

# Record

September | October 2022

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*Love Above All Else*

*In Our Homes, Churches and Social Circles*

# Love Above All Else In Our Homes, Churches and Social Circles

# Record

September | October 2022  
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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

1 Corinthians 13 lists many gifts and behaviors that can make major impacts for the Gospel, but only if done in love. Without love they are meaningless, they are nothing. Do we do everything in love? I know I don't, but I'd like to. Verse 13 says, "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

How can we live out our lives so that the most evident thing about our Christian walk is our love? What can we do in our homes, churches and social circles to simply and practically show others love? We explore that topic in this issue and share the stories of individuals and churches who are doing just that, loving other people. May you be inspired and encouraged to love a little bit more intentionally!

*Kristina P. Busch*  
Kristina P. Busch

Cover Photo by Bailey Schmidt



# By This Everyone Will Know

**“And now these three remain:** faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” 1 Corinthians 13:13.

The apostle Paul helps us understand that to love is above everything else. I cannot be a true disciple of Christ without God’s love being evident in me. If I am not motivated by love, whatever I do is meaningless. Paul goes even further teaching that love is fundamentally foremost to the experience of faith and hope.

It is not about what we experience first, but rather what is most important. In my opinion, the reason for this statement is so that we can understand just how important are the motivations and purposes that drive our decisions and attitudes to God. Since God is love, He clearly sees if I love Him and if what I am and what I do is out of love for Him and for others.

When the love of God lives in us, we may still make mistakes, have weaknesses and even sinful experiences along our journey. Nevertheless, the God who loves us with His infinite grace sees our hearts full of His love and in Christ we are justified and sanctified.

I challenge you to do a sincere and simple self-assessment inspired by the Word of God. Let’s evaluate ourselves and make sure that what drives us to persevere, serve, lead and witness is a sweet and powerful experience rooted in love.

We can help our self-assessment and evaluate the sincerity of our life’s purpose when we read the apostle John and reflect on: “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” 1 John 3:16-18.

When we lay our lives at the feet of Jesus in service to others, our hearts are opened and our love is manifested in acts of compassion.

We must love our spouses, children, relatives, neighbors, colleagues, church family and of course those whom we must disciple “in actions and in truth.” May we bring them closer

to Jesus and His eternal kingdom through our genuine love for them.

How can we do this? Only in Christ. John tells us to “abide in Him.” John 15:1-17. Christ calls us and commissions us. He promises us His power. He assures us that our love for others will be the best way to show that we are His ambassadors, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:35.

*By Osvaldo Rigacci  
VP for Multicultural Ministries*



# A Kitchen FOR THE *Community*

**What does a community kitchen look like?** In Northwest Arkansas, it began with a nudge. God had been impressing Compass Fellowship Northwest Arkansas company members James and Keri Harris to start a program for feeding the homeless in Siloam Springs, Arkansas. So, in May of 2021, Compass Fellowship invited anyone who wanted to be involved to meet and brainstorm how to start such a program. Because of COVID-19, they felt a drive-thru lunch program was the best option. A month later, the drive-thru program launched 25 lunches, but no one came. That did not deter their efforts, and Compass Fellowship kept doing what God had called them to do. Today, the Compass Fellowship Community Kitchen serves close to 250 meals a week!

Each week, several members purchase \$650 worth of food from Sam's, Walmart and Aldi grocery stores. We praise the Lord for the financial support of our faithful church members and even from some of our community kitchen recipients. We have received a \$1,500 grant from Walmart and are working with Sam's for a grant from them as well. With skyrocketing prices on food, gas, utilities and housing, people in our community are hurting. In addition to groceries, we share dog and cat food, toiletries and socks.

On Mondays, we fill bags with individually wrapped items and then transfer them to a 16-foot-long table in the church lobby stacked as high as we

can. Afterwards we set up the church kitchen with four sandwich-making stations. The fun begins on Tuesday mornings when we make over 450 sandwiches! Into each lunch bag, two sandwiches are added; then they are stacked on carts, ready to be taken out for pickup. Other workers set out signs, put out the orange cones for the drive-thru and set up tables and chairs for those who will meet each car.


Each week, a dozen or more people come to help with this ministry. We are a group of mostly retired, refitted and recommitted Christians doing what Jesus asks us to do. At the beginning of the day we meet as a group to pray for those who will cross our paths that day. As multiple vehicles arrive, it's wonderful to see smiling faces and prayers being offered by our members.

