

Record

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His Will for My Church
Discovering God's Plan and Purpose

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Editor's Note

God guides His people, individually and as a body, with the goal of reestablishing the loving and intimate relationships with us that He intended from the very beginning. We are all called to work as a body for His purpose—proclaiming the gospel to the world. Can we join together, with our various backgrounds and perspectives, and use the many gifts He has entrusted us with to serve others? Our mission is simple: tell others about Jesus and love them like He did.

In this issue we'll look at God's will for His church from different angles. As you read, celebrate the different ministries that exist in the Southwestern Union and be reminded that we are all working toward the same goal.



Jessica L. Lozano

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Our Mission:

The Mission of the Southwestern Union is to equip and inspire the Southwestern Union territory with the distinctive Adventist message of hope and wholeness.

His Will for My Church

Discovering God's Plan and Purpose



Larry Moore | President

God has a divine purpose for His church. It is not just a place for rest on Saturday morning. It is a body made up of many imperfect members with a conviction to love and serve and bring respite and healing to a broken world. 1 Corinthians 12:27-31 says, “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? Now eagerly desire the greater gifts. And yet I will show you the most excellent way.”

God has placed in the church a number of spiritual gifts to be used in building up the church and for working for the salvation of planet earth. Each of us has a role and a gift. Some may be similar and some may be quite different. As we accept the gospel assignment of taking the message to a dying world, each of us can see the gifts manifested in us. We are to use these gifts for the divine purpose for which God has placed them and us in His church.

Over the years, I have seen first hand how God has added individuals to the church who possessed gifts that were needed in a particular church. Once again God has supplied all our needs. As we use these precious gifts, they continue to develop; not to bring glory to ourselves, but to glorify God.

In *The Acts of The Apostles*, Ellen G. White writes, “The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God’s plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency.” The church is God’s church. No one person is responsible for fulfilling the mission of church, but rather a body of believers living after Christ and carrying the good news of salvation by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 1, everyone opened themselves to the working of God’s Spirit and the result was a marvelous coming together. Differences were settled, ethnic origins became insignificant and any barriers that obstructed their relationship with each other and hindered the presence of God’s Spirit were all put aside. “When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place,” Acts 2:1.

What a powerful statement! It is a revelation of a collaborative effort to accomplish the purpose of God. God’s people became uncompromisingly serious about their personal salvation and the salvation of others. Thus, God’s purpose for His Church was being accomplished. Let us pray for the indwelling presence of God’s Spirit individually and together. May the collaborative experience of the early church become our experience in these waning days of earth’s history.



Buford Griffith, Jr.
Executive Secretary

I love to watch and play basketball. It was a lot of fun to watch the Golden State Warriors turn their team into a champion a few years ago. For years the Warriors struggled to even make the playoffs and then they built a championship team. I believe a big part of the turnaround was the coach, Steve Kerr. He is quoted as saying, “A key part of the Warriors winning a championship is the team didn’t care who received the credit.” In other words, they checked their egos at the door and the team became most important, not individuals.

This example has so many applications that we could use for our church. 1 Corinthians 1:10 says, “I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.” A church that lets Jesus’ love pour out of the church and into the community can change lives. I love the concept of a team. On a team, every person is working to accomplish the same goal. Teams play off each other’s strengths and follow through when one falls a bit short. It is easy to look around and complain, but instead we should get involved and make a difference in our churches and our neighborhoods. God is ready to do miracles in our churches! When we as a church put our focus on Him and work together, all the Glory is for God.



John Page | Treasurer

Spirit of Service

Working Together to Meet Unique Needs



Walls are a vital component of any building. Walls keep structures upright, create new spaces and offer protection from the elements. At the same time, walls can be isolating. My home office is nestled in the middle of our house, which means there are no windows. It is absolutely perfect when I need to study, write or work on a special project as it provides a quiet, comfortable space for me to concentrate. But, at the same time, I have no idea what is happening outside of my office. My two-year-old daughter could be finger painting all over the house and I wouldn't know!

Unfortunately, this could be said about our churches as well. I'm not referring to physical walls, but spiritual ones. Could we be so focused on ourselves that we are blind to the needs of our community around us? Have we been so dedicated to inviting the community to come to us that we have missed a tremendous opportunity to serve outside of our four walls?

In her book *The Ministry of Healing*, Ellen G. White reminds us that "Christ's method alone will give true success

in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'"

Oklahoma Conference churches have numerous outreach ministries making a real difference in our local communities across the state. Adventist Fellowship (AF) in Tulsa, Oklahoma, is one of those churches.

Early in its church history, AF partnered with a non-profit organization called the Day Center for the Homeless, located in the heart of downtown Tulsa. The Day Center was created to meet the needs of the homeless population by providing a place for them to get out of the elements, take a hot shower, wash their clothes and receive a hot meal in the evening. Adventist Fellowship became one of the many groups to prepare and serve 125 hot meals every other month to the clients of the Center.

Co Edwards, the volunteer coordinator of the Day Center shared, "If we

don't have this community support, we end up doing what everyone else does: we order pizza, and that pizza runs about \$400. So they are not just giving of their hearts, they are giving financially as well." Referring to Adventist Fellowship, she adds "We are extremely grateful for your continued faithfulness and that you are reaching out a little bit more and doing other things for our clients as well."

"Every year, the women's ministries department of Adventist Fellowship selects an outreach project," says Joyce Carlile, women's ministries leader at AF. "We found out that the Day Center helps their clients transition into apartments, and of course, they need household goods." So the ladies of AF began collecting bedding, towels, dishes, cleaning supplies, pots and pans.

I was fortunate enough to follow along as a few women filled up two vehicles full of household goods to make their first delivery. "The gratitude that was expressed made it all worth it," explained Terry Gobbo, one of the contributors. "I had no idea this need existed before we started this project."

The reality is, there are many needs in our communities all around us, but if we remain within our four walls, we will never see them. I believe if it wasn't for the ongoing outreach of Adventist Fellowship, serving meals for over 15 years, the church may have never discovered a new opportunity to serve. Every church needs to take the time to ask God what it is He is calling them to do to love others. It's time to step out of our four walls and make a difference for the least of these. R

By Stephen Carlile. Carlile is the evangelism marketing, Bible Study Connect and assistant communication director of the Oklahoma Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He lives with his wife, Michelle, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. They have two children, Greyson and Katie Rae.

Living Gospel

Avenues to Love and Serve the Community

The pastor had a challenge for his church. Ken Blundell met with the Clarksville Seventh-day Adventist Church board to discuss what they could do for their community in Western Arkansas. According to the United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, Arkansas is the second highest state for “food insecurity” for children, seniors and people in general. Blundell proposed starting a church food pantry, providing both physical and spiritual food. Blundell is positive that when Jesus said to feed His lambs and feed His sheep, He also promised to help us do just that.

The Clarksville church started the food pantry in the church fellowship hall with just one freezer and a set of shelves. Hearing an ad on the radio about a nearby restaurant that had a walk-in cooler for salvage, Blundell headed over. He not only got the cooler, but helped with the demolition and received \$750 for his help. It was the seed money the church needed to get started.

The Clarksville church joined the River Valley Food Bank in Fort Smith, Arkansas, checked out the Wal-Mart distribution center for their end-of-day products and opened for business. The food pantry is open on Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to noon, and then again that evening, serving over 400 people each week. The church has joined with Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance and also helps with a backpack program at a local public school.


Troy Webb wanted to be involved in helping the community, so he and his wife, Deborah, decided to volunteer at the Clarksville food pantry. They became acquainted with the church members, started attending weekly prayer meetings and eventually joined the Clarksville church. Both Troy and Deborah are now very involved members and rejoicing in the truth and helping to lead out in the food pantry.

Clarksville, however, is not the only church in Blundell’s pastoral district. About a year and a half ago the pastor challenged the Boonville Seventh-day Adventist Church to get involved in their own community.

Anton Lacky, a 92-year-old veteran and member of the Boonville church, was instrumental in the church beginning “Veterans Tuesday.” Each week the church dedicates a day for veterans to come get food supplies. Although the Boonville church doesn’t have a fellowship hall, they have been serving people from the two small pantries in their church foyer which hold chest freezers and shelves. People take a number and wait to be called from the sanctuary where inspirational videos play while required paperwork is processed.

The church food pantry is available to the whole community on Thursdays, and they serve a free meal before their prayer meeting each week. The Boonville church’s interest in serving their community has led them to begin a major project. With the help of a loan from

the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference, they are building a 30 by 50 feet enclosed food pantry and center that they look forward to completing soon.

During one of Lacky’s visits to the Veteran Affairs administration offices, he met with VA representative Dellmar Cole in his office. Lacky mentioned that the Boonville church was helping veterans through their “Veterans Tuesday” food pantry initiative. Cole was interested and came to the church to see if he could help. He helped in many ways, learning more about the church and its members as he worked. Cole joined the Boonville church and now serves as a church leader. “I’m so excited about serving the Lord,” Cole says. “You’re a vessel—keep yourself empty so He can fill you again. You never know where He will send you next.” 

By Sylvia Downs. Downs is the administrative assistant of the communication, youth and Adventist Community Services departments of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. She lives in Jefferson, Texas.



Christ-like Compassion

Loving the Whole Person, No Strings Attached

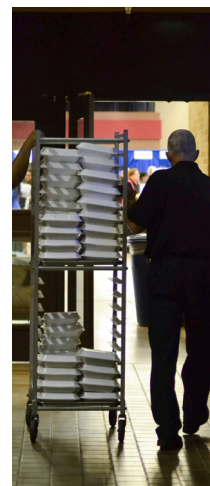
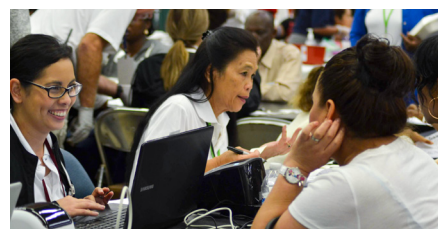
By Elton DeMoraes, Southwestern Union Vice President for Ministries, Ministerial, Men's Ministries and Stewardship Director

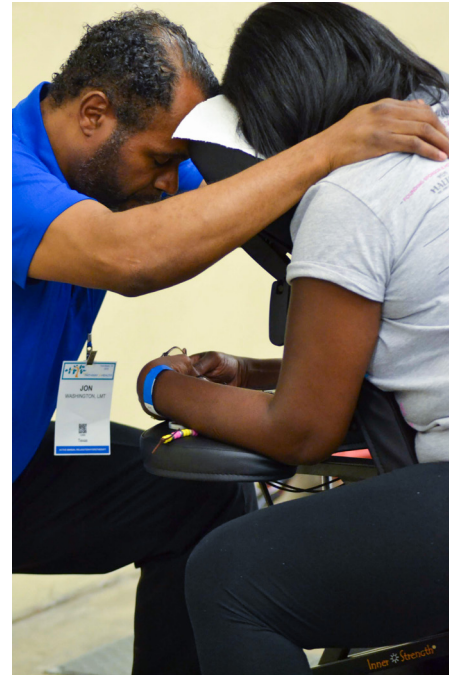
What does it mean to be the hands and feet of Christ? I believe it means showing love and compassion, meeting the needs of others while sharing grace and mercy with a forgiving heart. That is what over 1,600 volunteers from across the Southwestern Union showed North Texas residents during the Your Best Pathway to Health mega clinic held in Fort Worth, Texas.

According to the event organizers, this is the first time where the vast majority of volunteers came from the hosting union. Many of the volunteers came from Texas Conference and Southwest Region churches and Southwestern Adventist University contributed with over 100 nursing student volunteers. Each volunteer made a difference by recognizing that no task was too small or insignificant. Whether a health professional or willing volunteer, they all made a significant contribution impacting many lives during this event. Through their warm smiles, helpful demeanor and genuine interest, they were able to bring hope and healing to so many.

All of those who volunteered, be it by providing services, prepping meals, translating for patients or one of the many other ways we helped, were so enthusiastic about serving the community without any strings attached. I believe that in each smile, tear of happiness or a story shared by a patient we, the volunteers, got even more in return than we expected.

This was a major event, but we'd also like to recognize the many churches in our union who are reaching into their communities and providing similar services, loving their neighbors and meeting their needs. On behalf of the Southwestern Union I want to thank you for choosing to volunteer and share your gifts to enrich and impact people for the Kingdom. [®]





Church on the Court

Friendship Evangelism and Prayer Partners

Salomon Espinoza wanted to create a ministry that would bring youth together. As a new youth pastor in Texas in 2011, he asked members at the Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church, including Lee Batton, to join him praying about starting a basketball program as a small group ministry. Texas Conference Evangelism Director Dan Serns was the senior pastor of the Richardson church when the basketball ministry began. “We believe small groups are important to help people feel connected,” he said. “So, we appreciated the creativity of the members to think outside-the-box and create small groups people are excited about attending.”

Getting the okay to start the group, they were challenged to find a free place to play, so they continued to pray. Fortunately, Espinoza lived in an apartment complex with a nice indoor court. With the summer heat, indoor basketball attracted more people. Not wanting it to just be about basketball, the team created a devotional time before the three hours of basketball time.

“Since we were in an apartment complex, the gym was open to everyone,” Batton explained. “Some of the tenants found out there was a group playing basketball following a spiritual devotion every Sunday morning and decided to join us.”

What started out as a ministry for the church youth was quickly ministering to community members as well. “We were really excited when several people were baptized because of this ministry,” Batton shared. “We even helped two people with family issues. Through prayer and friendship, they were able to work things out.”

Two years after the group started, Espinoza left to continue his theology studies. He is currently pastoring at the Houston West Seventh-day Adventist Church. Batton knew it was a ministry that needed to continue. “The group provided a place to play basketball that did not have the




profanity or fighting often found at other places,” Serns shared. With Espinoza no longer living in the apartment complex, the group had to find another place to play. North Dallas Adventist Academy in Richardson allowed them to use its outside court, but the sun and rain limited when they could meet.

Michael Johnson, Richardson church member, joined the basketball group when they met outdoors. “I was so impressed with their resilience,” he said. “It was hot, but they still came to play basketball and join the small group discussions. The group is so much more than people just playing ball. For a couple of guys who don’t attend any church, this is their weekly church.”

