

Record

May | June 2020



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A Heavenly Objective

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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.

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Editor's Note

Whether big or small, we all have goals we hope to accomplish. Achieving those goals requires focus and determination, sometimes it may require sacrifice. When we seek God's leading and direction, those goals can become reality with a tremendous blessing. Proverbs 16:3 says, "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans."

The Lord wants to establish our plans and give us hope and a fruitful future. This includes setting us on a path to accomplish our heavenly goal. Are we as dedicated to our heavenly goal as we are to our earthly and temporary objectives? As you read this issue, I encourage you to reflect on your immediate goals and their eternal impact on your family and friends. Take inventory of your heavenly objective and ask God to guide you and inspire you forward.



Jessica L. Lozano

Cover photo by Teshorn Jackson Photography

A Heavenly Objective

Pursuing Our Goals with Focus and Intention



Larry Moore | President

I have noticed that in sports, as in other areas of life, reaching the goal is important. In fact, if a team fails to reach the goal at least one more time than the opposing team, they can be quickly dismissed as the losers. Ever notice how fast the losing team fades from sight? All because of a few points. No parades, no trophy, no Disneyland. It can be sort of cruel.

Sometimes it can even happen in the church. Is bigger always better? No! When our measuring stick is numbers, we can end up celebrating the wrong thing or person. I have noticed some pastors or churches work very hard only to have meager results. But when we keep our eyes on the goal and work with God's Holy Spirit, He will assume the success or failure of our work.

I rejoice when the results are favorable but I know that many work hard only to have modest results. God, who loves all of His children, will help us to stay focused on the objective of reaching the kingdom.

He knows us from the beginning. Even before we were born. You can trust Him. I am comforted to know that God cares. He will help us to keep our eyes fixed on Him. That's all He asks.

Will you accept His help today?

The book of Nehemiah is an inspirational account of focusing on an objective. Nehemiah received the news of the affliction and reproach of God's people. A Jewish remnant who had survived the exile were now back in their province, but troubled. The walls of Jerusalem had been broken down and the gates burned in Nehemiah 1. He prayed for guidance and resolution, and the Lord heard and answered him. Nehemiah surveyed the scope of the job, secured the necessary resources and set before the people what was needed to get the job done.

Three crucial factors made for fruitful results. First: the people. Individuals who held no independent interests but persons who believed collectively in the power, provisions and promises of God. Second: the work. The people pulled together, creatively utilizing all their resources and ideas collectively to accomplish the task. They used their individual talents to do the various jobs needed. Third: the mind. They believed that the work could be done by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Take courage in the words of Benjamin Baker in his book, *Having a Mind to do the Lord's Work*: "If you are going to accomplish any task you must first set your mind to do it before you ever stretch your muscles to attempt to achieve it...What you believe you can do; you are far more likely to do or at least attempt it. If you believe you cannot do it, you probably will not even try."



Buford Griffith, Jr.
Executive Secretary

Paul was a man of focus. He was a very passionate person who was very intentional and was not easily distracted. Even when Paul was sent to prison, he saw opportunities because he was focused on his mission. There is so much that I can learn from his focus. In my life when bad things happen, my tendency is to get distracted. But, I need to look at every situation as God has put me in an opportunity to help others or share God's love.

Paul was able to endure prison and shipwrecks. And he was still able to write in Philippians 4:4, 6, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!... Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

Paul's perspective in life was always focused on God. In the ups and downs of our lives, let's focus on God. God can turn our challenges into opportunities. Let these verses sink into our hearts so we can focus on God. Philippians 4:11-13 says, "I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength."



John Page | Treasurer

Eyes Fixed *on the* Finish Line

I love car racing. The cars, the different engines and the various tracks, the strategies and the skills of each driver are all part of the exciting package.

Some time ago, I was listening to a driver give an interview about his strategy for winning races. He said, “I just run my race. I don’t worry about what is around me. Lots of people ‘mirror drive’ when they get to the lead.” This essentially means they are staring in their rearview mirror so they can block whoever is coming up behind him. “I don’t do that,” he said.

“You got to the lead for a reason.” The driver continued, “I look ahead, hit my marks, and go as fast as I possibly can without distraction, and I keep my focus until the end.” I believe this driver was taking his quote from Philippians 3:13-14, where Paul says: “But one thing I do, forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.”

The apostle Paul likens the Christian life to running a race. This imagery likely came from Paul’s acquaintance with the Isthmian Games, which were held seven miles east of Corinth in a place called Isthmia. Every few years, Olympic-type games were held there in honor of Greek gods. The Corinthians were very familiar with these games. Using imagery which would be very familiar to his readers, Paul made several points in this metaphor which are analogous to the Christian life.

Runners Run with Focus

In 1 Corinthians 9:24-26, Paul says, “Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air.”

He’s saying: I’m focused on an eternal goal. I’m not just running for no particular reason. There is purpose in my pace.

There is a prize that I’m running after that will never fade, will never wilt, will never tarnish. I don’t want to focus on the temporary stuff and pleasures and applause and awards. I want to keep my eyes focused on eternity. I want to focus on heaven, and I want to take as many people with me as I go.

Trying Hard or Training Wisely?

Then he says in verse 27, “No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.” In other words, I’m going to strike a blow to my body, to my flesh. I’m going to deny myself. I’m going to make it my slave. I’m not going to serve my body; it’s going to be the other way around so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Paul was telling his readers that he was in this race, too. As a leader, he admits that it would be easy to drift. It would be easy to lose focus. It would be easy to miss out on a real life in the midst of running aimlessly through this life. It would be easy to tell everybody elsewhere how to run and not actually run there himself.

As a husband, father and pastor, I know that danger. I keep a little wooden figurine on my desk as a reminder of an article that author Gordon MacDonald wrote several years ago, called “Seven Siphons That Suck the Joy Out of Leadership.” One of those things is Words Without Actions. We can talk about something so much that we deceive ourselves into thinking that we are actually doing it just because we talk about it. And that’s a real and dangerous trap.

I think Paul recognized that trap. He’s saying: I’ve got to deny myself daily, not just talk about denying myself. I’ve got to crucify my flesh every day. And I’m not just going to urge other people to do it; I want to practice it. I want to model it so that I won’t drift, so that I won’t fade, so that I won’t fake it.

For us to stay focused on God’s race, we need to surrender daily, so He can do the transformation He wants to do in us. We also need to go back to the basics of our walk with Jesus.



We need to spend time in prayer, journaling, worship, serving other people, Bible study, memorization, living in the constant awareness of the presence of God in us, saying yes to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as He gives us leadership through the day. That is the type of training we need to finish the race well.

Finish Well

Later on in his life, just about at the end of his race, Paul writes to Timothy and says, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful.” 2 Timothy 4:7 (NLT). Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come. So, stay focused as you run.

If ever there was someone who epitomized the run of a champion, it was Jesus Christ. Talk about training, endurance and focus. Jesus knew that His race was uphill.

He knew that the plan to redeem humanity involved going up a hill to a cross, but He ran there anyway. There were all kinds of distractions for Him not to do that, but He remained focused on His mission.

Jesus was focused. He knew where He was supposed to run. He had His eye on the prize before Him. That prize was us.

In her book *The Ministry of Healing*, Ellen G. White says, “In the warfare in which we are engaged, all may win who will discipline themselves by obedience to the right principles. The practice of these principles in the details of life is too often looked upon as unimportant—a matter too trivial to demand attention. But in view of the issues at stake, nothing with which we have to do is small. Every act casts its weight into the scale that determines life’s victory or defeat. The scriptures bids us, ‘So run, that ye may obtain.’”

Let us run with growing anticipation of that future moment when we will stand before Christ. In that final day, may He place the imperishable crown upon our heads as we give Him glory, saying, “Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” 1 Corinthians 15:57 (NAS). ^R

By Elton DeMoraes, D.Min. DeMoraes is the Southwestern Union Vice President for Church Ministries. He lives in Burleson with his wife Alessandra, and their daughter, Isabella.

Vision Boards

Fun and Creative Projects to Help You Visualize and Achieve Your Goals

By Christina Homs, Educator



“Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans.” For myself, I’ve found that sitting alone with God, taking a moment away from the chaos, has been essential to planning out my path and committing my plans. Lately, I’ve used vision boards as a visual representation.

Vision Boards

You may have heard of vision boards in the context of New Year’s Resolutions, but they can be so much more! Vision boards allow you to have visuals of your plans and aspirations in one place. They can be made for any type of event. Planning an exciting trip? Pursuing a new career? Decorating a new home? You can also make vision boards periodically throughout the year, maybe every three to six months, rather than just one board a year. One year is long

and life can be quite unpredictable. 2020 has been a prime example of how unpredictable one single year can be. During these times, it is important to regroup, come to God and be flexible with your plans.

Vision boards aren’t just for dreaming. I can get lost in my thoughts, caught up in the vision of my future instead of focusing on the daily things I need to do to get me there. Vision



boards can look amazing, but we shouldn't overlook the actual work it takes to achieve our goals. Consider seeing your vision board as an "action board" as well. God calls us to take actions so we can turn our visions into achievable plans.

Getting Started

Before you embark on this creative journey, don't forget to spend some time in the planning stage. Write down exactly what you want to achieve in the near future. Then write down how you plan on getting there. Goals that aren't written down in specifics are just ideas.

Make your vision boards practical, flexible and interactive. One way to do this is to make a vision board that allows for change. You can add additional images or take images down. There are no right or wrong ways to make use of your boards.



There are different types of vision boards that you can choose from to make. If you love searching for pictures and cutting out images from magazines, then a postboard vision board might be for you. It can be as creative as you'd like and it's fun to make with friends and family.

This year I decided to look into digital vision boards. They are practical and I can search for images specific to

my goals. Two websites that are great for making digital boards are [Canva.com](https://www.canva.com) or [Befunky.com](https://www.befunky.com). I simply create a folder on my desktop of images or quotes I've found online and then I import my pictures onto their platforms and make a collage.

You can save the collage image you created and use it as a screensaver for your desktop or phone! You can also print it out on a poster and hang it up where you can see it regularly. Digital boards are easy to make and allow flexibility.

Whichever type of board you choose, just remember we are here for a reason and we serve a God who gives us the tools to be successful. Ephesians 2:10 reminds us, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." God created each of us carefully and has crafted a particular plan for our lives. He allows us the space to be creative with our plans and dreams. Consider spending some time visualizing your goals and committing them to the Lord. ^R



First, Last and Always

One Woman's Lifelong Objective

Her grandmother was special. Dorothy Johnson remembers her grandmother cooking, singing hymns and saying the Lord's Prayer. "Talk to the Lord, she would tell me, and, growing up I always did," says Dorothy. Her grandmother lived with Johnson's family as she grew up in Fort Worth, Texas. The rest of her family, her parents and siblings, were not religious, nor were they invested in each others' lives. "I know my family did the best they could, but I did whatever I wanted and nobody really had anything to say about it. I didn't have any direction and nobody really cared. I could have done anything with my life but nobody cared enough."

Dorothy met Rogers Johnson, who was an Adventist and a member of the Air Force, when he was visiting relatives in her neighborhood. The two married, and she studied the Bible and was baptized. They moved to California and traveled as the military required for four years before settling once again in Fort Worth. Her husband worked as an engineer at Lockheed-Martin, and they soon welcomed two daughters, Reytheda and Dorenda. Dorothy and her husband were determined to raise their girls to know Jesus.

Looking back, Dorothy says she had one goal for herself, her daughters and her family. "Keep God first, last and always. That's all I know and my main objective."

"My husband and I talked and prayed about what we wanted, and we decided early on that we were going to have our children in Christian schools and that I was going to be a stay at home mom so that I could always be there for the girls. It was important for me because of the way I had been raised. I

wished I'd had someone in my life who had been there for me that way."

For the Johnson family to commit to that lifestyle, it meant sticking to a plan, having a strict budget and sometimes sacrificing the "wants" that came along.

"We were a one-income household. We had to stick to our budget and be committed. The Lord always provided for what we needed and we never went without, but sometimes the 'wants' had to come later in order to live the way we had decided on."

When their daughters were school-aged, the Johnsons prayed about where they should be educated and chose to send them to Burton Adventist Academy in Arlington, Texas. Dorothy volunteered at the school, staying very active in the home and school programs. She was so active and involved that eventually she was offered a part-time job at the school as a teacher's aide, a position she kept for more than 20 years. Though she has now retired, she continues to volunteer with various projects at the school.

