

Record

May | June 2021

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Becomes Family



Growing Together
The Intergenerational Adventist Church

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Growing Together

Record

May | June 2021
Vol. 120, No. 03

The Record is an official publication of the Southwestern Union of Seventh-day Adventists.

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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

The idea behind “growing together” focuses on unleashing the potential of today’s young people while building a thriving community for all generations. This idea is built on older and younger generations working together to further the gospel mission.

In this issue, we explore this idea a bit further and discover why it is so crucial to the health of our individual churches as well as our denomination. Read about the innovative tools that are being used in ministry, how to build meaningful relationships with other generations and hear from a few young adults who are making a difference through the support of their mentors and community.

Did you have an older spiritual mentor or church leader that helped you along your faith journey? Have you been able to share a word of wisdom or counsel to a younger leader or member? Ask yourself, what part can each of us play in supporting congregations that are intentionally intergenerational, and how can we help them thrive in their communities?

Jessica L. Lozano
Jessica L. Lozano

Cover Photo by Record Staff

Growing Together

Young Adult Integration and Church Transformation




During my late teens and early twenties I quit attending church for about four years.

I was on a journey away from God and His presence in my life. At 21, I had some awakening experiences and realized that I was still alive for a purpose. Through prayer and reading my Bible, I started on a new journey of spirituality and relationship with Jesus that I never knew was even possible. Over time I began attending the Adventist church that I grew up in, but noticed that none of the friends I'd grown up with were there.

At 24, I had been married for a year and we had a newborn baby. My wife and I began inviting friends we had grown up with to our home on Tuesday nights for food and fellowship. We didn't know anything about "small groups," but we wanted to spend time with our friends. We would catch up about what was happening during the week, have a devotional thought from the Bible, prayer and good food. Without even knowing it, we had developed community. Our weekly home gathering became our "church family" with people our age. It was not an officially sanctioned small group of our church. It was just young adults doing what young adults do—getting together with friends and sharing life.

Then it happened. I received a phone call from our pastor asking if I would be willing to serve as an elder. "What!" I thought to myself. "I am not old enough, or smart enough or spiritual enough to be an elder." I told him that for all these reasons I was not interested in being an elder. I thought it was just plain crazy—a young adult being a spiritual leader in a large church where they already had at least 20 elders.

My pastor explained to me that he had been watching our little family and the friends that we were inviting to church with us. He shared how some of the elders and greeters were enjoying the interaction with us and our friends on Sabbaths and told me that the church nominating committee had voted for me to be an elder. He said that he would like me to be part of the board of elders to represent our young adult friends in the life of the church. Then he asked me to pray about it for a week. A week later I accepted two invitations—to be mentored by my pastor, who believed in me, and to become a young adult elder in my church.

The result of older generation leaders having a strong impact upon younger generation emerging adults is beyond explanation. When church leaders involve and integrate their youth and young adults into the life and leadership of the church, they stay. This is what the North American Division initiative Growing Young Adventists and Growing Together does for church leaders who want to retain and integrate their young people as leaders. Growing Young Adventists has already been implemented in your conference. Reach out to your pastor or conference youth director to see how you can integrate young adults and see your church transformed for the Kingdom of God. 

By Tracy Wood, D.Min. Wood is the North American Division Youth and Young Adult Ministries Director. For more information on Growing Young Adventists, visit GrowingYoungAdventists.com or contact your local conference.

Not a Statistic

*A Generation that is
Involved and Engaged*



“I’d heard so many stories of people leaving the church after college, and I didn’t want to be part of that statistic, so I was very intentional about my walk with Christ.”

Tim Kosaka spent his teenage and college years determined to stick with God and stick with the church. Once he graduated from college, however, Kosaka realized that following years of planning, the next step of life was truly in God’s hands.

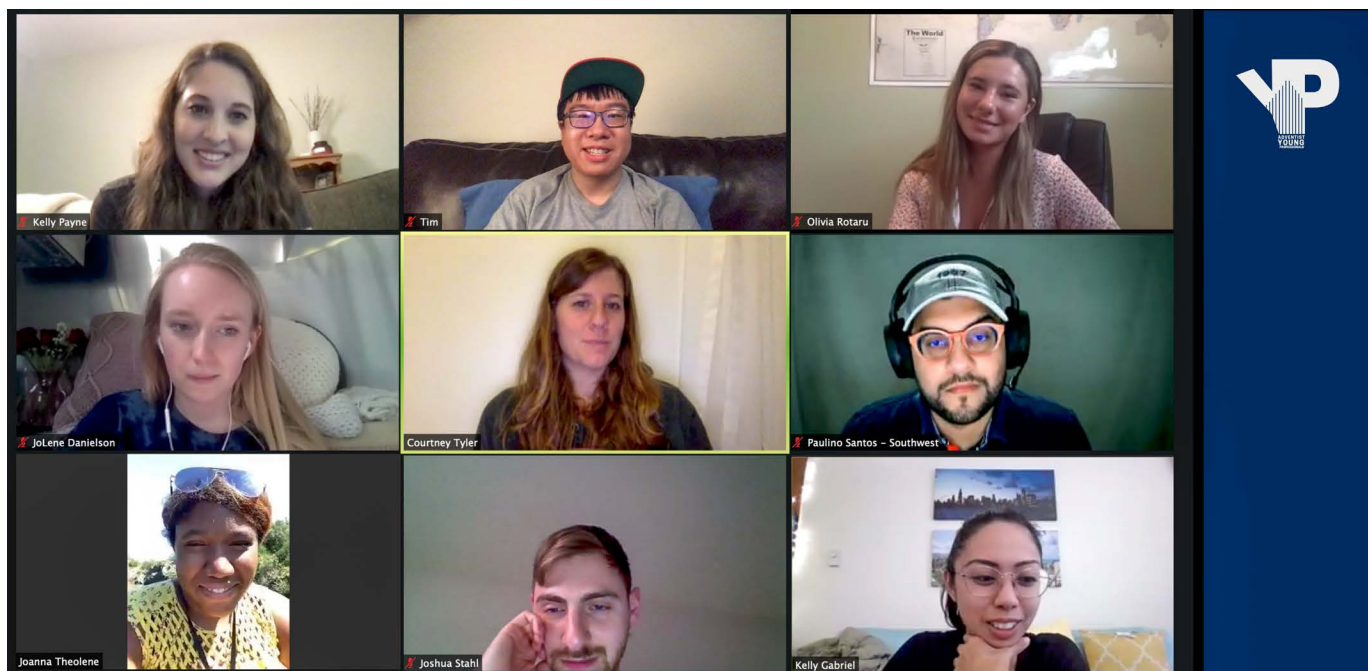
While working at summer camp he applied for jobs and prayed. A college contact told Kosaka she was recommending him for an opening at Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU), and though he didn’t expect to be hired, all the doors opened, and “I took a leap of faith,” Kosaka says.

So Kosaka joined SWAU in 2018, and has since been promoted to director of marketing and public relations, and uses his talents in what he considers to be ministry: The mission to inspire knowledge, faith and service through Christ-centered education.

“Christian education is a form of evangelism because not only are we educating people in our church, but we really serve as a gateway to the non-Adventist community as well,” he says.

At the end of 2019, Kosaka felt inspired to create a way for young people in the church to connect professionally, and Adventist Young Professionals (AYP) was born. It started as an Instagram page, “But God had bigger plans,” Kosaka says.

Today, AYP is a network of thousands of young Adventists starting their careers around the world, and has official representation across the United States as well as in Canada, Australia and Liberia. Kosaka says their goal is to be a hub of resources to help these young people be strong in their careers and grounded in their faith.



When the COVID-19 pandemic began, they launched AYP Devotionals—regular weeknight gatherings online which people joined from all over the world.

“We saw a community formed,” he says. “Authentic friendships developed because these young people were studying the Bible and praying together, learning professional and personal skills from each other.”

AYP Groups offers personalized support resources such as virtual Bible study and professional and personal development groups. This not only offers valuable insights to those who participate, but also empowers people who are passionate and skilled in an area by giving them the opportunity to lead and share with others what they know. Regional teams work to connect young Adventists in their area to each other so they have touchpoints in real life as well.

Kosaka’s skills and passions serve him well in his home church too. During the summer after college, Kosaka prayed God would lead him to a place where he could practice faith in the workplace and where he could find a strong young adult community. He says God answered ‘yes’ to all of that.

He is now part of Arlington Seventh-day Adventist Church. Interestingly, Kosaka spent his high school and college years watching Younger Generation (YG) Church, Arlington’s young adult ministry, online.

“They quickly tapped into my skill set and asked me to serve as public relations director,” he says. “It was their 15th anniversary that year, and we did a special program, put together a magazine, and shared the story of YG making a difference for the local community and online across the globe.”

All of this was, of course, before COVID-19, and Kosaka points out that God used the talent and resources of YG Church to pave the way and prepare the community for the digital ministry that became a necessity in 2020.

Kosaka also fills a mentorship role at YG Church. “They’re big on preparing the next generation of leaders,” he explains.

“Every member of YG Church is a mentor to someone else, supporting from the sidelines. It’s a really beautiful part of the church culture at Arlington, offering young people a safe space in which to innovate and unleash their creative ideas to serve.”

Kosaka and his AYP team have been working on launching a mentorship program as well, in which mentors will support professionally, personally and spiritually.

“Cross-generational ministry is so important,” Kosaka says. “When both sides are listening and both sides are sharing, it allows everyone to learn from each other and to blend their ideas into something that can bless people of all ages and all backgrounds.”

Kosaka says young Adventist adults are incredibly important to him not only because he himself fits into that demographic, but because it’s the age in which so many people stray from their faith.

“Our hands are finally let go of and we make important decisions with lifelong impact,” he explains. “I have been blessed with strong church and career opportunities, so I feel called to give back to help others on that journey to be strong in their faith and to make decisions they will be proud of in the future.”

Part of that support means staying strong in his own walk with Christ and maintaining his strong connections to the church.

“We have a call to share God’s love with the whole world, but in order to stay grounded in our faith, we need to be active, not passive,” Kosaka says. “Active church engagement helps all of us be stronger in our faith. Jesus is coming soon, and we cannot be passive.” **R**

By Becky St. Clair. St. Clair is a freelance writer and lives in the Napa Valley area of California with her family.

The Health Benefits of Hiking

Boost Immunity and Fight Disease While Having Fun

By AdventHealth

No matter the location or landscape, spending time in nature during a good hike is good for your physical, mental and spiritual health. Getting outdoors can help strengthen your immune system, reduce blood pressure, increase energy, boost your mood and find focus. Combine all of that with the low-impact cardiovascular activity of walking, and the health benefits are clear.

NATURE'S IMMUNE-BOOSTING IMPACT

Nature provides the perfect environment for exercise. Forests and green spaces contain higher concentrations of oxygen and less air pollution than urban areas, making it easier to breathe and get the oxygen levels your body needs during physical exertion. Additionally, plants produce chemicals called phytoncides. These natural oils are a defense against pests like insects, fungi and bacteria. They also boost the human immune system, helping you respond to virus-infected cells and the cells that form tumors. And the impact is long lasting: Studies show that increased natural killer (NK) cell activity can last for more than 30 days after a forest trip.

HIKING AS A DISEASE-FIGHTING HOBBY

With low-impact sports like hiking, you can experience all the cardiovascular benefits of aerobic activities with a minimum amount of stress and strain on your body. Regular exercise can ease anxiety and depression, help you control your weight and improve your longevity and quality of life. It can also keep you physically fit, relieve arthritis pain and support healthy bones, muscles and joints. Regular exercise can also substantially reduce your risk for chronic health conditions, such as anxiety, arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, obesity and osteoporosis.

Anxiety: Did you know that hiking releases adrenaline? This is important because when adrenaline accumulates, it can cause muscle strain and heightened anxiety. Studies have shown that walking results in immediate decreases in tension and anxiety, no matter how slow or fast you walk. Walking also releases endorphins that can lift your spirits and keep them elevated throughout the day or night, benefiting your brain and body.

Diabetes: If you have Type I (insulin-dependent) diabetes, walking can reduce the amount of insulin you need. If you have Type II (non-insulin-dependent) diabetes, walking can reverse the disease course as part of a weight loss program that includes both diet and exercise.

Heart Disease: The Centers for Disease Control has completed 43 separate studies showing that exercise can help people significantly reduce their chances of heart problems. In fact, those who don't exercise are twice as likely to suffer from coronary heart disease.


High Blood Pressure: Almost one-third of Americans have high blood pressure, which can lead to stroke, heart attack and other serious health problems. The low-impact cardiovascular exercise you get while hiking can help lower your blood pressure four to ten points.

Obesity: Hiking can help you lose weight and stabilize your cholesterol levels. The average person burns 100 calories for every mile walked. So if you're walking an average rate of two and a half miles per hour, you can burn 200 to 250 calories. People who try to lose weight from dieting alone are more likely to gain it back, while those who lose it through a combination of healthy

nutrition and a low-impact activity like hiking or walking are more likely to maintain their goal and even continue to lose weight.

Osteoporosis and Arthritis: Hiking and walking can help increase bone density and slow the rate of calcium loss. This strengthens the bones and makes them less likely to break.

READY TO HIT THE TRAIL?

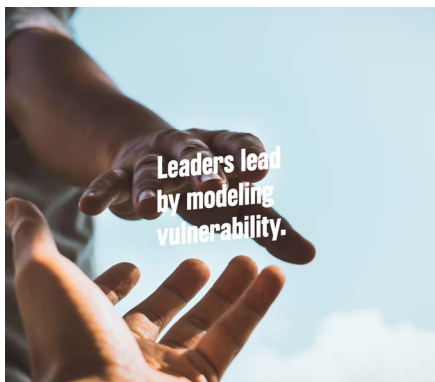
Easing into an exercise routine under a doctor's supervision can help you avoid injuries and keep you moving forward toward your goals. Be sure to consult your primary care provider before beginning a new exercise program and talk with them about ways to hit the trail safely. 



Mentoring the Next Generation

5 Tips to Building Meaningful Relationships

By A. Allan Martin, Ph.D., Younger Generation Church Teaching Pastor and North American Division Growing Young Adventists Representative



When I think about the most influential people in my life, people whom I admire and respect, it's hard to pinpoint one feature about them that stands out. In fact, I am hard pressed to think of a single word that captures their best attributes—it's hard to pinpoint one thing alone that they have done to make such a difference in my life. However, I can tell you one word that I never think of when I remember these valued people: Lecture.

Now granted, we all have experienced a parent talk *to* us, and certainly had a teacher, preacher and well-meaning adult talk *at* us. But I rarely recall such exchanges as being as powerful and life changing as when an older, more seasoned individual found authentic ways to engage me and then talk *with* me. An old, familiar adage, attributed to Confucius, goes like this: “Tell me and I will forget, show me and I may remember; involve me and I will understand.”