When one of the church members visited the Dallas First Seventh-day Adventist Church in Dallas, Texas, he noticed they had a gym. “God blessed us again,” Batton said. The Richardson basketball ministry was able to meet at the Dallas First church, switching things up and having the devotion during a break time in the middle. “We have a great conversation about God while reading and studying the Bible,” Batton shared. “Some of the guys said they needed this time to share their experi-

ence with others. Some said prayer is what they needed.”

In 2017 Stephen Gamallo became pastor of the Richardson church. His love for youth and a fondness of basketball was just the encouragement needed to continue this ministry. “I had never seen a ministry like this where the community was so involved,” Gamallo said. “Church members feel comfortable inviting their community friends. The relaxed setting enables us to build friendships.”

In December of 2017, the group moved to the basketball court that is part of the new Richardson Church Family Life Center. “It is nice to be able to play any day of the week,” Batton said. Playing in the new facility has increased the number of participants. “Some of the basketball players even talk about meeting for lunch,” Gamallo added. “They enjoy the connections and want to continue the discussions. It is definitely a ministry that meets people in a way other groups would not.” 

By Tamara Michalenko Terry. Terry is the associate communication director for the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. She lives with her husband, Randy, in Burleson, Texas. They have three children, Joey, Jonathan and James.

Reconciliation

Reuniting Inmates with Their Children

The inspiration behind the event is as amazing as the event itself. For the past three years the members of Memorial Seventh-day Adventist Church in Mansfield, Louisiana, have sponsored a community event they've affectionately dubbed, "A Day With Dad."

Richard Fuller, head deacon of Memorial church and CEO of Uncle Richard's House puppet ministry, was invited to participate in a community event sponsored by another ministry called Forgiven Ministry of Taylorville, North Carolina. Essentially, the vision of this ministry was to reduce prison recidivism by reconciling inmates with their families, in the hopes that these familial reunions might facilitate healing for their emotional wounds, and birth a renewed desire to one day be reintegrated into their homes and communities as productive members of society.

After working with and observing this beneficent organization for several years, Richard, who also serves as an elected Police Juror, felt impressed that a similar program would be a tremendous benefit to families in his own community. His

wife, Debbie, a middle school principal, was also acutely aware of the positive impact such a redemptive program could have on her at-risk students. Inspired by their experience with Forgiven Ministry, they crafted a similar vision for their local community and presented it to their Memorial church family for adoption. The idea was unanimously voted and enthusiastically received!


At least three times per year members of the Memorial church spend countless hours praying, planning, organizing, preparing, identifying and arranging for children within targeted communities to spend a few cherished moments with their incarcerated fathers enjoying fun-filled activities, delicious food and familial fellowship. Teachers within Memorial's congregation assist the church in identifying children in the community who come from fatherless families, based on their knowledge of the students they teach. They also enlist the aid of other teachers in the community, as well as other civic groups and churches, to partner with them in hosting this remarkable event.

Outfitted in color-coded shirts, staff, children and fathers are treated to a

potpourri of activities including table games, outdoor baseball, arts, crafts, face-painting, puppet shows, motivational speakers, musical selections and dining. The fathers are also afforded an opportunity to bond with their daughters by having their first dance together and with their sons by teaching them how to tie a necktie. The fathers encourage their kids to become responsible men and women and avoid making the same mistakes they did.

The evening before the actual event, men from the Memorial church visit the inmates and conduct a seminar entitled, "Godly Dads." The purpose of the seminar is to teach them what it means to be a respectable man and a responsible father. While at the prison, the members teach the fathers how to tie a necktie, if they don't already know, in preparation for their bonding time with their sons. Fathers must also complete an application by answering a vital question: Why do I want to participate in the program?

While the children are in one location fellowshipping with their fathers, their guardians are in a nearby location being feted with the same program and activities so that the guardians can experience for themselves what the children are experiencing with their fathers.

The Southwest Region Conference applauds the dedication of the Memorial Seventh-day Adventist Church family and their commitment to uplifting their community. This spirited fellowship of 50 active members is a sterling testament of the fact that even small churches can have a big impact upon their local communities when it's in the heart to do so! 

By Eddie Polite. Polite is the ministerial director of the Southwest Region Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He lives with his wife, Donna, in Desoto, Texas. They have four adult children, Kynisha, Michael, Kimberly and Taylor.



Growing Young

Revitalizing Seventh-day Adventist Church Leadership and Growth

By David Craig, Texas Conference Associate Youth Director and Southwestern Union Growing Young Adventists Representative

I've been involved with the North American Division's (NAD) new initiative, *Growing Young Adventists*, since 2017. Contextualized for our faith community, *Growing Young Adventists* was derived from the the Fuller Youth Institute findings outlined in a book called *Growing Young*. The book reveals key principles on helping youth and young adults love and embrace their church. The team spent thousands of hours researching hundreds of churches in North America and found common denominators in churches that successfully engage their youth and young adults.

The churches had six things in common, known as the six core commitments for "Growing Young." These are: Unlock Keychain Leadership, Fuel Warm Community, Take Jesus' Message Seriously, Empathize with Today's Young People, Prioritizing Young People (and Families) Everywhere and Be the Best Neighbor.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America recognized that we are not exempt from the very real issue of youth and young adults leaving our church. The NAD sought one representative from each union to go to Fuller Youth Institute for multiple summits in order to brainstorm, strategize and contextualize "Growing Young" to our Adventist churches and members. Each

representative became the point person in their union to help any church that wanted to "grow young."

I was freshly installed as the associate youth director of the Texas Conference when the NAD asked if I would be the representative for the Southwestern Union. I was eager to learn as much as I could about helping young people draw close to God and their church and I accepted the invitation, trusting *Growing Young Adventists* would help my youth and young adults ministry. Little did I know this initiative was more than just a benefit for our young people.

Growing Young Adventists benefits all people because growing young isn't about changing youth ministry but about changing church culture. This fall we piloted the program in the Southwestern Union, conducting Growing Together Summits in Greater San Antonio and the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. Fifty teams made up approximately 220 participants. More summits across the union are in the works and information can be found at GrowingYoungAdventists.com.

This is not about programs and traditions but about building intergenerational relationships within our churches. Forty-five percent of young people pointed to relationships as the reason they were involved in church. There is

no mystery ingredient to helping our churches retain young people. What young people want is genuine relationships with people who are willing to journey with them. Young people today are looking for what Jesus offered when He was on earth.

Ellen G. White said it perfectly in her book *The Ministry of Healing*, "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow me.'"

Growing Young Adventists is really about growing together. Young people bring energy to our church and our older generations bring wisdom and mentorship. We grow stronger together. *Growing Young* says, "Our church needs young people and young people need our church. One without the other is incomplete."

My hope is that our churches will be the best place for young people to thrive and belong. I hope that one day the Seventh-day Adventist Church will be well known for what we are doing right in engaging not just young people, but people of all generations. **R**



Striving for Excellence

Recognizing Exceptional Educators in the Southwestern Union

The Southwestern Union Conference recognizes excellence among its teaching staff at both the elementary and secondary levels each year. To qualify for the award, a teacher must demonstrate proficiency in a number of criteria related to teaching and learning. The teachers are provided a \$500 award, along with a certificate and plaque. We are proud to announce the Excellence in Teaching Award recipients for the 2017-2018 school year.

Devin Anavitarte

Devin Anavitarte, or “Mr. A” as he is affectionately called by the students at Burton Adventist Academy, plays an integral role in creating a strong spiritual atmosphere. Students have been drawn to his English classes ever since he became a faculty member in 2013. It is evident in his writing as a published author and playwright that he is passionate about his relationship with Jesus and his desire for his students to know Him as well.

Mary Burton

Mary Burton was born in Texas. She grew up in the mission field and now teaches in Ardmore, Oklahoma. She loves teaching underlying principles that simplify complicated information, but her greatest passion is character training and helping students understand that they are saved through daily surrender and trust in Christ.

Robert Fetters

Robert Fetters teaches at Ozark Adventist Academy. He has a B.A. in Biology with Chemistry and Religion minors from Southern Adventist University, as well as a Masters in Environmental Studies from Virginia Commonwealth University. He taught science and math for 18 years before spending four years as an environmental chemist in Rich-



mond, Virginia. Fetters and his wife, Judy have three children, Jeb, Grace and Abbie Rose.

Sabina Mauricio

Sabina Mauricio, a graduate of Southwestern Adventist University, has been a great asset to the Texico Conference since she became the head teacher of El Paso Adventist Junior Academy. Through her leadership and dedication, the school has doubled in enrollment and the Iowa Assessment scores have shown a significant increase.


Elle Nelson

Elle Nelson currently teaches first and second grades at Joshua Adventist Multi-grade School. She enjoys sharing Christ through the Bible and actively incorporates Bible principles into every-day learning. Through her example, the students have come to know Jesus as their friend and Savior. She is loved and respected by her students, their parents and colleagues.

Lisa Tonack

Lisa Tonack has been teaching for 25 years, mostly at Ozark Adventist School, but also in the Southeastern California Conference. She feels God has definitely called her to teach, and wants each student to feel confident and loved by God. She and her husband Jeff have four adult children, Winston, Warren, Ally and Spencer.

Renee Whiting

Renee Whiting is a graduate of Oakwood University and Southern Adventist University. She has a B.S. in Elementary Education and a master's degree in School Counseling. A product of Adventist education, she is dedicated to building the kingdom of God by providing a relevant 21st century Adventist education to every student that she teaches. She currently serves as the Principal of New Orleans Adventist Academy. She has three daughters, Britany, ReJena and Alexis Nicole. 

Sharing our Blessings

Feeding Not Just the Body, but the Soul

“I’ve been a teacher for 15 years,” says Maria Ruiz. “Helping with the Pathfinder club was just another opportunity to work with kids.” Ruiz started volunteering as a leader of the Pathfinder club of the North Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 2013. She never imagined that her passion for working with kids would soon turn into a long-standing ministry of helping others.

Ruiz and the staff wanted the Pathfinders to make an impact in their community. A new idea came to mind: asking parents to donate 200 burritos once a month. The parents obliged and the Pathfinders began handing out burritos along with hot chocolate in the winter, and cold water in the summer. They gave away burritos and drinks in area parks and a nearby “tent city” as well as organizations that assist the homeless community.

“Sometimes our kids grow up in a bubble and they don’t know of the needs that exist outside our church walls,” says Ruiz. “However, our kids were always happy to help and were moved by the

experience.” On one occasion, a man asked to pray with the Pathfinders so he could thank God for the work the youth were doing. “They often told us we were blessings but in reality, we were the ones that came out blessed,” says Ruiz.

In addition to distributing burritos, the Pathfinders also began collecting food baskets for families at the North Valley church and in the community. They also raised money for families who needed assistance to pay their rent or bills. Initially, food and monetary donations came from within the Pathfinder ministry; however Ruiz soon started receiving support from the entire church.

In 2015, Ruiz was asked to be the church’s community service director. She gladly accepted and continued the work she began with the Pathfinders. Ruiz connected with Last Chance Ministries, a non-profit that works closely with the homeless community, and formed a great ministry team.

“When I became the community service director, we prepared food and fed the homeless at a local park every Sunday for two years. The members

of North Valley provided all the food,” says Ruiz. “Today, we do it twice a month, and we still involve the Pathfinders because they are very important to this ministry.”

In addition to their homeless meal ministry, Ruiz and her team collect donations for a mobile food bank that is then taken to low-income communities. This year, they also organized a community event where they distributed food and toys and provided health screenings and immigration consultation services.

“Our young adults, personal ministries and family ministries teams are just a few that have been involved,” says Ruiz. Over the last few years, the church has hosted a community Thanksgiving dinner and collected coats, winter clothing and small bags full of hygiene products to give the guests. The North Valley church always serves the homeless community during Thanksgiving, and now their ministry of service is year-round.

“Sharing the blessings we receive from the Lord is very rewarding. But our ministry is more than just providing physical nutrition to others,” says Ruiz. “We also focus on sharing God’s Word and His promises. We have seen the impact this has on many occasions.” Ruiz is delighted that what started as encouraging youth to make a difference has evolved into a church-wide ministry focused on serving and helping others. “It’s a lot of work,” says Ruiz. “But when I see how this ministry touches people, it motivates me to continue to do God’s work.” R

By Debbie Márquez. Márquez is the communication director of the Texico Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. She lives with her husband, Sam, in Albuquerque, New Mexico. They have three children, Ayden, Annah Sofia and Alexa.



Certified to Help

Emotional and Spiritual Care When It Matters



Hurricanes, tornadoes and shootings are tragedies now commonplace in the world. In the aftermath of disaster, people need to be cared for spiritually as well as physically. That's why Adventist Community Services (ACS) in the Southwestern Union is training pastors and lay people to become Certified Emotional and Spiritual Care Providers. Within the last year, 47 individuals received the national certification through ACS, and are now prepared to offer support in times of tragedy.

"After Hurricane Harvey and the Sutherland Springs shooting, we got calls asking if we had any Emotional and Spiritual Care Provider teams," says Marshall Gonzales, director of ACS for the Southwestern Union and the Texas Conference. "I felt bad because I had to say no. We didn't have any. Because of that, and knowing the needs and times we are living in, we decided to make this available."

At first, ACS offered training for this certification to Seventh-day Adventist pastors and spouses in Texas. Next year, ACS hopes to provide training to all people interested in contributing emotional and spiritual support to the community.

Certified individuals are prepared to step into a scene of tragedy, listen to hurting people, assess needs and provide emotional and spiritual support. That support includes basic crisis communication techniques, psychological and physiological crisis intervention and critical incident stress management. Some individuals also elect to take a suicide intervention course.

"Pastors are trained to do ministry," says Julie Gonzales, co-director of ACS for the Southwestern Union and the Texas Conference. "They are trained to work with individuals, but the way we reach out to individuals in a time of disaster, or in a time of need, is different. It's a different way to minister to people. That's why this training is important."


After the suicide intervention course, one pastor shared, "I just realized I've been doing things incorrectly. I realize that I need to be more mindful of the words I use to comfort people and how I interact with people."

Even months after a tragedy, Emotional and Spiritual Care Providers are still needed in the community. There is a great need for more people to become certified. The goal is for ACS to have a list of trained teams at the ready in all areas of the Southwestern Union.

Training and certification are offered through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and ACS. It takes place over a series of three courses.