The Compass Fellowship Community Kitchen has helped some recipients over 50 times. They get to know us, and we get to know them by their names and their individual journeys. Jesus' method was to mingle with people, meet their needs and bid them to follow Him. If it worked for Jesus, with the Holy Spirit leading us, it is working at the Compass Fellowship Community Kitchen. Neither rain nor snow, heat or ice has prevented us from serving meals to our community. Even when the forecast called for a 100 percent chance of rain, God held it off until the distribution was finished.

Community Kitchen started on May 30, 2021, and on May 30, 2022, we launched Celebrate Recovery, a Bible-



based 12-step program for any sort of addiction. Church and community members grow through small group ministries like these. We share our stories and pray for one another.

The mission statement for Compass Fellowship is "Compass is a biblically true, safe environment, where people are free to belong, grow and serve." We are family! 

*By Carol Birge.*

*Birge is a member of the Compass Fellowship Northwest Arkansas Seventh-day Adventist Company in Siloam Springs, Arkansas. Compass Fellowship NWA is a company in the Arkansas-Louisiana Conference.*

# A Hot Meal

## WITH A SERVING OF

# Love



**They put their needs second,** and served others first. The Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church in Covington, Louisiana has had a long history of serving the community with hot meals for the less fortunate and showing their neighbors and abundance of love. “We already had the feeding ministry in our church, but during COVID-19, our feeding ministry went up another level,” said Raynell Smith, Ephesus pastor.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Smith said the church members still wanted to be relevant by making an impact during a time when many

people were having hardships. “Our feeding ministry was able to stay connected with the entire community,” he said. “Every Tuesday, we would have hot food for the community.”

However, the Ephesus church was going to have to increase the level of food distribution even more. “At the time, we had no idea how much the feeding ministry would increase after Hurricane Ida made landfall in Louisiana,” said Smith. Hurricane Ida hit the Gulf Coast in August of 2021 and the church soon noticed it was becoming difficult for the community to receive goods and services for the assistance they needed.


“We decided to place even more effort in the feeding program, and the response was even higher than what we had during the COVID-19 pandemic,” Smith said. Although he doesn't have a specific amount, the number of hot meals distributed in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida was doubled. “We were not only giving hot meals to the community, but we were also meeting with them and talking to them. They were very grateful,” Smith shared. “Our community partners kicked in and helped us, and our church members, along with their families, went above and beyond.”

The youth at Ephesus church would go door to door handing out meals to neighboring families, something that is still happening to this day, noted Smith. Under the leadership of Glynn Bradley,

the community services department of the Ephesus church has been providing meals to a growing list of recipients throughout the city of Covington and sharing God's love with its community.

“We have a great core team in our community services department led by Glynn,” said Smith. “Some of our volunteers make sure not just to give people food, but to make them smile or talk to them to see how they are doing.”

After Ida, many of the Ephesus church members lost power and had trees fall in their yards, but they stepped out in faith. The members put others' needs before theirs and made themselves available to keep the ministry going. “During this time the church members saw more opportunity to bless the community through the ministry,” Smith said.

At one point, the church had to close down the kitchen, but a couple of its members stepped up and opened their homes to cook the meals. “We know that that mission is for us to reach as many people as possible through this ministry,” Smith shared. “We never know how it can bless people beyond giving them food.” 

*By Saul A. Flores.*

*Flores is a freelance writer based in Milford, Connecticut. The Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church is a church in the Southwest Region Conference.*

# Serving Breakfast To Our Community

By Faith Morse, Texas Health Hospital Mansfield Marketing Coordinator



When students leave school for the summer, many who rely on two to three school meals per day don't know where their next meal will come from during those summer months. Toke Mayes saw a need and immediately stepped into action. As director of Nutritional and Environmental Services at Texas Health Hospital Mansfield, a venture between Texas Health Resources and AdventHealth in north Texas, he organized a cereal drive to assist families in need.

"It bothers me that in one of the greatest countries in the world, we have people, especially children, that suffer from hunger," said Mayes. "If we can figure out a way to help with that, shouldn't we?"

The Mansfield Mission Center (MMC), a local nonprofit, regularly hosts a market where families can shop free of charge. Thanks to expanded

shopping hours, community members can stop by anytime between Monday and Saturday, with no appointment needed. The center, which relies heavily on donations from the community to make the market a success, is expected to feed approximately 4,000 individuals this summer.


"Cereal is one of the most requested items when children are out of school during the summer," said Lindsey Troom, director of development for MMC. "It is something kids can prepare themselves and contains several servings."