Launching a more vibrant, meaningful relationship with new generations may be a bit daunting, even clumsy at first, but the impact it can have on the young person and yourself can be profound. Here are a couple of tips to starting and building great relationships with next generations:

1. SHARE A MEAL

Sounds simplistic, but I think one of the best ways to break the ice is to “break bread” together. Whether it is light—like a quick stop for a hot drink or a favorite frozen yogurt—or even something more like a lunch or a family supper, there is nothing that feels more natural than sharing conversations while enjoying something to eat.

2. SHARE AN INTEREST

There are things that you already enjoy. Maybe it's a hobby or a sport, a genre of film or a style/era of art. Common interests are great points of connection to build on in a relationship. Whether you love theme parks or libraries, enjoy escape rooms or horticulture, start there and see how the relationship might grow and deepen.

3. SHARE A SERVICE EXPERIENCE


I've found younger generations to be very passionate about making a positive difference in the world. When you roll up your sleeves side by side, conversations will naturally develop. Whether it is some service activity in the local neighborhood, a short-term mission trip or some ongoing volunteering with a community agency, joining forces in doing good is a wonderful way to foster deeper relationships.

4. SHARE STORIES, START WITH THEIRS

Young people certainly benefit from the life experiences of older generations, but there is something profound when adults intentionally lean in to listen to the stories of those who are younger. Being interested in their experiences and valuing their perspective makes a difference in young lives. Encouraging younger generations to share their stories is the onramp to them sharing their lives.

5. LINGER LONGER: TELL ME MORE

Too often I'm not really listening, I'm just preparing to respond. Often, I'm just waiting my turn to talk rather than really hearing what the person has to say. A helpful hack in building better relationships is using the phrase, “tell me more,” or some variation of it to help me linger longer in listening to what a young person is sharing. *Growing Young* co-author Jake Mulder shares, “Leadership begins with listening.”

For all these sharing keys, the relationship deepens as I take a genuine interest in the life of that young person. As I listen empathically, invest time and look for ways to involve young people in my life, I've found the meaningful relationships that ensue impacting both of us for the good. Check out the Growing Together Podcast: Intergenerational Relationships for more ideas on how to build meaningful relationships with other generations. 

Rediscovering Humanity

Young Pastors Get Creative with Ministry During the Pandemic

Stay home, stay safe. Just over a year ago, the nationwide lockdown in response to COVID-19 sparked a season of isolation. As information changed daily, uncertainty increased and many churches closed doors for safety. Yet, in that time, creative methods of connection began to emerge.

Four young pastors in the Texico Conference started an online Sabbath School program. It united districts as far apart as Central Texas to Northern New Mexico. Those pastors, Isaí Ramírez, Joel Navarro, Eliab Quinones and Josh Ramirez, not only discussed the Sabbath School lesson, but also worked together to create connection in their church families.

“In the beginning of the pandemic, we thought that the lockdown would be a one-to-two week deal,” said Navarro. “But once we saw that it would be longer than two weeks, and that people were really getting scared and locking themselves up at home, we felt that we needed to find a way to connect with the people around us.”

At that time, Zoom, or other video conference software, was not yet in wide use in those church districts. So these pastors filmed discussions each week to share digitally. “By filming our Sabbath School discussions, we could create a bigger district and produce content to hopefully help people feel a little less alone,” said Navarro.

“When our church ministries, services and activities came to a sudden halt, it was wonderful to note that our young pastors hardly missed a beat. They have grown up in a digital environment and they just naturally gravitated to methods to not only remain connected with each other, but they found wonderful opportunities to bring ministry to people who were likewise feeling disconnected from their church families,” Texico Secretary/Treasurer Phil Roberston shared.



Each of those four pastors are still in their first church districts since graduating from university or seminary. At the time, the process of recording videos together also helped them to feel less alone as new pastors. After each recording, they would sometimes stay on the video chat for several hours, talking and catching up with each other. “I was able to spend

time with friends and colleagues,” said Josh Ramirez. “It was a blessing, especially in a time that we all lacked social interactions.”

That’s when Isaí Ramírez and Joel Navarro came up with a new idea: To create a podcast that would capture the essence of those conversations. Ultimately, they wanted to spark authentic conversation and to share a sense of community. The podcast, called Rediscovering Humanity, would be more than a sermon or devotional. It would be an open discussion about what it means to be human.

“The hope is that people will have authentic conversations about whatever topic we’re discussing,” said Isaí Ramírez. “Our guests don’t have to be famous or well-known, but just someone who can give an additional or different perspective than Joel and I have. That’s brilliant. The more diverse of a perspective we can share, hopefully the more people will relate.”

The desire to be authentic is at the heart of their podcast. As young pastors, Ramírez and Navarro found themselves in districts with a majority membership from older generations. It became a challenge for them to check their expectations of ministry against the reality of pastorship within well-established churches.

Then the pandemic hit and changed everything. In addition, tragedy touched the Navarro family. In November 2019, Navarro’s father passed away. “My father was my life mentor,” said Navarro. “He was a pastor and he was the reason that I wanted to become a pastor. I was probably mildly depressed for the rest of that year and for the start of 2020. Through that, one thing I’ve discovered is that authenticity matters more than having everything figured out.

“It’s about being more than doing... To be authentic... Connected... Available... That goes a long way.”

With the support of each other, and with the help of mentors such as Lee-Roy Chacon, president of the Texico Conference, Navarro and Ramírez were able to refocus and reexamine what it means to work in ministry. “When I was



first going into ministry, and especially with the pandemic, all my expectations were thrown out the window,” said Ramírez. “My advice to people interested in ministry is to be patient and adaptable. You have to be sure that your ministry is doing what Jesus calls it to do, to be the hands and feet of Jesus.”

“The Texico Conference is grateful for the ingenuity and resourcefulness of these young pastors,” Chacon shared. “Employing Zoom and tools like podcasting the way they have really demonstrates their commitment to ministry.”

Now, over a year after the initial 2020 isolation, Rediscovering Humanity is

in its second season of podcasting. It’s available on Spotify and other streaming websites. The lessons learned from being a young pastor during lockdown will continue to carry throughout the ministries of Isaí Ramírez, Joel Navarro, Eliab Quinones and Josh Ramirez, as well as other young pastors throughout the world. [®]

By Makala James. James is a freelance writer based in Granbury, Texas.

When School Becomes Family

A Story of Faith, Community and Relationships

By Becky St. Clair, Record Freelance Writer

In 2016, Casey Harris beat cancer. Amidst the nightmare that was 2020, it came back for another fight. But this time Harris, now principal at Sandia View Christian School (SVCS) in New Mexico, was ready for it.

Harris joined SVCS in 2018 and she absolutely loved her job. “There is nothing as great as these kids,” she gushes. “Their parents are phenomenal, too, always wanting to help and make things better for the school and their kids.

They regularly come in after school to make sure I got a hug that day, and frequently text that they’re praying for me and for the school. It’s a very close-knit community.”

Her colleagues, she says, are also friendly, helpful and wonderful to work with. Harris came to SVCS from very small schools where she was the only teacher, so coming to SVCS where she has a staff of five was a real gift. “I love it here, and I don’t know why I’m so blessed to be a part of it,” she says.

When her cancer came raging back, Harris was eventually forced to go out of state for treatment. Due to the pandemic, no one could accompany her—not even her husband. From November 2020 to February 2021, Harris received treatments in an isolated hospital room, connected to her family and friends only via technology, spending the holidays alone but for the hospital staff.

But, in reality, she wasn’t really alone at all. “When I say SVCS has a family atmosphere, I’m understating it,” Harris insists. “There were times I’d be lying in my hospital bed and my boys would text that they needed a ride somewhere. All I had to do was shoot a text to a few moms from the school and almost always every single one of them volunteered to get my sons where they needed to go.”

“It was so comforting to know that even though I couldn’t pray, my community was doing it for me,” she says. “It’s very healing to know you’re part of a community, that you’re valuable and that when you return, they’ll notice.”

Though they’d only been at SVCS a short time, Harris says her family was preparing to put down roots. They had begun developing friendships within their community, and were prepared to stick around for the long haul. Leaving that community when she needed them most was devastating to Harris. But they never left her.

An anonymous donor paid for their sons’ tuition for the entire year so the family could use their money for medical bills. The SVCS community chipped in and bought her a brand new laptop so she could easily talk to people from the hospital in Denver, Colorado. The home and school group did fundraisers to contribute toward the Harris’ medical expenses. At Christmas, the entire school made and sent Christmas cards, and several people sent homemade slippers and blankets.

“Many of those cards were glittery and full of pictures in crayon,” Harris recalls. “Being able to have those connections when I was so isolated from actual human contact meant so much to me.”

Perhaps the most touching gift Harris received was when the home and school group revealed their Friday t-shirt design for the 2020-2021 school year. “The kids wear uniforms every day,

but on Fridays they’re allowed to wear school t-shirts, and every year there’s a new one,” Harris explains. “When they revealed this year’s design, which said ‘Casey Strong,’ I burst into tears.”

Funds from the sale of these t-shirts went directly to the Harris family, and every Friday the entire school declares their support of Harris on their shirts. Harris says that the first few times they received checks, she sat down and sobbed, not knowing what else to do. Her mom told her: “Casey, just say thank you.” So she did.

“One day I sat down to write thank you cards and I wrote 70 in one day and had to call my dad and ask him to send me another box of cards,” Harris says incredulously. “My community has given me so much.”

Though Harris is back home now, her oncologist insists she cannot leave the house until her immunity is back to normal. She hopes to fully step back into her role as principal this fall. For now she attends church online and waves at colleagues, parents, friends and students through her car window when she picks her sons up from school every day, relishing being in the presence of people again.

“There are people who say that they can worship God anywhere. And that’s



true, but that's not all church is," Harris points out. "When you get to share your burdens with others, there's nothing in the world like having that support and comfort. We need that community of people, too."

During her time in the hospital, Harris said there were days she was too angry to pray for herself. In those difficult moments, she would ask her community to pray for her. "It was so comforting to know that even though I couldn't pray, my community was doing it for me," she says. "It's very healing to know you're part of a community, that you're valuable and that when you return, they'll notice."

It's experiences like this that bring home the purpose and value of Adventist education for Harris: An exceptional, powerful community that lifts each other up in their darkest hours.

Texico Conference Superintendent of Education Derral Reeve agrees. Of his own personal experience he says, "Seventh-day Adventist education is part of my family culture; my parents and siblings have a combined 156 years of going to Adventist schools. But it has become more than just a family tradition. It has become a force that draws the students, parents and churches into an interrelated community so strongly that they become a real family."

SVCS embodies this idea perfectly through its mission, vision and practice. "At SVCS, we really focus on making sure the school is relationship-focused," Harris says. "We're teaching kids to have a relationship with Jesus, and the only way to do that is to demonstrate what 'relationship' means. SVCS is brilliant at that. God reached out to me when I needed Him most, and He did it through my relationships with my school and church community. There's nothing I can do in return except say thank you." [®]

A Humble Heart and a Generous Spirit

The Bible has lots of promises for us. Sometimes when we read them, we find one that we think is just for us. Other times we get to see the fulfillment of a Bible promise in someone else's life.

I remember with joy in my heart a special story about a young guy that I knew several years ago. His name is Federico and the Bible promise in Luke 6:38 became real in his life.

When my family was serving as missionaries in South America, we met Federico. He was one of our students in one of the boarding academies. Federico worked in the kitchen of the school in order to pay for his tuition. One day another group of missionaries visited the school and noticed Federico was a hard-working student. After the meal, one person gave him a \$10 tip. Ten dollars was quite a large amount of money for an academy student.

One night at a prayer meeting, the school was asking for donations to help a local teenager attend the Adventist academy. This teen would be taught how to read and write, and would also get to know about Jesus and His Word.

I saw Federico give his \$10 tip as a donation. Not only was this a large sum for a student, but this was the only money Federico had. Yet, he gave it all to help another person that he did not know so that they could have a Christian education. I shared with my husband what I had observed and he shared the story with the leader of the missionary group that was visiting.

On the group's last day they collected an offering. They called Federico and gave him \$110! His quiet act of generosity had moved them to help him with his tuition.

I praise God for His promises, for the generosity of the missionaries and for teaching me a good lesson.

You see, when we help others with all of our heart and with all we have, Jesus' promises become real.

Luke 6:38 says, "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For

with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

I saw that promise in action! Federico gave \$10 and God blessed him with not only the \$10 that he gave before (a good measure), but an additional \$100 (running over)! Federico did not expect that, but God honors the good heart and the cheerful giver. You will have a lot of opportunities to help or serve others. Do it, help, serve, give with all your heart! Jesus will take care of the rest; His promises will be real in your life!

By Sonia Cano

Southwestern Union Children's Ministries Director



May Events

8-9

SWAU: Graduation Weekend, Recognition Ceremonies in Keene, Tex., Commencement Ceremony in Cleburne, Tex. SWAU.edu

8

Texas Conference: Resilient Families Celebration: Embracing Practical Ways to Strengthen Faith and Relationships, Dallas First Seventh-day Adventist Church ForeverONEfamily.org

16

Texas Conference: Biennial Constituency Session, virtual, delegates only, TexasAdventist.org

29

Texas Conference: Resilient Families Celebration: Embracing Practical Ways to Strengthen Faith and Relationships, Magnolia Park Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church ForeverONEfamily.org



June Events

1-5

Arkansas-Louisiana Conference: NW Arkansas Camp Meeting with John Bradshaw and Kings Heralds, Gentry, Ark. GentryAdventist.org

4-6

Southwest Region Conference: Virtual Camp Meeting in Spanish, MySouthwestRegion.org or Facebook: SouthwestRegion

7-11

Southwestern Union: Virtual Cactusville VBS Training in English and Spanish, scano@SWUC.org

11-19

Southwest Region Conference: Virtual Camp Meeting in English, MySouthwestRegion.org or Facebook: SouthwestRegion

13

Southwest Region Conference: Virtual Lay Advisory Meeting, MySouthwestRegion.org or Facebook: SouthwestRegion

13-18

Arkansas-Louisiana Conference: Cub Camp Week, Camp Yorktown Bay DCraig@arklac.org

19

Texas Conference: Marriage Intensive: Activate, Connect and Transform Your Marriage, space limited, Quinlan, Tex. ForeverONE.org

20-25

Arkansas-Louisiana Conference: Junior Camp Week, Camp Yorktown Bay DCraig@arklac.org

June 27-July 2

Arkansas-Louisiana Conference: Tween Camp Week, Camp Yorktown Bay DCraig@arklac.org

For more events and information, visit SouthwesternAdventist.org.