"It would just be a benefit for us to have more and more pastors and lay people trained and available to help in these situations," says Marshall. "Even now, people think that Harvey is all done with, but it's not. They still need teams in Houston, almost a year later."

Julie and I have both been in the area right where the hurricane came in. They talk about how the people are so depressed and down. Now I can tell them that we have a team close to their area that can help."

People who wish to provide support on the scenes of tragedy must be Certified Emotional and Spiritual Care Providers. If you have any questions or would like to find out more about becoming certified, contact Marshall and Julie Gonzales at acs@txsda.org. 

By Makala James. James lives with her husband, Denny, in Granbury, Texas. Marshall and Julie Gonzales are the directors of Adventist Community Services for the Southwestern Union and the Texas Conference. They live in Keene, Texas.

Christmas Eve Snow

Remembering and Relishing God’s Creation

When my nephew, Zane, was born, it was the greatest thing to ever happen to me. Having a nephew meant there was a new baby to love and cuddle and play with. It was basically like having a baby doll to play with, but one you could give back whenever the baby started to cry. Seeing him grow up and learning to walk and talk has been so much fun.

But nothing was more fun than Zane seeing snow for the first time. Growing up in Texas means you don’t always get to see snow and get to play in it. But that changed one Christmas Eve. We were sitting in the living room with Zane when my mom looked outside the window and said, “Oh, look there’s snow on ground!” Everyone rushed to the window to be the first to see the ground covered in pure white and untouched by foot prints.

I opened the front door and there was snow everywhere! It covered the grass, sidewalks, streets, everything! “Zane, come look at the snow, buddy!” I said, picking him up and showing him. “Oooh!” He said, reaching out, wanting to touch it.

We closed the door and started putting on jackets, boots and looking for warm hats, scarves and gloves for Zane. We dressed him up and took him outside to see his first snowfall. We walked with him down the driveway, letting him stop to touch the snow on the car

and the sidewalk. “What do you think?” I asked him, making a snowball in my hand and handing it to him. “Wow!” he said, taking it and looking at it and even trying to eat the snow! When it got too cold to stay outside, we had to bring Zane inside to get warm, but he did not want to go! He wanted to keep playing in the snow and was so sad when we took him inside.

Seeing Zane have so much fun reminded me that this was only possible thanks to God, who created the snow and made it fall on Christmas Eve. Psalm 8:3 says, “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place.” God has created many things here on earth that we like to play in, like snow in the winter and the oceans that we play in during the summer. God enjoys seeing us enjoy the things He has created. Sometimes we forget to have fun until we see someone we know having fun and then we remember. Zane having fun in the snow reminded me to make sure I was relishing the things God has created. In His infinite love for us, God has provided us nature as a way to connect and spend time with Him.

By Brianna LeBlanc



November Events:

2-4

Arkansas-Louisiana Conference:
Pathfinder Camporee
SDowns@arklac.org

3

Arkansas-Louisiana Conference: Young Adult Sabbath School, Baton Rouge, La., info@arklac.org

3

Southwestern Union: Stewardship Sabbath
NADStewardship.org

4-5

SWAU: University Experience, 817.645.3921

8-11

Texas Conference: Men's Ministries Retreat, Lake Whitney Ranch, Clifton, Tex., TexasAdventistMen.org

9-11

Oklahoma Conference: Men's Retreat, Wewoka Woods Adventist Center, Wewoka, Okla.
OKAdventist.org

10

Southwestern Union: IGNITE Youth Sabbath School Leadership Training, Keene Community Center Keene, Tex.
SouthwesternAdventist.org/Youth

16-18

Arkansas-Louisiana Conference: Spiritual Gifts Training, Baton Rouge, La.
FAlcorn@arklac.org

16-18

Southwest Region Conference: Youth & Young Adult Summit, Lone Star Camp, LMassiah@swrgc.org

17

Texas Conference: Soul Winning Festival St. George Maronite Center, San Antonio, Tex.
TexasEvangelism.com/festival

17

Oklahoma Conference: Young Adult Q&A Forum Tulsa Adventist Academy Tulsa, Okla.
OKAdventist.org/youth

18

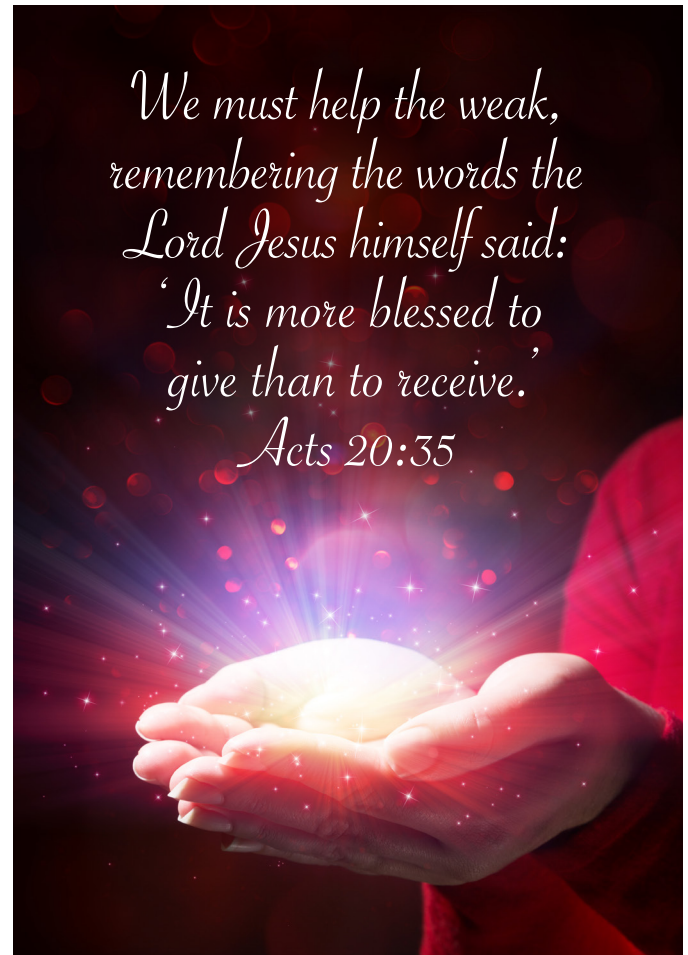
Southwest Region Conference: Constitution & Bylaws Committee Meeting Dallas, Tex.,
SBrooks@swrgc.org

18

Oklahoma Conference: Hispanic Ministry Leaders Roundtable Discussion, Tulsa, Okla., OKAdventist.org

22-23

Thanksgiving Holiday: Conference and Union offices closed.



December Events:

1

Oklahoma Conference: Elders' Round Table Discussion, Conference Office, Oklahoma City, Okla., OKAdventist.org

7-9

Southwest Region Conference: Singles Enrichment Weekend Lone Star Camp
LMassiah@swrgc.org

14-15

Texas Conference: Engaged Couples' Retreat Lake Whitney Ranch Clifton, Tex., TexasAdventist.org

24-26

Christmas Holiday: Conference and Union offices closed.

28-Jan. 1

GYC Convention: George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston, Tex.

For more events and information, visit SouthwesternAdventist.org.

In His Likeness

Women's Spiritual Retreat Weekend

FRISCO, TEX. – More than 750 women from across the Southwestern Union territory, the United States, and Mexico joined together for the Southwestern Union's Women's bilingual spiritual retreat, *In His Likeness / En Su Semejanza* on Aug. 10-12 in Frisco. The attendees came to be refreshed with Christian fellowship and inspired by the special guest speakers, testimonies, opportunities for prayer and fellowship.

The theme for the retreat was drawn from 1 John 3:2, "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

According to Carmen Fuente-Griffith, women's ministries director for the

Southwestern Union, "God built us in His image and when He comes again, we want Him to see a reflection of Himself in us. Our hope for this retreat was that the attendees would be drawn closer to Him and have a desire to be just like Him."

The retreat began on Friday evening with welcome messages from Fuentes-Griffith and Carla Baker, North American Division women's ministries director.

The guest speaker for Friday evening vespers was Elizabeth Talbot, Ph.D., speaker and director for the "Jesus 101 Biblical Institute," a media ministry of the North American Division. Following vespers, attendees were invited to participate in a specially-created prayer room that led individuals through prayer stations.

Saturday morning began with a communion and praise session led by Shirley Benton, followed by seminars, and then a worship service with special music by Ysis España and message by Elizabeth Talbot.

More seminars followed lunch in the afternoon, and an anointing and testimony service was led by Janice Ford, Betty Borges, Shirley Benton and Carla Wright in the evening. On Sunday, attendees enjoyed an early-morning praise session followed by a special communion service before departing.

For women's ministries resources and upcoming events in your area, visit SouthwesternAdventist.org/Women



Grand Opening

Southwestern's New Nursing and Administration Building



KEENE, TEX. – Southwestern Adventist University celebrated the grand opening of the Larry R. Moore Nursing and Administration Building on Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2018. The ceremony took place on the front steps of the new building. Southwestern's nursing students, alumni, friends, Board of Trustees and administration were in attendance, along with Texas State Representative DeWayne Burns and Keene City Mayor James Chapline. The community was invited, with more than 500 visitors in attendance for the event.

The \$16 million building is officially debt free, with 100 percent of the funds raised through gifts. “In 1893, Keene

as we know it did not exist,” said Tami Condon, vice president for advancement. “The first recorded fundraised building cost \$2,500. Today, we’re building a state-of-the-art nursing building and our nursing program is ranked well above the national average.”

State Rep. Burns said bricks and mortar don’t change the lives of people. “People change the lives of people, and our God changes the lives of people. What happens in the brick and mortar behind us today, hopefully, will change lives for the better. And I believe that it will, not only in this community but around Texas, around the United States and around the world.”

With new medical manikins and simulation labs, the building will support the growth of the nursing department, which already comprises a quarter of the university’s enrollment. Keene Mayor Chapline said he’s proud of all advances in Keene, but this building is truly a “game changer” as it moves the university to a new level of excellence and achievement.

For more information about the Larry R. Moore Nursing and Administration Building and how you can support Southwestern Adventist University, visit swau.edu/give.

Photos by Carlos Rodriguez

Breaking Ground

New Healthcare Campus is Now Under Construction

MANSFIELD, TEX. – Oct. 3 marked a kick-off event to celebrate the beginning of Texas Health Hospital Mansfield, a new health care campus. Scheduled to open in late 2020, it will offer a variety of services including a 24/7 emergency room, general surgery, women’s care, orthopedics and interventional cardiology. The project is a joint venture between Adventist Health System and Texas Health. The two faith-based organizations have a long history

of collaboration; Huguley Memorial, a 365-bed Adventist Health System hospital, affiliated with the Texas Health system in 2012. Now known as Texas Health Huguley Hospital Fort Worth South.

“One of our strategic imperatives is about engaging consumers and putting them at the center of their care experience,” said Adventist Health System President and CEO Terry Shaw. “This commitment manifests in the service

standards we employ, spiritual care we offer, care navigation we provide and the tools we develop to help consumers engage in their care.”

The four-story, 195,400-square-foot facility will have an initial capacity of 95 beds. At a total cost of \$150 million, the campus will also include an 80,000-square-foot medical office building that will house primary care and specialty practices.

Ranking High

Southwestern Moves Up In Best Colleges Rankings



KEENE, TEX. – Southwestern Adventist University has moved up in the rankings by *U.S. News* Regional Colleges West from 20th to 13th place. The rankings are part of the comparison of colleges calculated and posted by *U.S. News* annually. This ranking is up from 21st place in 2016 and 22nd in 2015.

“As we’re celebrating our 125th school year, it is wonderful to see that our legacy for affordable, exceptional higher education still holds strong,” shares Southwestern Adventist University President, Dr. Ken Shaw.

U.S. News also ranked Southwestern Adventist University as the 5th Best Val-

ue Schools in the West Region. According to *U.S. News*, this ranking is based on both academic quality and cost. Only those schools ranked in the top half of their 2019 Best Colleges ranking categories were considered for the Best Value Schools list.

“It is exciting to see Southwestern increasingly recognized for academic quality and student success on a regional and national scale,” says Vice President for Academic Administration Dr. Amy Rosenthal.

The *U.S. News* rankings focus on academic excellence, with schools ranked on up to 15 measures of academic

quality. Overall, the rankings emphasize student outcomes including graduation and retention rates. The college ranking categories are based on the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, the most widely accepted classification system in U.S. higher education. *U.S. News* has used the Carnegie classification system since the first Best Colleges rankings in 1983.

Read more about Southwestern Adventist University’s additional rankings at swau.edu/about.

Photo by Caressa Rogers Photography

Truth

Film Receives Regional EMMY® Nominations

KEENE, TEX. – Southwestern Adventist University’s department of communication has earned two nominations in the highest honor in the television industry – the EMMY® Awards. The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences nominated *Truth* in the category of Historic/Cultural - Program Feature/Segment in the annual Lone Star Chap-

ter Regional EMMY® Awards. The nominees, Kyle Portbury, Glen Robinson and Michael Agee, all current professors, will attend the televised awards ceremony in Houston on Nov. 10 where the winners will be announced.

Truth tells the story of women’s rights activist and abolitionist Sojourner Truth and her extemporaneous speech deliv-

ered in 1851 at the Women’s Convention in Akron, Ohio. “This nomination demonstrates the film’s capacity to continue the conversation Sojourner began 167 years ago. It’s as relevant today as it was in 1851” said communication professor and the film’s writer/director Kyle Portbury. Learn more at swau.edu/film.

GenHER Discovery Days

Alumna Inspires Internship Opportunities

KEENE, TEX. — This summer, Southwestern Adventist University sponsored 10 female students to attend GenHERation Discovery Days in Dallas. GenHERation is a network that trains young women and connects them with industry leaders. Students attended panels, toured headquarters, and met with female leaders from Ernst & Young, Southwest Airlines, Pizza Hut and JCPenney.

“Attending events like GenHERation provides broader perspective for students,” says Ana Patterson, business department chair. “It specifically provides women with mentoring relationships and a different view of the role women play in organizations and corporations. It helps them look at their future in a different light.” Patterson learned about GenHERation from alumni Heidi Dart, communications, class of 2018.