Texas Health Hospital Mansfield organized team members into five large groups for a friendly competition to collect as many donations of cereal as they could. Though the initial goal was to collect 10,000 servings of cereal, team members doubled their goal, raising nearly 21,000 servings of cereal

in just two weeks. This is the largest cereal drive MMC has ever seen.

"Thanks to partners like Texas Health Mansfield, we can ensure that we are able to take care of families when children are home for the summer and when they need it most," said Troom.

"Here at Texas Health Hospital Mansfield, our commitment to and love for our community runs deep," said Faith Morse, marketing coordinator for Texas Health Hospital Mansfield. "As a result, we feel tasked with the duty to not only live our mission of extending the healing ministry of Christ within our hospital walls but also outside of them."

"What we did isn't going to change the world," said Mayes. "But hopefully it has an impact in our local community and the lives of those within it." 

# A Professor to Love

By Michelle Bergmann, Southwestern Adventist University Freelance Writer

Since she was a young girl, Assistant Professor Kathy Davis knew she wanted to be a teacher as she grew up in Anchorage, Alaska. Instead, “God took me on a different path into nursing, where I taught every day, just in a different setting than a classroom,” Davis explains. She earned her master’s degree in nursing education in 2020. Then, in July 2021, the department of nursing at Southwestern Adventist University (SWAU) invited her to join as a full-time assistant professor.

Besides teaching in the hospital setting, Davis has always loved students of all ages, from 4-year-olds in Sabbath school to teaching teens honors in Pathfinders, to now teaching nursing students at the university level. When asked about her teaching style, she reveals, “There was no certain student approach that I learned in academia. After working in the emergency department for over 25 years, I learned that connections are key. Interacting with people gives me good energy and makes me strive to be a better version of myself. I believe in the goodness of people, and that we should respect people, really see them, listen and show them value.”

From observing Davis in the classroom, Dr. Kerrie Kimbrow, chair of the department of nursing at Southwestern Adventist University, describes her as an energetic, creative and engaging teacher. “For example,” Dr. Kimbrow explains, “Davis has developed escape rooms for learning disaster response, and she often takes props to class to help her students understand a new concept. Students appreciate her interactive teaching style, and they love hearing about her experiences as an ER nurse.”


Thinking back on the experiences that have shaped Davis into the teacher



she has become, she remembers, “My mom taught me that love and kindness go a long way in this life.” As someone who values family and the lessons learned at home, she says, “My family has given me a glimpse into the depth of the Creator’s love for us.” One of her recent favorite books is *Winning the War in Your Mind* by Craig Groeschel. In it, he writes, “You are a weapon of righteousness in a world of darkness.” To Davis that means, “Simply show up, be authentic to who you are and students will know you care.”

Making connections with students has profoundly impacted the department of nursing at Southwestern Adventist University, according to Dr. Donna Berkner, vice president of academic administration at SWAU.

“Her knowledge in the nursing field is current, and her ability to transfer that knowledge to student learning has made a significant impact in students’ lives. The love she pours into students shines through her daily interactions as she works with students to grow future nurses,” she says.

Davis teaches Pathophysiology, Disaster Readiness and Intervention, and Med-Surg 4. For Kathy Davis, though, inside and outside the classroom, it all boils down to this: “I have learned over the years that I am worthy of love, and so is everyone else.” 





# Sharing Love

## AN OPEN HEART & WILLING SPIRIT

**Brandyn Parks is a newer church member.** He was baptized as a Seventh-day Adventist in May, 2021 and became a member of the Oklahoma City Central Seventh-day Adventist Church. In November, along with his friend Ira Farley, he got involved in volunteering to help Afghan refugees.

“We were asked to pick them up at the airport and take them to their hotels as their first point of contact,” he explains today. Since then, what was a basic task has grown both in complexity and magnitude. Today, 40 Seventh-day Adventists from the Oklahoma Conference, linked together via WhatsApp, volunteer to help Afghan refugees under the moniker “Adventists4Afghans: Oklahoma City.”

Their service includes helping refugees get their driver’s licenses, buying groceries and helping them adapt to American life. One of the unique ministries that Parks is involved with is the donation of sewing machines for Afghan women, who are then taught how to use them. The loosely knit group of volunteers is led by Farley, who, according to Parks, has more contact with the Afghan elders and deals with larger issues that come up. Farley and the team he created

enter into this ministry discerning that God was doing something beautiful, and drawing Afghans that they may come to experience the love of God in meaningful ways.