Union Constituency Session

Delegates Elect Officers and Departmental Leadership



KEENE, TEX. — The 31st Constituency Session of the Southwestern Union was held on April 25, 2021, at the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church in Keene, Tex. A worship session began with a welcome from retiring Southwestern Union President Larry R. Moore, before Debleaire Snell, senior pastor of the First Seventh-day Adventist Church of Huntsville, presented a stirring and sober message on the topic of understanding God’s timing, based on 2 Chronicles 12.

The business session was then called to order, and officers, vice presidents and departmental directors presented video reports on the work of the Southwestern Union from 2016-2021. A special recognition service for Moore thanked him for his 49 years of service to the Lord.

The nominating committee was chaired by G. Alexander Bryant, president of the North American Division. Shortly after a lunch recess, the delegates were presented with a report from the nominating committee recommending Carlos J. Craig to the position of president. The recommendation passed, electing Craig as the new president of

the Southwestern Union.

As the nominating committee continued to meet, the delegates heard reports from Penny Johnson, President and CEO of Texas Health Huguley Hospital, and from Ken Shaw, then-president of Southwestern Adventist University. Shaw had previously announced his call to become the president of Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tenn., which he is set to begin in June.

Buford Griffith, then-executive secretary, presented a report from the constitution and bylaws committee with proposed changes. After some discussion, the proposed changes were moved and accepted.

The nominating committee recommended the following officers, vice presidents and departmental leaders, which were put to a vote and passed:

Executive Secretary, Stephen Brooks; Treasurer/CFO, John Page; Vice President for Church Ministries, Elton DeMoraes; Vice President for Education, Carol Campbell; Vice President for Multicultural Ministries, Osvaldo Rigacci; Undertreasurer, Bo Just; Associate Treasurer and HR Director, Vivian Johnson; Children’s Ministries

and Sabbath School Director, Sonia Canó; Communication Director and Record Editor, Jessica Lozano; Associate Communication Director, Kristina Busch; Secondary Education Director, Mike Furr; Men’s Ministries, Ministerial Director, and Stewardship Director, Elton DeMoraes; and Young Adult and Youth Ministries Director, Prayer Coordinator, Helvis Moody.

The positions of Family Life/PARL Director, Women’s Ministries Director, Personal Ministries Director and Evangelism Director were voted to be referred back to the Southwestern Union Executive Committee.

G. Alexander Bryant thanked outgoing officers and departmental leaders, Buford Griffith, Jr., Carmen M. Fuentes-Griffith and Eduardo Canales, for their many years of dedicated service to the Southwestern Union.

Carlos Craig presented closing remarks for the session, which was then closed with prayer by Kyoshin Ahn, executive secretary of the North American Division.

By *Jessica Lozano*
Communication Director

New Union President

Craig Named President at 31st Constituency Session

KEENE, TEX. – Carlos J. Craig, having served as president of the Texas Conference since June 2011, was voted to the position of president of the Southwestern Union Conference at its 31st Constituency Session, held April 25, 2021, at the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church in Keene, Tex.

Upon his election, Craig shared that it was a “daunting honor to accept the nomination. It’s a new stage for me, but I’ve always been open to God’s leading. Thirty-four years ago, when God gave me a chance in ministry, I promised Him to do whatever He asked me to do. Sometimes you have to be careful when you do that...God has an interesting sense of humor in asking me to do this, but I prayerfully accept, by God’s grace.”

Craig was born in Wichita, Kan., in 1961, and was adopted at three days old into the family of a Seventh-day Adventist minister. He spent his youth in Kansas, Florida and Colorado before studying theology at Montemorelos Adventist University in Mexico.

Craig and his wife, Leticia, have been in ministry in the Texas Conference since 2000. They served in Los Angeles, Calif., before coming to Texas. Craig has served the Texas Conference as Executive Secretary, Executive Vice President for Evangelism and Hispanic Ministries and Youth Department Director.

Craig and Leticia reside in Cleburne, Tex. They have three adult children, Danette, David and Daphne, and three grandchildren.

At the close of the constituency session, Craig shared, “We go forward with the promise that He is with us always until the end of the age. And so, continue to pray for us as we pray for you.” Craig will assume the duties of the presidency in May.

By Jessica Lozano
Communication Director

Top Left: North American Division President, G. Alexander Bryant (left) introduced Carlos J. Craig (right) as the new Southwestern Union President. Top Right: The three elected executive officers of the Southwestern Union (from left to right) are Executive Secretary Stephen Brooks, President Carlos J. Craig and Treasurer/CFO John Page.



Oklahoma Constituency

Session Convenes at Wewoka Woods, Officers Re-elected



WEWOKA, OKLA. – The 70th Constituency Session of the Oklahoma Conference was held April 18, 2021, at the Wewoka Woods Adventist Center in Wewoka, Okla., with more than 300 delegates.

The day began with prayer and welcome from James Shires, president of the Oklahoma Conference, and special music by Cory Leineweber, member of the Choctaw Seventh-day Adventist Church. A devotional message was then presented by Helvis C. Moody, young adult and youth director/prayer ministries coordinator of the Southwestern Union. The devotional was followed by a prayer session led by Shires, in which he asked delegates to pray for the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The session officially began with the reading of the call and seating of the delegates. Rodney Grove served as parliamentarian.

The administrative officers presented their official reports, beginning with the president’s report. Shires reported on the spiritual momentum that has been gained over the past four years, and gave a special spotlight on the way pastors, leaders and members worked together during the COVID-19 pandemic to use innovative technologies to make sure that ministry continued. Executive secretary Apple Park presented his report, sharing that there were 921 baptisms in the past four years, and a membership

at the end of 2020 of 8,613. In his treasurer’s report, Carlos Portanova shared that tithe had increased 2.2 percent over the last quadrennial session, with a total tithe for the last four years standing at \$31,351,360. The session continued with video reports presented by departmental directors.

Following the administrator and departmental reports, Michael Merrifield, CPA, CGMA, General Conference Auditing Service Regional Manager, shared the December 31, 2020, 2019, 2018 and 2017 audit report for the Oklahoma Conference. The conference received an unmodified or “clean opinion,” which is the best opinion review an organization can receive, for all four years.

Larry R. Moore, Southwestern Union president, introduced the nominating committee report to the delegates. He recognized the committee and thanked them for their work. The nominating committee report was read and voted on, and the following positions were confirmed:

Officers: President, James Shires; Secretary, Apple Park; Treasurer, Carlos Portanova.

Departmental Directors: Associate Treasurer, Tamra Clark; Adventist-Service Laymen’s Coordinator, Apple Park; Asian Ministries Coordinator, Apple Park; Children’s Ministries Coordinator, Cinthia Portanova; Communication

Director, Daniel Ortega; Community Services/Disaster Relief Coordinator, Apple Park; Education Superintendent, Tim Kripps; Evangelism Coordinator, Nic Coutet; Health Ministries, Sherry Fisher; Hispanic Ministries, Luis Prieto; Men’s Ministries Coordinator, Robert Quintana; Ministerial Spouses, Julia Shires; Native American Ministries, Robert Burnette; NSO, Tim Kripps; Planned Giving & Trust Services, Carlos Portanova; Public Affairs & Religious Liberty, Brad Jones; Stewardship Director, Robert Burnette; Women’s Ministries, Karol Mosebay; Youth Ministries Director, Daniel Ortega.

The positions of family ministries director, ministerial director, prayer ministries coordinator and Sabbath School/personal ministries director were voted to be referred to the Oklahoma Conference Executive Committee.

Delegates later discussed proposed changes to the constitution and bylaws for the conference. Delegates voted to refer all proposed changes to the constitution and by-laws back to the constitution and by-laws committee.

Prior to the session closing, the administration recognized Ciro and Susan Castillo, Jack and Linda Francisco, and Rodney Grove for their many years of service to the Oklahoma Conference.

By Jessica Lozano
Southwestern Union Communication Director

Communication Revamped

Department Restructures and Adds to Team

BURLESON, TEX. – The Southwestern Union communication department oversees the production of the *Record* suite: a bi-monthly magazine and online platforms as well as the Southwestern Union website and social media channels. The communication department manages public relations and crisis management issues for the Southwestern Union and assists the local conferences with these issues as well.

The communication department supports the various events and initiatives of Southwestern Union ministries through marketing management, graphic design, photography and videography.

In 2020, the communication department also became heavily involved with the production and execution of online events and training sessions conducted by different Southwestern Union ministries, from prayer conferences to online ministries training. Although events were not held in-person, the behind-the-scenes work was just as involved. The communication department welcomed the opportunity to innovate and expand the Southwestern Union's ministry potential.

However, at the time, the team consisted of only two full-time individuals and a part-time administrative assistant, which limited the amount of support the communication department could dedicate to the other Southwestern

Union ministries while still fulfilling the department's own responsibilities.

The first quarter of 2021 afforded the Southwestern Union and the communication department with a few unique opportunities.

The Southwestern Union hired Zack Posthumus to serve as assistant director overseeing graphic design in January. His addition to the department alleviated a great deal of design pressure that had been handled in-house as well as outsourced. Posthumus also infused the department with fresh perspective and creativity.

Following Posthumus's arrival to the communication department, the Southwestern Union named Tammy Prieto to serve as full-time assistant director overseeing photography, videography and digital media. Prieto had most recently served in the communication department as administrative assistant since 2016 in addition to serving as part-time administrative assistant for multicultural ministries. With this addition, the communication department was able to tap into Prieto's visual arts skills in a much more meaningful capacity in order to enhance departmental promotional efforts and campaigns for the Southwestern Union.

Afterward, the Southwestern Union extended an invitation to Kristina P. Busch, who had accepted a call to Texas

Health Huguley Hospital, to return to the position of associate director, overseeing the production of the *Record* suite. Busch accepted the invitation and rejoined the Southwestern Union communication department in March. With Jessica Lozano at the helm as director, the communication department now consists of four full-time employees.

This restructure has revamped the communication department and increased the scope of support the department can offer. In addition to increasing the online presence of the Southwestern Union and the *Record*, the department has several plans to further develop the communication, public relations and marketing efforts of the Southwestern Union in order to equip and inspire the Southwestern Union territory with the distinctive Adventist message of hope and wholeness.

————— *By Record Staff*

Left: Zack Posthumus, Assistant Director for Communication

Right: (from left to right) Tammy Prieto, Assistant Director for Communication, Jessica L. Lozano, Director for Communication, Kristina P. Busch, Associate Director for Communication



Why One Student Donates

SWAU Exceeds Expectation for New Fundraiser



KEENE, TX. - When Southwestern Adventist University announced their new fundraiser featuring different landmarks from the campus in 2020, they never imagined they would get the overwhelming support they received from the student body, knowing students' priorities are going towards their school finances.

Linh Vu, a recent transfer student, learned about the keepsake fundraiser and was immediately intrigued. Vu said the university meant so much to her that she felt moved to make a donation. Years ago, Vu was hired right out of high school to work for a military and criminal attorney. Ten years later she adopted a baby girl and began dreaming big for her daughter. She knew she wanted what was best for her and knew right where she needed to start.

As Vu previously attended community college, she never finished her degree. Vu knew she wanted to go back to school to obtain a degree that suited her well. She had her priorities in line and knew she wanted to apply to different nursing programs. Though Vu knew nothing about Adventists, her childhood background in religion made SWAU stand out to her.

Vu was accepted at multiple nursing programs and knew she needed to choose the school that would benefit her most. Before COVID-19 hit the country, she was able to visit the SWAU campus and get a taste of what it would be like. After speaking with many professors and learning about everything SWAU's nursing program has to offer, she knew SWAU was where she needed to be.

Later when the keepsake ornament fundraiser was announced, Vu knew she wanted to give a donation. Growing up, Vu was raised and taught to give back and give often, especially within her community. She knew that donating to something that benefited the education of students and their futures would be worthwhile.

Since transferring to Southwestern, Vu shares she has gained memorable friendships and that she values the help of her tutor so highly. Vu strongly believes God placed her at SWAU for a reason. She looks forward to gaining her degree and being able to show her daughter what she accomplished.

By Becky St. Claire
Photo By Emily Watts

Nurses Serve

SWAU Nursing Students Support COVID-19 Vaccine Effort

KEENE, TX. – When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States, nursing students had no idea what was in store for their soon hands-on learning experience. While restrictions limited clinicals, allowing students to gain in-person learning techniques, Southwestern Adventist University gave their nursing students the opportunity to serve at mass local COVID-19 vaccine clinics.

SWAU nursing students partnered with surrounding cities to meet the needs of their communities. The students joined forces with the Cleburne

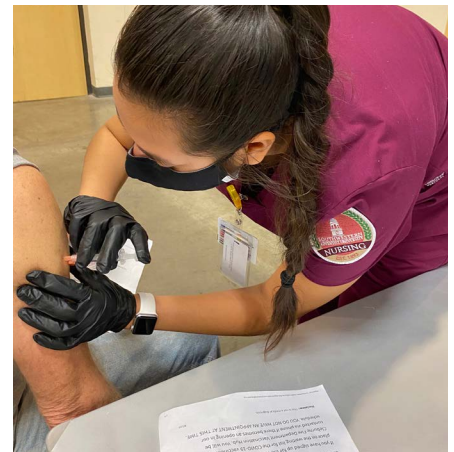
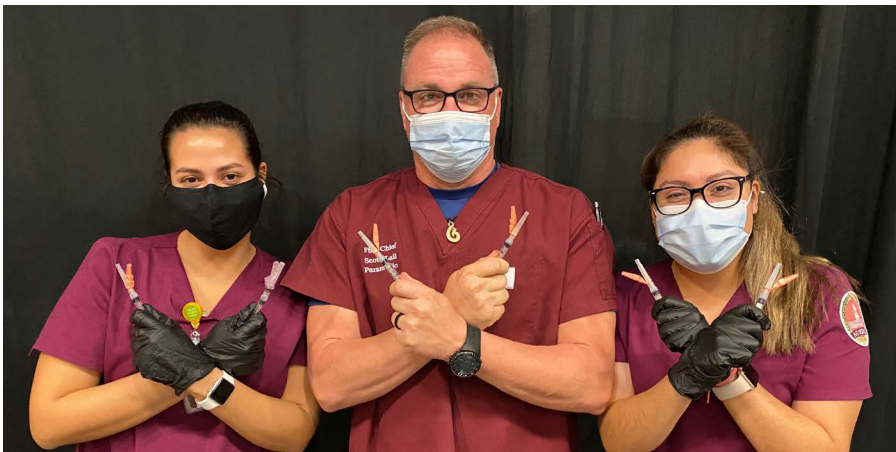
Fire Department, Burleson Public Health Authority and Texas Health Huguley Hospital to provide COVID-19 vaccines to members of the community.