"I wanted my girls to be brought up to know the Lord, to know about the Bible and to have people around them that cared for them," she says. Dorothy felt that being part of the school's community gave her daughters role models and the opportunity to learn from their peers in a nurturing environment.

"They had a lot of role models. They saw people make both good and bad decisions, and they were able to learn from that and we were able to talk about those decisions." As parents,


Dorothy says she and her husband wanted their children to feel safe talking to them, and to be able to encourage them and to support them.

“We told them, ‘We’re your parents, we want you to be able to make the right choices,’ so they would understand that we wanted them to talk to us and we would help them. And they did—they loved to go to their daddy with their problems.”

The Johnsons were also active in their church. Dorothy liked to stay behind the scenes, helping with background details, while Rogers was active in prison ministries and Pathfinders. Rogers is currently the prison ministries coordinator and Pathfinder director for the Southwest Region Conference. Dorothy, along with a group of women from her church, Forest Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church, has volunteered at the Union Gospel Mission of Tarrant County for more than 20 years, serving meals to the homeless. “We serve the meals, and we also do what we can to make the people we meet feel special,” she says.

Dorothy’s daughters both went on to graduate from college and have had successful careers. Both are married, and Dorothy now has a young grandson, Benjamin. She loves her family and is happy with the fact that her daughters stay in close contact.

“They are loving and kind. Because of my family background, I thought maybe when they got older they wouldn’t want to stop by or talk to us much but they do. They always keep in contact.”

Dorothy loves spending time with her grandson and wants what is best for him. She prays for him to know and love Jesus. It’s her daily prayer that little Benjamin will make his main objective to “keep God first, last and always.” 

By Jessica Lozano. Lozano is the Southwestern Union Communication Director and Record Editor. She lives in Cleburne, Texas.



Teshorn Jackson Photography



Education That Heals

The Journey from Angry Student to Redeemed and Blessed Teacher

By Shania Ramirez-Robles, Student Missionary and Sophomore at Southwestern Adventist University



I did not grow up in a spiritual environment. As a kid, my family didn't attend church very often, only during Easter and Christmas. When I was about eleven years old, one of our family members passed away and suddenly our whole world stopped. Our circumstances changed drastically and we were left heartbroken, rethinking our lives and purpose.

I was very confused and angry as I didn't yet understand the purpose of death, and in my grief, I put a lot of blame on God. During the next couple years while I was in middle school, there were many times I would just scream at God, angry at Him for everything bad that happened. I didn't want anything to do with Him.

We eventually turned to my Seventh-day Adventist aunt and uncle for help. They suggested that we start attending the Adventist schools near our house in Rio Rancho, New Mexico. My younger siblings transferred to Sandia View Christian School, then my older

sister into the high school. I was the last to switch over. The last thing I wanted to do was leave my friends behind for some random small school, but I didn't exactly have much say in the matter, so I began my freshman year at Sandia View Academy (SVA).

My first year was tough. I felt that everyone always talked about this God who was loving and almighty, and they would sing songs I had never heard before about how much God loves us and how He died for us. I couldn't understand it. I couldn't fathom the thought of Him even possibly being by my side after feeling like He had already abandoned me. For years I was angry that one of the people that mattered most to me was taken away, and all these people were saying that God was supposed to matter most. They told me that if God was all I had, then I would have all that I needed.

In time, God used the people around me to soften my heart. In the beginning, I felt like I didn't belong at SVA

because I didn't know God. But my classmates and teachers accepted me anyway. The Lord surrounded me with positive spiritual influences that I'm still grateful for to this day. I got to learn about His character during our Bible classes and was pushed to grow into a deeper relationship with Him. Although it was tough, my freshman year was also a particularly big year in my spiritual development. One major contributor was weekly chapels, where most days I was so moved by the message I would leave in tears. Together, these things slowly helped guide me and helped form the strong foundation on which my faith and love for God began.

In Genesis 32:22-29, the Bible talks about how Jacob wrestled with God. Looking back, I recognize that I spent a lot of time the same way Jacob did. I wrestled and wrestled and then wrestled some more until God finally blessed me. My life has completely changed.

After that first year at SVA, I participated in literature evangelism through the Texico Conference Youth Rush program. The next summer, I worked at Camp Yorktown Bay, an Adventist camp in Arkansas. This year, I completed eight months as a student missionary teaching P.E. for Palau Seventh-day Adventist School in Palau, Micronesia. I had the joy of teaching over 220 amazing students, and that experience has led me to change my major to Primary Education at Southwestern Adventist University.

I know now that Adventist education, along with all the people whom I've met through it, have impacted my life in a way that I don't think anyone could have imagined. God saved me through them and through the Adventist schools that I hold near and dear to my heart. One day, I hope I can do the same for my students as was done for me. **R**

Mindfulness

What it Means and Why it is Important to Your Health

By Record Staff and AdventHealth

Mindfulness is a mental state achieved by focusing your awareness on the present moment. Through the practice of focus and awareness, often accomplished in mindfulness exercises, we train ourselves to concentrate on what we are doing in the moment.

Our lives are often so busy that our minds begin to feel accustomed to being in a constant state of overdrive. Want to give it a try? Wherever you are right now, just close your eyes and take ten long and slow breaths. Drop your shoulders, relax your facial muscles and simply focus on your breathing. One breath, two breaths and so on.

How do you feel? Are you a little more relaxed? Did you find it hard to focus? By taking these pauses and practicing other similar methods, we develop the skills to recognize and let go of unnecessary distractions as they form.

Now let's try this again. For five breaths, calmly acknowledge and accept your thoughts and feelings (both emotional and physical). Are you worried about something? Do you have a lot on your plate? One breath, two breaths and so on. Perhaps this time the exercise was a little easier. If we can quiet our thoughts and focus on them one at a time, we can better spend our energy resolving each one, rather than being overwhelmed by everything in front of us.

RENEWING OF YOUR MIND

Reflection and the cultivation of a sense of self-awareness are important parts of mindfulness. These practices can lead to an enhanced sense of well-being, among other benefits. Paul emphasizes this in Romans 12:12: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will."

Our mindset shapes our perception of reality. Our mind influences our body and our attitude impacts our health. By practicing mindfulness, we can come to see that our mind is filled with an array of thoughts, some beneficial to our happiness and whole-person health, and others not so much. Philippians 4:8 reminds us to fill our minds with these healthy thoughts, "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

Taking mindful pauses throughout the day allows us to reflect on our thoughts and have self-awareness, noting how those thoughts might be affecting our behaviors, as well as our emotional and physical health. Over time, practicing mindfulness can help you more calmly manage your thoughts and emotions. Eventually, this can promote a decrease in unproductive thoughts and emotional reactivity, as well as boost focus.

MAKING MINDFULNESS WORK FOR YOU

A clouded mind makes it hard for us to find clarity in almost anything we do. Mindfulness enables us to weed through our distractions, resulting in clear focus and enhanced potential.

To practice mindfulness, start by increasing your awareness of who you are and your surroundings. Observe your behaviors, reactions and thoughts to recognize patterns. Acknowledge them as they are and try not to pass judgment or analyze them. Instead, let thoughts and feelings form organically. Then, accept them, work through them and refocus. If you put mindfulness into practice, you can be better prepared to have a healthier mindset and a more productive, happy life. **R**

MINDFULNESS TIPS

- Have a cup of tea on the porch.
- Turn off your phone for an hour.
- List the ways God has blessed you.
- Draw, color, knit or create something.
- Find a quiet place to read.
- Memorize verses that inspire you.
- Write your thoughts down in a journal.
- Take a walk alone in a park.

Goooooool!

Focus, Determination and a Great Coach

When I was five years old, my mom asked me, “Leila, do you want to play soccer?” I knew that I would be playing with my best friend, Yaslen, so of course I said yes! I was so excited as I thought of all the fun I would have hanging out with my bestie and running around.

The first season came and went. I don’t remember who the coach was or who the other kids were but I do remember really enjoying the game and the snacks and all the giggling that went on. I also remember that I didn’t score a single goal. When you are five, you don’t really care about scoring goals.

The next three years we continued to play on the same team. I greatly enjoyed it and I looked forward to every Sunday when I could see my team. Although my skills had improved, I still had not scored a goal. My competitive mother would always encourage me to push harder and run faster, and after every game she would ask the same questions. “Did you have fun? Do you feel like you tried your best?”

It made me start wanting to really push myself and to finally score the elusive goal. Around our fourth season, Coach Omar joined our team. He made my mother’s competitiveness seem mild. He worked us hard and added practices during the week with drills worthy of a high school team. He always expected a lot out of us and now, I not only enjoyed the game, I also found in me a fierce determination to run fast and to win. He never made us feel bad if we lost or if we missed a goal or if we didn’t play our best. He always had a plan for the next practice, for the next game, for the next season.

During this time, I found that I could run fast and had multiple assists. Yaslen and I still giggled and chatted more than we should have, but we also worked hard and focused. Now I had an objective—I had to score a goal. I knew that I was capable of it, and with my coach’s help, I knew that I would.



The Bible says 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.’” God is like that “coach” or leader who never gives up on us. He always encourages us and He provides what we need in order to fulfill His plan for us. God has left the Bible, His playbook, to give us hope and to guide us through every moment of our lives. He will always stay with us through all the ups and downs and He will rejoice with us in the end.

Oh, and yes. I finally reached my objective and scored that goal! It was the best feeling ever! But I bet it doesn’t even compare to fulfilling the goals God has for me.

By Leila and Mariangela Busby

Camp Meeting & Summer Camp SCHEDULE

ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE:

www.arklac.org

June 2-6 | Northwest Arkansas Family Camp Meeting, Gentry Seventh-day Adventist Church Gentry, Ark.

June 7-July 19 | Summer Camp Camp Yorktown Bay, Mount Pine, Ark.

June 10-14 | Ark-La-Tex Camp Meeting (East Texas), Jefferson Academy Seventh-day Adventist Church, Jefferson, Tex.

June 12-13 | Northwest Arkansas Spanish Camp Meeting, Gentry Seventh-day Adventist Church Gentry, Ark.

OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE:

www.OKAdventist.org

June 7-July 5 | Summer Camp Wewoka Woods Adventist Center Wewoka, Okla.

July 10- July 18 | English Camp Meeting, Wewoka Woods Adventist Center, Wewoka, Okla.

July 23-26 | Spanish Camp Meeting Wewoka Woods Adventist Center Wewoka, Okla.

SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE

www.MySouthwestRegion.org

June 12-13 | Virtual Camp Meeting, Facebook Live, Facebook.com/SouthwestRegion

TEXAS CONFERENCE:

www.TexasAdventist.org

June 3-6 | Keene Camp Meeting Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church, Keene, Tex.

June 7- July 19 | Summer Camp Lake Whitney Ranch, Clifton, Tex.

June 10-14 | East Texas Camp Meeting (Ark-La-Tex), Jefferson Academy Seventh-day Adventist Church, Jefferson, Tex.

TEXICO CONFERENCE:

www.Texico.org

May 31 - June 4 | Summer Camp Bonita Park Camp, Capitan, N.M.



United in Ministry

Texico Churches and Members Respond During Crisis

CORRALES, N.M. – Despite adhering to “stay at home” and social distancing recommendations this spring, it has been amazing to see churches in the Texico Conference come together during the COVID-19 pandemic. Pastors and congregations quickly mobilized to continue to minister while their churches remained closed. Some members felt the call to help the community directly. Lissey Vancil, a member of North Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church, hand-made colorful masks and donated them to a family clinic in Taos.

Most churches used various online platforms and social media to engage their members in creative worship experiences, while others used more traditional methods like making phone calls and sending emails and text messages.

“Last year, I learned a lot about digital missionary work and the positive spiritual impact it can have,” said Mike Razon, youth director. “It has been exciting to see that in the midst of these challenging times, many of our Texico members and leaders have become digital missionaries overnight.”