When Dart began her senior year at Southwestern, she was concerned

about her career prospects because she hadn’t yet had an internship. Dart then discovered GenHERation. The company connected Dart with people who took an interest in her success. She found mentors, friends, and then, as a result of her connections and hard work, was offered a job at Southwest Airlines. In addition, she was offered a job at FaithSearch Partners.

Now, Dart is working for FaithSearch Partners, where she uses skills learned from GenHERation everyday. She reached out to Southwestern to encourage a relationship with GenHERation. As a result, many Southwestern students will benefit from empowering connections and job training.

“I am extremely grateful that Southwestern has made it possible to enjoy and engage in programs like GenHERation,” says Sharné Lazarus, junior international business major. “It allows us to have the ability to connect with people in the work-

force. It’s always a blessing and opportunity to know people who are constantly encouraging and mentoring you to take bigger steps and to build your career.”

At the GenHERation event, speakers shared advice about how to get a job, such as tips for good resumé writing, networking, and job interviewing. Students were encouraged to work hard to find a job they are passionate about, even if it takes time.

“I learned that I don’t have to have it all figured out right now,” says Eva Wong, education and psychology student.

Discovery Days was just the beginning of a relationship between Southwestern and GenHERation. This year, GenHERation is hosting an event on campus. In addition, Southwestern plans to sponsor students to attend other GenHERation events, such as a recent half-day tour of Southwest Airlines.

————— *By Makala James, SWAU ‘15*



Engage

Now is the Time for Genuine Impact



One of my mentors used to say, “People will not listen to our message until we show them how much we care about them.” That’s a powerful statement, and I believe it is true. I have been watching events in our nation and world and I am fascinated by what has been transpiring. I am reminded of Jesus’ words in Luke 17:26-30: “Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man ... it was the same in the days of Lot ... it will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.”

No truer words have been said. Jesus knew what He was talking about. Our world has become very much like the days of Noah. Our society is reflecting very much what it was like in the days of Lot. I believe the four angels that are holding the winds of strife are beginning to loosen their grip. Things that you and I would have never dreamed of are happening before our very eyes. We must not turn a blind eye to what is going on. We must engage as a church as never before. Engage is a verb. It means action is needed not just sitting on the sideline, but upon the line.

I had that happen again today in my life. As I was leaving a restaurant, I saw a man sitting at a table. He looked like an everyday, normal person. As I was passing by, he looked at me, and I smiled back at him. I made my way out to my car, but before I could get in, he came near and put out his hand and thanked me for smiling at him. I asked why he thanked me. He responded that his day, and frankly his life, at this moment reflected today’s gloomy, rainy weather. He said that my smile was like a breath of fresh air. It was sunshine for his soul. He opened up and shared with me that he was homeless and yes, he needed help, but what he really needed was encouragement, and my smile was what the doctor ordered. Praise God! He shared with me that God had helped him through some tough times before and he was sure that God would get him through now. We visited for several minutes. As we parted, sharing our faith in Jesus with one another, it was fist-bumps of joy!

Now is the time to get involved with our neighbors, co-workers, families and friends. There is no more time to live our lives on auto-pilot. We can no longer be satisfied with business as usual. Instead, we need to build friendships. We need to build strong ties and relationships. We need to help meet the needs of the people around us. And then we need to share the good news of Jesus Christ. It is time that we fulfill Matthew 24:14 in our own lives. Genuine impact means more than being a church; it means we are a movement with the Holy Spirit’s power and purpose! Let’s be bold and fired up to make a positive impact on people’s lives and share our story with anyone who is willing to listen. Your impact is vital to the completion of the mission. Will you engage now?

By Richard C. Dye, Sr., President



Mission to Lesotho

Young Adults Carry the Gospel to the World

SHREVEPORT, LA. – Eleven young adults from throughout the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference, accompanied by Associate Youth Director Fernando Villegas, participated in a mission trip to Lesotho, a country in southern Africa, during the month of July.

The trip was organized in conjunction with ShareHim, an Adventist ministry whose goal is to empower and mobilize lay men and women to be active in a lifestyle of evangelism.

All 12 participants preached a nine-sermon evangelistic series in dif-

ferent locations around Hlotse, Lesotho. The locations ranged from church buildings to outdoor tents and private homes. A special convocation was held on the final Sabbath, as people from all 12 sites gathered together to worship and witness over 60 people being baptized.

One of those baptized was Daniel Hilliard, an electrician from the South Church in Shreveport, La. He was one of the preachers, and the Spirit so moved in him and his meetings that he made a decision to be re-baptized himself.

Following the meetings, the young adults had the opportunity to spend a couple of days of sightseeing in South Africa before returning to the United States. The Lord greatly blessed the preaching of His Word, and we look forward to seeing again our brothers and sisters in Christ from Africa; if not in this age, at the soon return of Jesus!

————— *By Fernando Villegas*
Associate Youth Director



Healthful and Delicious

Vegan Chef Presents Cooking Demonstration

SLIDELL, ARK. – Mark Anthony, 3ABN guest speaker and chef, presented a health message and vegetarian cooking demonstration at the Slidell Seventh-day Adventist Church this past spring. It was nearly standing room only in the fellowship hall of the Slidell church as Anthony showed creative ways to make “cheese” from vegetables, salad dressing from bananas, and a great new way to slice watermelon. At the end of the presentation everyone enjoyed tasting the delicious meal.

————— *By Vernella Rogers*



Baptisms in Decatur

Dakota Day Presents Amazing Facts Series

DECATUR, ARK. – Dakota Day, an Amazing Facts speaker and evangelist, presented a series of meetings in the Decatur Seventh-day Adventist Church for not only the church members, but also for visitors from the surrounding community. More than 5,000 flyers were sent to the homes of Gravette, Bentonville, Bella Vista and Centerton in preparation. From those flyers and through the work of the members inviting friends and family, approximately 10 visitors arrived each night to hear the message of truth, warning and hope that Day shared.

Day not only preached Bible prophecy and knowledge about the coming crisis, he also shared how to prepare for the end times and how to truly understand the Word of God by “not just reading the Word of God but also getting to know the God of the Word.” Explaining why that relationship with God is so important, Day compared it to a three-legged stool with the three legs being Bible study, prayer and a relationship with God. If we take out even one of these legs, our whole world may

totter and fall just as there can never be a sturdy, two-legged stool.

God blessed in the presentation of His message and when Day made an altar call toward the end of the series, the Holy Spirit moved in the hearts of three people who accepted a call for baptism. After meeting with the candidates and making sure everything was prepared, Ryan Griffith, Trenton Driskell, and Michelle Griffith were baptized by Day and joyfully welcomed into the Decatur church.

The parting message was not just to encourage and strengthen the new members in the church, but was also a reminder to the members that we all have a Christian walk and that we all struggle with sin and temptation. Though we all stumble and fall down over and over, we can still get back up and keep pushing forward, trusting in the promises of Christ. The key point is to get back up. We have to exert the effort to break free from our mistakes, to cry out like Peter did when he was sinking below the waves of the Sea of Galilee saying,

“Lord save me!” The Lord is always close by our side ready to help us. All we need to do is call upon Him.

Though these meetings have ended, the blessing and the fire that we received from the Holy Spirit keeps on in our hearts and minds. Just because the series is over doesn’t mean that we stop inviting people to church, and activities at the church. Nor do we stop witnessing to our neighbors, friends, and family. No, instead we are to actively participate and continue being willing for the Spirit to use us to reach the people who are yearning for the truth. The Lord has planned for a plentiful harvest and the fields are teeming with an abundance of crops. As the hymn asks, we must ask ourselves, “Where are you, O reaper, to do your part in bringing in that glorious harvest home?”

By Kody Fly

New believers with David Grams, pastor, and Dakota Day, Amazing Facts speaker and evangelist.



Havana Company Forms

Ola Spanish Group Moves Forward

HAVANA, ARK. – Church bells rang out at 4:00 p.m. on Aug. 18, alerting the community that something special was taking place in Havana. The surrounding community had been invited to join with the Ola Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Group as they gathered to celebrate both the organizational transformation from a group into a company as well as the

welcoming of a new facility in Havana. Thus, the Ola Spanish group met for the first time in a new church building, which had previously been an old Presbyterian church, while also becoming the Havana Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Company. Aymer Plana, pastor, officiated the event. A ribbon cutting kicked off events which included a message from Arkan-

sas-Louisiana Conference Executive Secretary Juan Borges, special music and more. Finally, 37 individuals from the Ola Spanish group made their way to the podium to sign the book as charter members of the Havana Spanish Company. Joyous fellowship with a meal followed.



A Literature Ministry

Reaching Hammond and Beyond

HAMMOND, ARK. – In 2002, after seeing advertisements for literature on 3ABN, we decided to order books on the state of the dead, the Sabbath and the health message to share with our community. God impressed me to use clear bags to leave the books on the doorknobs of homes. The Lord also impressed me not to ring the doorbell, but simply leave the books on the doorknob; the Holy Spirit would do the convicting and converting.

As the years went by we ordered more and more books to share. Once, a hailstorm damaged our roof and, after replacing the roof, we had \$2,500 left with which we decided to purchase more books. I still felt an urgency to do more. We decided to go to area churches and share our ministry with them. We

helped them organize, select locations, map the streets, pack books, and hand them out on Sabbath afternoons.

The Arkansas-Louisiana Conference noticed the large number of books we were ordering and asked me to write an article for the *Record* magazine. I remarked to my husband, “Wouldn’t it be a miracle if we were asked to be on 3ABN?” Three weeks later we received a call from 3ABN asking us to share our ministry. After the telecast, 3ABN put our name, address and phone number on the screen. God’s timing is perfect. He still required more and I felt a deeper urgency. As a result of the 3ABN broadcast, I had several calls from across America and Australia telling me about their ministries, and I had several people donate

money in order to share the book *The Great Controversy*. I was grateful for their donations. I developed a close relationship with Betty, Wendy and Gavin, some very spiritual and evangelistic-minded individuals from Australia whose generosity and sacrifices have allowed them to give more than \$122,000 toward sharing *The Great Controversy*. The states receiving *The Great Controversy* are Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho and Texas.

There is no limit to what God can do. Putting a book in a clear bag years ago has resulted in God crossing the oceans, connecting people and working out every detail of our ministry.

By Janet Miller

Batesville Backpacks

Church Provides School Supplies for Community

BATESVILLE, ARK. – The Batesville Seventh-day Adventist Church held their first annual “Backpacks to the Community” outreach in mid-August. Church members gathered together and filled 200 backpacks with school supplies such as paper, pencils, folders and binders. Out of the 200 backpacks, 165 were handed out and everyone who received one was deeply appreciative.

Colleen and Debbie, two women who helped prepare and distribute the backpacks, shared how they were impacted through this outreach. Colleen said, “It

was a blessing working together with the church and the young people while we were putting the backpacks together. During the time that we handed out the backpacks, the looks on the faces of all the children as they got to choose from all the colors and then the excitement of their first day back at school was such a blessing to me! I think they helped me more than I helped them!”

Debbie said, “I am thankful that I got to be part of such a wonderful event. It was so exciting to watch our church youth and adults find joy in wanting to

help the children of our community. From observing the gratitude of the parents, to the smiling faces of the children, we witnessed everyone being blessed. It was a beautiful opportunity for our church to play a part!”

God is so good to us and it is so important for us to remember that we are called to serve others; to be witnesses for Jesus in all that we do, even if it’s through a backpack.

By Francis Taylor



Challenged to Give

Zachary Juniors are Giants in Giving

ZACHARY, ARK. – The Zachary Seventh-day Adventist Church is not a very big church and only has a small group of Juniors in its Junior Sabbath School Class, but their small numbers didn’t stop them from doing a mighty work for the Lord. At the end of the first quarter of 2018, the Junior Class had \$205 for their 13th Sabbath mission offering. They came up with the idea of challenging the Adult Sabbath School Class for the next 13th Sabbath offering to see who could give the most for missions. Everyone was quite busy during the quarter. Caitlyn

baked and sold cakes. Brecken went through all his belongings and had a rummage sale. There was quite a lot of anticipation on June 30 as the 13th Sabbath offering was counted. The church treasurer announced the adults had given \$430 and the Junior class had raised \$845 for missions. Caitlyn and Brecken once again challenged the adult class for the next 13th Sabbath mission offering! They have found that working for the Master is a great way for everybody to win!

By Cheryl Livingston



The Mission-driven Church

God's Will For My Church



Have you ever wondered what God's will is for His church? In *Welfare Ministry*, Ellen G. White wrote "I have been instructed to refer our people to the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah... When you meet suffering souls who need help, give it to them. When you find those who are hungry, feed them. In doing this you will be working in lines of Christ's ministry."

Here's a quick background of Isaiah 58. The nation of Judah had been giving God "lip service," while their hearts were far from Him. Their religion was one of performance, formalism and observing rituals. In essence, they were outwardly showy and very legalistic. God sent a message of reconciliation and reproof through Isaiah the prophet saying, "They come to the Temple every day and seem delighted to learn all about me. They act like a righteous nation that would never abandon the laws of its God. They ask me to take action on their behalf, pretending they want to be near me. 'We have fasted before you!' they say. 'Why aren't you impressed? We have been very hard on ourselves, and you don't even notice it!' 'I will tell you why!' I respond. 'It's because you are fasting to please yourselves'" (Isaiah 58: 2-3, NLT).

I cannot forget a guest speaker who shared from her heart what it's like to minister to the needs of Syrian refugees. As an American Christian living in a certain country, she was given an amazing opportunity during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim year, during which strict fasting is observed from sunrise to sunset. She carefully studied Isaiah 58 about fasting with some Muslim women. What I gleaned from her talk radically changed my daily view.

The message was this: The "true fast" that God was calling the Jews and calling us to partake of is fasting from *ourselves*. This is the kind of fast God desires in our church and communities: free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you; let the oppressed go free, and remove the chains that bind people; share your food with the hungry; give shelter to the homeless; give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help; remove the heavy yoke of oppression; feed the hungry and help those in trouble (Isaiah 58:7-9).

This is fasting from ourselves! I believe with all my heart that Isaiah 58 is the antidote for selfishness and this practical ministry will infuse life into our churches.

We're told by White that Isaiah 58 is crystal clear about our mission. It "is explicit, and is enough to enlighten anyone who wishes to do the will of God. There is plenty of opportunity for everyone to be a blessing to humanity."