Cleburne Fire Chief Scott Lail reported that nearly 5,000 vaccines were given to the community each week through the spring. Being volunteers, the students had a variety of opportunities to give their support to those in need, including prayer. Supporting, praying and vaccinating members throughout the community gave the students an opportunity to remember why they do

what they do, and why they fell in love with nursing to begin with.

SWAU’s Department of Nursing provides one of the top learning experiences for students in Texas. Offering an on-campus B.S. Nursing as well as an online R.N. to B.S. Nursing, the program welcomes two cohorts of students each year who graduate prepared to pass the NCLEX and pursue their career.

— *By Tim Kosaka*
Marketing and Public Relations Director
Photos by Kerrie Kimbrow



New Business Programs

SWAU Adds Three New Business Concentrations

KEENE, TX. – SWAU is adding three new concentrations to the business program: Project Management, Certified Financial Planning and Professional Sales.

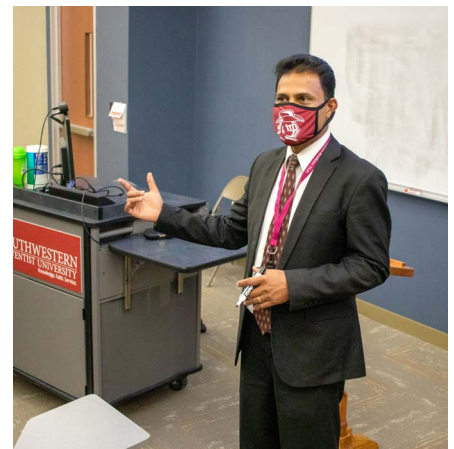
The Project Management track prepares students to complete the PMI Certified Associate in Project Management certification.

Certified Financial Planning is well suited for those interested in taxes, insurance, estate planning and retirement, and prepares students to become licensed as a Certified Financial Planner.

Professional Sales is offered to ensure long-term customer commitments in B2B sales and provides students with empathy, compassion and listening skills.

These new concentrations are offered in partnership with Low Cost Models for Independent Colleges Consortium. Students engage in on-campus classes while getting the experience alongside students from all over the country through industry leaders and lecturers.

– *By Tim Kosaka, Marketing and PR Director*
Photo by Keith Barrow



Championship Church

Discovering the Consuming Focus



I love baseball! I grew up on baseball. From my earliest memory, my dad would be sharing about baseball. He would play catch with me and teach me how to bat and how to play defense. We would listen to each broadcast of the St. Louis Cardinals game, whether it be day or evening, on the radio. Often there were trips to watch the game in person at the ballpark. We would roar with joy as we witnessed the gem of a great play and groan when a rally would fizzle out. And we had our heroes over the years. There were the great ones like Stan Musial, Bob Gibson and Lou Brock, and there were others who were good but who would float in and out.

Dad would always say that a championship baseball team had a couple of characteristics. First, the whole team loved the game. They would eat, breathe, sleep and live the game—that was their entire focus. Second, the team would be made up of young players who had incredible raw talent—stars who were in their prime and playing at the highest level of excellence, as well as seasoned veterans who were past their prime, but contributed to the team in key areas and who helped bring the rookies along and keep them encouraged and focused.

I share that with you because I have found the same principle to be true when it comes to championship churches. Their focus is Jesus: Creator, Redeemer, High Priest, Soon Returning King! It is all-consuming. And when Jesus is the consuming focus, then all the church, regardless of generation or ethnicity, is moved and motivated by the Holy Spirit to collaborate in a wonderful and seamless harmony to advance the kingdom. Newborn babes in the faith with their newfound joy and enthusiasm are joined with those believers who are at the top of their game in preaching, teaching and evangelizing, combined with the wisdom, nurturing, mentoring and encouraging of seasoned believers. The result is a church on fire! The church is one. The church is unstoppable. There is no division because they are a team. They rejoice together. They pray together. They work together for the glory of God and to lift up King Jesus!

The key is that it is never about self or division. It has always been about Jesus and one another. Championship churches live out the words of Jesus, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, you shall love your neighbor as yourself....” Mark 12:30,31 (NASB).

Today, as never before, we need championship churches! We need each generation. We need you!

By Richard C. Dye, Sr. President



Texarkana and Amazing Facts

Dedicated Members Share Gospel Through Pandemic

TEXARKANA – With the onset of COVID-19 and the resulting shutdown of our annual fair ministries, the personal ministry director, Brenda Litchfield, and husband Dennis, prayed about a different way to reach people with books and magazines. Then their Amazing Facts magazine arrived with an ad for doing mailings in the local area and Dennis was inspired. The Litchfields discussed their own personal donation and opened it to the church as a project.

To take advantage of the special pricing, they stepped out in faith and started the project with the intent of supporting it on their own. However, the Texarka-

na church board was enthusiastic and agreed to cover two zip code areas. The idea was shared with the congregation and the board agreed that if the effort proved successful, they would extend it to other zip codes. W.D. Weitzel printed a rough draft insert to place inside the magazine offering *The Great Controversy* book and asked Amazing Facts to include it in the mailing. They not only agreed, but offered to print it also.

We distributed in the first two zip codes and the church has plans to cover the rest of Texarkana. Amazing Facts called Weitzel for permission to use the insert in other areas where they are dis-

tributing the magazine. There are now cards coming in from everywhere, with some as far away as Alaska. Members helped address envelopes for those responding to the magazine, which included a letter introducing the enclosures of *The Great Controversy*, *Hope for the Hurting* and *The Three Angels' Message*, along with a Bible study request card. The church requests the prayers of the entire conference family.

By Loretta Johnson

Being Hands and Feet

Batesville Members and Pathfinders Care for Homeless

BATESVILLE, ARK – Sarah and her husband, pastor Abraham Velazquez, joined the Batesville Seventh-day Adventist Church late last year, and one of the things they enjoy is bicycle riding.

During a bicycle trip to downtown Little Rock, Sarah noticed that there were many people living on the street and it really tugged on her heart. The question she kept asking was, “What can we do to make a difference in the lives of the homeless?”

With winter fast approaching, Sarah brought the idea to the church family and asked if anyone would like to volunteer to help knit and crochet hats, scarves and socks for the homeless. Several church members from the Batesville district volunteered and Threads of Love came to fruition.

This small but dedicated group met each Sunday until they felt they had enough items to make a difference. The Pathfinders came together on

Valentine’s Day and filled 29 bags with literature, the handmade scarves, hats and socks, hygiene products and a few snacks. Another thing they did was make handwritten cards for each bag; the cards read, “You are loved, you are cherished, you are not forgotten.” It was a blessing for the Pathfinders to be involved in God’s ministry, to be Jesus’ hands and feet.

By Frances Taylor



Ozark Adventist Academy

Students Participate in 10 Days of Prayer



GENTRY, ARK. – Ozark Adventist Academy conducted a 10 Days of Prayer event using the resources provided by the General Conference. Rather than ten consecutive days, the event was divided in half and held on school days for two weeks. A staff member and student teamed up to lead out each day.

The event concluded with a special program with musical numbers by the bell choir and ensembles. The student body participated in a foot washing and communion service which was followed

by a testimony time where students and staff shared how they were blessed during the past two weeks.

Some students shared: “This 10 Days of Prayer has really touched me. Sometimes I feel my relationship with God is lukewarm. The 10 Days of Prayer has really brought me to think of who I am and my relationship to God.”

“No matter how many times we have fallen down, God never gets tired of us. He’s always behind us. He’s in front of us showing us the way. He’s behind us.

He’s got our back and he’s beside us because he’s our friend.”

“The 10 Days of Prayer actually helped me to reevaluate myself as a person and how I represent God. Christianity is not about perfection but how we can reach that through Jesus.”

“Thankful for fresh starts with God.”

The program was livestreamed and can be viewed at [Facebook.com/OzarkAdventistAcademy](https://www.facebook.com/OzarkAdventistAcademy).

— *By Stephen Burton*
Superintendent of Schools

Thousands for Tuition

Siloam Springs Supports Students With Rummage Sale

SILAM SPRINGS, ARK. – The Siloam Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church hosted yet another rummage sale for their worthy student fund, which helps six children from our church attend church school. We have two attending Ozark Adventist Academy and four attending Ozark Adventist School.

The annual rummage sale is usually held once a year, but the Holy Spirit put it upon the hearts of those at the Siloam Springs church to hold another one. Last August they raised over \$3000! This time they raised over \$2000! We

know God was with us every step of the way.

The Siloam Springs church plans on having another sale during the summer. We had very faithful helpers and customers! We can’t think of a better way to spend our time, energy and money than on our kids being able to have a good Christian education.

— *By LaTara Reyes*



Motorcycle Ministry

From Food Baskets to Blessing Lives in the Community

SPRINGDALE, ARK. – The Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Ministry is an outreach program that caters to the motorcycle community, but that does not prevent them from helping others when they see a need.

During the Thanksgiving holiday we learned of a lady that had come on hard times and was in dire need of a food basket. The group met and went shopping to prepare several food baskets for delivery.

In making the delivery we learned that this older woman had to relocate from her dwelling on very short notice and was forced to move into a worn-out

RV, parked in a ditch on a piece of property that she had been able to acquire.

There was no running water, no sewer, limited power and a small propane tank for heat. She had two young grandsons that had been left for her to raise and she was trying to homeschool them.

It was decided that the ministry would prepare more food baskets and collect gifts for the family for Christmas.

The generosity of the Tontitown Church Group and others in the community was tremendous. Word spread and we even had the local Razorback Pizza Restaurant donate two bicycles for the boys. The boys were excited to

get their gifts, but we were stunned then they stated that their favorite thing of all was the box of ramen noodles that had been included in the food baskets. Experiencing the thrill of helping others has been a blessing for all of us.

Should anyone have an interest in this unique ministry, contact Rick Thames, South Central Regional director, Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Ministry at RNThames@gmail.com.

By Rick Thames

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, June 27, 2021, at Texarkana Convention Center, 2910 S Cowhorn Creek Loop, Texarkana, Texas 75503. 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, and 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 C. Dye, Sr., 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, June 27, 2021, at Texarkana Convention Center, 2910 S Cowhorn Creek Loop, Texarkana, Texas 75503. 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 of Seventh-day Adventists are delegates of The Arkansas Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists.

Richard C. Dye, Sr., 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, June 27, 2021, at Texarkana Convention Center, 2910 S Cowhorn Creek Loop, Texarkana, Texas 75503. 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 of Seventh-day Adventists are delegates of The Arkansas Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists.

Richard C. Dye, Sr., President
Tony Cash, Association Secretary

Thailand Mission Trip

DESTINATION: KANCHANABUIR, THAILAND

DATES: NOV. 17 – DEC. 2, 2021

MISSION PROJECT:

ORPHANAGE / VBS
PROGRAM /
CONSTRUCTION /
EVANGELISM / EYE CLINIC /
DENTAL SERVICE

COST:

\$2,500/ AIRFARE, LODGING,
CONTRIBUTION FOR
PROJECT,
TRANSPORTATION, TRAVEL
INSURANCE, AND LODGING
DURING EXCURSIONS

REGISTER AT:

www.arklac.org/ministerial

We only have room for 45
people, so register asap!



Arkansas-Louisiana Conference

FOR MORE INFO
CONTACT:
JEFF VILLEGAS

318-631-6240 EXT. 205
JVILLEGAS@ARKLAC.ORG



Given the Chance

Mentoring and Discipling Today's Youth for Today's Church



When I reflect on my time growing up in the church, one thing stands out. Church leaders were very intentional about mentoring and empowering me to be a church leader. I remember at the age of 12 being asked by the Sabbath school secretary to help her count the offering every week. It consisted of mostly one-dollar bills and a bunch of change, but I remember it being something special. She carefully and patiently showed me how to record it and talked to me about how this money was special and how it was going to be a blessing to children in another part of the world. Even in my limited knowledge of the world mission, in doing this seemingly small task, I felt like I was playing a huge role in the Lord's work.

The following year I was asked to serve as a deacon and put on the rotation of the deacon's responsibilities. By the time I was in college, at the age of 21 I had grown in that ministry and served as head deacon of my church. Along with that role, at different times during my high school and college years, I had served as bulletin secretary, AY leader, Sabbath school teacher, music director, Pathfinder director and a few other leadership roles. I can assure you that it was not because I was some highly talented young man. I had a willingness to serve, and they took advantage of that and mentored me (and others) through a variety of opportunities to serve. They were not intimidated by having a kid on the board who asked questions and had a few different ideas.

I thank God for a church family who didn't just say we were the future leaders, but empowered us and trusted us with important roles and served along with us. My experience reminds me of what Ellen G. White wrote in *Prophets and Kings*, "Ministry comprehends far more than preaching the word. It means training young men as Elijah trained Elisha, taking them from their ordinary duties, and giving them responsibilities to bear in God's work. Small responsibilities at first, and larger ones as they gain strength and experience."

The story of Elijah and Elisha is a great biblical example of mentoring and preparing a younger person to take on a leadership role. Up to the very last moment of Elijah's ministry, these two men "were walking along and talking together," according to 2 Kings 2:11. I love that image! An older, more experienced prophet mentoring a younger man. How great would it be to see all of our young people being intentionally mentored and disciplined by older, more experienced God-fearing Christians as they serve together. Doing this, in part, fulfills the great commission to go and make disciples. How about you? Is there a young person that you are intentionally mentoring and helping prepare to be a leader for God?

By Daniel Ortega, Youth and Young Adult Ministries Director



Technology Blessings

Ketchum Adventist Academy Receives Laptops



KETCHUM, OKLA – Early in the school year I was sitting in the classroom at Ketchum Adventist Academy (KAA), frustrated with our students’ computers that no longer worked with any of the new required education programs.

One of the North American Division (NAD) education department’s requirements is a new style of testing called the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) testing. It tests students at the beginning, the middle and the end of the school year to determine their progress.

MAP testing is a wonderful way to review students’ progress and address any weaknesses, but there was one big problem: our desktop computers were 12 years old and would not work with the tests. Desperate, I emailed the Oklahoma Conference about KAA’s dilemma. In the meantime, I prayed.

As a teacher in a small, multi-grade school for 30 years, there are many different jobs to juggle, but it is worth it. Teaching at KAA has stayed deep inside my heart. I knew this school needed more help to keep everything special and running smoothly for our students. Then one day, after my email and many, many fervent prayers, I received a phone call that began a series of blessings.

Our conference president, James Shires, and the conference officers responded to my email and noted that

KAA has several non-Adventist, Native American students. The conference’s Native Ministries department arranged for KAA to receive new Apple laptop computers, and the ministry also purchased software subscriptions for a period of five years.