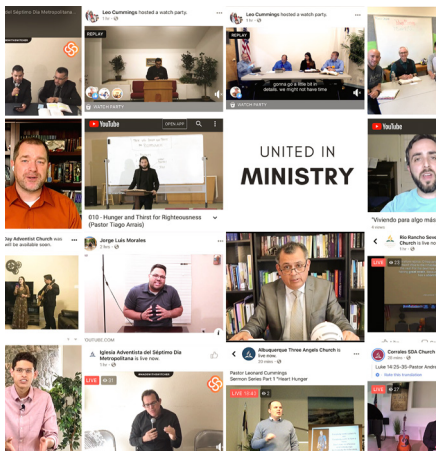
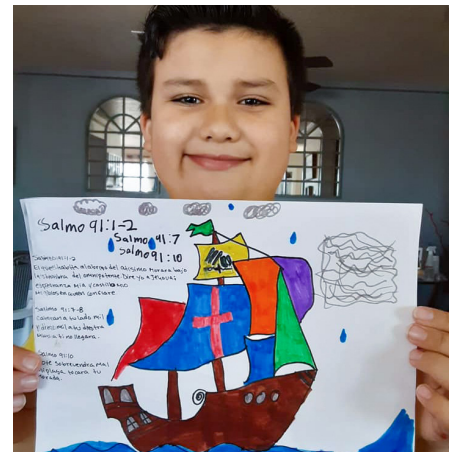
Jorge Morales, pastor of several churches in Southern New Mexico, found himself wanting to reach out to the kids of his church in the same way he was doing with the adults.

“As I was preparing for my first online sermon, I kept wondering how social distancing was affecting kids,” said Morales. “It was then that the story of Jesus calming the storm came to me. I immediately grabbed my whiteboard and started drawing and writing.”

That Sabbath, Morales told kids the story of when Jesus calmed the storm and presented his white board. He invited them to draw a boat like the one Jesus was in and write a Bible promise or text that would bring them comfort the next time they felt scared. Morales received several online pictures from kids in his churches and one from as far away as Puerto Rico. Since then, Morales has continued to engage his younger audience in activities with valuable lessons.

While the coronavirus may have forced many of us to make dramatic changes in our daily routines, there is no question that even in the toughest times, God has no limit to what He can do through His people.

—By Debby Marquez
Communication Director



Every Home a Church

Southwest Region Conference Thriving Online



DALLAS – “Every home a church” is the theme that moved around the Southwest Region Conference in response to the situation caused by coronavirus (COVID-19). While church buildings closed their doors and congregations ceased to gather for face-to-face prayer and Bible study, the church remained open for worship at home and on the internet.

Matthew 18:20 affirms that where two or three gather in God’s name, there He is with them, and we testify that God was with us on every phone and internet connection, every Facebook Live event and every YouTube video replayed where God’s name has been lifted up.

At least once a day, every day of the week, Southwest Region Conference members could tune in to one of many conference-wide live prayer hours and small group meetings.

More than 2,000 youth from around the conference came together for YAWE, a Youth and Young Adult Worship Experience in both English and Spanish, as well as for a live Bible Bee on Zoom.

Friday evenings became the highlight of the week when hundreds of participants joined Facebook Live for a “Fire-

side Chat with President Watkins,” as Southwest Region Conference President Calvin Watkins welcomed the Sabbath hours and led our members in prayer and Bible study.

Members appreciated special segments with Watkins hosting panels with medical doctors and experts, the presidents of the nine Regional Conferences in North America and most recently, Ted Wilson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

In Wilson’s message to the membership, he quoted verses from Psalm 57 and 46 and reminded us that “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” Psalm 46:1.

Wilson encouraged members to spend time in the Word of God and in prayer asking for the latter rain and to be involved in the mighty mission to warn people of the great things to come upon the earth and the provisions that the Lord is making for us now and of His soon return.

These weekly broadcasts gained an extraordinary following, evident in the more than 6,000 viewers that have continued to watch after the live broadcasts have ended. A true testament to the extent of God’s wonderful reach.

According to Watkins, “The COVID-19 crisis is changing the way we do ministry.” Members are actively conducting Bible studies through Zoom and other online platforms; former members are returning to Christ and the church is receiving all who desire to be ready for Jesus’ soon return.

While the world awaits the uncertainty of another day, the Southwest Region Conference family continues to encourage one another and spread the Gospel and the hope of Jesus Christ to those in its territory and far beyond.

We realize that, more than ever, there is no limit to how we can come together and worship God, there is no obstacle for doing ministry and certainly no excuse for not sharing the gospel message.

— *By Leslie Soupet*
Administrative Assistant to the President

New Normal at Southwestern

Walking in Faith Through Unprecedented Times

KEENE, TEX. — In these uncharted, unprecedented and chaotic times, I pause to think about our faith. It is in our University mission statement, “to inspire knowledge, faith and service through Christ-centered education.” We talk a lot about knowledge and a lot about service, and when the academic year and world around us is running smoothly, faith seems to just come naturally.

But when chaos is rampant, what role does faith play? Donna Berkner, Ed.D., our vice president for academic administration, implored the faculty in a meeting to pray daily for discernment and be open to the Holy Spirit like never before.

During times like this, we are reminded that through the chaos, God is with us and He cares for us. When the world

around us seems to be focused on fear and worry about tomorrow, faith provides a confident calm about the future; it provides a reliance on God who is in control. Faith allows us to live without fear and to be sheltered in His care though COVID-19 is all around us.

At Southwestern Adventist University, we, like everyone else, have had to stay strong in our faith and find ways to encourage our students who are now adjusting to online education and studying from their homes across the Southwestern Union and beyond.

Every day, we share virtual devotionals to continue supporting our students’ spiritual journey. Our administrators, faculty and staff members personally reach out to every student each week to check in, encourage and pray for them.

A “Fighting Food and Housing Insecurity Fund” has been set up to support members of our campus family during this difficult time. Our deans host virtual challenges and events to keep campus life vibrant. While socially distanced, we remain strong in our faith and socially engaged as a campus.

I appreciate the Bible promises that keep us centered on what is most important and encourage us to be calm and not afraid amid life’s problems. I am proud of the faculty and staff who are working hard to keep our students’ faith strong. Faith can be our strength when we feel weak, faith can be our hope when no solution seems possible, and faith can be our calm when chaos surrounds us.

————— *By Ken Shaw, President*



Trusting God's Plan

Clarksville Serves Arkansas Counties Through Pantry



CLARKSVILLE, ARK – When an emergency or disaster strikes, the essentials are sometimes hard to come by. Food, water, shelter and the like become scarce or finances become strained. We knew our mission was to keep the Clarksville Seventh-day Adventist Church Pantry open. Johnson County, Ark., already has a 22.5 percent poverty level, so getting the food to those that need it most while staying safe dealing with cars from not only our county but also several surrounding counties became our priority. Food and prayer is the central element

of our community outreach ministries. We chose to make meals to help truckers who have had hard times finding meals on the road. We also reached out to other groups in our area that help the elderly and the young. Our small community churches really came through with great volunteers and help in the distribution. Not shying away from COVID-19, but trusting the Lord to guide our actions. The three stages of a disaster are Readiness, Response and Recovery. He looks for our Readiness to serve, provides the tools for the proper

Response and guides us with compassion down the Recovery road. We all have to know that there is a plan and it is His plan. We continue to trust in His Divine Grace, look for every opportunity to minister and pray, and support our community, our volunteers and the Lord's work wherever we find it. We are so blessed to have the service opportunities He provides us. We pray everyone stays healthy, helps thy neighbor and turns their eyes fully on Jesus.

—By Joel Newman

Global Gospel

From a Northwest Arkansas Living Room to the World

SILAM SPRINGS, ARK. – In March we received coronavirus (COVID-19) news suspending church services. Rick Mercer, pastor of Springtown and Siloam Springs Seventh-day Adventist Churches, and church leaders quickly transitioned “church” from to online platforms. “Prayer aLIVE,” devotional and prayer sessions, were held on Wednesday nights and “Let’s TALK,” a Tuesday morning group call, included devotionals, updates, concerns, prayer time and planning discussions. Emails, calls,

church newsletters, Facebook/Instagram posts and Flocknote communication tools kept church members informed and encouraged. We shared Sabbath services and weekly prayer meetings from our living room on Facebook Live and nearly 3,000 viewers combined “attended” church together. We are so blessed to have valuable team members in each church implementing the various resources which are keeping the church body connected!

—By Cindy and Rick Mercer, Pastor



An Opportunity to Thrive

Churches Reinvent and Innovate to Minister in Texas



ALVARADO, TEX. — “It was a hard decision to make,” Carlos J. Craig, Texas Conference president, said March 17, 2020, about having to close its church buildings for at least 30 days.

“But we want to do our part to eliminate the spread of this disease.” He emphasized that only the building is temporarily closed. “Church will continue in a variety of ways through online platforms, chat groups, phone calls and texts.”

True to their Texas Strong mentality, pastors, elders and church members alike stepped up to keep church going.

In addition to streaming services, some offered drive-thru options for water, food and necessities along with drive-thru times for returning tithes and giving offerings for those who did not want to utilize the AdventistGiving.org online and app options. Others mailed Sabbath school quarterlies, so members had them to read and refer to during online Sabbath schools.

Some changes members witnessed included church announcements shared live via online platforms; daily devotions given by text or other social platforms; online Bible studies; online prayer meetings; more online sermon options and a return of church pastoral “visits” by phone or text.

Knowing his church members missed coming to church and wanting a way

to let them know he was praying for them, Manolo Damasio, pastor of the Dallas Brazilian Seventh-day Adventist Church, taped the first name of each member along the pews, making sure to keep them in the area where they usually sat on Sabbath.

He created a video showing his members the names and concluded it with 1 Corinthians 12:27, “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.” Each week, Damasio sits by the names and prays for each member.

“Every crisis offers opportunities; opportunities to thrive or opportunities to fail,” Kenn L. Dixon, Texas Conference vice president for Communication and Public Relations, said. “COVID-19 gives us opportunities to reinvent ourselves for the future.”

Texas Conference schools transferred to virtual learning shortly after the church buildings closed. It was an easier transition for those churches and schools already utilizing technology, but others needed a little assistance.

The Texas Conference Communication and Public Relations department created and continually updated the innovation webpage: TexasAdventist.org/innovation, with suggestions and resources along with regular video communiques.

“You don’t need a lot of resources,” Dixon added. “What you need is com-

mitment and time.” And, having a youth or young adult to assist you in this area regularly wouldn’t hurt. For many, technology is second nature. They can share a variety of ways to connect online and are usually informed of the most recent trends.

Thankfully, as challenging as these times may be, God is still in control. He sees the bigger picture. We simply need to put our faith and trust in Him, claiming His promises, and then share that hope with others, practicing social distance, of course.

—By Tamara Michalenko Terry
Texas Conference Communication and
Public Relations Associate Director

Left: The Houston Spanish Northwest Seventh-day Adventist Church hosts a drive-by food drive.

Right: Members of the Dallas Brazilian Seventh-day Adventist Church are remembered in their usual Sabbath seats and prayed over by their pastor, Manolo Damasio.

Online and Drive-In Churches

Creatively Reaching Members and Visitors in Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA. — As the coronavirus COVID-19 began to alter life this March, most of our pastors throughout the Oklahoma Conference began providing weekly, and sometimes daily, devotionals and services for their members, using online platforms such as Facebook Live, YouTube and Zoom.

Many pastors, like John Moyer and Gilbert Green, connected with the older members to help with technology and drop off Sabbath school quarterlies. They sent weekly letters and called regularly. The conference youth and children's ministries departments provided online, interactive Bible games using Zoom and Kahoot and sponsored art contests.

As communities practice social distancing, two churches in Oklahoma,

Sallisaw Seventh-day Adventist Church and Wilburton Seventh-day Adventist Church, under the leadership of their pastor Robert Quintana decided to try a new approach: drive-in church. Similar to a drive-in movie, attendees park in the church parking lot, tune in to the designated radio station, and listen to the church service happening live on a stage in the parking lot—all while remaining safely in their cars.

Quintana considered live-streaming a traditional church service, but inspired by a "drive-in church" in Tampa, Fla., he felt the church could offer the members something more. "I think it's important for people to come together physically," said Quintana. "You can stay at home behind a screen and get a good message, but something special

happens when people come together."

Attendees agreed that the drive-in church met both a spiritual need and a social need. "It was a fantastic solution to a modern-day dilemma," said Christy Davidson, who drove from Van Buren, Ark., with her two children, to attend. "We miss seeing our church family when we're not together," said Danan Smith, a lifelong member of the Sallisaw church. "Just being able to see them from a distance gave us a sense of fellowship, like we're all in this together."