A mission-driven church will be a revelation of Christ. White wrote in *The Ministry of Healing*, that "the world needs today what it needed nineteen hundred years ago—a revelation of Christ... Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me.'"

By Michael Smith, Ministerial Director



Men's Prayer Breakfast

Nearly 100 Come Together for Fellowship

OKLAHOMA CITY – For five years in a row the Hispanic men of the Oklahoma City metropolitan area have come together to celebrate an annual prayer breakfast. This year nearly 100 men met in the Will Rogers Botanical Park with the theme “Walking in Integrity” as an additional effort to take the church to the community.

This vibrant men's event was characterized by music, testimony, gifts and inspiring messages. Gabriel Mendieta's testimony was absolutely mesmerizing. With his voice drowned by tears and emotions, Mendieta shared his moving story. He was a young man who grew up in poverty under the effort and care of a single mother. He lived in a world of gangs and drugs but redirected his life and now dedicates time to strengthen his small barber shop and his family. Mend-

ieta recognizes that under the direction of God and his wife, he has begun to live in ways of integrity. Manny Hernandez, another of the speakers, told of his life experience and his passion for serving the community. Hernandez is a high-ranking officer in the police system of the county. He helps needy men, gives legal assistance and is also a man who fears God.

Gregorio Avilés, pastor, presented the basics for a life of integrity in Christ, inviting each man to give his best in favor of the church, family and society.

Each year the Hispanic Men's Ministries of the Oklahoma Conference recognizes youth talent and integrity. This time the winners of the awards were Carlos Maya and Jorge Serrano, Jr. Maya was commended for his commitment and leadership in the church and

for his academic achievements. He is beginning his higher education at Oklahoma Central University. Serrano, Jr., holds the record of being the youngest man to receive the Certificate of Leader of Men's Ministries in the Oklahoma Conference and in the Southwestern Union, and was recognized for his efforts and support as well.

At the end of the program, the pastors who were present had the opportunity to mingle with the more than 30 non-Adventist men who attended the breakfast. The event concluded with individual prayers, interchanging of opinions and messages of motivation and commitment.

————— *By Florencio A. Bueno*



New School Opens

Grand Opening is a Dream Come True

MUSKOGEE, OKLA. – On Sunday, Aug. 12, the Muskogee Seventh-day Adventist Christian Academy (MSDAC) celebrated the opening of its newly built facility. The afternoon began with a dedication service by the local pastor, Jose Torres; Oklahoma Conference Executive Secretary Apple Park and Treasurer Roger Driver; and an introduction of the MSDACA faculty by Education Superintendent Tim Kripps. Muskogee Mayor Bob Coburn also spoke, expressing his gratitude for the positive impact that a new school

will have on the community. After the ribbon cutting, everyone enjoyed music, jumping castles, refreshments and a tour of the beautiful classrooms and the large gymnasium.

This celebration marked the reality of a dream come true for the Muskogee church. The church has been working on this project for the past five years. The school board and staff look forward to serving the community by providing a quality, Christ-centered education in this new, spacious, inspirational facility.

By Charise Sandoval



Highways and Hedges

Missionaries on the Road

OKLAHOMA CITY – According to Luke 14:15-24, we are called to go to the highways and hedges to invite and compel those who would not normally come to the feast on their own. Members of the Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Ministry (SKMM) feel that this is one of our calls in these last days. The Lord has placed a burden on our hearts to reach those who haven't heard the message of the Lord's soon return and His invitation into the Kingdom.

This ministry will go anywhere we are called to share God's Love. Whether it

is through hospital visits, church visits, home visits, prayer ministry, Jericho rides around cities, literature booths, or seminars, we are ready.

The Sabbath Keepers in this Union (with several chapters in Oklahoma, Arkansas and Kansas) have been privileged to work with other motorcycle ministries to form a network of God's people reaching bikers everywhere. We meet many times a year to share rides, rally information and prayer requests.

Each Fall, SKMM, the 3 Angels Messengers Motorcycle Association (3AM)

and Adventist Motorcycle Ministry (AMM) get together near Athens, Texas, for the Southwestern Union's annual Cowboy and Biker Camp at the South-west Region Conference's Lone Star Camp. It is a time for sharing stories and testimonies, a time for rides through the countryside together, and a time for prayer and renewing of spirit. The members of the SKMM are a family of like-minded missionaries who wish to do our part for God's kingdom.

By R. L. Simpson



Young Preachers

Five Youth Preach the Word at Camp Meeting

WEWOKA, OKLA. – Every summer at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center, constituents of the Oklahoma Conference and neighboring friends receive a rich blessing as a result of the fellowship and presentations at its annual camp meeting. This year was no exception especially as it was given an extra spark by participating young people during the adult services in the main auditorium.

Aside from the young people leading out in prayer, special music, and song service, there was extra excitement as our older constituents witnessed pow-

erful sermon presentations by children, youth and young adults.

Five young people from throughout the conference were selected, coached and prayed for to preach during one of our afternoon sessions. Our young preachers, most of which have some level of preaching experience, included an eight-year-old third-grader, a high schooler, a recent high school graduate, a young entrepreneur in her mid 20s and a young adult in his mid 30s who works as a supervisor at a local energy company. Each of them presented a

message about faith through the life stories of various Bible characters. After their messages, some of them were approached by the audience and given invitations to preach at their local churches. The Oklahoma Conference is excited about our young people and looks forward to seeing how these young people will continue to inspire others to preach God's word, no matter your age or background.

By Daniel Ortega
Youth Ministries/Communication Director
Photos by Christian Smith



Decisions for Christ

Group Rejoices in First Baptisms

ENID, OKLA. – Pastor Gregorio and Zandra Aviles recently celebrated Enid Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Group's first baptisms since this group was formed. The four individuals baptized were a result of natural church development using Christ's method over a period of three months.

The leadership is committed to being intentional about incorporating those whom they are studying with and have built relationships with into their fellowship and programing. These four, now members, were being included in the

Friday vespers, youth programs and personal bible study leading up to making their decision for Christ.

The church is excited about how God is working, and together they move forward in faith believing that He will continue to use them to bring others into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

By Daniel Ortega
Youth Ministries/Communication Director



New Church Building

Congregation Celebrates Anniversary in a New Building

TULSA – When I arrived to my new district in Tulsa, the Independence Seventh-day Adventist Church was preparing for a great celebration. However, it was not any ordinary celebration; this was going to be a very special occasion because we would celebrate 22 years since the first Spanish Seventh-day Adventist church began in the Tulsa area. It began in humble house that for many years served as a shelter for the work of God and that became a shining beacon of light for the city. From that house, other churches have begun, and the Adventist work has grown greatly.

One more anniversary would be a reason to be grateful for the way God has guided us here, but in my prayers I was asking the Lord to provide us with a more adequate place to worship Him.

One day, a realtor friend of mine told me that there was a church building for sale. We had visited several church buildings with him, but this time we were impressed by the structure even though it had been empty for more than a year. It was spacious, beautiful and comfortable. Its price was in line with our budget and we decided to pray about it, consult with the administrators of the Oklahoma Conference and manage the loan. We started the purchase process, they accepted our offer and then we had to wait six months to resolve some legal issues to complete the purchase, but finally, they gave us the keys and the building was ours. Our members were enthusiastic about the possibility of fixing it and decided to completely remodel it inside.

Each of the church members put their talents at the service of God in the restoration of the building which we proposed to finish in three months. God blessed us abundantly. We worked day and night without stopping and finally, on Saturday, Aug. 25, we were able to offer the Lord a beautiful temple, as He deserves.

We thank God for our 22nd anniversary. We wanted a celebration, but God had other plans. He wanted to give us a gift for future generations. May God bless the Independence church and prosper our work until the day of His coming.

By Luis E. Prieto
Photos by Hugo Gamas



A Shining Light

Demonstrating the Compassion of the Gospel



There can be no life without light. 1 Timothy 6:16 declares that God Himself dwells in light. The church is to be the light of the world and the light of the community. The church is commissioned to carry the light of the gospel truth to the world. It must never hide its light, or allow the world and the community to remain in darkness. In addition to its witness of the gospel, it must also glorify God by its good works. This means that the church must not only declare the gospel, it must also demonstrate the compassion of the gospel with the good works of service to humanity.

Ellen G. White revealed the mission of the church in *Acts of the Apostles*, which says, “The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world.” Notice that it says that the church was organized for service: service to the world, service to the city, and service to the community. The goal of the church today must be to minister to the felt needs of the community, both physically and spiritually. Every member should be given the opportunity to minister in some way for Christ to the needs of others.

Christ demonstrated concern and compassion for humanity with His good works that uplifted the fallen, healed the sick and ministered to the needy. His mission resonated with Isaiah 61:1 “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.” (NKJ)

Following the Master’s example, we must reach out in service to the people of the community. But first, we must find out what the needs are, then develop programs and activities to meet those needs. This can be done by members going door-to-door to assess the needs of the community. Also, members who live in the community could provide information about the needs of the community. Secondly, the community should be informed about the services and programs that the local church provides. A number of helpful programs include food pantries, health fairs and seminars, youth athletic programs, tutoring programs, finance and family seminars or mentoring programs.

It is not enough to conduct evangelistic meetings and prophecy seminars. These evangelistic efforts will be more productive if there are ongoing services to the community; these efforts will impact the lives of people and fulfill the Master’s mission.

Finally, the local church must pass on the torch of service to the youth. Young men and women must be prepared and trained to carry on the mission of service to the community. They must understand that the mission is ministry to others and service to the community. Let us let our light shine that the community will see our good works of service for Christ, and be prepared for our Lord’s return.

By Grace Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church Pastor Helvius Thompson



Exploring Jesus' World

Alpha Church Brings Sea of Miracles to Austin

AUSTIN, TEX. – The Austin Alpha Seventh-day Adventist Church recently launched another spirit-filled Vacation Bible Xperience (VBX) using the Sea of Miracles program created by the Children's Ministries Department of the North American Division.

The church averaged 45 students in attendance each night and a third of those attendees were not members of the church. Through VBX, we offered these children an opportunity to explore what the world was like during Biblical times when Jesus walked the earth.

In one activity, students crushed flowers to make perfume. They dyed wool and pressed grapes with their feet to make "grape juice." They even ground wheat to make flour. The Bible

Story station "Simona's House" was a place where Bible characters told stories from Jesus' time. The children entered Simona's tent and experienced activities that made each story captivating.

Our game station was called "Shepherds' Field." Here we featured activities that emphasized the key Bible points we had learned earlier in the day. The most inspirational station was the Prayer station. Children climbed the "Mountaintop" which was an upstairs conference room that featured quiet "caves." Once there they learned how to pray for others and fellowship with the Master.

The most work however, went into the "Fish Market." This area included a snack station and curriculum. Here the teachers were given yet another opportunity to reinforce lessons. The Fish

Market featured sea-themed hot meals and desserts.

We ate and fellowshiped together as one big happy Austin Alpha church family as the team told stories and taught students how to pray and give thanks for their meals.

The grand finale was our VBX Sabbath program. That day the children and leadership team shared songs, a video montage and even a formal graduation. It was a blessing to see first-time introductions of children to Jesus!

By Donna Radford-Dalton



Because We Care

Fondren Community Services Benefit Fair

MISSOURI CITY, TEX. — “We serve because we care” was the rallying cry from Southwest Region Conference Community Services Director Durandel Ford, as he addressed the nearly 100 devoted and committed volunteers and team leaders of the Fondren Southwest Seventh-day Adventist Worship Center in Missouri City on Sunday, Aug. 5, from noon to 3 p.m.

The fifth annual Community Services Benefit Fair was held at the Fondren church, where Gordon Jones is the pastor and Michelle Mota is the assistant pastor.

The mission of the Community Services Ministry under the direction of Myrna Sharpe and her team of volunteers is: “Lending a Helping Hand Today for a Brighter Tomorrow.” The Community Services Benefit Fair was an enormous undertaking which included, but was not limited to, free health education, health screening, nutrition education, clothing giveaway and career

development. The goal was to equip, educate and empower the families in the surrounding areas of the church.

The highlight of the day was the church’s ability to provide almost 400 backpacks with school supplies to students from grades Pre-K to high school completely free. We also distributed free school uniforms.

In order to receive the backpacks, families went through a registration procedure and were required to visit at least 10 educational and medical booths which were manned by 50 vendors.

Some of the vendors offered diabetes education, dental, vision, hearing, blood glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol screenings. They also offered suicide prevention, information to prevent bullying and immigration counseling services.

The children who attended the fair also enjoyed free entertainment including face painting, and they snacked on snow cones, popcorn and hot dogs.

Another very important feature was the blood drive provided by the Gulf Coast Regional Blood Bank. The staff reported that “It was a very good day as we were able to receive a record 15 pints of blood in two and a half hours.”

Several universities and colleges were represented to offer education, career choices, tutoring opportunities and workforce solutions.

The Fair has been an ongoing initiative where we have been providing food and household items to an average of 128 families each week.

We are able to do this with the assistance of community partners such as Walmart, Target, Costco and the Food Bank. We are blessed to be able to bless others.

By Dora G. Morton
Photos by Rufus L. Morton



University of the Saints Conference Launches Lay Training School

DALLAS – With the vision of Southwest Region Conference President Calvin Watkins, we launched the University of the Saints, a training school for lay members desiring to work in building the Kingdom of God. We have begun the Spanish branch of the university. The curriculum for the Church Leadership Certification includes eight classes and we hope to graduate 400 to 600 lay leaders. Participants receive instruction on the theological foundations for Christian leadership, how to manage conflict in the church context, how to

instill change and other basic topics related to church leadership. In a *Review and Herald* article dated Nov. 6, 1888, Ellen G. White wrote, “The minister should not feel that it is his duty to do all the talking and all the laboring and all the praying; but he should make it a part of his work to educate workers in every church.” This declaration as well as Jethro’s counsel to Moses in Exodus 18:1-12 underlines the importance of a leadership program to train lay leaders.

— *By Vanston Archbold*
Multilingual Director



My Hand in His Placing Trust in God in All Things

DALLAS – My life changed one September day in 2016 when I learned my test results were positive for breast cancer. After a whirlwind of tests and doctors’ visits, I had surgery on Oct. 20. My father-in-law passed away on Oct. 26 and our family began planning his memorial. Chemotherapy, not in my original treatment plan, began Dec. 1.