KAA was also provided additional funding to support the quality of education for our Native American students. Because of these funds, KAA students will have the technology necessary if we need to switch to distance learning at any time.

Although some students have received scholarships through donors via the Opportunity Scholarship Fund (osfkids.org), the scholarships cannot be used for technology. And although some of our students are not members of our church, their parents wanted their children to go to a school that would teach them about Jesus; KAA gives their children that extra-special knowledge. A few of our families have even requested Bible studies.

Recently Oklahoma’s Native Ministries Director Jim Landelius visited KAA to have worship and deliver the computers to our excited students. We are beyond thankful to our donors. Native people were forced onto reservations and left to struggle alone, but God didn’t forget them, and Oklahoma Native

Ministries (NativeMinistries.org) did not forget about their children at KAA.

With this donation, we are reminded about how fortunate we are to live in Oklahoma with one of the highest ratios of Native Americans in any state in the country.

We are now studying Oklahoma’s Native Americans, and for worship, we are reading *Swift Arrow* by Josephine Cunningham Edwards. Her thoughtful story is about a young boy who was captured but carefully raised for 12 years by Native Americans in Pennsylvania during the 1700s.

We may never know how many seeds are planted for Jesus just by keeping our church schools open, sharing God’s messages of love, forgiveness and a future that is shaped by His hand.

I praise God for the gifts from Native Ministries and for our KAA students who make coming to work every day a blessing.

By Damien Toews

Anointed for Service

Friendship Evangelism at Work in Vinita

VINITA, OKLA. - When Jesus was baptized, the Holy Spirit, like a dove, lighted upon Him and anointed Him for His saving mission, and He heard His Father declare: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. When anyone surrenders their life fully to Jesus, the Father declares His pleasure and the Holy Spirit begins to fill that heart with divine love and power for a new life of service.

Luke and Nicholas Toews are brothers and students at Ozark Adventist Academy who responded to the Holy Spirit and gave their hearts to the Lord in baptism. Jerry Mayes, pastor, assisted by Michael Smith, OAA boys' dean, baptized them. Smith witnessed their spiritual growth and was delighted to participate and offer a fervent prayer for the in-filling of the Holy Spirit.

Meanwhile, Eddie Thornburg (bottom left) experienced a very unique baptism. He had attended Adventist church as a child, with his mother, Mary Cole. When he listened to the evangelistic sermons presented by Mayes, Thornburg's heart was touched anew and he indicated his desire to be baptized and become a member of our Vinita church family. However, as Thornburg was scheduled for surgery, and the baptistery was not ready, Mayes decided to baptize him in a jacuzzi bathtub. It was such a blessing to witness his enthusiastic joy as he was lowered into the water and anointed with the Holy Spirit to make him a powerful witness for Jesus.

Gloria Sawin (center) studied the Amazing Facts Bible studies with Connie Patrick. Patrick and the church

rejoiced as Sawin arose radiantly from the baptismal pool. We pray for the Holy Spirit to fill her life.

Another baptismal praise is Donna Ellis (bottom right). Ellis is a health client of Becky Siler. She was invited by Siler to attend our church in Vinita. Ellis had attended Adventist churches several years ago, and she hesitantly accepted the invitation. She had no desire to become a member. As she listened to God's Word and experienced the love of the church family, the desire grew in her heart to become a member of our congregation. She could hardly wait to be baptized and anointed for service. Her enthusiasm filled us with joy. We desire to lead souls to the Savior and see them all prepared for Jesus' soon return.

By Kay Mayes



Festive Sabbath

Sallisaw Spanish Pays Off Mortgage, Celebrates Nine Years

SALLISAW, OKLA. - On Jan. 16, the Spanish Sallisaw Seventh-day Adventist Church celebrated paying off the church mortgage and their ninth anniversary. Oklahoma Conference Executive Secretary Apple Park and Treasurer Carlos Portanova took part in the ceremony burning the mortgage debt paperwork. Members shared testimonies about God's leading of the spreading the gospel. It was a rejoicing Sabbath for the whole congregation. We are grateful for God's abundant blessings throughout this journey.

By Juan Williams, Pastor



Spanish Preaching Challenge

Oklahoma Young People Take to the Pulpit



OKLAHOMA CITY - After the iPreach for HIM preaching challenge in November 2020, some Spanish church pastors reached out with interested children from their churches. Immediately, the Youth Department planned another challenge. Each church held a church-wide preaching challenge and the winner moved on to the conference level. Seven youth, ages 10-18, reached conference level: Derek Abraham Bello (Midwest City), Allen Gamas (Tulsa Spanish), Ramon Loyo Plata (West

Siloam Springs), Alex Vasquez (Durant Spanish), Emmanuel Bartolon (Garnett Spanish), Arodi Lopez Barrientos (OKC Central Spanish) and Abraham Velásquez (Independence Spanish). Each sermon focused on the theme "An Encounter With Jesus."

Judges consisted of three pastors, and after hearing all seven great presenters they totaled up the points. First place went to Arodi Lopez Barrientos, second place went to Emmanuel Bartolon and third place went to Allen Gamas. All

participants received a small gift card and a recognition certificate signed by the youth director and conference president.

We praise God for the work that the Holy Spirit is doing with this group and we know that the Lord has great plans for their lives. We look forward to seeing them continue proclaiming the Word of God. Watch their sermons on the Ministerio Hispano-Oklahoma Facebook page.

— By Yesenia Ortega, Youth Admin. Assistant

Making Memories

Oklahoma Hosts Tea Party for Mothers and Daughters

OKLAHOMA CITY – On Sunday, Feb. 28, the Oklahoma Conference Children’s Ministry Department hosted a special Mother-Daughter Tea Party. We wanted to offer an opportunity for moms and daughters to have a special time to bond with each other and encourage a closer walk with God as they live their everyday lives together. In order to allow for social distancing, the attendance was limited to 80 people. The Sheraton Hotel in downtown Oklahoma City fit the bill with a banquet room large enough to accommodate us. Thirty-two moms and 41 daughters attended, representing 14 churches, traveling from as far away as Tulsa, Ardmore and Durant.

The attendees all arrived with their special party dresses, some with hats and gloves. While waiting for everyone

to arrive, the daughters were given the opportunity to answer questions on how well they knew their mothers. To start the program, we had a short presentation on the origins of afternoon tea and the correct etiquette involved at a tea party. Herbal teas plus a variety of tea treats were provided so everyone could enjoy the process of serving each other tea and practice tea etiquette.

All children’s ministry events must have a time to be creative, and for this event each mom was given a brown paper bag filled with supplies to make their daughters “fascinator hats,” a style of hat made popular in the 1940s. After the hats were finished, moms walked with their daughters down a “runway,” showing off their creativity.

The afternoon activities culminated

with an inspirational talk by Amy Gil, elementary teacher at Tulsa Adventist Academy. Amy shared 10 points to help mothers and daughters form a closer bond with one another, leaving us with the thought that the most important part of any relationship is to have Jesus the center of the relationship. The moms were then given the opportunity to present their daughters with a box which contained a key with a heart attached. Moms then made promises to their daughters and had a special prayer of dedication. Our prayer is that those who attended went home with a deeper bond in their relationships.

— By Norma Shepherd



Growing Together

Learning a Lesson from Andrew



Jesus looked over the crowd of more than 5,000 who had followed Him up a mountainside, yearning to hear more, and questioned His disciples on how to feed them. Andrew brought a lad to Jesus who had offered his lunch of five loaves of bread and two fish. Jesus accepted the willingness of this boy and took the little that he had, and made one of the greatest miracles. Andrew could have easily dismissed the lad because, humanly speaking, what could that lunch do? I love the fact that Andrew took the boy to Jesus and involved him in the process and in the conversation.

The miracle took place because one adult involved a youth in the process and two generations worked together. When we work together, we grow together. We must believe that God can use children, youth and young adults with any gifts and talents they have, no matter how little it may seem. We need their creativity, passion, desire and willingness to help, change, grow and live. We need more disciples like Andrew who will bring our younger generations to Jesus. Churches die when one generation does not empower the next. Often youth are pushed aside at church and we later find them serving corporate America as CEOs and CFOs. They lead the world that esteemed their value, which their former church overlooked.

It's time to take a good look at our church and ask: Are we growing old or are we growing young? The book *Growing Young* outlines six essential strategies to help young people discover and love your church. The core commitments of growing young and growing together are *Unlock keychain leadership*: Instead of centralizing authority, empower others—especially young people. *Empathize with today's young people*: Instead of judging/criticizing, step into their shoes. *Take Jesus' message seriously*: Instead of asserting formulaic gospel claims, welcome young people into a Jesus-centered way of life. *Fuel a warm community*: Instead of focusing on cool worship/programs, aim for warm peer and intergenerational friendships. *Prioritize young people and families everywhere*: Instead of giving lip service to how much young people matter, look for creative ways to tangibly support, resource and involve them in all facets of your congregation. *Be the best neighbors*: Instead of condemning the world outside your walls, enable young people to neighbor well locally and globally.

I pray that we will understand the value of our youth and empower them by giving them a voice and a chance while leading them to Jesus. Let's finish preaching the gospel to the world and await Jesus' return together.

By Vanston Archbold

General Field Secretary/Diversity, Associate Youth Director



Always About Others

We Are All Community Service

BATON ROUGE, LA - It is not unusual for places of worship to come forward with their donations during major holidays. However, such an action becomes unique in the absence of a church elected department leader. This was Berean's recent experience when member Doris Collins, in the absence of a community services director, approached the pastor, T. Ron Weegar, regarding Christmas dinners for the needy. The church board approved the request with an adequate monetary amount to cover expenses. With former community services coordinators Collins and Lyn Hakeem at the helm, and the amount matched by an anonymous Berean couple who joined members Raven Butler, Carla Chevies, Dan Collins, Arlene Mossey and Cheryl Scott, the team went to work.

"Berean doesn't have a community services department and yet, Berean has a community services department. Ours is a Holy Spirit-driven desire to do what God wants us to do," says Hakeem. "We are all community services," chimed in Collins. "We see a need and we passionately respond," she continued.

The congregation submitted names of community and some of its own who had requested or were observed to be in need. With a comfortable number in mind, Collins and her team began their shopping. What resulted were 44 hefty meals meticulously arranged in large baskets. Each basket was chock-full of the makings for a pasta meal, green salad fixings, beans, rice, potatoes, rolls, fresh fruit and donated turkeys. On the Tuesday and Wednesday before Christ-

mas, team members delivered the dinner and fruit baskets. Recipients included members of apartment complexes, individual homes and the Big Buddy organization—which for the last five years has received box and basket deliveries for several of its needy families.

For Collins and husband Dan, since their 1999 arrival to Berean, this latest experience has continued their gift of help and service. According to Collins, "Giving is my way of letting the Holy Spirit use me. Dan, my 15-year-old niece, Raven, who has been volunteering since she could walk, and I share that gift." Berean is grateful for Collins and her team who felt the need and acted on it.

By Evelyn M. Edwards
Photos by Doris Collins



Perfectly Mixed

Helping Children Build Confidence and Love

LAWTON, OKLA. - I have lived through discrimination and realize bias of any kind is a form of bullying. If I felt it, so did many others, especially our children. I read an article about the effects of bullying and how they were leading to a spike in children's suicides and my heart broke. God provided an opportunity for me to take a break from the workforce and *Perfectly Mixed* was born.

God laid that burden on my heart and I was moved to put pen to paper. I wanted to do my part to combat bullying and support our children by helping them

build confidence and foster a love for themselves.

My prayer is that *Perfectly Mixed*, for children ages 2-10, will reach every child that has been treated with bias because of their nationality, culture or color of skin, especially the underprivileged child across the globe. I pray that this book will help parents talk to their children about any bullying they have experienced and the importance of inclusion. I am so excited to share this God-inspired book with every child in need.

By Maria Meredith



Go Red

Supporting and Promoting a Clean Heart

HAMMOND, LA. - Propelled by the community services department, members of the Emmanuel Seventh-day Adventist Church donned their red outfits one Sabbath in February in support of Go Red for Women®.

The American Heart Association's (AHA) signature initiative, Go Red for Women®, is a comprehensive platform designed to increase women's heart health awareness and serve as a catalyst for change to improve the lives of women globally.

According to the AHA, "While nearly 80 percent of cardiac events can be prevented, cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in women, claiming the lives of 1 in 3 women. The movement harnesses the energy, passion and power of women to band together and collectively wipe out heart disease. It challenges them to know their risk for heart disease and take action to reduce their personal risk. It also gives them tools they need to lead a heart healthy life."

By Sherlette Burkhalter



Ministry of Healing

Holistic Self-Care for Adventist Educators

DALLAS – It is not a secret to anyone that COVID-19 is ravaging our country and the world: Over 500,000 deaths in the U.S. alone. Healing is needed. It is not a secret that racial profiling exists in United States. Healing is needed.

What may be a well-kept secret is the groundbreaking work being accomplished by Southwest Region Conference’s Education Department with financial support from Versacare Foundation. There is an active initiative and intervention happening that could easily be called “a ministry of healing.”

Early in 2020, La Sierra University’s Center for Conflict Resolution (CCR) was reviewing successful projects it was supporting around the United States. The American Psychological Association (APA) has an entire database that focuses on the relationship between conflict management and the psychological underpinnings that foster conflicts within organizations: APA PsycInfo. Therefore, CCR’s desire to assist Adventist communities in this time of unrest was a natural outgrowth of CCR’s “goal to help you resolve actual or potential conflicts....”

The Southwest Region Conference (SWRC) had successfully implemented a bullying prevention program in all eight of its schools across Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas. Could this forward-thinking conference discover new ways of ministering to hurting communities? CCR’s consultants believed that they could.

In April 2020 Superintendent of Education Buford Griffith, III, was contacted by Cliff Wright, Jr., a CCR Consultant, to discover what needs the SWRC schools and communities were experiencing due to the twin crises.

CCR’s consultants worked with our schools during the 2018–2019 school year, so trust, understanding and mutual respect created fertile ground for growth. After consultation with SWRC personnel, it was determined that the current crises required a specific focus: Holistic Self-Care.

A snapshot of the nation would reveal the following: social distancing compounded feelings of isolation among young and old, job loss and uncertainty were common in all communities and churches were closed. Mental health challenges due to stress were at record levels in the U.S. before COVID-19; during the pandemic the economic toll of lost wages, closed businesses, and closed parks and libraries fed feelings of depression. Domestic abuse soared. A ministry of healing was needed.

Dr. H. Jean Wright, II, a clinical and forensic psychologist from Temple University in Philadelphia, Pa., confirmed what research clearly indicated about all schools, even small private schools: Teachers were performing the role of first responders. They were the first line of defense for parents and students in crisis—physical, social and emotional.