"Life is meant to be experienced together," said Quintana. "This is one way we can help people feel connected during this disconnected time."

—By Heather Quintana and
Daniel Ortega, Communication Director



Oxford Handbook

Professor Leads Editorial Team for Reference on Adventism

KEENE, TEX. – The Oxford University Press (OUP) has accepted a proposal for an Oxford Handbook on Seventh-day Adventism, which will be led by faculty from several institutions, primarily from Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU) and Andrews University (AU).

The book will be written by Adventist and non-Adventist scholars and will address various topics, including the history of Adventism, Adventist theology, organization, and approach to culture, ethics and politics. Each chapter will provide scholarly and historical overviews,

footnotes and further suggested readings.

Michael W. Campbell, professor of religion at SWAU, is a lead editor. “This work will appear in academic libraries around the world. It will be the starting point for scholars, students and others, perhaps unfamiliar with Adventism, to learn about the Adventist Church,” he says.

“The Oxford Handbook of Seventh-day Adventism provides a unique opportunity to establish an authoritative reference work on the Adventist Church that is intended for the general public,” says Ella Simmons, general

vice president, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

The editorial team includes Denis Kaiser, assistant professor of church history at the Adventist Theological Seminary; Christie Chui-Shan Chow, faculty at City Seminary of New York and educational missionary to China; Nicholas P. Miller, professor of church history at Adventist Theological Seminary; and David F. Holland, professor of New England church history at Harvard University.

— By *Tim Kosaka and Gillian Panigot*



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New Vice President

Donna Berkner Voted VP for Academic Administration

KEENE, TEX. – On Feb. 11, Southwestern Adventist University’s (SWAU) Board of Trustees unanimously voted to appoint Donna Berkner Ed.D. as vice president for academic administration. Berkner, who has been with the university since 2012, has served as the interim vice president since July 2019. Previously, she was the chair of the Department of Education and Psychology.

Berkner is a published author and holds multiple licenses, including the State of Texas Teaching License, State of Texas Principal License, NAD Lead-

ership Certification, and Professional Development and Appraisal System Certification. A previous principal, Berkner is a member of Associate Deans of Texas and of REACH Committee for North American Division and Inclusive Education. She currently serves as vice president for higher education with the NAD Office of Education.

Berkner looks forward to working with the faculty as they provide educational experiences for SWAU students.

— By *Tim Kosaka*
Marketing and Public Relations Director



The Power of a Story

Enactus Delivers Workshops to Artisans in Chile

KEENE, TEX. — The small rural village of Rari, Chile, is home to Crin, an intricate handwoven artisan craft made from delicate horsetail hair. It was there that Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU) students met Guadalupe. She attended an entrepreneurial workshop delivered by Enactus and invited them to visit her home the next day. Guadalupe carries on a family tradition of weaving Crin into colorful butterflies, dolls and flowers. She sells to tourists from her home or at markets.

Guadalupe welcomed our students with a warm smile and served up homemade jam on crackers while sharing the story of learning the art of Crin from her grandfather as a small child. As she spoke, she unpacked her inventory from cardboard shoe boxes to display. Guadalupe is an artist, and without a market that values her craft, the future of Crin is uncertain.

Guadalupe's story echoed the sentiment of over 30 artisans who gained entrepreneurial training from work-

shops conducted throughout Chile in January. Enactus, an entrepreneurial team spearheaded by SWAU's business department, worked in partnership with the Fundación Artesanías de Chile. The foundation furthers the sociocultural and economic development of artisans with the intent of preserving traditions passed on from one generation to another.

Enactus students conducted a needs assessment with foundation representatives who expressed a desire to provide interactive training on business topics in an easy-to-understand format. The project, named ARTIVA, consisted of workshops focused on practical tips to increase sales and understand the consumer market. Participants learned about marketing, product differentiation, SWOT analysis and consumer behavior.

The culmination of each workshop came in the form of a mock sale where students served as customers and artisans used the skills learned to deliver

a sales pitch. The ARTIVA project included a "train the trainer" session with foundation employees who will replicate workshops for other artisan groups. In addition, a fund sponsored by Enactus and managed by the foundation will provide raw materials necessary for the expansion of product lines and product differentiation.

Workshops stressed communicating the story behind a product, and as students heard the stories told by artisans, an invaluable cultural exchange took place. Grateful artisans emotionally spoke about pieces they brought to display and the meanings behind them. Students learned about how art can tell stories of political unrest, social issues, religion and family history. ARTIVA provided an opportunity for service in an unexpected way and taught students that the value of a powerful story exists in the ability to tell it again.

— *By Ana Patterson*



Focus

Holding Steady Until the Finish



I am always energized by watching people with focus. They demonstrate raw courage and strength in challenging situations. Their singleness of purpose is often a hallmark of leadership. I was reminded of that some time ago when I was watching the Philadelphia Eagles and the Seattle Seahawks in their playoff game. After Philadelphia's quarterback was sidelined by a first quarter injury, a 40-year-old backup, named Josh McCown entered, playing in his first playoff appearance.

I watched him in the second half of the game, limping after every play. He showed poise, determination and sheer courage as he tried to rally his team. Toward the end of the game he saw an opening that could have led to a touchdown, and off he went, but after a few yards, he was tackled. And really that was the end of the game. The Eagles lost.

But I later learned that McCown tore his hamstring muscle and played the whole second half with great pain. That is what impressed me greatly. His intention, his focus was like a glue that held that team together.

I share that moment with you as an example of the great focus and intention that is needed in the life of every believer. We are surrounded by great challenges from the enemy almost at every turn. But we must not give up. Instead we must press on with our hand in Jesus' hand and trust Him to see us through.

The apostle Paul rightly sets before us the conviction, purpose and focus we must have in advancing the kingdom. He writes, "Let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews 12:1-2 (NASB).

Right now, some of you may be ready to give up and throw in the towel, but instead I challenge you to fix your eyes on Jesus and trust Him. He will see you through. He has promised victory for everyone who believes and trusts. As the clock is winding down to Jesus' return, don't give up; rather, look up.

By Richard C. Dye, Sr., President



In His Service

Southern Louisiana Holds First Teen Prayer Conference

SLIDELL, LA. — On Feb. 15, nine churches from the Southern Louisiana area were represented as young and old settled into the sanctuary with retired pastor John Taylor (pictured left) as the morning speaker for the area's first teen prayer conference. Young people came from Slidell, Bogalusa, Mandeville, New Iberia, Lafayette, Marrero, New Orleans, Hammond, Baton Rouge and Zachary churches. The conference's theme "In His Service," enumerated the ways that young and old can be of service in the Lord's work, and showed how prayer pulls everyone together.

The afternoon continued as the young people attended three break-out sessions that discussed how to use the power of prayer to best serve the Lord. Werner Gill, Gentry Seventh-day

Adventist Church pastor and assistant prayer ministries director for the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference, focused on how to put your brain in gear with prayer before serving; Bryan Seymour, pastor of the Lafayette Seventh-day Adventist Church, taught how to fill your heart with God's love and trust before serving Him; and Lanette Bieber, prayer ministries director for the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference, showed how prayer adds protection and strength to our hands before trying to serve Him. Each young person received a hat, t-shirt, work gloves and a small tennis shoe on a keychain. Taylor used the tennis shoe to symbolize the work the youth would each do for the Lord.

Other guests from the conference of-
fice were on hand to meet with and wel-

come the young people, church members and sponsors to the first Southern Louisiana Teen Prayer Conference, including President Rick Dye and his wife, Yvonne; Youth Director David Craig (pictured right); and Educational Superintendent Stephen Burton.

The day closed at 6 p.m. with a delicious haystack supper in the fellowship hall. It was a wonderful Sabbath with a lot of enthusiastic young people who were inspired to do their best in working for the Lord and serving others. The prayer ministries team is ready and willing to do a weekend revival on prayer in your church. Lanette Bieber can be reached through PrayerPowerLab@gmail.com.

—By Sylvia Downs

Communication Administrative Assistant



Growing Leaders

Southern Louisiana Starts Master Guide Club



SHREVEPORT, LA. – Young adults from Southern Louisiana desired to grow and develop as God-fearing leaders who would be there for each other and for younger generations.

The idea materialized as the first official Master Guide Club in Southern Louisiana. The area is mostly composed of smaller churches, so they decided to come together from their various churches to form one club initially. That way they could learn, strengthen and encourage each other, and at the

same time, develop their leadership skills. The end goal would be to take these tools back to their local churches and either start or grow their local churches' club ministries programs.

There are 67 Master Guides from seven churches officially registered in the new club, named Dunamis, which means power! They chose this name as a reminder that with God and His power, the club has the potential to do great things for Him.

The Club had its official induction

ceremony on Feb. 15 and then, on the weekend of March 7-8, they received their first training, courtesy of Texas Conference Master Guide directors. The training included everything from how to properly start and organize a club ministry to classes on how to be effective leaders. The 67 members are committed to completing every requirement expected and hope to continue developing as Godly leaders, rightfully trained to help finish the work!

————— *By David Craig, Youth Director*

Celebrating 50 Years

Heber Springs Honors Laurie and Joyce DeWitt

HEBER SPRINGS, ARK. – Laughter, sharing good memories, sweet fellowship and good food were evident as the Heber Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church honored its pastor, Laurie DeWitt, and his wife Joyce, in celebrating 50 years of marriage on Jan. 5, 2020, as well as their upcoming retirement.

Laurie DeWitt has served the Adventist denomination as a pastor since 1982, and served many years prior to that as an elder.

With a wealth of spiritual truth, his love of the book of Daniel and his

caring ability to nurture his flock, Laurie has served his God faithfully and well during his tenure as a pastor. Laurie and Joyce have shared a long and lasting marriage of fifty years side by side. The Heber Springs church has grown and flourished under his caring leadership.

Though he will retire in 2020, he will still be vitally involved in the future of this little church. He will be sorely missed as our pastor, but best wishes are there for Laurie and Joyce's future!

————— *By Judith Newton*



Performing for a Cause

Pathfinders Raise Money for a Local Mission Project

BENTONVILLE, ARK. – The Bentonville Beavers Pathfinder Club held its 19th annual Valentine Dinner Theater fundraiser on Feb. 16. The event's live stage drama, entitled "Sarah," was set in 1910 in Kansas and followed the story of a well-known classic children's book. The cast members for the drama included staff and members of the club.

They practiced for nearly two months, three times weekly, in preparation for the event. Club members JD Aguilar and Daisy Aguilar played the starring roles of siblings Caleb and Anna Whitting.

Nearly 100 guests from the community and neighboring churches attended. A country picnic-inspired dinner was served during intermission. Also, booths were open where guests could

learn pioneer-style skills such as butter churning, rope making, candle dipping and more! There was also a country store where guests could purchase home-baked goodies, homemade jams and jellies and crafts made by some of the staff members.

The proceeds from the event totaled nearly \$1,000. All the funds raised will go toward helping the Pathfinders continue their mission project at the Sulphur Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church. Since June of 2019, the Pathfinder Club has been visiting the Sulphur Springs church twice a month to hold a free "Kid's Day." This is a Sabbath afternoon program for community children with Bible stories, games, crafts, songs, snacks and more! These programs are run completely by

the Pathfinders. Poverty is an issue in Sulphur Springs, so Pathfinders offer free snack packs to any community children who come to "Kid's Day."

The program began with only one or two children attending and has now grown to more than 10 children who come to each meeting. The Pathfinders plan to start an official Adventurer Club at the church this summer, which will be kick-started by a week-long kid's day camp.

The performance and more can be viewed on our YouTube channel, "Pathfinder Strong Channel." You can also follow our mission project on Facebook by searching for "Sulphur Springs Kid's Day."

By Audra Kohltfarber



Community Service

Hot Springs Pathfinder Club Reaches Out

HOT SPRINGS, ARK. – On Sept. 28, the Hot Springs Hawks Pathfinder Club participated in their church service alongside the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference Youth Director David Craig.

A wonderful sermon titled “If My Life Were A TV Show” was given to our Pathfinders and church members and was followed by a delicious potluck in his honor.