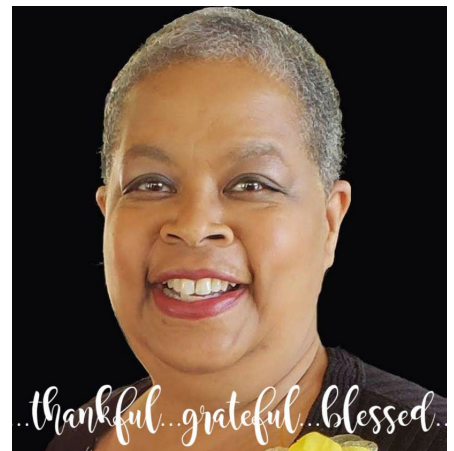
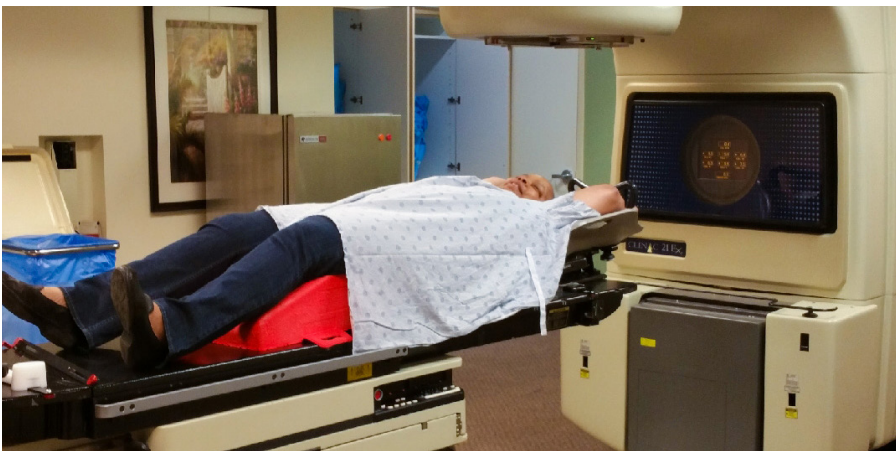
Soon after, my mother’s health began to decline. I went through a difficult chemotherapy process and my hair began to fall out. However, I was blessed not to have experienced the severity of

the unpleasant effects that many people have, but that internal chemical warfare was no joke.

2017 rolled in and while I got used to a bald head, my son’s life was spared from a horrific car accident and my mother’s health deteriorated. She passed away Feb. 20. We celebrated my son’s wedding that spring, and I continued radiation treatment. Through it all I experienced an unexplainable peace! My prayer was, “Lord, I’m surprised but I know You are not, so I’m placing my hand in Yours and I ask that You guide me through this.”

I thank God that my doctors insisted I get my mammogram, and that the radiologist spotted the suspicious tissue despite no lumps nor external signals. I thank God for supportive family and friends, and dedicated and caring medical staff. I thank God for peace and His presence through it all! I want to encourage you that when you feel blindsided, know there is a God who is bigger than it all; One who sees your way through the mess. Trust Him!

— *By Janice Ford*
Shepherdess Coordinator



Paying It Forward

The Frank L. Jones Sr. Scholarship

DALLAS – The Office of Regional Conference Ministries (ORCM) is an organization that helps to coordinate some of the events and ministries of Regional conferences along with African American Ministries in other North American Seventh-day Adventist conferences. One of the significant leaders in this office was Frank L. Jones Sr. who served the Church for several years and in his later years as a Financial Leader in our ORCM Office in Huntsville, Ala. At his passing, a scholarship was established in his honor. The Frank L. Jones Sr. Scholarship is now an internship established to provide and encourage accounting and business administration students exposure to the opportunities in

treasury work in our Regional Conference offices across the country. This year we were privileged to select Ms. Jasmyn Collins, a Junior accounting major at Oakwood University. Starting this past June, Jasmyn successfully helped us reconcile our entire General Ledger Fixed Asset Accounts with our File Content Support. During that time, we were able to share with her the interworking of our department, from participating in our staff meetings to looking over the shoulder of each team member as they accomplished their specific duties. Additionally, I was able to sit with her and explain our accounting reporting and budgeting, etc. In my exit interview with Jasmyn in August, she expressed

her gratitude for the opportunity and said she learned a great deal. We pray that she will have continued success as she looks forward to her senior year at Oakwood and hopefully will consider serving our Lord in one of our Regional conferences very soon.

————— *By Philip Palmer, Treasurer*

Front row, from left: Jasmyn Collins, business intern; Marion Ricks, treasury administrative assistant, Sheree Brown, accountant. Back row, from left: Terry Foster, under treasurer; Philip Palmer, treasurer; Maggie Moore, associate treasurer.



Blow the Trumpet in Zion

Heeding God's Command as We Face End Times



As we look over the landscape of the world today, there is absolutely no doubt whatsoever that we are living in the prophetic toenails of the statue that the prophet Daniel visualized. That being the case, it is imperative that, as a church, we comprehend God's deep desire and concern for us as we sail into the turbulent times and hideous happenings that surround us.

Joel 2:1 says, "Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill. Let all who live in the land tremble, for the day of the Lord is coming. It is close at hand." We ask ourselves, what is the significance of the trumpet symbolism? In the Old Testament book of Numbers 10:9, it says, "When you go into battle in your own land against an enemy who is oppressing you, sound a blast on the trumpets. Then you will be remembered by the Lord your God . . ." The New King James Version says, "sound an alarm with the trumpets." I believe we are currently in "4 Alarm" territory as far as the seriousness of the times in which we are living. As society crumbles around us, as iniquity abounds, as the church sputters against the stark winds of corruption, God distinctly commands, "Blow the trumpet in Zion!"

Now I find this remarkable. Who is Zion? Well, that would be us. The psalmist declares in Psalm 132:13, "For the Lord has chosen Zion, He has desired it for His dwelling . . ." Where on earth has the Lord chosen to reside? In His church. In the midst of His people. As the people of the three angels' message, our ears should perk up at the mention of the trumpet.

Notice the words found in Revelation 8:13: "As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: 'Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!'" God's call to His people in this last day scenario is two-fold. It's individual and it's corporate. The urgency is obvious. Far too many of us are completely comfortable with our status-quo spirituality. Much like Israel of old, we have sunk into apathy as far as our relationship with the Almighty. May the Lord strengthen us, as a church, as we face the rapidly approaching storm. I pray that we remain faithful to the end.

By Carlos Craig, President



Sowing to Thrive

Planned Giving and Trust Services

ALVARADO, TEX. – One of the most common causes of stress relates to money and finances. The same issue ranks as one of the top three issues that couples fight over. No wonder the Bible says in Romans 13:8, “Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.”

Our heavenly Father knows when we owe more than the “debt of love,” the emotional stress and relational burdens we carry may interfere with our ability to give 100 percent of ourselves back to Him or to our fellow man. Life under these circumstances essentially robs us of opportunities to support the family, friends and ministries we love.

The vision of the Texas Conference Department of Planned Giving and

Trust Services is to see families thriving, while managing God’s call to live godly lives. Living a godly life encompasses the total person. It includes the physical, spiritual and mental health, but also relational and financial health as well. We acknowledge the principle of sowing in Galatians 6:7, “A man reaps what he sows” while trusting God’s prophetic words in Jeremiah 29:11, “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’”

Our department goal is to assist in education, training and service with regards to “financial sowing” both in-life and at the end-of-life. By God’s grace, we help families “reap” the blessing of caring for and protecting their loved

ones as well as supporting the Lord’s work. Trust Officers Jerrod Songy and Deyvy Rodriguez travel to churches providing Sabbath morning worship services and mid-week prayer meetings, as well as seminars on personal finance, stewardship and estate planning.

Through this department, we make available the following estate planning documents: Wills, Trusts, Charitable Gift Annuities, Powers of Attorney for Finances and Healthcare and Advance Directives (sometimes referred to as a Living Will).

Along with the trust officers, the ministry is led and supported by Roger Mekelburg, director; Lynette Ecord, associate director; and Sofia Fuentes and Claudia Dominguez, administrative assistants.



Date Night

San Marcos Couples Enjoy Special Time Together

SAN MARCOS, TEX. – The San Marcos Seventh-day Adventist Church Family Ministries coordinates marriage enrichment activities to strengthen relationships. Following the activities, couples have an opportunity to go out together while the Pathfinder Club members watch their children. Any donations given are used to raise funds for the International Pathfinder Camporee scheduled for Aug. 12-17, 2019 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

By Kristi Heinrich Reeves
Photo by Josue Murillo



Following God's Call

Houston International Church Members Serve in Indonesia

HOUSTON – The Houston International Seventh-day Adventist Church mission team follows The Great Commission to teach all nations. The team has traveled to eight countries in the continents of Asia, Africa and South America resulting in close to 2,000 baptisms, six church plants and constructions, thousands of literature distributions, 5,000 Bible studies and hundreds of patients seen for health care needs.

The team visited North Sumatra, Indonesia, for the second time in early June 2018. A typical day for the volun-

teers started with worship and breakfast at seven in the morning. Two hours later, the team headed to the clinic site with a multidisciplinary team of physicians, nurses, a dentist, a pharmacist and other volunteers. In all, 280 patients received care. Once the clinic ended around two in the afternoon, the team had lunch then retreated to rest before the reaping series at six in the evening. They held the evangelistic meetings in Northern Sumatra at Porsea, Laguboti, Balige, and Parsoburan concurrently. The team was divided to support the meetings at

the four sites leading in special music, health nuggets, sermons, Q&A with gifts for attendees, and a children's program. After five days of evangelistic meetings, 34 people gave their lives to Jesus and were baptized on the last Sabbath of the mission trip. The Bible workers and pastors in the host country will continue working with the baptized individuals for an additional three months to ensure they are grounded in the faith.

By Judy Motanya and Steven Mbola
Photos by Lydia Mbola



Following Jesus' Example

Acts Two Church Members Help A Stranger In Need

PLANO, TEX. – The call came out of the blue. Julie's adult son was very sick. Doctors did not know how long he would live. The church members decided to pull together their airline miles and fly her to be with her son 1,800 miles away in Plano, Texas.

Additionally, a church member picked her up from the Dallas/Fort Worth Airport and drove her to her son's hospital in Plano.

Keith Gray, pastor of the Acts Two Seventh-day Adventist Church, had also received a call requesting, "Would

your church members help a stranger in need?" Without hesitation he asked, "What can we do?" Pastor Gray greeted Julie the night she arrived, inviting her to Sabbath services that included breakfast. Church members also arranged for meals and volunteered to house Julie.

Thankfully, things turned around for Julie's son. She credits the prayers given on his behalf by family, friends and church members including the strangers that became friends. Acts Two church members provided a modern-day example of Matthew 25:35: "For I was hungry

and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in."

Seventh-day Adventist Church members are a wonderful network of caring people. Only in Heaven will Julie's son meet all those who helped his mother and prayed on his behalf. Thank you for the continued prayers for his health.

— By *Tamara Michalenko Terry*
Associate Communication Director

A Mall Experience

Church Members Coordinate Health Fair at Local Mall

FORT WORTH, TEX. – When God is by your side, amazing things can happen. That's how a group of church members felt when they decided to offer something to their community. The group wanted to offer a break for people with activities that would fill them physically, mentally and spiritually. A health fair seemed a natural idea.

As the group discussed different location opportunities and someone suggested a mall. Why not? They proceeded to make a request at the Hulen Mall in Fort Worth. Excited to receive

approval, the group quickly finalized arrangements offering stations with amazing health facts, vegetarian food samples, doctor and nutritionist advice, a bounce house for children and an exercise station in addition to incredible prizes that included two kayaks and two cruiser bicycles.

One of the busiest stations was the massage area. It gave people the opportunity to de-stress for a few minutes. More than 300 people visited the various stations with 57 people requesting free Bible Studies.

"It's a model that could be used in many other places," shared Texas Conference Evangelism Director Dan Serns.

It was exciting being able to help people. The group is looking for other ways they can help the community. After all, that's what the Lord says we should be doing in Matthew 25:40, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

— By *Lois Serns*
English Evangelism Associate Director



Backyard Mission Field

Jefferson Christian Academy Receives Dorm Makeover

JEFFERSON, TEX. — During February 2018, Carl and Sandy Keller (pictured on right) began dreaming about taking another mission trip. They had been on several and were hooked.

“Why don’t we do a mission trip close to home and save all our travel time and money for lodging? We could use our own tools, sleep in our own beds, and still be on a mission “trip,” Sandy proposed. “Let’s do a mission trip to Jefferson Christian Academy!”

Carl took the idea to the Jefferson Central Seventh-day Adventist Church

board, discussed it with the elders and the pastor, and people got excited. Close to home was a big draw for those who couldn’t take a lot of time off from work.

During alumni weekend in April, an appeal went out for help on the Boy’s Dorm, which was badly in need of repair. It was a great project for a mission trip. The church promised \$3,800 and two weeks of work with a Vacation Bible School in between.

The whole dorm was scraped down and painted and eight weeks into the venture, a load of new vinyl flooring

arrived. Sandy promised that as long as the money kept coming, she would be on the job.

The mission trip that started with \$3,800 mushroomed into a \$25,000 job. For anyone interested in being a part of a mission trip, Sandy says, “Check out your own backyard.” There are many projects that God has waiting for someone to tackle. If He can use you to organize and get things started, you have no idea what He can turn it into!

By Sylvia Downs



Gifts & Talents

Dallas New Life Young People Make Beautiful Music

RICHARDSON, TEX. — Hearing an organ and piano when you enter a Seventh-day Adventist Church may not be surprising. Finding out the musicians are in elementary school could be surprising. Fourth grader Noah Maturi, pianist, and sixth grader Jabari Mosoti, organist, welcome members and guests to the Dallas New Life Seventh-day Adventist Church in Richardson with beautiful hymns played mostly without music. They are two very talented young men.

By Tamara Michalenko Terry
Associate Communication Director



The Second Mile

There Are No Limits to God's Mercy



While preaching at an evangelistic meeting not too long ago, I noticed a man in the audience with an expression of pain on his face. After the meeting, I asked him if I could help him and he placed his hands on his side and said, "I am in pain. I need fresh air." I walked him out of the church and sat him down. As we started talking, I realized that this was someone I knew and had not seen for years. However, he was no longer the young energetic man that was once part of the church. He told me he had recently fallen and had injured his ribs. His pain was evident, but it went beyond the bruising on his face. He shared with me that he had lost his marriage and children due to drug addiction and he was now alone, homeless, broke and hopeless. He said that he wanted help and I could see his desire to turn to God, but he said he felt unworthy to return to church. In anguish he said, "I have already been baptized twice."