First responders regularly suffer from secondary trauma, and it looks like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

CCR worked with the SWRC Education Superintendent to construct and implement a plan to safeguard staff, students and the ministry of education performed in those missionary outposts called “SDA Church Schools.” Data reviewed during Christmas break confirms the stress has been enormous, but the staff and students are showing signs of great resilience. For instance, some schools have even grown their enrollment. However, the most important data is not the size of the school, nor the revenue generated, but the health of the schools’ population and the homes that are impacted.

This initiative is ongoing, we praise God for the results and give thanks for the ways He supplies His children’s needs. CCR plans to give a full report to Versacare.org at the end of this academic year. We pray that lessons learned will be shared with all our ministry outposts (elementary, junior high schools and academies).



Griffith said, “During this pandemic, schools have found themselves in uncharted waters. Trying to navigate through virtual learning, students’ emotional stress and the adults’ own heightened stress levels was a massive challenge.”

“As we were developing best practices for the classroom, learning and the well-being of students there was no built-in help to address the teachers’ emotional and mental strain. Prayer and pastoral visits were the only tools available to most superintendents—tactical supports were not in place. If teachers are not in a good place emotionally and mentally, then instruction and school climate will suffer.”

The partnership between CCR and SWRC has given teachers, students and parents additional resources and support: monthly self-care check-ins for teachers, emotional support tools and techniques for schools and communities and external professionals to provide non-therapeutic guidance.

What I find most enlightening is that a little book written in 1905 called *Ministry of Healing* provided consultants in 2020 with direction on how to minister effectively during a crisis that none of us was expecting. Praise God for His abundant mercy and grace.

By Darryl E. Allen

I WILL *Go*

Virtual
SWRC Camp Meeting 2021
June 11-19



Forever Young

Embracing Young People on the Front Lines of the Mission



Back in the eighties there was a popular song written by Englishman Rod Stewart titled “Forever Young.” It began, “May the Good Lord be with you down every road you roam. And may sunshine and happiness surround you when you’re far from home. And may you grow to be proud, dignified and true. And do unto others as you’d have done to you. Be courageous and be brave. And in my heart you’ll always stay forever young.”

As I thought about the overarching theme chosen for this edition of the Record, those words came back to mind. I thought, what a fitting description of how youth and young adults should be viewed not only from our church, but by society as well. Did you notice the word “grow” incorporated in the lyrics? Growing pains was a well-known phrase that often had a negative connotation. When I was growing up, I experienced what many others of my generation experienced, a depreciation of youth and young adults. It was a common thought that if you were young, you weren’t quite up to speed. Sadly, there wasn’t a place at the adults’ table for children and youth. I praise God that we have grown quite a bit as a church in the past 50 years, but we still have a way to go.

The psalmist said it best in Psalm 144:12 (NKJV), “That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; That our daughters may be as pillars, sculptured in palace style.” Did you catch King David’s subtle reference to the importance of youth as he describes them as “pillars, sculptured in palace style?” If anyone knew and appreciated the beauty of a palace, it was David. The most decorated king in Israel’s history compared youth to the beauty of the inner palace!

Part of the church’s growth and development includes our ability to grow young as we grow old. Entrusting the youth of our church with responsibility, with mission and ministry, must not be seen as a challenge, but rather a privilege. This nation’s military entrusts million-dollar equipment in the hands of youth. Mega-companies readily entrust leadership into the hands of young minds. Why not the Church? Those of us 50-somethings and beyond must grow young at heart so that the youth and young adults of the church are not only seated at the table but also on the front lines of the mission.

By Carlos J. Craig, President



Helping Our Own Texans Are Resilient, But Appreciate the Extra Hand

ALVARADO, TEX. — Texans were challenged this past February as abnormally low temperatures caused power outages throughout the state, leaving many residents unbearably cold without heat. To make matters worse, when the temperature began to rise, frozen pipes began to burst, causing water issues.

This winter storm made history as it was the first disaster to affect all 254 counties in the state of Texas.

The Texas Adventist Community Services (Texas ACS) team was immediately in contact with local, county and state

officials in order to organize efforts to provide help. With it being a state-wide crisis, the task of providing assistance to those in need was daunting and one that could not be met by one individual or one organization. Organizations were told to help where they could locally.

The Texas ACS team was able to aid the Johnson County Emergency Management office to distribute water to various cities nearby for the many residents without drinkable water.

The team also provided coats, hoodies, sweaters and blankets to students

at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Tex., who were trying to stay warm without heat.

Donations given to Texas ACS provided extra food for food pantries struggling to keep up with the needs.

Thank you for your support of Texas ACS as we work “To Serve Communities In Christ's Name.”

Find donation and volunteer information at Texas-ACS.org.

————— *By Marshall Gonzales
Adventist Community Services Director for
Texas and the Southwestern Union Conference*



Where's God?

Local Church Member Questions Lead to Podcast Answers

KEENE, TEX. — When the global pandemic required a social shut down in March 2020, many of our church youth and young adults were asking, Where's God?

Wanting to answer their question, Jonny Wilczynski, associate pastor for the Richardson Seventh-day Adventist Church in Richardson, Tex., joined me, associate pastor for the Keene Seventh-day Adventist Church in Keene, Tex., for some raw conversations about where God is and how there can be genuine hope in the midst of stress and anxiety.

Since we couldn't meet in person, we created a podcast to share the answers.

We were surprised how quickly the podcast began reaching beyond our local congregations and started noticing responses like this one: “Thank you for your podcast. It's the perfect title ... I searched ‘where's God’ when I was feeling really frustrated and this was what came up.... You've helped me to see the big picture and I'm very grateful.” We've continued to ask the big questions to encourage our listeners.

————— *By Michael Gibson, Pastor*



Ready to Serve

Houston Area Churches Provide Food to Refugees

HOUSTON, TEX. – Seeing a man sitting on a curb, I decided to join him. He slowly began to share his pain. He had three children and a pregnant wife. They fled Afghanistan only to have their daughter die on the way. Now, he had lost his job.

I was grateful I could offer more than just sympathy. Volunteers from five Houston area churches gathered diapers and school supplies to add to the food we regularly distributed to refugees.

We were part of a group trying to “Reach the World Next Door.” No longer was it necessary to travel to share

God’s love with others; we could do so with those in our own communities.

New online training videos shared how to befriend refugees new to the area. It was exciting to put the training into action.

The ministry impacted church members too. Amaka Nzeadibe from the Houston Central Seventh-day Adventist Church said, “I felt I couldn’t share because I wasn’t where I needed to be, but as we reached out, I grew.”

Who can you befriend in your area?

By Scott Griswold, Pastor



Online Communion

Uniting Together to Recommit Ourselves to God’s Work

GARLAND, TEX. – Garland Faith Community Seventh-day Adventist Church in Garland, Tex., celebrated its first communion service for 2021 on Sabbath, Jan. 16. It was a long-awaited event for the church family. The church had to close in-person services in the spring of 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The church opened to limited capacity with social distancing in place on Sabbath, Oct. 3, 2020.

Knowing some would still not be able to attend for various reasons and wanting to be careful with those in

attendance, small packages with the emblems of Christ were prepared for church members wanting to participate in the communion service.

We were surprised so many church members desired to participate in person that we had to encourage some to watch online after reaching the limited capacity numbers. We were thankful for an online option so we could still have communion together. This was the first time we put the Zoom meeting on the big screen so those in attendance could see those participating online.

It was a special treat to have our Burmese mission group join us as well.

Texas Conference English Evangelism Director Dan Serns (below, left) was the guest speaker and prepared our hearts with a powerful sermon entitled “Pray and Obey.” He encouraged us to follow God’s calling to share Jesus with others throughout our daily lives.

It was an awesome opportunity to get closer to God and more united as a church family.

By Nathan Delima, Pastor



It's Summer Camp Time

Campers and Counselors Alike Are Excited to Return

CLIFTON, TEX. — As this issue is going to print, we are making plans for in-person summer camp at Lake Whitney Ranch. Virtual camp in 2020 was fun, but it definitely did not have the same impact.

“Summer camp has a significant impact on the religious life of staff, campers and their families... 83% of camp staff said their time at camp helped to influence their career choice, making summer camp one of the most effective training grounds for future leaders,” shared North American Division Camp Ministry office research.

LWR summer programs are more than a fun week away from home. Yes, you will have fun driving go karts, riding horses, skiing on Lake Whitney, making crafts, attending classes, plus other awesome activities. But LWR’s main purpose is to develop relationships, relationships with each other and a lasting one with our creator.

When you attend summer camp, you become part of a family—a family that centers itself on God and His word. We seek to encourage each other to a deeper relationship with God.

The LWR summer camp program is designed for people ages 7 to 35. The 2021 summer camp schedule includes:

- Cub/Jr Week (ages 7-11) June 13-18
- Tween Week (ages 12-14) June 20-25
- Teen Week (ages 15-17) June 27-July 2
- Young Adult (ages 18-35) July 6-11

To register for any of the above weeks, visit txyouth.org/summercamp.

By Deborah Gendke
Lake Whitney Ranch
Summer Camp Coordinator



Showing You Care

It's the Little Things that Let People Know They're Special

LONGVIEW, TEX. — Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we did a variety of things to keep in touch with our church members and community family.

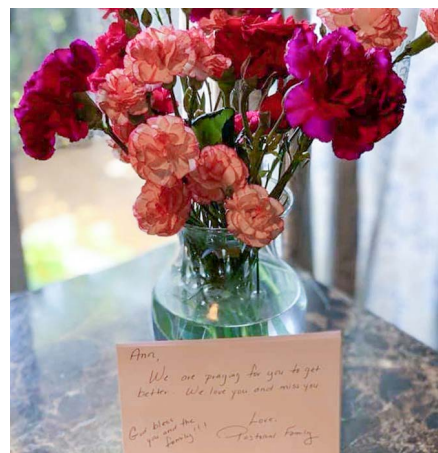
Knowing the importance of social distancing, we wrote encouraging messages on poster boards that we could share with our church family from a distance. Someone would knock on the door and then hurry to the curb where the pastoral staff or other church members would hold poster boards with positive words. It was fun to see the smiles and make connections, especially during the

quarantine period. We would end by praying for those in the household and surrounding community.

When we heard someone wasn't feeling well following a motor vehicle accident, we shared some flowers and a note. Appreciating the gesture, the recipient posted a picture, at right, with thanks for the thoughtfulness and for the pastoral family taking the time and effort to deliver them.

It is so important to take the time to show you care.

By Jose Omar Rodriguez, Pastor



Join a Team

Answer the Call to Be Determined for Adventist Education

ALVARADO, TEX. — Adventist education is in the business of changing lives and gaining souls for God's kingdom. Time and time again we hear parents share testimonies about their experiences sending their children to one of our Seventh-day Adventist schools. "I knew I didn't have the money for my three kids to attend the school, but somehow, the school principal insisted that I come. A church member gave to support scholarships and my kids are here. I know their lives, and mine, will be changed forever," shared one member.

As we press forward in our educational ministry, we know more needs to be done to make Adventist education affordable for all who want to attend. Out of this need, we answer with a life-changing fundraiser and health promoter known as the Determined Cycling Tour.

The Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is hosting the fifth annual Determined ride (formerly called Tour de Youth), a 14-day cycling tour from McAllen, Tex., to Richardson, Tex., for the benefit of students throughout Texas.

This 800+ mile fundraising event is designed to develop financial partners to create an endowment fund to support scholarships for the 23 Seventh-day Adventist schools in Texas.

Each school will be asked to participate in various ways. First, they will be asked to plan their own health promotion activity. As we look to support the Adventist health message, this will be a great reminder to our students how they can stay healthy and join in with the cyclists. Second, they will be creating their own fundraiser and gaining sponsors to support their school and the endow-

ment fund. And, finally, each school will connect with a cyclist. The schools will be able to follow the rider's progress and send videos to cheer them on during the 800+ mile ride.

"The greatest part about the Determined cycling tour is that you don't have to be a rider to get involved," says Kenn Dixon, Texas Conference Vice President for Communications & Public Relations and the creator of the cycling tour.

If cycling is not your thing, or the dates don't work for you or the thought of riding more than 800 miles is too much, you can still join the fun. The ad below lists a variety of ways to join a Determined team virtually, by accepting the President's Challenge or becoming an Education Superhero. Join us!

By Kisha Norris,

Vice President for Education



ARE YOU 
DETERMINED? 

Choose your way to join us

- Education Superhero
- Official Cycling Tour
- President's Challenge
- Cycling (on your own)
- Running (on your own)
- Walking (on your own)

TexasAdventist.org/Determined

 Seventh-day
Adventist Church
TEXAS CONFERENCE

 Adventist Education
A JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE

Growing Young Intentionally

Six Key Strategies to Grow Congregations



Several years ago, I joined Adventist youth and young adult leaders from across the North American Division at the Fuller Youth Institute (FYI) for a Growing Young speaker training and certification. FYI specializes in researching, training and developing resources for reaching today's young people. Their book, *Growing Young*, has now grown into a ministry that focuses on the inclusion of all generations into meaningful church ministry and shared leadership.

The book expands on six essential strategies from churches who successfully help young people discover, love and engage with their church. They are listed below.

Unlocking keychain leadership involves sharing leadership responsibilities with those who have a potential to be leaders. Mentoring a younger person is significant. *Empathizing with today's young people* is what I believe is the key to this ministry. Each member should make an intentional effort to relate to the issues that Millennials and Generation Z wrestle with, as they are very different from the struggles of Baby Boomers. *Taking Jesus' message seriously*. Young people today do not just want to hear the Word, they want to apply its message. When a church taps into this viewpoint, a previously passive church can turn into an active congregation that engages in a slew of ministries like food pantries or mission trips that personify the Gospel as modeled by Jesus. *Fueling a warm community*. Research has found that youth who come back to church do so because the church exhibits a sense of warmth and a familial environment. *Prioritizing young people (and families) everywhere*. A church that limits its youth involvement to a youth group or ministry won't be a place that young people or young adults will remain for long. The church needs to give young people the opportunity to find relevance in the shared mission through their participation in all of its functions. *Being the best neighbors*. Showing mercy to those outside of the church walls can have a lasting effect and be a blessing to all involved.

Growing Young centers around intergenerational inclusion. It involves building intergenerational connections, fostering an inclusive community and learning from one another. This may mean moving away from age-specific ministries and leaning more towards ministering collectively. It will require a holistic reorientation that needs support from leadership and the members. Attempting to implement these strategies may bring up challenges, but the key is cooperation, intention and persistence.