During the afternoon, the Hawks club went to downtown Hot Springs to hand out bottles of fresh water and glow tracts. Although initially some of

the people on the streets were hesitant to take the water and tracts, once they saw it was free, they were amazed and thankful to these young people.

They praised the willingness of our Pathfinders to do their part in spreading the good news of Jesus and giving fresh water on a hot sunny day.

May God bless His youth who are willing to go out of their comfort zone to tell others about the soon returning of Jesus Christ.

By Brenda Perez



OFFICIAL NOTICES

ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Notice is hereby given that the 35th Regular Session of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will be held Sunday, September 27, 2020, at The Strand Theatre, 619 Louisiana Avenue, Shreveport, LA 71101. The first meeting will convene at 9:00 a.m. Registration will begin 8:00 a.m.

This constituency session is being held for the purpose of receiving reports for the past quadrennium, the election of officers, departmental directors, executive committee; and the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the delegates. Each church/company is entitled to one delegate for the organization. The remaining delegates shall be apportioned based on the percentage of church membership to the total conference membership as of June 30 of the year preceding the session.

Richard Dye, President
Juan Borges, Executive Secretary

THE ARKANSAS CONFERENCE ASSOCIATION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of The Arkansas Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists will be held in connection with the 35th Regular Constituency Quadrennial Session of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists on Sunday, September 27, 2020, at The Strand Theatre, 619 Louisiana Avenue, Shreveport, LA 71101. The first meeting will convene at 9:00 a.m.

The purpose of the meeting is to elect a Board of Trustees and to transact such other business as may properly come before the meeting. Delegates to the 35th session of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists are delegates of The Arkansas Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists.

Richard Dye, President
Tony Cash, Association Secretary

THE LOUISIANA CONFERENCE ASSOCIATION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of The Louisiana Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists will be held in connection with the 35th Regular Constituency Quadrennial Session of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists on Sunday, September 27, 2020, at The Strand Theatre, 619 Louisiana Avenue, Shreveport, LA 71101. The first meeting will convene at 9:00 a.m.

The purpose of the meeting is to elect a Board of Trustees and to transact such other business as may properly come before the meeting. Delegates to the 35th session of the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists are delegates of The Louisiana Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists.

Richard Dye, President
Tony Cash, Association Secretary

Not My Will, But Yours

God's Hand and Plan at Work



We can see throughout the existence of man how intentional God was and is about the salvation of every one of us. Stories of Moses, Joseph, Joshua, Jonah and so many more open the heart of the intent of God for us to see. The story of Gideon is a wonderful picture of God and His intention to save His people from their idolatrous ways. It's amazing how one can see the plan and hand of God through this story except for Gideon.

Of course, Gideon was willing to go and fight for the Lord, and he thought he was doing it the way God wanted him to; he tested God two times using the fleece, but so often God had to tell Gideon that he needed to follow the instructions as God revealed them to him. Gideon first headed out with 32,000 men. In Ellen G. White's book, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, we read that at this time in history, the leader was to make a proclamation that any man who was fainthearted, newly betrothed, or had planted a new vineyard was supposed to return to his home. However, Gideon was sure he didn't have the numbers of men he needed with 32,000, so he didn't make the proclamation.

But God told him to do it anyway, and 22,000 men left the numbers and went to their homes. God intended this battle to be different than Gideon had thought it should be. God told Gideon he still had too many men for this battle so He told him to take the men down to the water. Those who knelt would not go any further; those who took water into their hands were to go on. Three hundred men took water with their hands and the others had to go home.

Have you known that God has chosen you to do a part of His ministry, and then you proceeded with your own thoughts of how that should be done? God has an intentional plan for the salvation of His children. Like Gideon, He needs us to do it His way, or we take the glory for ourselves. *Patriarchs and Prophets* continues to say of the three hundred men, "The men of His choice were the few who would not permit their own wants to delay them in the discharge of duty. The 300 chosen men not only possessed courage and self-control, but they were men of faith."

Prayer can be used that way, as well. We ask God for specific items in our lives, ministries and families. We end our prayers with the words "Thy will be done," and then we go on our way to get that prayer answered. Let us pray and follow the Intentional One the way He intends it to be; let ourselves be open to gain all the faith of a mustard seed to have the victories and grace in His way. May we be intentional in our faith, allowing His will to be done, not ours.

By Apple Park, Executive Secretary



Oklahoma Music Fest

Schools Gather to Worship God

TULSA— On Feb. 16, the annual Oklahoma Conference Music Festival took place at Tulsa Adventist Fellowship, featuring Adventist schools from across Oklahoma. This year each school was given 20 minutes to perform and show their musical talents.

If you weren't there, you missed an incredible blessing. After the program, some guests commented: "It was the best program in some time" and "The program was very multicultural with the Zomi and Korean students singing in their languages, and there were schools

that incorporated sign-language into their performance." I want to thank all of the parents for giving up their long weekend so that their children could participate. I also want to thank the teachers and music directors for the time they put into working with the students.

A huge thank you to the Tulsa Adventist Fellowship Church sound and tech crew for the countless hours that they put into making the program a success! And lastly, I would like to thank the students themselves for the job well done!

By Carol Thomas



Pastoral Couples Retreat

Families Blessed Through Learning and Fellowship



OKLAHOMA CITY— One of my prayers as the Family Ministries Director for the Oklahoma Conference is that, as a result of our time together, we as pastoral couples will commit to modeling healthy covenant marriages for our church families.

To encourage couples in this commitment, Oklahoma Conference pastors and their wives were blessed with the opportunity to attend a pastoral couples retreat and be mentored by the North American Division Family Ministries Directors Claudio and Pamela Consuegra from Feb. 21-23.

Throughout the weekend we laughed, we cried and we bonded. Some important concepts from the weekend were thinking about the definition of marriage and marriage as a covenant.

If you ask Siri or Google to define marriage, the answer is pretty bland. Don't ask for the second definition; it only gets worse. In some ways, these definitions mirror the thoughts many today have about the institution of marriage.

Marriage has become nothing more than a legal contract, union or mixture.



Strangely, when you think of divorce, it's simply the dissolving of that contract. Instead, enter marriage as a covenant.

A covenant to love for better or for worse. A covenant of unconditional love, long after romance fades.

This is what we as pastors of the Oklahoma Conference were exposed to and reminded of over a three-day journey.

By Walter Martinez
Family Ministries Director

Serving the Community

Community Celebrates Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

MUSKOGEE, OKLA. – On Dec. 17, 2019, the Muskogee Chamber of Commerce arrived at 615 S. Main Street for the ribbon cutting and grand opening of the Muskogee Seventh-day Adventist Community Services building. Not only was this the grand opening of the building, it was also the one-year anniversary of the Samaritan Center of Muskogee. The Samaritan Center is a thrift store that provides emergency food and clothing to people who need it. The thrift store pays for its own overhead, provides funds for

school tuition assistance for a student at Muskogee Seventh-day Adventist Christian Academy and other community needs. After the flood disaster in the area, we were able to represent ACS/ Disaster Relief in partnership with the community.

In Oct. 2019, our facility hosted and assisted with a domestic violence seminar in conjunction with the Domestic Violence Prevention Network of Muskogee, presented by Marie Fisher. The ACS building has other ministries

as well. Celebrate Life Recovery meets every Monday evening with Krissy Jones Miller facilitating. A food pantry is scheduled to open soon. The Health and Temperance Department of our church plans to utilize the multi-purpose area in our facility as well, with a five-day smoking cessation clinic scheduled in February.

We are thankful to God for providing the building and allowing us to be a part of the community.

By Judy Reid



OKC Member Recognized

Southwestern Alumna Wins Teacher of the Year Award

OKLAHOMA CITY – Yeneer Oruru, member of the Oklahoma City Central Seventh-day Adventist Church and Southwestern Adventist University alumna, works at Surrey Hills Elementary School in Yukon as a special needs teacher. Earlier this year, she was awarded “Teacher of the Year” by her colleagues at Surrey Hills.

In early December Oruru graduated with a master’s degree in administration of special education. This is her second master’s degree. Oklahoma News

Channel 4 recently visited her classroom along with First Fidelity Bank. When one of Oruru's coworkers learned that she pays for many of her school supplies out of her own pocket, they nominated her to the Pay it 4ward Award program (a program through which KFOR-TV viewers can help someone they know who could use extra cash). To see the full story, visit bit.ly/33bV0i8.

By Yesenia Ortega

Communication Administrative Assistant



Prepared in Haskell

Church Shares Disaster Preparation with Community



HASKELL, OKLA. – The All Nations Seventh-day Adventist Church's Adventist Community Services (ACS) hosted an Introduction to Disaster Preparedness seminar for attendees ages seven and up in Haskell, Okla.

The May 2019 flood that caused disruption of transport between Coweta and Haskell and the surrounding areas prompted this urgency of understanding of what to do during a disaster.

The presentations were a community event for ACS personnel to discuss fires,

floods, tornadoes, hurricanes and other disasters.

The All Nations ACS leader, Kim Syrus, wanted the town of Haskell to understand that we are there for them at all times. The class helped the members and the community to be prepared for a disaster and know what to do when that time comes.

Leaders from other ACS and community centers presented at the program, including presenters from outside the Adventist church.

The program was sponsored by Texas Adventist Community Services under the leadership of Marshall Gonzales and Julie Gonzales.

ACS is involved in the four phases of disaster response: Preparation, Mitigation, Response, and Recovery to ensure volunteers are matched sufficiently with needs in a community.

Disaster does not name the time or place; we have to be ready at all times!

Pathfinders Receive Training

Tulsa Twisters Learn First Aid and Safety Skills

TULSA – On Jan. 19, 2020, the Tulsa Twisters Pathfinder Club hosted its 6th annual area-wide First Aid Day for about 60 Pathfinders. The Pathfinders listened to presentations on a variety of topics including strokes, poison safety, frostbite, hypothermia, heat stroke, electrical shocks, seizures and fire safety.

The Pathfinders then rotated to nine different stations and practiced the information they had just learned. Fire safety, how to use a fire extinguisher, poison treatment, rash identification, insect and animal bites, splinting, rescue car-

ries, CPR and stroke recognition were a few of the stations provided. Each of the stations had real life scenarios where Pathfinders had to use everyday objects to help the victims. Some stations had “victims” with fake wounds and the Pathfinders had to triage the victims while remembering their own safety in these difficult scenarios.

It was a great morning with lots of learning and practice assessing first aid situations.

By Glenda Sweezy



Summer Camp 2020

Adventurer Camp - June 7-14

Junior Camp - June 14-21

Tween Camp - June 21-28

Teen Camp - June 28-July 5

Blind Camp - July 19-24



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Seventh-day
Adventist Church
OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE

Laser Focus

Fix Your Mind on Goal Oriented Mission



We entered the year 2020 with goals accomplished or incomplete, depending on whether we connected our mission to the vision. Nevertheless, our intentions played a major role in our movements. Intentions are simply an idea we plan to carry out. They can be good or bad, evil or humanitarian, greedy or generous. Intentions are our goals, purposes or aim to carry out a plan. They are the purest form of transparency when revealed because they represent our thoughts, desires and ideas.

Intentions are important. They provide a framework to set priorities and align ourselves with the resources we need to manifest our goals. A strong, positive and energized intention is likely to repel that which is not in alignment with it. Whereas a strong, positive and energized intention will attract the essence of what it is. This process of setting and working towards our intentions says we are serious and focused. Focus means to concentrate on something in particular, to fix on a central point. Focus is the gateway to all thinking. It builds momentum, increases our effectiveness and reduces stress; without it we become overwhelmed. Focus is like a laser: a coherent and focused beam of photons. Simply put, a tight beam of light. If the light is interrupted temporally by a solid object, the light is immediately restored as soon as the object is removed; that's focus.

Satan's focus was on evil, while Jesus's focus was the Kingdom of God. All leaders whether evil or good have focus. Inconsistency will destroy focus and raise tension internally or corporately, whereas unmanaged distractions, whether external or internal, will interrupt and sometimes destroy focus as well. Beware of these.

Jesus is the perfect example of focus, all the way to the cross and beyond. He gave us His Spirit, whose mission is to lead and guide us into all truth...focus. In 2020, let's focus on our Kingdom objective, thus bringing our intentions in line with God's mission. We need an anticipated outcome that guides our planned actions. Since thoughts precede every action, and action determines results, we must choose our thoughts and intentions well.