Whenever I meet someone who has fallen to sin repeatedly and wonders if the church will accept them with open arms or rejection, I cannot help but ask, How deep is God's mercy and as a Church, how should we react when a person who fails more than once expresses they want to be restored? Shouldn't we walk the second mile and give meaning to what Jesus said in Matthew 18:22, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." And shouldn't we be careful when thinking we can decide when a person can no longer be worthy of God's grace after failing "too many times"?

In the Gospels we find the story of Mary who was considered a great sinner. *The Desire of Ages* tells us that Jesus could have "extinguished every spark of hope in her soul, but He did not. It was He who had lifted her from despair and ruin." Praise God for his goodness, patience and His great mercy! The author continues, "Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away... Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration."

These words make me think of this hurting man who stumbled into that meeting that night. The help he needed most was getting pointed to the only source of hope and the only One who could restore him... seventy-seven more times if necessary. Today, I urge all of us to keep this in mind. Let us follow Jesus' example and be careful not to limit God's mercy by closing the door to those who need Him most. By praying diligently, we can exercise love, tenderness, patience and self-control when dealing with those who are seeking acceptance into our churches. May God use us as instruments of His glory, goodness and mercy because we never know if there will come a time when we will need to be shown the same kind of loving mercy.

By Jose Manuel Rodriguez, Family Ministries Director



Community Service

Santa Fe Spanish Churches Bring Hope to the Community

SANTA FE, N.M. – It has been exciting to see members of the various Santa Fe Spanish Seventh-day Adventist churches come together this year and work actively in community service. Most recently, Women’s Ministries directors Edith Cummings of Santa Fe Marcy Park Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church and Martha Ocegüera of the Santa Fe Airport Seventh-day Adventist Company put together what they call “buckets of hope” for women of the Esperanza Shelter, a support center for battered families in Santa Fe. The buckets contained toiletries, gift cards, blankets and other household items. Esperanza Director Sophie Dant was moved to tears and expressed tremendous gratitude for the kind and loving act of compassion. “Seeing those beau-

tiful buckets full of gifts for the women of Esperanza Shelter made us feel like it was Christmas again,” said Dant. “I’m thankful to the Seventh-day Adventist Church for bringing happiness and love to our shelter.”

The Santa Fe Airport Company members are also ministering to the homeless community in Santa Fe. Every Friday morning, several members of the congregation prepare homemade burritos and place them in a bag along with water, chips and church literature. These bags are becoming a symbol of hope to those receiving them and many in the homeless community eagerly look forward to receiving the bags and seeing their “angels of compassion” every week. “Many of our homeless brothers do not know how to read,” says Martha

Ocegüera. “Yet, it is touching to see that the ones that do read look forward to reading the inspirational literature we provide to their friends.”

It is no wonder the motto throughout the Santa Fe churches is, “We are one church with several congregations.” We definitely are one church, and I encourage all the congregations in our world church to find ways to reach our communities and meet their needs. In doing so, both our churches and communities will be blessed and we will shine in our communities like the noon day!

By Leonard Cummings
Adventist Community Services Director



Guyana Mission

Corrales Church Joins Mission Effort

CORRALES, N.M. – The Corrales Seventh-day Adventist Church is always looking for ways to do outreach. Recently, they decided to support their fellow members, Bruce and Monique Wilkerson, who are missionaries in Guyana. Since 2015, Bruce and Monique have served as project managers for Adventist World Aviation Wings for Humanity (AWA), an international humanitarian aid organization that was founded to meet the demands of isolated frontier missionaries in desperate need of air support. Guyana, a country on South America’s North Atlantic coast, is defined by its dense rainforest. Despite Guyana’s economic assets of its natural resources mainly its pristine rainforests, sugarcane plantations, rice fields, baux-

ite and gold reserves it remains one of the poorest countries in South America.

Part of Bruce and Monique’s mission work in Guyana is to distribute items such as Bibles, clothing, soccer or volley balls and food items to the most remote areas of Guyana. Over the years, Bruce and Monique have looked to their home church for support and the Corrales church has been more than willing to help this valuable ministry in a number of ways. One of the primary ways has been filling mission barrels with items Bruce and Monique need. Recently, the church once again helped the mission by filling four large barrels with goods. The barrels were shipped on Sept. 17, 2018.

“This initiative is a reminder to our church on the importance to look

beyond ourselves,” said Pastor Andre Arrais. “It’s easy to get caught up with the issues and needs of our local church but forget that there is a hurting world out there that also needs our help.”

Bruce and Monique have a passion to educate people in the way of the Lord and bring them to a real and meaningful relationship with Jesus. The Corrales Church is proud of Bruce and Monique’s commitment to this mission and will continue to support them in any way possible.

By Jenny Larsen



Continuing a Tradition

The Advent Message in Southeast New Mexico

LOVINGTON, N.M. – Every year, the Lovington Seventh-day Adventist Church looks forward to participating in the Lovington County Fair. More than just hosting an information booth at the fair, the Lovington church sees the fair as an opportunity to reach people outside of their church walls. This year the Lovington church handed out more than 1,000 pieces of

Adventist literature. “It was a successful booth,” says Ken Davis, pastor. “We met a lot of people who were interested in health and spiritual matters.”

Adventism in Southeast New Mexico can be traced as far back as 1915 when colporteur H.C. Barron arrived in the area and began to spread the gospel. Today, the Lovington church continues

to share the same message of hope throughout the community through avenues such as its radio ministry, which broadcasts the good news throughout Lovington and Hobbs, N. M., and special events like the county fair. “Only eternity will show how God has worked through these opportunities,” says Davis.

–By Debbie Márquez, Communication Director

Texico's New Pastors

Two Pastors Join Conference to Serve West Texas

CORRALES, N.M. – We are very pleased to announce that there are two new pastors now serving our members in the West Texas Area – Joel Navarro in the Abilene/San Angelo/San Angelo Spanish churches and Ray Christman in the Lubbock church. We are grateful for the contribution that these pastors and their families are making to the Texico Conference.

Navarro comes to us from Andrews University (Andrews) where he recently completed his Master of Divinity degree. He was born in Spain and then studied at Andrews for part of his undergraduate degree before returning to Spain. After earning his first Master's degree in Pastoral Theology from the Adventist Seminary, he pastored in a two-church district where he was the youth pastor in a large church and the lead pastor in a smaller congregation.

During this time Navarro met Martha Detweiler, who had traveled to Spain for a year of concentrated Spanish language study. Joel and Martha fell in love and were married and now have a baby girl named Sophie. Together they have served the church in ministry positions including Local Church Pastor, Bible Teacher/Chaplain at Auburn Adventist Academy and in the Adventist Language School in Hong Kong.

Navarro's ministry passion is to journey with those around him as they

grow closer to Jesus Christ. "My desire is to empower those who wish to be Christ's disciples with Biblical and practical knowledge that will allow them to deepen their own Christian experience and to lovingly lead those around them to the Cross."

Ray Christman assumed pastoral responsibilities at the Lubbock Seventh-day Adventist Church in mid July. He moved with his wife Karie, son Benjamin and niece Haley to Lubbock, Texas, from Orlando, Florida, where he worked as a chaplain for the Adventist Health System.

Christman is an ordained minister and an endorsed chaplain with the North American Division department of Chaplaincy Ministries. Prior to his experience in chaplaincy he pastored in the Texas Conference for some 13 years in both English and Spanish congregations. His passion in pastoral ministry is to be a "Jesus-focused, cross-centered pastor who is committed to helping families experience healthy relationships." He encourages people to pursue their own calling to discipleship through the gifts God has given them.

During his chaplaincy training, Christman completed the standard four units of Clinical Pastoral Education and then further pursued the designation as a Board-Certified Chaplain with the Association of Professional Chaplains.

In reflecting on his transition back to pastoral ministry Christman believes that his experience in chaplaincy ministry deepens his ability to support members and the community during challenging times.

Christman is grateful for his wife Karie who is very supportive and involved in ministry. Karie is a nurse who has also been able to mentor their son, Benjamin, who is now a second-grader at Lubbock Junior Academy. Their niece, Haley, is a senior at Great Lakes Adventist Academy in Michigan. The Christman's are excited about the opportunity to love and serve the Lubbock church family. While Christman has never served in the Texico Conference, it is interesting to note that he is the grandson of Don Christman, who retired as president of this conference the year that Ray was born.

We are very grateful that God has led these two pastoral families to the Texico Conference. It is our prayer that God will bless them greatly as they share their ministry gifts and their hearts with all of us.

By Phil Robertson
Executive Secretary/Treasurer

Left: Martha and Joel Navarro
Right: Karie and Ray Christman



Sandia View's Angel Tree

School Kicks Off the Season of Giving

CORRALES, N.M. – Sandia View Christian School (SVCS) is kicking off the holiday season by setting up their Angel Tree this month. Every year, SVCS staff puts up a Christmas tree and decorates it with angel cutouts. The special angels include gift ideas for kids within the school community. Parents then have the opportunity to take an angel home and provide the gifts. “Angel tree is one of our favorite projects to do,” says SVCS Office Administrator Diann Gurule. “It helps kids have the Christmas they may not have otherwise. It also allows our

students to foster a giving spirit during the holidays.” The wish lists on the angels consist of necessities like clothing and shoes, but they also include fun Christmas gifts like toys.

In addition to the Angel Tree, SVCS also takes part in a community-wide activity that allows them to work closely with the Corrales Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Roadrunner Food Bank of New Mexico. Throughout the month of November, the school collects sleeping bags, winter coats and accessories and on a selected date the seventh-

and eighth-grade classes make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and take the sandwiches and the collected items to Last Chance Ministries, a non-profit organization that works closely with the homeless community. The Corrales church and the Roadrunner Food Bank provide additional food options and other items. “We are looking forward to doing this again this holiday season. What a great way to share God’s hope and love,” says Gurule.

By Debbie Márquez
Communication Director



Texico Conference 2018 School Christmas Program Schedule

EL Paso Adventist Junior Academy
December 1, 2018
11:00am • El Paso Meraz Spanish SDA Church

December 9, 2018
6:00pm • El Paso Northeast SDA Church

December 15, 2018
11:00am • El Paso Central SDA Church

Lubbock Junior Academy
December 8, 2018
11:00am • Lubbock SDA Church

Abilene Junior Academy
December 8, 2018
6:30pm • Abilene SDA Church

Crestview Seventh-day Adventist Academy
December 11, 2018
6:30pm • CSDAA

Adventist Academy of Santa Fe
December 12, 2018
6:30pm • Santa Fe Airport Spanish SDA Church

Sandia View Christian School
December 13, 2018
6:30pm • SVCS Gymnasium

Sandia View Academy
December 14, 2018
6:30pm • Corrales SDA Church



Classified Ads

EMPLOYMENT

Union College invites applicants for an Accounting faculty position.

Qualified applicants will have an MBA or Masters in Accounting, a certification and should be a committed member of the SDA Church. A doctorate is preferred. Find more information at UCollege.edu/faculty-openings or contact Barry Forbes at Barry.Forbes@UCollege.edu

Camp MiVoden is looking for a full-time food service director.

This opportunity to be part of a fantastic team, impacting youth and families in Northern Idaho,

is in the Upper Columbia Conference. Camp MiVoden has been connecting campers to Christ for generations. This director will train, teach and coach summer food-service staff; work with smaller staff, fall through spring, for event meals; and serve in other areas as needed. If you enjoy cooking, hospitality, organization and communication apply at UCCSDA.org/jobs. For questions call 509.242.0506.

Union College invites applicants for a Management teaching faculty position.

Qualified applicants will have a master's degree in a related field and should be a

committed member of the SDA Church. A doctorate is preferred. Find more information at UCollege.edu/faculty-openings or contact Lisa L. Forbes at Lisa.L.Forbes@UCollege.edu

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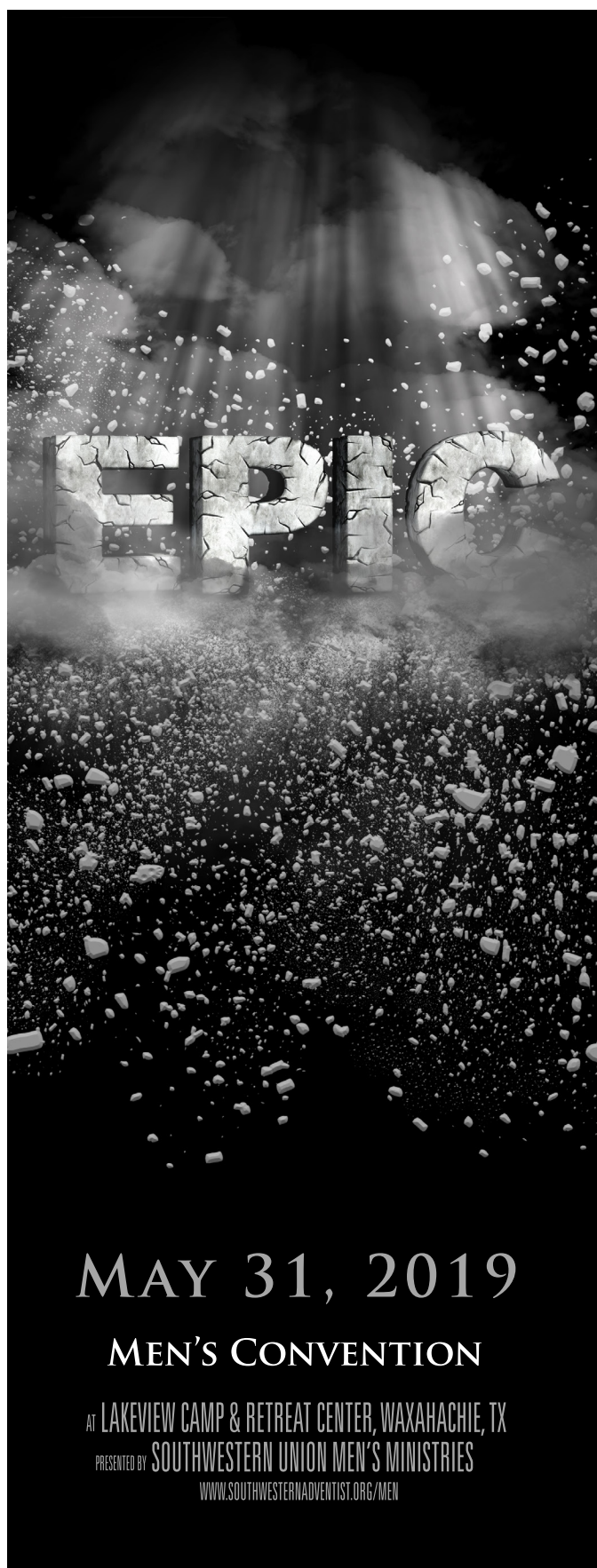
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2019 Adventist Tours Bethlehem to Rome (including Revelation's Seven Churches), June 2-19; Israel in Jesus' Steps, June 2-10; New Testament Alive (Revelation's Seven Churches/Patmos/Greece/Rome option) June 6-19; African Safari & Service, July 18-26. Tours led by Dr. Andy Nash and Dr. Greg King. \$1990+/person. For full info, contact TabghaTours@gmail.com or Facebook.com/TabghaTours

Kenneth Edward Simpson was born Nov. 14, 1948, Mercedes, Tex., and died Sept. 12, 2018. Ken was employed by the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference his entire career. He served as a Seventh-day Adventist Pastor for the first 28 years, serving in several churches in Arkansas and Louisiana. His last 16 years was serving in the Trust Services and Planned Giving Department of the Conference headquarters in Shreveport, La. Preceded in death by son, Marc Simpson and his parents, Edward and Lillian Simpson. Survivors: wife of 47 years, Chris Simpson; son, Gary (Heather), Apopka, Fla.; brother, Clifton (Dian), Arlington, Tex.; sister, Sharon (Edwin), Burleson, Tex.; two grandsons and several nieces and nephews.