By Michael Razon, Youth Director



Hope for Albuquerque

Food Pantry Blesses Families During Difficult Times

ALBUQUERQUE – “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’” Matthew 25:40.

The Albuquerque Three Angels Seventh-day Adventist Church is fortunate to operate a food pantry that has been a blessing for many families in the west-side community, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Every fourth Wednesday of the month, a faithful group of volunteers from the Three Angels church, wakes up early to fill boxes for families who line up down the street to collect them in the afternoon. Prior to the pandemic, the volunteers would hand out about 40 food boxes in a day. Now, they are distributing 350 or more boxes.

The strain the pandemic has put on families is evident, but the Three Angels church members have been delighted to help when it is needed most.

People in the community have taken notice and have expressed their support and gratitude for the food pantry.

Volunteers have witnessed participants tearfully saying, “Now we have something to eat this week, thank you,” and strangers have stopped by to make financial contributions to the ministry.

A man who lives in the area recently knocked on the church door and asked if he could pray for the Three Angels Church. In his prayer, he commended the church and thanked God for the service it was providing.

It is a true blessing to take part in a ministry that you can see is making a

tangible difference in the lives of your friends and neighbors. However, none of it would be possible without God’s provision and the wonderful volunteers who make it happen each month. We are infinitely grateful to them.

Our prayer is that the Three Angels church can continue to share the love of Jesus by helping our brothers and sisters in need by being Jesus’ light, especially in difficult times.

By Leo Cummings
Pastor



Greatly Missed

Beloved Texico Teacher Retires After 38 Years of Service

CORRALES, N.M. – After teaching for 38 years and serving the Texico School District for 19 years, Bonnie Garner is retiring from Sandia View Christian School (SVCS) at the end of this school year.

“She will be greatly missed by students and staff alike,” said SVCS School Board Chairwoman Kathy Clifford. “We have all benefited from her innovative teaching style and making sure students learned to read.”

Garner grew up in Nova Scotia, Canada, and still enjoys frequent visits to her homeland. After receiving her degree in Elementary Education, she began her teaching career in Perry, Fla., in 1983.

“I had 8 students and 6 grades,” said Mrs. Garner. “It was a brand-new school and we met in a mobile home.”

Since then, Mrs. Garner has gone on to earn a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction with a reading emphasis and has received Texico’s Excellence in Teaching award multiple times. She has served as SVCS Principal and is currently its reading specialist and teaches first and second grade.

Over the years, Mrs. Garner has taught hundreds of students, at times teaching multiple generations of the same family.

“Mrs. Garner is the true picture of a passionate teacher,” said Christie DeBerg, parent of three former students.

“She shared the desire to read with all of my children and because of that, their foundation is so much stronger. We are very blessed to have had her as a teacher.”

Mrs. Garner’s zeal for her students has contributed to her longevity as a teacher. Her love for music and art have also played an integral part in her teaching curriculum.

One of her students’ favorite field trips in the past has been visiting nursing homes in the community to sing songs to their residents.

While Mrs. Garner is happy to see her students grow and excel in their education, she says that what she is going to miss most in working with the students is helping draw them closer to God.

“I love her, she is a wonderful teacher,” said Makayla Soto, one of Mrs. Garner’s current students. “She has taught me to enjoy reading, music, art and is always willing to play with us.”

After retiring, Mrs. Garner has plans to travel and spend time with her family.

“My husband, Tim, and I plan to travel in our RV as much as we can,” said Mrs. Garner. “We want to spend time with our grandson who was born in April. I also want to spend more time with my oil painting projects.”

Mrs. Garner is leaving big shoes to fill and her absence at SVCS next year will definitely be felt.

“We are sad to see her go but also extremely happy to see her start her retired life knowing that she has definitely earned it. She deserves every moment of her new path in life discovering new adventures,” said Clifford. “She has been an inspiration to us all and will be sincerely missed. Her legacy will have lasting positive effects for years to come.”

By *Debby Márquez*
Communications Director



Inspired by Prophecy

Amarillo Church's Book Challenge Grows into Video Ministry



AMARILLO, TEX. — Callie Lopez, women's ministry director of the Amarillo Seventh-day Adventist Church, truly has a passion for learning and sharing God's word. In 2019, Callie started a book challenge with the hopes that members of the Amarillo Church would fall in love with God's word and also see the value in the writings of Ellen G. White.

The first book she recommended from the Spirit of Prophecy collection was *The Story of Redemption*, and since then, members have read *The Adventist Home*, *Ministry of Healing*, *Last Day Events* and *Prayer* together. This year, Callie challenged members to read *The Conflict of the Ages* series, starting with *Patriarchs and Prophets*. To make the books accessible, the church purchased them in bulk and gave them out to members and

non-members alike. "Without a doubt, Ellen G. White was inspired by God," said Lopez. "The Bible scripture in the books makes the story come alive and helps us better understand God's wonderful plan of salvation and what He sacrificed to save us."

As of January, the Amarillo Church has distributed approximately 1,000 books, and the book challenge has taken a new step. Most recently, Callie and Amarillo's pastor, Bobby Harris, put together a team of volunteers to record daily videos to better help members understand the chapters they are reading and see the beauty in their lessons. The videos, which are posted on the church's Facebook page and YouTube channel daily, are also meant to encourage people to read the books. In addition,

the volunteers who make the videos participate in a panel on Sabbath mornings and lead a discussion on the chapters that were assigned the previous week.

"In a time where the world seems to be winning the hearts and souls of men, I see this program as a lifeline to all the people that are in dire need of a Savior," said Harris. "I am so proud of the work this church is doing even in the harshest of times. We know the message must still go forth and we will use any means we can find to spread it."

The members of the Amarillo Church truly enjoy participating in this new ministry and look forward to continuing to share what they feel the Lord has inspired and blessed them to do.

By Anna Swingle

Looking Ahead

Albuquerque Central Expands Virtual Outreach

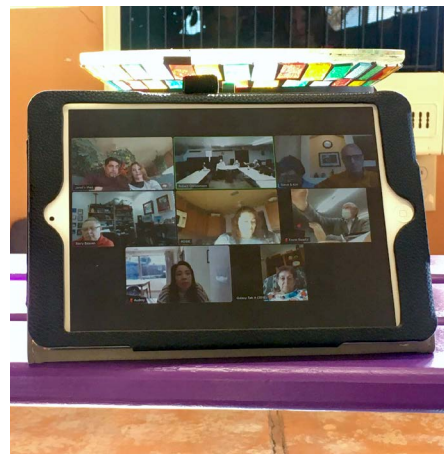
ALBUQUERQUE – Every year, Seventh-day Adventists around the world unite for ten days to pray for revival, intercession and the Church’s mission. This year, the Albuquerque Central Seventh-day Church participated in the 10 Days of Prayer event that took place from Jan. 6-16. In the past, only a handful of regulars attended the in-person meetings.

This year, Albuquerque Central church held the meetings virtually and saw a much larger attendance. Each night, John Abbott, pastor, presented messages focused on “Seeking Revival.”

During the ten days, participants witnessed answered prayers and were blessed by, and filled with, the Holy Spirit.

This paved the way for a new virtual adult Sabbath School class which is regularly growing in size and now includes a member of a local Baptist church. Albuquerque Central is excited to see God working in different and exciting new ways. Their ongoing prayer for 2021 is to let God lead and direct in all their plans and ministries.

By Janet Van Why



Pathfinder Bible Experience

Texico Clubs Advance to Conference and Union Level

CORRALES, N.M. – The Texico Conference Pathfinder Bible Experience (PBE) held the first Area Level sessions of the year in February after taking a short hiatus due to COVID-19. Three teams were excited to participate in the Northern New Mexico Area PBE on Feb. 6., which was held at the Central Seventh-day Adventist Church in Albuquerque. Two additional teams from Clovis and Lubbock took part in the West Texas Area PBE on Feb. 13.

Pathfinders were happy to return to PBE activities with some familiar

changes at the meetings. Churches hosting more than one team followed COVID-19 protocols and the teams were distanced while parents observed from a separate room.

This year, Pathfinders studied the books of Hebrews, James, and I and II Peter. Teams consisting of six Pathfinders and one alternate answered 90 questions of which they could earn from one to five points. At this level, 136 points were possible and the team with the highest total points had their total become the standard to which each

of the other teams was compared. All of the teams advanced to the Texico Conference level PBE, which was held online on March 6. Teams who scored 90% or above of the top score in the Conference level advanced to the Southwestern Union level.

Congratulations to each of our Pathfinder Clubs studying these books and internalizing their messages.

By Derral Reeve
Club Ministries Director



Classified Ads

EMPLOYMENT

Enrollment for 2021 at Atlanta Adventist Academy is now open! Atlanta Adventist Academy offers excellent Adventist education locally (Atlanta, Ga.) as well as virtually through our live online program for homeschoolers and distance campuses. To enroll your student, call 404.699.1400 or visit AAA.edu/Admissions.

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degree and five years of experience required. PhD or equivalent is highly desirable. Background in clinical settings and online teaching is desirable. Other responsibilities include academic advising and service to the department, University and the surrounding community. Diverse applicants are encouraged to apply. Andrews.edu/admres/jobs/show/faculty#job_5.

Stallant Health, a Rural Health Clinic in Weimar, Calif., is accepting applications for a Psychiatrist, Family Practice physician and an NP or PA to join the team. Interested individuals should contact Marva by email at Marva@StallantHealth.com.

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Milestone



Retirement: After 27 years of service to the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference, Don Fortner, pastor, retired on Feb. 29, 2021. A service of appreciation was held in the Little Rock Seventh-day Adventist Church where Don and Joyce Fortner received a plaque for their long standing service.

Obituaries

Blake, Arthur E. born May 6, 1934, Michigan; died Jan. 17, 2021, Harrah, Okla. Church membership: Summit Ridge Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by his parents; two sisters, Dorothy Magnant and Naoma Marvetz; two



Ada Ruth (Woolsey) Elder of Gentry, Ark. (89) died on Jan. 16, 2021. She was born on Oct. 28, 1931, to Charles Arthur and Cora Woolsey while they were missionaries in China. She received a bachelor's degree from Southern Adventist College.

Ada Ruth taught at Ozark Adventist Academy from 1953-1955, where she met the love of her life, Jack Elder. They were married by Jack's brother, William H. Elder, in Collegedale, Tenn., in 1955. Ada Ruth taught elementary school from 1961-1975. She was active in the Seventh-day Adventist Church teaching in the children's department for years. Ada Ruth was a real estate agent assisting Jack at Tall Star Realty for more than 20 years.

Ada Ruth is survived by her husband of 65 years, Jack; daughters, Rhonda Tomlinson and Von Elder and her brothers, Raymond and Clyde Woolsey.

brothers, David and Johnny Blake. Survivors: wife, Anna; brother, Phil Blake; three children, Trent Blake, Karla Dreadfulwater and Joy Baylon; and grandchildren.

Corley, Robert Oliphant, born Aug. 1, 1938, Oak Grove, La.; died Feb. 17, 2021, Clarkston, Wash. Preceded in death by wife, Shirley Mae Corley in 2011. He was a pastor in the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference, 1980-87. Prior to that he served as a pastor in the Texico Conference.

Cotten, Darlene (Dennis), born Nov. 21, 1941, Hedley, Tex.; died March 14, 2021, Amarillo, Tex. Church membership: Amarillo

Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by an infant son, Bryan Euvenc Cotten; husband of 45 years, Bobby Lee Cotten; three sisters, Mae Dale Conner, Clara Dean (Deanie) Dennis, Wilma Parks and her parents A.M. and Lillie Mae Dennis. Survivors: daughter, Leigh (Cotten) Chacon (Johnny) of Amarillo, Tex.; son, Vernon Cotten (Amy) of The Woodlands, Tex.; four grandchildren, Morgan Chacon Henry (Joe) of Oklahoma City, Okla.; Brennan Cotten, Bailey Cotten and Graden Cotten of The Woodlands, Tex.; and siblings, Barbra Grissom, Dwight (Whitey) Dennis (Kathy), Pat McCain

(Danny), Aldo Dennis and brothers-in-law Buster Parks and Layne Conner.

Dillisaw, Evelyn Faye, born June 3, 1934, Lawton, Okla.; died Nov. 6, 2020, Antlers, Okla. Church membership: Antlers Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Fletcher, Jerry James, born Sept. 3, 1943, Melville, La.; died Jan. 14, 2021, Newnan, Ga. Fletcher served as a literature evangelist, then pastor until his retirement in 2010. Survivors: loving wife, Sandra Hughes Fletcher; daughters, Amy Fletcher Cromer, Emily Fletcher and Kelly Fletcher Broussard;

son, Jerry Fletcher; sons-in-law, Rodney Cromer, Justin Long and Kenny Broussard; daughter-in-law, Cheryl Fletcher; eight grandchildren; one grandson-in-law; three great-grandchildren; sister, Leona Fletcher Keiser; brothers-in-law, Leo Keiser and Art Mooney; favorite sister-in-law, Sylvia Mooney; four nieces and four nephews.

Hightower, Cheryl Ann, born July 13, 1946, Baton Rouge, La.; died Feb. 5, 2021, Baton Rouge, La. Church membership: Baton Rouge Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by parents, Samuel L. and Mable Joseph Smith; husband, Charles

James "Mike" Dale, born Nov. 22, 1950, Denison, Tex.; died Dec. 20, 2020, Rogers, Ark. Mike spent 26 years working either as a Science teacher or Principal in the Texas public school system, being awarded Teacher of the Year three times. During this time, he also earned his Master's in Education with emphasis in law school. Mike loved teaching and made learning fun for his students. He spent several summers at Camp Yorktown Bay as Outpost Coordinator, Activities Director or Camp Director.

Mike began working as boys' dean at Ozark Adventist Academy (OAA) and was later asked to be the Academy Principal. The leadership Mike Dale provided over the next 12 years as Principal, Development Director and Recruiter was what OAA needed. God blessed abundantly in countless ways. In the spring of 2020, Mike was awarded the Excellence in Leadership award, the first to be given in the Southwestern Union.

He is survived by his wife, Linda (Gillham) Dale; his three daughters, Michelle (Jeremy) Deisch, Andrea Salguaro, Marianne (Benton) Robinson; and two grandchildren. Mike considered it a privilege and joy to spend his life in service to God and dedication to his family, to young people and to Christian education.



Clarence Ralph Southard and Nellie Katherine "Kitty" (Reeder) Southard met at Southwestern Junior College (Southwestern Adventist University) in the cafeteria line where Kitty was the check-out. They soon fell in love and were married on Aug. 7, 1950. They were a team in ministry for 69 years.