Danish philosopher and religious author Soren Kierkegaard once said, "Our life always expresses the result of our dominant thoughts." Let's fix our thoughts on what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. Keep putting into practice all we've learned and received from the Spirit of God. Then the God of peace will be with us.

If, as the Japanese proverb claims, "vision without action is a daydream and action without vision is a nightmare," then what could "focus with a Heavenly revelation" bring about? May our consuming focus for 2020 be the Father's Kingdom.

By Charles Sanders, Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Director



Eulalia's Return

A Mother's Prayer Answered

EL PASO – Eulalia Rodriguez was an ordinary girl raised in the Adventist church who attended services with her mother every week. Rodriguez was actively involved in her home church in California and particularly enjoyed being a part of the Pathfinder club. However, as a young person, Rodriguez was seduced by what the world offered.

In moments of clarity she was tormented by the thought that she was a daughter of God who had once given her life to the Lord, but she fought those feelings and continued her lifestyle.

Rodriguez's mother continued attending church and prayed continually for God to touch her daughter's heart and return to the Lord's path. As she trusted the promise of Proverbs 22:6, "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it."

For many parents who are claiming this promise, it may seem as though these are dead words, but there is assurance that God not only hears their prayers but continues to work silently in the life of their children.

Rodriguez returned to church and was recently baptized in the El Paso East Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church. Although her mother had already gone to sleep in the Lord, we can only imagine the blessed surprise it will be for her, as it will be for many parents, to see her child again.

Today, Rodriguez serves as head deaconess and, together with her husband, Eber César, they serve the Lord in their local church as they await the blessed return of Jesus Christ.

By Pedro Ledezma, Pastor



Treasury Training

What Do You Have in Your Hand?

HOUSTON – On Feb. 29, the Southwest Region Conference treasury team held its fourth of seven weekend training events titled "What Do You Have in Your Hand?" Although open to all, it was targeted towards local church treasurers and safety officers.

Four members from the Conference office, including Treasurer/CFO Philip Palmer, addressed the local church treasurers. Philip spoke about policies and procedures, including the first essential steps for a new church treasurer. Associate Treasurer Maggie Moore discussed

Risk Management and addressed the discontinuation of 15-passenger vans used by churches for transportation.

Auditor Wilmarie Figueroa spoke about auditing procedures and how to prepare for an audit to ensure the process is successful.

With local church treasurers trained and in position for a successful year, let's continue to be faithful and do the work that our hands will find until we hear "Well done good and faithful servant."

By Michael Johnson
Conference Accountant



It's Almost Midnight

Let's Go Tell the World



HOUSTON – An amazing worship experience and spiritual restoration! That is what we experienced at the Southwest Region Conference Women's Ministries sponsored Hispanic prayer summit held at the Central Regional Spanish Church on the weekend of Jan. 31 and Feb. 1.

We were greatly blessed from the moment we walked in the door as we were greeted by ushers dressed as angels who helped create a heavenly atmosphere.

Our speakers, Adly Campos and Leslie Soupet, as well as singer Ysis España, were anointed by the Holy Spirit as they

shared the Word of God. Women from all over our Conference came together to participate in the event.

We were awakened to embrace the mission that God has commissioned to each and every Seventh-day Adventist Christian.

We have a holy message to share with those God wants to take home and it is our duty as children of God to reach out to those who have not yet heard or accepted His true message.

We need to be filled with His Holy Spirit so we can go out and preach

about His Love and soon coming. Time is running out. We are seeing many signs of His soon coming and we cannot stay with crossed arms. We must go out and tell the world.

The messages received were powerful. The praise and worship was a great blessing. We ended our Sabbath with a grand finale as we made a personal commitment with the Lord and worshiped together singing the "Midnight Cry" and "Go Light Your World."

————— *By Ana Acosta, Hispanic Women's Ministries Coordinator*

There Shall Be One Fold

Baptist Pastor and Daughter Join Shiloh Church

LITTLE ROCK, ARK. – God is doing great things at the Shiloh Seventh-day Adventist Church. We believe in the power of building relationships and have made it our business to be a beacon of hope.

On Feb. 29, we had the privilege of extending fellowship to Beatrice Jenkins, who was the pastor of the Arkansas Worship Center, and her daughter, Armani Jenkins. They were accepted by profession of faith. "Pastor B," as she is called, comes from a family of pastors. When she made the decision to join the church, she stated that a weight was lifted

from her shoulders. Since that time God has been blessing her tremendously. Beatrice and Armani are not only excellent preachers but renowned musicians.

Beatrice has transformed her church into an outreach ministry under the Shiloh church that reaches and teaches people about the truth of the Sabbath. Pray for us as we begin the process of incorporating about 30 new members from the Arkansas Worship Center of Faith, which has since been renamed Arkansas Outreach Center.

————— *By Kerwin Jones, Pastor*



Peace and Brotherhood

A Celebration of Black History Month

FOREST HILL, TEX. – On Feb. 24, the Southern African family joined our Forest Hill Seventh-day Adventist family in celebration of Black History Month.

The morning worship fueled our hearts with anticipation as we lifted our voices and sang together.

Afterwards, we enjoyed the bounty of various meals, in the most joyful atmosphere.

The evening was electrifying. The group shared with us the love of their God, the love of their land, their culture weaved in colorful and beautiful traditions and their spiritual journey expressed in songs and dances.

We were moved at the pure sight of God our Way Maker, Miracle Worker and Promise Keeper! Without a doubt we must acknowledge that the evening

provided a new reality. Yes, we tasted peace, real brotherhood, truth and unconditional and contagious love.

In the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. during his acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize, “I refuse to accept the view that mankind is so tragically bound to the starless midnight of racism and war that the bright daybreak of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality... I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word.”

The Forest Hill church family truly appreciated the walk of faith of our Southern African brothers and sisters and their ability to trust in God the creator no matter what the season.

We shall never forget how our own hope in God was rekindled by their

heartfelt expressions of praise; we were inspired to believe even more intently in the promises written in the Holy Bible.

The Holy Spirit was made manifest and we knew in that moment holding on to Jehovah to make a way for us is the only way, through pain, sorrow, hardship, loss, grief and tears.

We’ve seen God’s glory and now trust that He will make everything beautiful in due time.

By Danielle Jones



Soles for Souls

Baton Rouge Berean Church's Shoe Giveaway

BATON ROUGE, LA. – The Baton Rouge Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church recently held a shoe drive and giveaway, giving away dozens of shoes to people in need in our community.

There was an overwhelming response of shoe donations in every size. When the day finally came for a successful giveaway, the youth and young adults of the church waved signs and stood at strategic points bellowing their welcome. Some shoppers drove their vehicles onto the parking lot while others walked from nearby. One gentleman whose wife was

left in the car minding the four sleeping children made three trips, each time leaving with an armful full of shoes.

“I thought the second trip was the last one only to have her remind me that the children needed more than just school shoes,” he said. “The last trip is for me on my job” as he found two pairs of work shoes and a pair of athletic ones. A female shopper wandered in from the neighborhood and found shoes for her three children. Not only did the ministry provide the physical but also the spiritual as team members prayed with shop-

pers, passed out reading materials along with a card announcing church days and times; and of course, gave a verbal invitation. A really late sprinkle put a literal damper on things as we scurried to break down tables and salvage what little was left of the event that saw its ‘charm’ with the second attempt. The two and a half hour ministry had resulted in a giveaway of 75 pairs of shoes that hopefully has its wearers walking a little bit prouder. We praise God for the success of this ministry.

— *By Evelyn M. Edwards*



International Day of Praise

New Life Celebrates with Neighboring Churches

LAWTON, OKLA. – New Life Seventh-day Adventist Church's first Annual International Day of Praise was a great success with more than 70 in attendance, and included guest speaker, Eliezer Castanon from Edmond, Okla., and guest artist “Princeliott,” also known as Elliott Meredith III, from Jessup, Md.

Intercessory prayers were given in French by New Life pastor Shelot Pierre, in Spanish by Castanon and in English by Terry March, pastor from Carriage Hill Christian Church.

Laurie Pierre led out during the

children's story time and youth ushers showed up in style, sporting international flags as part of their uniform. As usual, we were encouraged with a moving sermon by our very own pastor, Shelot Pierre, who delivered a power word entitled “Let's Celebrate.”

Our celebration continued as the church and visiting guests enjoyed a well-prepared international feast.

This exciting celebration ended with a concert from local ministries and vocalists.

— *By Maria A. Meredith*



His Purpose Is Perfect

Trusting God to Take Away Our Doubts and Uncertainty



There are moments in life when even Christians who profess both faith and fortitude face doubts and uncertainty about their present life and the future. We find comfort in the well-known words of the apostle Paul, “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose,” Romans 8:28 (NKJV). Three things immediately strike us from this passage.

First, the biblical writer emphatically reminds us that we know that things work together for good in our lives! Second, the Lord has a purpose, and we must recognize and accept the fact that we are governed by that divine purpose. Third, the apostle Paul speaks here of what we might refer to as “providential events” in our lives. Things such as sickness, death, loss of employment, the fracture of a meaningful relationship, even divisions within the body of Christ (church) can ultimately be seen to reveal that wonderful purpose of the Almighty working for the good (salvation) of those who fear His Name and respect His will.

When those experiences that are afflictive in nature are understood within the framework of faith, patience and humility, then the Christian is empowered from above to press on and march forward in the confidence of knowing that God is completely in control of her/his life and that come what may, that divine purpose will work for her/his ultimate good.

The chastisement of an all-loving, all-benevolent heavenly Father who sees all, knows all and loves beyond measure should be readily received by His children who so often live by sight instead of faith. When we thus live, we position ourselves to carry out the divine purpose of God in our individual lives, which enables us to be a blessing to our family, our church and our community at large.

What society so desperately seeks and needs today are Christians who are the salt of the earth in a tasteless world and light that illuminates in the midst of a world of darkness and corruption. The world truly needs a clear picture of God’s redemptive grace. As a church, we have been placed in this world for one purpose and one purpose only, to accurately portray the character of God. When we live out God’s purpose in both our individual and corporate lives, the joy of heaven shines through and people are drawn to a loving and compassionate Savior.

By Carlos J. Craig, President



Impact 2020

Churches Unite Together in Mission and Service

LAREDO, TEX. – Jan. 24-25, 2020, the Spanish Tres Angeles Seventh-day Adventist Church in Laredo hosted Impact 2020: Together In Our Mission.

The objective was to train the new church officers that have been selected to serve in their San Antonio-area churches this year. Francisco Pollock, Texas Conference associate treasurer, presented the general sessions as well as offered training for the new treasurers. San Antonio church pastors supported the event as instructors and trainers.

The first general session emphasized

the importance of staying together as a church while following the example of Christ's true leadership: to serve others. The Sabbath afternoon session focused on having a sound perspective on personal and church finances in order to honor God and finish His work soon.

The group then separated by departments to receive more detailed training. We want to acknowledge the large number of members who joined from the different area churches. We appreciated their enthusiasm as each instructor presented their class.

To close the event, we participated in a ceremony of commitment and devotion.

Finally, we all joined in a delicious meal of friendship and gratitude to our God for His plentiful blessings and assurance that the coming year will be one of victory for the honor and glory of His name.

————— *By Samuel Altez, Pastor*



School of the Month

New Recognition Program Features Texas Schools

ALVARADO, TEX. – Seventh-day Adventist schools within the Texas Conference are doing an incredible job in training the leaders of today and tomorrow.

Unfortunately, many times their work goes unnoticed. Wanting to recognize their accomplishments, the Texas Conference Education department created a School of the Month program. Each month, a different school will be highlighted on the Texas Conference social media pages. It could be their work in the community, their educational focus, especially as it pertains to science, tech-

nology, engineering, arts and/or mathematics, their music program, their spiritual emphasis or their sports program. Please join us in praying for our teachers and students. In these challenging times, it is more important than ever to offer a Christian education that encourages values and a relationship with Jesus.

Share your Seventh-day Adventist education experience in Texas, by emailing education@txsda.org.