NAD Health Summit 2019 “Healing of the Nations.” Designed to provide training, networking and inspiration for anyone involved with or interested in health ministries. January 20-26, 2019, Albuquerque, N.M. Register at nadhealth.org. For more information contact 1.443.300.8845 or summit@nadhealth.org

Milestones

ANNIVERSARIES

On May 3, 2018, Bobby and Evelyn Teal of Slidell, La., celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. On Sabbath, May 5, the Slidell Seventh-day Adventist Church family surprised the Teals with a special service and a special prayer during the service with a meal following. The Teals’ son, Stephen, and wife, Kelly, joined the celebration as well.

Obituaries

Dalton, William Sr. (Bill), born July 31, 1944, Jasper, Tex.; died Sept. 5, 2018, Hempstead, Tex. Church membership: Waller Seventh-day Adventist Church. Survivors: wife, Martha Ann Dalton; son, Bubba Dalton (Pippa); daughter, Cindy Smith; brother, Sydney Joe Dalton (Pansey); sisters, Pat Durden, Cecilia Gilley, Carolyn Sue Dalton, Martha Lynn Varner; four grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren.

Downer, Mildred Bardo-Pettit, born Jan. 11, 1920, Prescott, Ariz.; died May 25, 2018, Moberly,

education, global community development, nursing, religion and social work. Flexibility is provided through some online and many on-campus programs. Financial aid may be available. For more information, call 423.236.2585 or visit Southern.edu/graduatestudies

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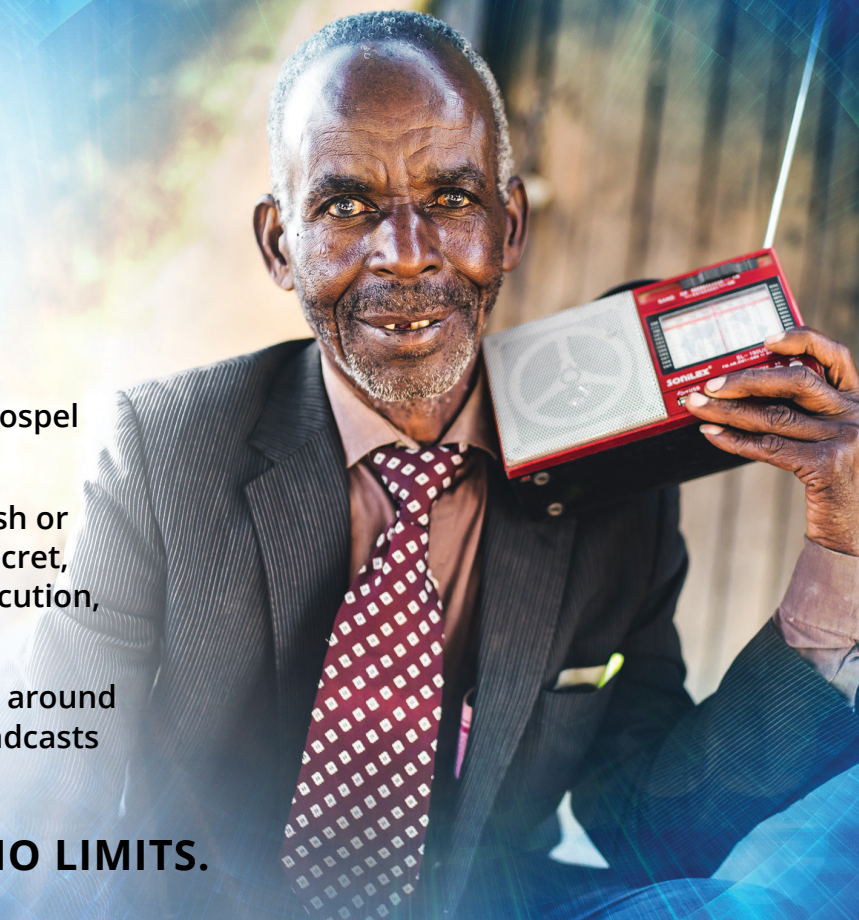
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Mo. Church membership: Chandler Adventist Fellowship. Preceded in death by husbands William Bardo and Clair Pettit; brothers, Elon and Lee Downer; sister, Marie Caraway. Survivors: husband, Leroy Fugitt; children; William Bardo, Eva Sundean, Janice Purkey; stepchildren, Paulette Murphy, David Pettit, Esther Visbal, Mark Fugitt, Noel Fugitt, Desiree Deitrich, Jonathan Fugitt, Aaron Fugitt.

Farrow, Kathryn Ann Amos, born Dec. 6, 1943, Maysville, Okla.; died, Aug. 22, 2018, Ardmore, Okla. Church membership: Ardmore Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by parents, Horace and Sallie Amos; brothers, Tony, Eddie, Richard; sisters, Nona Thomas, Eva Broadway; grandchildren, Jeffrey Loper, Seth Mylonas. Survivors: daughters, Melanie Williams (Marvin), Norman, Okla.; Marty Walker, Norman, Okla.; April McCright, Hospers, Iowa; Holly Burns (Steven), Fort Worth, Tex.; Teresa Mylonas (Tommy), Ardmore, Okla.; sisters, Nola Morrison, Francis Ward (D.C.), Joyce Tewksbury (Jay), Joan Davis, Donna Tucker (Mike); brothers, Carl Amos (Barbara); 13 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren.

Guy, Herman, born Dec. 18, 1930, Iola, Kan.; died April 22, 2018, Lawton, Mich. Church membership: Weslaco Seventh-day Adventist Church. Survivors: wife, Jane; daughter, Janita Steffan; sons, Jon and Jim; seven grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren.

Heinrich, Evalena, born April 18, 1937, Enid, Okla.; died Jan.

15, 2018. Church membership: Enid Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by her parents, Salamo and Eva Bill, and one brother, Evert Bill. Survivors: husband, Gilmore (Pete); son Gene Heinrich, Brush Prairie, Wash.; two daughters, Carol Ochoa, Spangle, Wash., and Twila Doucet, Ringwood, Okla.; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren.

Heinrich, Gilmore (Pete), born Oct. 13, 1928, Okeene, Okla.; died July 1, 2018. Church membership: Enid Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by his parents, Samuel and Emma Heinrich; wife, Evalena; three brothers, and two sisters. Survivors: son, Gene Heinrich, Brush Prairie, Wash.; two daughters, Carol Ochoa, Spangle, Wash. and Twila Douchet, Ringwood, Okla.; one brother, Larry Heinrich, Billings, Okla.; one sister, Joyce Helmer, Barstow, Calif.; four grandchildren; three great-grandchildren.

Irvine, John, born Aug. 13, 1928, Brisbane, Australia; died July 25, 2018, Harrah, Okla. Church membership: Summit Ridge Seventh-day Adventist Church. Survivors: wife, Enid; son, David (Ione), Grove, Okla.; daughter, LaDelle Gay (Spencer), Charlottesville, Va.; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren.

Johnson, Edward, born Nov. 4, 1943, Alhambra, Calif.; died Aug. 14, 2018, McKinney, Tex. Church membership: Denison-Sherman Seventh-day Adventist Church. Survivors: wife, Jan Johnson, Gober, Tex.; sons, Charles Johnson (Kim), Ionia, Mich.,

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Back Pages

and Daryl Johnson, Oklahoma City, Okla.; daughters, Sandra Johnson, Crawford, Colo., and Janelle Lawson, Edmond, Okla.; Jason Owens (Renee), North Richland Hills, Tex.; brother, Ertis Johnson Jr. (Marilyn), Elk City, Okla.; sisters, Nancy Hicks, Vinita, Okla., and Linda Adami, Chipley, Fla.; six grandchildren; four great-grandchildren.

Larmore, Jim Jr., born Jan. 1, 1945; died Aug. 21, 2018, Bartlesville, Okla. Church membership: Oklahoma Conference Seventh-day Adventist Church. Survivors: wife, Tammy.

Meekma, Peter Jr., born March 19, 1933, Racine, Wis.; died July 19, 2018, Apopka, Fla. Church membership: Forest Lake Seventh-day Adventist

Church. Preceded in death by parents, Peter Sr. and Mabel Harriet Henke Meekma; sister, Jenina Meekma; brothers, Kenneth Meekma and Ronald Meekma; grandchild, Joshua Meekma. Survivors: wife, Kathleen; sons, Peter Meekma III (Freda), Robert "Brian" Meekma, Kevin Meekma (Yolanda), Stephen Meekma (Jani); brother, Glen Meekma; sisters, Judy Pervis and Linda Banfe; seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Page, William Conway, born Nov. 15, 1933, Benton, Ark.; died July 13, 2018, Hot Springs Village, Ark. Church membership: Little Rock Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by his wife, Mary. Survivors: daughters, Lisa (Hirsch) and Deborah (Jim); brothers, Brent Page (Wanda), Larry Page (Mickie); sisters,

Linda Nelson (Gary) and Mary Lou Smiley (Nolan); and four grandchildren.

Pickens, Eugene, died July 11, 2018, Colgate, Okla. Survivors: wife, Rebecca Pickens.

Simmons, Bobby Lee, born Nov. 24, 1939, La Sierra, Calif.; died May 25, 2018, Joplin, Mo. Church membership: Ketchum Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Smith, Gladys Lillian VeraCruz, born March 9, 1934, Kealia, Kauai, Hawaii; died Aug. 25, 2018, Elgin, Tex. Church membership: Elgin Seventh-day Adventist Church. Survivors: children, Harold Smith (Debby), Bursleson, Tex.; Nathan Smith (Joy), Elgin, Tex.; and Leilani Stowell (Richard), Cleburne, Tex.; 13 grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren.

Submissions

Back Pages: To submit family milestones, obituaries, announcements or address changes, visit SouthwesternAdventist.org/Communication or call 817.295.0476.

The *Record* also accepts expanded obituaries. For submission and cost information, contact Record@SWUC.org or call 817.295.0476.

News and Articles: Send your local church news and high-resolution photos to your local conference communication representative listed on page 2.

If you are interested in writing for the *Record*, email Record@SWUC.org or visit SouthwesternAdventist.org/Communication to review our writer's guidelines.

Advertising: Contact Bradley Ecord at BEcord@swuc.org or 817.295.0476

Sabbath Sunset Calendar

November-December 2018

	11/2	11/9	11/16	11/23	11/30	12/7	12/14	12/21	12/28
Abilene	6:48	5:43	5:38	5:35	5:33	5:33	5:35	5:37	5:41
Albuquerque	6:12	5:06	5:01	4:57	4:55	4:54	4:55	4:58	5:02
Amarillo	6:53	5:46	5:41	5:38	5:35	5:35	5:36	5:38	5:42
Brownsville	6:48	5:44	5:41	5:39	5:38	5:39	5:40	5:43	5:47
Dallas	6:36	5:30	5:26	5:23	5:21	5:21	5:22	5:24	5:28
El Paso	6:16	5:11	5:06	5:03	5:02	5:01	5:03	5:05	5:09
Fort Worth	6:38	5:33	5:28	5:25	5:23	5:23	5:24	5:27	5:31
Gallup	6:20	5:13	5:08	5:05	5:02	5:02	5:03	5:05	5:09
Gentry	6:22	5:15	5:10	5:06	5:03	5:03	5:04	5:06	5:10
Houston	6:35	5:30	5:26	5:23	5:22	5:22	5:23	5:26	5:30
Little Rock	6:15	5:09	5:04	5:01	4:59	4:58	4:59	5:02	5:06
Muskogee	6:26	5:19	5:14	5:10	5:08	5:08	5:09	5:11	5:15
New Orleans	6:13	5:08	5:04	5:02	5:00	5:00	5:02	5:05	5:08
Oklahoma City	6:35	5:29	5:23	5:20	5:18	5:17	5:18	5:21	5:25
Roswell	6:06	5:00	4:56	4:52	4:51	4:50	4:51	4:54	4:58
San Antonio	6:48	5:43	5:39	5:36	5:35	5:35	5:37	5:39	5:43
Shreveport	6:25	5:19	5:14	5:11	5:10	5:09	5:11	5:13	5:17
Tulsa	6:28	5:21	5:16	5:12	5:10	5:09	5:10	5:12	5:16

Note: Daylight Savings Time ends November 4 at 2:00 a.m.

All 2018 Sunset Calendars are available at SouthwesternAdventist.org/sunset

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