Clarence was born April 19, 1929, in Krebs, Okla., to Allen Newton Southard and Anna Bell Rice. It is fitting that he went to rest in Jesus on Sabbath Jan. 4, 2020, in Owasso, Okla., at the age of 90 years. Clarence went to grade school in Krebs, Okla., and graduated from McAlester High School. He then attended Southwestern Junior College where he began a theology Degree which he finished at Union College in Lincoln, Neb.

Kitty was born March 11, 1929, in Freeport, Tex., to George Ross Reeder and Dovey Ann (Joy) Reeder. She went to sleep in Jesus on Oct. 1, 2019. She graduated from 8th grade in Danbury, Tex., and proceeded to Keene, Tex., where she graduated from Academy and then finished an Associate Degree in Secretarial.

Together they pastored churches in Oklahoma, Tennessee and Kentucky. Clarence was known for building churches (8). Church construction projects also included additions to schools, many of the structures at Summit Ridge retirement center, in Harrah, Okla., and parts of the Wewoka Woods Youth Camp for the Oklahoma Conference. As health allowed, he enjoyed a variety of pastimes such as gardening, reading and building things. Although he was known for being a builder, his heart was always in evangelism. He always wanted to talk about his friend Jesus; he was continually handing out tapes and then DVDs to anyone who would

take them. Even after he needed care in a nursing home he wanted those around him to be introduced to Jesus.

Although most of Kitty's working years were spent on the homefront raising their three kids, she was always busy as a pastor's wife. She was always ready on very short notice to spread the table with her marvelous cooking for the many guests that sat at their table. Kitty enjoyed a variety of pastimes such as playing the piano or organ (hymnal cover to cover), sewing and canning or freezing all that Clarence's garden could produce, but especially loving her grandchildren.

For the past several years Clarence and Kitty attended the Three Angels Seventh-day Adventist Church in Owasso, Okla. It was their greatest desire to see you in Heaven.

Those they leave behind, who hold many cherished memories, include their children, Joy (Bryant) Davidson of Owasso, Okla., Bob (Theresa) Southard of Fletcher, N.C., Jerry Southard of Portland, Tenn.; grandchildren, Anthony (Jennifer) Southard, Dale (Amanda) Southard, Jonathan Southard, Edwin (Laura) Davidson, Kathilee Davidson (Jorge) Matamoros, Ciara Southard; great grandchildren, Callian Southard, Alena Southard, Lydia Southard, Joshua Southard, Caleb Southard, Kathryn Davidson, Hannah Davidson, Bryant Matamoros. Clarence is survived by two sisters, Clara Garcia of McAlester, Okla., and Alice Day of Douglas, Ga. He was preceded in death by his wife "Kitty" Southard, his parents, Allen Newton and Anna Bell Rice Southard; brothers, Mitchell, Jack, Kenneth, Doyle and Richard Southard; sisters, Dorothy Todd, Grace Testa and Ruth Treat Pickering, Mildred Stidley, Juanita Ringer and Mattie Clancy. Kitty is survived by one sister, Betty Reeder of Clute, Tex., She was preceded in death by her parents, George and Dovey Reeder and three brothers, "Preacher," Bill and Frankie.

Cottrell Hightower; brothers, Earl C. Smith, Joseph O. Smith, Sr., Ray (Muggs) Smith, Roy E. Smith and Samuel S.A.' A. Smith; sisters, Hazel Williams, Mary (Tabby) Carney, Myrtle M. Smith and Sylvia Freeman. Survivors: sisters, Priscilla Asberry and Anita Sim-

mons; brother, Arlington R. Smith; son, Cedric L. (Renee) Smith; two grandchildren, one great-grandchild; aunt, Margaret Milton; four sisters-in-law and two brothers-in-law and godchildren, Jessica Banks, Tia Chew and Isadore Tansil, III.

Hosek, Mary (Mikeska), born Sep. 7, 1916, Temple, Tex.; died Jan. 18, 2021, Loma Linda, Calif. Church membership: Houston Central Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by parents, Anton and Mary Mikeska; husband, Elvin Hosek; sisters, Anne Hamusek and Ella

Hartwig. Survivors: daughter, Nancy Hosek of Loma Linda, Calif.; son, David (Valerie) of Houston, Tex.; nieces, Carole Lindner of Glendale, Calif. and Denise Jamieson of The Woodlands, Tex.; and nephew, Dr. Ronald Hartwig of Albuquerque, N.M.



Ivagene Elliston, our beloved aunt, died Oct. 22, 2020, one hundred and seventy-six years since the Great Disappointment of Oct. 22, 1844. She was 100 years, one month and 22 days old. She was next to my mother, Myrtle Ellen Fortner, in age. We have so many fond memories of the times we've spent together. She did so much for us kids while we were growing up. She would send surprise boxes that we could get one prize thing out of the box each day until it was all gone. That was exciting! Ivagene and my mother had many fond memories of riding horses on the ranch at the home place. In fact, she was the chaperone for my mother and dad before they were married.

Ivagene is preceded in death by her grandparents, grandpa and grandma Elliston and grandfather and grandmother LaGrone; her parents, Raymond and Jewel Elliston; many aunts and uncles; many cousins; her three sisters, Georgie, Bernice and Myrtle Ellen; and nieces and nephews, Carolyn, Joe and Monte.

Ivagene had a rich heritage of service for our Seventh-day Adventist Church. She was a schoolteacher for many years. I still meet some of her students who were taught by her. She taught in places such as Des Moines, Iowa, Fort Worth and San Antonio, Tex. She spent multiple years working for the denomination in the Sabbath school department. There are young folks who trace their acceptance of Jesus as their Savior to her ministry. She worked in Texas, California and Washington State for the Sabbath school department in the conference offices. Her training seminars were very exciting, and she will be remembered for her spiritually themed church bulletin boards!

As a family, we always enjoyed getting together at Christmas at our great big family celebrations. We had many laughs and lots of fun together. Every family member has splendid ceramic creations that grace our homes that Ivagene made for us. When Joyce and I were working in the youth department running summer camps for the Oklahoma Conference, we recruited Ivagene to do the ceramic crafts at Wewoka Woods. She was a fabulous story teller and used to entertain us on Sabbath afternoons with her stories! She taught children's Sabbath school at Hereford, Tex., way into her 90s; her children loved her! We all will miss her loving touch!

Ivagene was one of six children born into the Raymond and Jewel Elliston family of Hereford, Tex. We are certainly going to miss her, but the memories will live on in the hearts and lives of her sister, Evelyn Fitzpatrick; her brother, Wayne Elliston; nieces, nephews, cousins, church family, neighbors and friends. Each one of us has our own special memories of times spent with Aunt Ivagene—her homemade bread, gluten, desserts and all the love we shared! We expect to see her and other loved ones on the resurrection morning when Jesus comes to claim His family!

Let's all be faithful so we can all spend eternity with our loved ones and friends in God's everlasting kingdom where we will never part again! Thank you, Heavenly Father, for sending your One and only Son, Jesus, our Messiah to die for our sins. We plan to spend eternity together because of Jesus Christ! Blessings from Don and Joyce Fortner, pastor, teacher, friend, nephew and niece.



Lambeth, Mildred Belle Lacefield, born Nov. 30, 1925, Eagletown, Okla.; died Feb. 27, 2021, DeQueen, Ark.; Survivors: six grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

Lindsey, Jimmy Wayne, born Feb. 26, 1946, Marietta, Tex.; died Dec. 24, 2020, Longview, Tex. Church membership: New Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church. Jimmy was a United States Army Veteran. Preceded in death by his

parents; stepfather, Judge Wesley "Jab" Welsh, Sr.; and one brother, Jerry Lindsey. Survivors: wife, Fanette Lindsey of Marietta, Tex.; one son and daughter-in-law, Jimmy Lane and Shannon Lindsey of New Boston, Texas; two brothers and sisters-in-law, Judge Wesley, Jr. and Linda Welsh of Marietta, Tex., and Joe and Renee Welsh of Daingerfield, Tex.; three sisters and two brothers-in-law, Marth Anne Berry of New Orleans, La.,

Linda and Larry Bobo of Hallsville, Tex., and Margie and Steve Blaisdell of Naples, Tex.; two grandchildren, Cyndey Carpenter and Reed Carpenter (Sonya); one great-granddaughter, Esther Carpenter; special friend, Chris Brock; and numerous other relatives and friends.

Percic, Darla Kay (Ray), born June 5, 1974, Chandler, Okla.; died March 11, 2021, Miami, Okla. Church membership: Miami Seventh-day Adventist

Church. Preceded in death by her father, David Danker of Wellston, Okla. Survivors: mother, Diane Lawson of Miami, Okla.; husband, John Percic; daughter, Amber Matthews (Timmy); son, Bobby McCoy (Samantha); son, CJ (Bailey); brothers, Jason Case and Earl Lawson and families of Miami, Okla.; and many grandchildren.

Shores, Shirley J., born Oct. 2, 1932, Adamson, Okla.; died Dec. 31, 2020, Oklahoma

Barbara Kaye Lemons, age 74, passed away at her residence in Mansfield, Tex., on March 13, 2021, after suffering a stroke a month earlier. She was born Sept. 25, 1946, in Orlando, Fla., to parents Bessie Kaye and Bernard Mac Brewer. She loved spending time at the beach and swimming in the ocean while growing up in Florida. She moved to Fort Worth, Tex., to attend Southwestern Union College in Keene. To pay her way through school, she worked at Brandom Kitchens making cabinets. She soon took note of a tall young man wearing a cowboy hat that also worked there. After making his acquaintance, their love flourished, and it was the beginning of 54 years of marriage to the love of her life, Bill Lemons.

Barbara was preceded in death by her parents, her sister Rosemary Brittain and her son Billy Jr. Left to cherish her memory include her beloved husband Bill; two brothers, Bud Brewer and Roger Collins; three children, Michelle Katrina, John and Lisa; grandchildren, Autumn, Aubrey, Calvin, Samuel, Levi, Abigail, Lucas and Gabi; and great-granddaughter, Cabella Kaye Rose.

A member of the Arlington Seventh-day Adventist Church for over 50 years, she taught cradle roll and kindergarten as a young mother. She spent many hours as classroom “mother” for her children’s teachers. Her love of sewing con-

tributed to many school clothes as well as various holiday costumes for her children. She had a soft spot in her heart for animals and over the years took care of dogs, cats, ducks, rabbits, birds, squirrels, goats and horses. Most recent was her love of her hens, which she enjoyed feeding and watching over. Lucky family members took home pasture-raised farm-fresh eggs to enjoy after a visit. She especially enjoyed the quiet peace and beauty of nature surrounding the home she shared with her husband Bill.

Over the years she enjoyed a variety of crafts, including cross stitching and crocheting. She shared her projects with others and many friends appreciated her hand-crafted goods. Perhaps she was best known by family and friends for her wonderful cooking skills. Children and grandchildren alike looked forward to delicious home-cooked meals when visiting. She also enjoyed bringing her potluck dishes to church for all to enjoy.

The memory of her abundant love and kind heart will be held dear by all who knew her.

City, Okla. Church membership: Summit Ridge Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by her husband Bill Shores. Survivors: daughter, Elisa Ann Shores, of Wichita, Kan.; two sons, Jim (Linda) Shores of Wichita, Kan., and Rex (Kathy) of West Monroe, La.; and four grandchildren.

Tait, Myron Wallace, born June 28, 1946, Oakland, Calif.; died March 31, 2021, Harper Tex. Survivors: wife, Mary Jane Tait; daughter, Faye Louis Tait; son, John Philip Tait (Sherrill); one beloved grandson, John Perry Tait; brother, Russell (Denise) and two nephews, Ryan Tait and Jeffrey Crawford.

Webster, Shirley, born Aug. 11, 1934, Hot Springs, S.D.; died Dec. 9, 2020, Oklahoma City, Okla. Church membership: Summit Ridge Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by her parents, three husbands, six children, one brother and one sister. Survivors: sister, Carol Cardwell of Wichita Falls, Tex.; two nieces, Christa Henderson of Wichita Falls, Tex., and Laurel Damico, Fort Worth, Tex.; one nephew, Norman Manke of Trinidad, Colo.; a grandson, Cody Wadzeck of Utah.

Submissions

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News and Articles: Send local news for your church or school, along with high-resolution photos, to your local conference communication department listed on page 2.

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Romans 15:5-7

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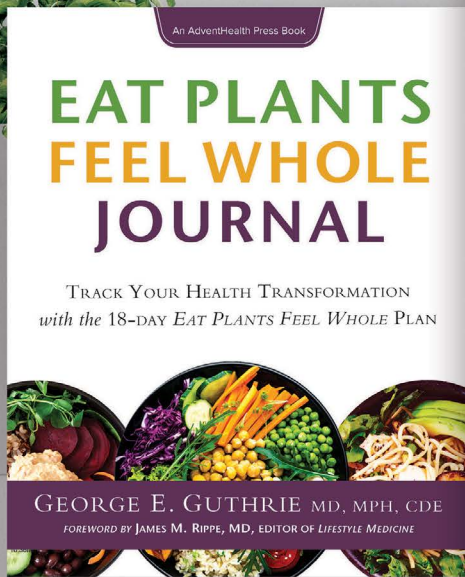


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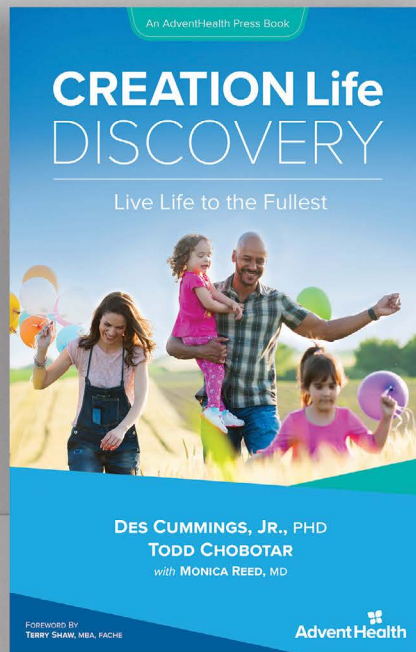
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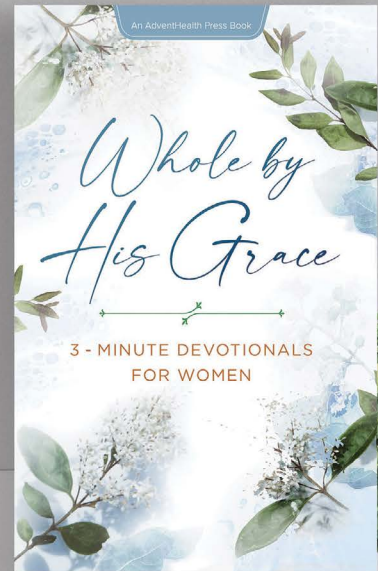
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