————— *By Kisha Norris*
Vice President for Education



The Best Gift

Man Surprises Wife By Being Baptized Before Anniversary

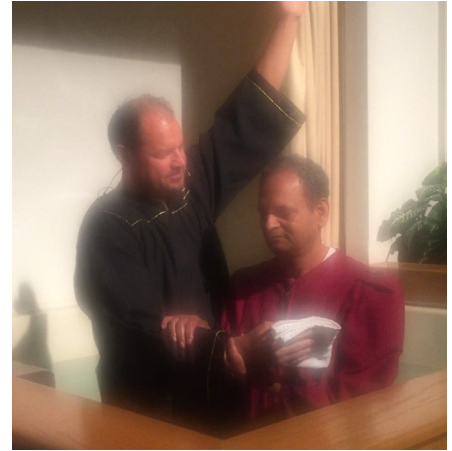
RICHARDSON, TEX. – Milind Meshram attended the Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church for 14 years with his wife, Carmen, a member. As the years passed, he always had an excuse for not committing his life to Jesus.

Something changed this past October and Meshram completed the church's contact card, expressing an interest in Bible studies. As we began to study, I asked Meshram if he had ever accepted Jesus. He admitted he was afraid to turn everything over to Jesus, so I asked if he

would like to kneel right then and ask Jesus into his heart. It was an extremely moving experience when Meshram surrendered his life to Jesus and received Him into his heart. He truly felt his burdens lifted.

A few weeks later Meshram was baptized on Dec. 28, 2019, a day before their wedding anniversary. Meshram has a new smile on his face and a vibrant testimony to share of what Jesus has done in his life.

————— *By Byron Corbett, Pastor*



Blessings Continue

Church Members Amazed at How God Answered Prayers

BROWNSVILLE, TEX. – Brownsville Seventh-day Adventist Church members had no idea what God had in store for them when they started praying for young adults to join their church.

Young adult Ivan Guarjardo came to visit the church after learning about the Sabbath while reading the Bible.

Excited about his newfound faith and church family, he shared his beliefs with one of his managers, Adalberto Mendez, who was interested and requested Bible studies. Shortly thereafter he was baptized and started sharing what

he was learning with his friend, Jonas Vergara. Vergara (right with Marlon Wallace) started Bible studies and was baptized Feb. 29, 2020.

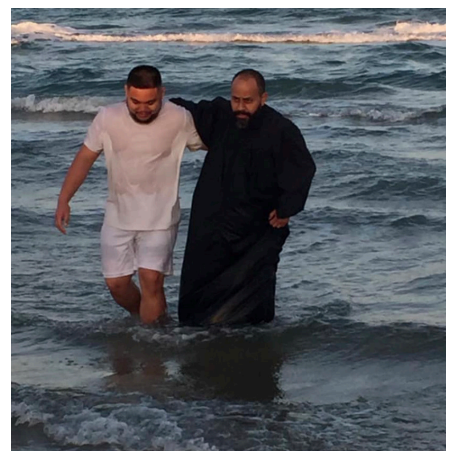
Both Vergara and Mendez (below) are interested in becoming pastors. Mendez visited Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Texas, where he hopes to study.

“Many young adults are wanting to be involved in church leadership,” Justin Yang, Texas Conference young adult director, shared. “However, they are still waiting to be given the keys to leader-

ship. It is the responsibility of church leaders to allow their young adults to be groomed into leadership positions. It is very important for them to develop new leaders who can take the church to the next level and on to a brighter future.”

The future is bright for the Brownsville church as its young adult membership increases, as church elder Skariah Perakathu continues to give Bible studies and as the outreach team focuses on connecting with the community.

————— *By Marlon Wallace, Pastor*



CM Council

Children's Ministries Volunteers Increase Programming

ALVARADO, TEX. – Children's Ministries is growing in Texas and we are happy so many are willing to get involved! The photo on the right features members of the first children's ministries council in San Antonio. Our goal is to have a council in every area. To get involved, email TXChildMin@txsda.org.

Find more on Facebook: Texas Conference Children's Ministries, or TxAdventistKids.org.

By Alexis Rivera
Children's Ministries Director
Photo by Geraldo Alonso



Colorful Baskets

Mosaic Christian Church Members Brighten McKinney

FAIRVIEW, TEX. – For the past 12 years, colorful baskets filled with ingredients for a bountiful Thanksgiving meal have been generously provided through our active Mosaic Christian Fellowship Seventh-day Adventist Church community services to help those in need within the McKinney area.

According to Victoria Mercer (center below) a dedicated leader in our community services, “This ministry started out with five families and has grown to over 60 families! Many of the names are submitted by church members who

know those in need.” Some of these families have been actively attending a weekly Wednesday night Bible study at the church, provided especially for the community. Meetings are designed to target the family as a whole with an adapted study for the children, the youth and the adults.

“We are fulfilling the gospel command,” said Edgar Navarro (far right below), one of the study leaders. “Our focus is to meet the basic needs of those who are suffering and struggling in their daily life while offering our friendship,

support and introducing them to our loving and caring friend, Jesus.”

Not too many months ago, Lupe and Rita Hernandez (in baptismal robes next to Luisa Navarro, left) committed their lives to the Lord and were baptized as a result of this outreach. They are now planning to spread the gospel themselves in Linares, a small village in Nuevo Leon, Mexico. Mosaic members are excited to see how the Lord is leading and we are honored to be His hands and feet to bring His love to those in need.

By Cosette Goodnight



A New Start

Providing Church and Community Members a Better Life

BAYTOWN, TEX.— In an effort to serve the community through health evangelism, the Baytown LaPorte Seventh-day Adventist Church conducted a community-wide health fair on Jan. 12, 2020, at the Baytown Community Center.

This past year, Antonette Melrose, a registered nurse, became the church's health ministries director. Shortly thereafter the pastor, Jose M. Rojas, suggested the church conduct a health fair as part of the church's overall evangelism program to serve the community and to continue the growth of the church.

This was a big step for the church as members had never planned, organized or conducted such a huge event, but everyone agreed to the idea and planning started immediately. The church decided to conduct a NEWSTART (Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sunshine, Temperance,

Air, Rest and Trust) health fair. Services included blood pressure checks, blood sugar, breath capacity, dental, vision, physical fitness/BMI, computer health age, men's health and women's health, massage therapy, a blood drive, barbers, a cooking demonstration, an outreach station, a prayer station and even a raffle every 30 minutes where the church gave away health-related gifts such as a juicer, a blender or a blood pressure cuff.

Houston Central, Houston Spanish Spring Branch and Katy Spanish Central Seventh-day churches gave advice and support. Sister churches Baytown Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church and Baytown United Seventh-day Adventist Church added to the overall success of the health fair.

Church members distributed 2,000 flyers in both English and Spanish to

surrounding neighborhoods, businesses and other locations. The event was advertised in the local newspaper and on a local Christian radio station.

The event attracted hundreds of attendees and was considered a huge success by everyone involved, especially those in the community receiving the free services and gifts!

Church members were blessed in providing this event and are already making plans for other health-related programs. They look forward to seeing the church grow through health evangelism.

An event like this also provides a variety of ways for people, including children, to participate, making it an opportunity for total team involvement.

By Tom Melrose II

TX ADULTS






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Focused Mission

Setting Our Minds On Things Above



According to the latest research, the average adult consumes five times more information every day than their counterpart 50 years ago. In fact, the average person spends as much as 12 hours a day in front of a TV and computer. There is no denying that we live in a world that is saturated with things that vie for our attention. For this reason, many of us struggle to stay focused on what Jesus wants to do in, and through, us.

With that being said, it is important to remember that Jesus also faced many daily distractions. Just think, the scribes and Pharisees tried to engage Him in useless debates about who He was, and they continuously criticized Him for almost everything he did. This was Satan's ill attempt to discourage Him from fulfilling His mission. But that did not discourage Jesus. He was not distracted from the mission He came to accomplish, nor did He deviate from it. Even at a young age, Jesus knew that He "must be about (His) Father's business," says Luke 2:49 (KJV).

I often like to ponder the things that Jesus could have done while He was on earth. Although He had unlimited power and resources at His disposal, Jesus did not build a temple or a synagogue, or heal every sick person in the world at that time, nor did He raise everyone from the dead. That is because His mission was very specific. Jesus stuck to His objective. He came to do God's will on earth (John 6:38). He was the light of the world, illuminating it with His love (John 8:12). He was the salt of the earth. Jesus' fundamental mission on earth was to fulfill God's plan to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10).

What is encouraging about this thought is that Jesus is still faithful to His mission even today. He still calls all sinners to repent. On this very day, Jesus continues to seek and save those who, by faith, come to Him for salvation. So, despite all the clutter and distraction of this world, Jesus wants your attention and wants to save you. Let us not forget what His mission was, and still is, and live out the words of Colossians 3:1-2: "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."

By Lee-Roy Chacon, President



The Call to Ministry

Two Brothers, Two Pastors and Two Ordinations

CORALLES, N. MEX. – During the hours of the first Sabbath of 2020, Texico Conference experienced a rather unusual blessing. On that Friday evening Tiago Arrais was ordained at the Advent Life Church in Santa Fe, and on the following afternoon, Andre Arrais was ordained at the Corrales Church. It was an added blessing that both of their parents were present and able to participate in these special services held in their respective churches.

These pastors are not only brothers, they are also the sons of parents who are both pastors with departmental leadership responsibilities at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Their father, Jonas Arrais, is the Associate Director of the Ministerial Association and their mother, Raquel Arrais, is the Associate Director for Women’s Ministries. Having grown up in the home of pastors, they experienced the joys and challenges of pastoral ministry.

Andre and Tiago Arrais were born and raised in Brazil, and each of them has journeyed with God through their early years to a sense of calling to ministry and then to a pursuit of theological education. They both graduated from the same academy and then obtained undergraduate degrees from the Adventist University of São Paulo and graduate degrees from Andrews University. In many ways their journeys have been similar, yet different.

In the final year of his law program, Andre sensed that God was actually calling him into pastoral ministry rather than to a career in the practice of law. After much prayer and consultation with his fiancé, Natalia Nardy, they concluded that Andre should enroll in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan. It was in this context that the Texico Conference became aware of his many gifts and passion for authentic worship and mission-focused ministry.

For the past five years Andre has pastored the Corrales Church and the active elementary school that it operates. He is also the Young Adults Director for the Texico Conference. In this context Andre is a certified presenter for the Growing Young Initiative fostered by the North American Division, and he has taken this training to numerous churches around the conference. The critically important goal of full inclusion of all generations, especially the youth and young adults, into meaningful church ministry and leadership responsibilities has become a major focus of his ministry.

Andre and Natalia Arrais have two beautiful children that were both born as native New Mexicans. Noah is four years old and Stella is just seven months. The family enjoys camping, hiking and many other outdoor activities.

Tiago Arrais, along with his wife Paula, has been part of the Texico Conference ministry team for about a year and a half. In the late fall of 2018, they moved from São Paulo, Brazil, where Tiago had been teaching in the Religion Department for the previous four years. Prior to that they spent eight years in graduate study at Andrews University, where Tiago received both master’s and doctoral degrees in religion.

Throughout his professional career, whether as pastor or professor, Tiago has deployed his ministry gifts to meet the needs of his members, students and community. He has authored and presented numerous scholarly papers, but his greatest joy is to open the Bible and lead his audience on a journey through the text. He is a gifted communicator endowed with the ability to explain seemingly complex topics for the understanding of all. His ready use of the marker board as a presentation tool has become a bit of a trademark with the members in his Santa Fe and Los Alamos congregations.

Tiago and Paula Arrais have two children, eight-year-old Benjamin and four-year-old Joana. This pastoral family is a wonderful addition to the Texico Conference and we pray God’s great blessings for them all.

By Phil Robertson



Mission Trip

Sandia View Academy Students' Outreach to Puerto Rico

CORRALES, N.M. – Twenty-two Sandia View Academy (SVA) students arrived in San Juan on March 12 on a humid Wednesday afternoon. The plan was to preach a nine-day evangelistic series to nine churches, conduct a Week of Prayer at the Adventist academy and enjoy some island recreation. But then COVID-19 changed all of that.

Lodging accommodations for the Mission Team were at the conference youth camp located in the El Yunque Rainforest. The mission team included eight student speakers, four sponsors (who were also speakers), twelve student Week of Prayer participants, and two musicians. On Thursday and Friday, the preachers diligently practiced their sermons, complete with PowerPoint slides on topics like Prophecy and End

Time events. Week of Prayer leaders focused on teen issues, preparing skits that portrayed emotions and how best to manage them. They created object lessons about the importance of managing emotions using Biblical illustrations.

