, immediate family members who preceded them in death, immediate family members by whom they are survived, denominational service in the Mid-America Union and military service.





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|---------------------|--|------------|--------|--------|--------|------|
|                     | COLORADO   | JAN 7      | JAN 14 | JAN 21 | JAN 28 |      |
|                     | Denver   | 4:51       | 4:58   | 5:06   | 5:15   |      |
|                     | Grand Junction   | 5:07       | 5:15   | 5:22   | 5:30   |      |
|                     | Pueblo   | 4:54       | 5:01   | 5:08   | 5:16   |      |
|                     | IOWA   | Davenport  | 4:48   | 4:56   | 5:04   | 5:13 |
|                     | Des Moines   | 5:00       | 5:08   | 5:16   | 5:25   |      |
|                     | Sioux City   | 5:09       | 5:16   | 5:25   | 5:34   |      |
|                     | KANSAS   | Dodge City | 5:37   | 5:44   | 5:51   | 5:59 |
|                     | Goodland   | 4:39       | 4:46   | 4:54   | 5:02   |      |
| Topeka              | 5:16   | 5:23       | 5:31   | 5:39   |        |      |
| MINNESOTA           | Duluth   | 4:37       | 4:45   | 4:55   | 5:05   |      |
| International Falls | 4:35   | 4:44       | 4:54   | 5:05   |        |      |
| Minneapolis         | 4:48   | 4:56       | 5:05   | 5:15   |        |      |
| MISSOURI            | Columbia   | 5:03       | 5:10   | 5:18   | 5:26   |      |
| Kansas City         | 5:11   | 5:18       | 5:26   | 5:34   |        |      |
| St. Louis           | 4:55   | 5:02       | 5:10   | 5:18   |        |      |
| NEBRASKA            | Lincoln  | 5:15       | 5:22   | 5:30   | 5:39   |      |
| North Platte        | 5:30   | 5:38       | 5:46   | 5:54   |        |      |
| Scottsbluff         | 4:40   | 4:47       | 4:56   | 5:04   |        |      |
| NORTH DAKOTA        | Bismarck   | 5:11       | 5:20   | 5:30   | 5:40   |      |
| Fargo               | 4:55   | 5:04       | 5:14   | 5:24   |        |      |
| Williston           | 5:18   | 5:27       | 5:37   | 5:48   |        |      |
| SOUTH DAKOTA        | Pierre   | 5:18       | 5:26   | 5:35   | 5:45   |      |
| Rapid City          | 4:31   | 4:39       | 4:48   | 4:57   |        |      |
| Sioux Falls         | 5:06   | 5:14       | 5:23   | 5:32   |        |      |
| WYOMING             | Casper   | 4:47       | 4:55   | 5:04   | 5:13   |      |
| Cheyenne            | 4:46   | 4:54       | 5:02   | 5:11   |        |      |
| Sheridan            | 4:43   | 4:52       | 5:01   | 5:10   |        |      |
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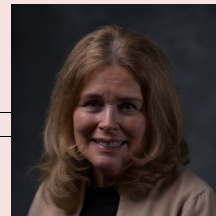
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