As the Friday night opening meeting approached, local conference officers met to discuss plans and protocols for COVID-19. By Sunday, all church and school activities were shut down across the island. Even though there were no more church meetings, on Sunday night the students held one more meeting on Facebook Live, hoping to connect with their audience. Viewership was low as the people had much more on their minds. On Monday, the team spent time at Fajardo Beach and at the El Yunque River. God's nature was intact, and it

was refreshing their deflated spirits. Although they were originally scheduled to return on March 24, flight arrangements were made to fly home. The change of plans brought disappointment, but the students were not discouraged.

The team was able to reach the lives of more than 100 people in one weekend of sermons and songs. They also provided over 200 pounds of high school textbooks and classroom materials. In the end, there were joyful hearts and blessings to be counted as they reflected on this amazing experience to share the love of Jesus with people in Puerto Rico. COVID-19 may have shortened the mission trip, but there is little doubt about how much can be accomplished in just a short time!

—By Chanda C. Castañeda, Principal



Called to Work

Saragosa Church Makes a NEW START in 2020

SARAGOSA, TEX. – The Saragosa Seventh-day Adventist Church proposed to do something different in 2020. Early in the year, the church found that visitors who were taking Bible studies or were participating in small group study were also interested in learning more about health. Members came together in prayer and developed a plan to promote the health message in the Saragosa community. The church organized cooking and meal planning classes. They provided information on plant-based nutrition, selective ingredients, healthy serving

sizes, healthy sugar substitutes and healthier ways to make Tex-Mex food.

This gave birth to the NEW START ministry that is now taking place on a monthly basis. The NEW START name stands for Nutrition, Exercise, Water, Sun, Temperance, Air, Rest and Trust in God, which are the topics they focus on every month. Although the original purpose of the ministry was to serve the community and further promote the Adventist health message, it has also had a positive impact on the church directly. The church is now working together

continuously, which has helped mend some relationships among members. It also has helped the members deepen and develop a more intimate relationship with God. More importantly, the NEW START ministry has generated a lot of interest in the subjects of physical, mental and spiritual health from non-members, which has paved the way to more Bible studies.

We have been called to do God’s work and the Saragosa church is determined to keep moving forward in 2020!

————— *By Jonathan Gonzalez, Pastor*



Joining the Family

Española Valley Church Welcomes New Member

ESPAÑOLA, N.M. – On Feb. 15, the Española Valley Bilingual Seventh-day Adventist Church welcomed a new member to their church family. After years of struggling with alcohol addiction and experiencing the pain of losing his wife, Leonard Pacheco was baptized in a beautiful and touching ceremony at the Española Valley church. Through the years, Leonard visited the church occasionally, but he wrestled to make a decision for the Lord. It wasn’t until recently that he felt convicted by the Holy Spirit.

Leonard’s mother Virginia Pacheco, sister Trish Winn, and son Leonard Pacheco Jr., were thrilled to see him give his life to Jesus.

His family had prayed for him for many years and they now love seeing Leonard enjoying his new life in Christ. He especially takes pleasure in Sabbath worship and mid-week Wednesday services. Praise God for Leonard’s decision! May God bless him as he continues to deepen his relationship with Jesus.

————— *By Ricardo Castro, Pastor*



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Southern Adventist University is seeking qualified candidates for the following teaching faculty positions: School of Computing, School of Visual Art and Design and School of Physics and Engineering. For more information and a complete list of qualifications visit Southern.edu/jobs

Andrews University seeks Instructor-RMES. Ruth Murdoch Elementary School (RMES) is seeking a certified, innovative teacher to teach Grade 5. Candidates must be proficient in the core/STEM subjects, demonstrate commitment to collegiality and professional competence and have a passion to instill a Christ-like character while inspiring students to strive for excellence in their total

development. The employee will perform all supervisory and extracurricular responsibilities expected of a full-time elementary classroom teacher. RMES is the K-8 laboratory school at Andrews University and has an enrollment of about 228 students. Andrews.edu/admres/jobs/show/faculty#job_5

Andrews University seeks Faculty-SDAPI Edtr/Dgtl Cms Mg. Responsible for the development, maintenance and promotion of the Adventist Digital Library, the Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Index and the James White Library's Digital Commons. Andrews.edu/admres/jobs/show/faculty#job_4

Andrews University seeks Instructor-RMES. Ruth Murdoch Elementary School is seeking a certified, enthusiastic teacher to teach English-Language Arts (Reading and Writing) at the Jr. High level/Grades 7 and 8. The candidate must be able to work in a collaborative environment, demonstrate professional competence, be proficient in other core subject areas and have a passion for inspiring students to strive for excellence in their total development. The employee will perform all supervisory and extracurricular responsibilities expected of a full-time elementary classroom teacher. Andrews.edu/admres/jobs/show/faculty#job_5

The General Conference is seeking an Associate Treasurer for

Technology to lead and direct its technology departments. Responsible for setting long term strategies. Bachelor's degree in information systems management or a related field is required. A Master's in information systems and experience in administration at higher levels of the church organization is preferred. Interested applicants should send resume to StavenhagenR@gc.adventist.org

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MISCELLANEOUS

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Obituaries

Blackwell, Roberta "Gail" Dowden, born Feb. 20, 1940, Pineville, La.; died Feb. 4, 2020, Arlington, Tex. Preceded in death by her mother, Hazel Killen DeVille and her father, John Paul Dowden; sisters, Laura Paula Dowden Bishop and Elizabeth Dawn Casey Bradshaw. Survivors: husband, Douglas Wayne Blackwell, of Arlington, Tex.; sister, Rebecca Dowden Bordner, of Magnolia, Tex.; daughters, Debra Lynn Blackwell Webb, Carmen Denise Blackwell, and Barbra

Gail Blackwell, all of Arlington, Tex.; two grandchildren, and two great-granddaughters.

Brock, Carol, born Oct. 1, 1944, Dayton, Ohio; died Feb. 6, 2020, Decatur, Tenn. Church membership: Hugo Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Brummell, Harry "Jim" James, born Dec. 7, 1934, Wood River, Ill.; died Dec. 24, 2019, Yellville, Ark. Survivors: wife, Beverly Jean Brummell; children, Greg Brummell of Riverside, Calif. and Lisa Brummell of Blue Springs, Mo.; and his sister, Billie Lou Bogart of Phoenix, Ariz.; three grandchildren.

Byram, Harvey James, born June 18, 1936, Decker Township, Ill.; died Feb. 8, 2020, Keene, Tex. Church membership: Joshua Seventh-day Adventist Church. Church service: 55 years as an educator and charitable planned giving and trust services director in the Iowa-Missouri Conference, Southwestern Union and Southwestern Adventist University. Preceded in death by brother, Robert; sister, Geneva; and son, Wesley. Survivors: wife, Carolyn Joy Byram, of Cleburne, Tex.; son, Willard James Byram, of Hagerstown, Md.; one grandson.

Dauzart, Tammy Kaye, born July 14, 1964; died Dec. 23, 2019, Alexandria, La. Church membership: Central Louisiana Seventh-day Adventist Church. Survivors: fiancé, Scott Roshto; sons, Benny Carl Camp, II (Sara) of Palmetto and Corey Allen Camp, of Oklahoma City, Okla.; brother, Gary Dau-

Louis Stephen Gifford, age 79, passed away in Gainesville, Texas, on Friday, March 13, 2020 at 2:41 am. Steve was born on May 17, 1940 in Shreveport, La. He graduated from high school at Ozark Adventist Academy in Gentry, Ark. His college years started at Southwestern Junior College, Keene, Texas, but he earned his college degree from Union College in Lincoln, Neb. He did one year of graduate study at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Mich.

He served as president of the Kansas-Nebraska Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Topeka, Kansas, from 1983 -1986. He went to the Southeastern California Conference in Riverside, Calif., where he served as president from 1986-1994. He then was elected president of the Texas Conference in Alvarado, Texas, and served there from 1994-2004, at which time he retired.

Survivors include his wife, Jeanne Gifford, and his sisters, Susie and husband, Jimmy Collier of Marshall, Texas, and Linda June of Shreveport. La. Also, his sons, Trent Gifford of California; Jon Gifford and wife, Wendy, of Cleburne, Texas; and Michael Gifford and wife, Jennifer, of Kettering, Ohio.

Steve was laid to rest Sabbath, March 21st at Glenwood Cemetery in Alvarado, TX. A celebration of Steve's life is pending for a later date

zart of Rogers, Ark.; sisters, Denise Dauzart Yeley (Ellis) of Pitkin; Susan Spicer (Jim) of Frederick, Colo.; Angela Smith, of Alexandria; five grandchildren.

Greanya, Dorothy, born Feb. 12, 1920, Edenville, Mich.; died March 5, 2020, Harrah, Okla. Church membership: Summit Ridge Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by husband, Harold.

Griffin, Betty Jo, born Nov. 21, 1932, Vicksburg, Miss.; died Oct. 28, 2019. Church membership: Hot Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by her daughter, Daina; parents, Bill and Lola Wallace; sisters, Jean and Doris; and brother, Billy. Survivors: husband, Jim; daughters, Deborah

Griffin, of Knoxville, Iowa; and Kimberly Griffin, of Hot Springs, Ark.; sister, Barbara Ann Wallace, Monroe, La.; brother, Donald (Mary Ann), of Columbia, La.

Kowarsch, Klaus Willfried "Will", born July 13, 1941, Qumälisch, Germany; died, Aug. 11, 2019, Fort Worth, Tex. Church membership: Crowley Seventh-day Adventist Church. Church service: 50 years working for the denomination. Survivors: wife, Dian, of Burleson, Tex.; daughters, Krista Kowarsch Stover Weisner, Karin Beals and Karla O'Neal; son, Klaus Kowarsch, Jr.; sisters, Renate Gray, Heidi McFarland, Esther Zwemer; brother-in-law, Robert Garren; 13 grandchildren, six great-grandchildren.

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Proffer, Barbara Ann, died Jan. 21, 2020. Church membership: (DeQueen) Beacon Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church. Survivors: daughters, Lucretia Hodges, of DeQueen, Ark., and Michelle Georgina; sons, Nathan Lyle and Marvin Daniel; sisters, Peggy Honea, of DeQueen, Ark. and Joyce Nolan, of Austin, Tex.; two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Russell, Thelma Juanita, born March 19, 1928, Pomona, Mo. Church membership: Mammoth Spring Seventh-day Adventist Church. Survivors: children, William Wayne Russell, Jr. (Hattie), of Koshkonong; Norman “Buck” Russell (Shirley), of Birch Tree, Mo.; Leroy Russell (Susan); Joe Russell and Chris Russell, all of

Koshkonong; Loretta Faye Wheeler, of Batesville, Ark.; Berta Guy (Ronnie), of Tulsa, Okla.; and Renee Turner (Robert), of Wilmer, Tex.; son-in-law, Myron L. King, of Broken Arrow, Okla.; 26 grandchildren.

Tinker, Kathleen “Eloise”, born Dec. 10, 1931, Shafter, Calif.; died Jan. 7, 2020, Harrah, Okla. Church membership: Summit Ridge Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by husband, Bert; sister, Ruby; and brother, Alvin. Survivors: sons, Richard (Colleen), Yucaipa, Calif.; Darrell (Denia), Austin, Tex.; sister-in-law, Carol Ratzlaff, three grandsons, four great-grandchildren.

Winders, Dorothy, born Feb. 6, 1923, Roanoke, Ill.; died

Feb. 4, 2020, Harrah, Okla. Church membership: Summit Ridge Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by sister, Dora Winders. Survivors: cousin, Denise Yakes.

Announcements

“Ye Olde” Cedar Lake Academy Reunion to be held June 5-7, 2020 for alumni and schoolmates of 1970 and earlier at Great Lakes Adventist Academy will be cancelled for this year due to the Corona Virus. Classes to be honored will do so in 2021.

Submissions

Back Pages: To submit family milestones, obituaries, announcements or address changes, visit SWURecord.org 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.

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Here to Help

As counties followed stay-at-home orders, many people found themselves out of work. That made it challenging to purchase food for their families.

As Seventh-day Adventist Church members saw this need, they worked alongside local food banks to distribute food. It is just one way Adventist Community Services is helping communities throughout Texas.

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