Recently, Parks and Farley visited an apartment where a refugee’s car had been rear-ended by another car. The driver of the other car spoke only Spanish, and two translators were needed: one speaking Spanish, the other speaking Pashtu, the language of Afghanistan.

*If I have the gift of  
prophecy and can  
fathom all mystery and  
all knowledge, and if  
I have a faith that can  
move mountains, but  
have not love,  
I am nothing.*

I CORINTHIANS 13:2

Parks has learned a lot about Afghan culture throughout his experience.

“They always have dinner together, even if it’s not actual family,” he says. He finds they are open to adapting to a new environment, with some more conservative than others.

Parks also does a monthly ministry where he spends time on scooters with the younger guys. He takes them either downtown or to nearby Lake Hefner for some decompression time.

“Some have English-speaking ability, some don’t,” Parks explains.

In working closely with them, Parks has learned a lot about the challenges that face these refugees. The language barrier is the first obstacle, making it hard to find jobs. Many of the men had been thriving in construction work while they were in Afghanistan, but now struggle because they can’t speak English. The second challenge is the cultural differences. They aren’t used to America and are highly dependent on each other, and shy to ask for help. “At the same time, they love to invite you to dinner,” Parks says. “It’s kind of beautiful.”

Finally, they have the practical challenge of lack of resources. In many situations, they need to be able to



apply for credit and become members of our society. Parks saw this as a very daunting task and realized his need to trust God. But he, and the others who volunteer, can see the wonderful things that God is accomplishing with their help. It's exciting!

"Most of what I've helped them with are things most people have a basic knowledge of," Parks says. But their ministry is more than just providing basic needs for these refugees.

Gabriela Phillips, Adventist Muslim Relations coordinator for the North American Division, trained Parks and others in his group. Adventists4Afghans in Oklahoma City is one chapter of a larger organization that helps refugees throughout North America.

"How much volunteers do depends on the needs of the refugees and the abilities of the volunteers and how far the refugees are open to such interactions. We are people of blessing, how far that blessing enters each house is for the refugees to decide," she


explains. "Every ministry is different." Phillips explains that the goal is to build "kingdom relationships." It's important that volunteers look at their time working with refugees as not just a project, but relational. "They will tell you what they need."

Phillips says that the ministry goes through three phases, with volunteers deciding how comfortable they are doing each step. The first is resettlement, where volunteers help them with basic needs, like food, housing and transportation. The second is emotional, social and spiritual support, where refugees transition from basic, immediate needs to more abstract needs. The final step is discipleship, where the volunteers lead them into a relationship with Jesus.

"Some volunteers just do step one," Phillips explains. "Others go on to step two or three."

The project started because of love. Love for Jesus. Love for those who need to know about Him. And now

it has grown to the point where love is mutual. Parks feels that he benefits every time he volunteers. "I started telling them I loved them and now they can't tell me enough how much they love me," Parks says.

"For anyone who wants to do mission work, this is a crash course in doing that while still at home. It's rejuvenating every time I go," he says. "Afterwards, I feel better." 

*By Glen Robinson. Robinson is a published author and freelance writer based in North Texas. Photography by Bailey Schmidt. For safety and security purposes, the refugees that Parks and Adventists4Afghans: Oklahoma City serve were not able to be photographed. Brandy Parks is a member of the Oklahoma City Central Seventh-day Adventist Church, in the Oklahoma Conference.*

# A Closer Look at the Greatest of These

By Kristina P. Busch, Record Editor and Southwestern Union Communication Director

One of my favorite chapters in the Bible is 1 Corinthians 13. This single chapter, for me, sums up the Christian experience—love. God is love. The verses in this chapter tangibly describe the Savior who sacrificed it all for me for love. I don't need to wonder or question who God is, because it's all clearly spelled out for me. He is patient, kind, sacrificing, forgiving, protective and perseverant.

Consequently, these are also my marching orders according to Matthew 22:36-38, "Love the Lord your God... Love your neighbor as yourself."


A few years ago I came across an approach to personify scripture using your pronouns and name in place of the ones that are in Bible verses. For example, for me, John 3:16 could be: For God so loved Kristina, that He gave His one and only Son, that she would believe in Him and not perish, but have eternal life.

When I used this approach on 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, replacing the word love with my own name it really made me think. I was not very patient, or very kind for that matter. As I reflected on my character, I noticed that I needed the wakeup call. I explored where I measured up on patience, kindness, envy, boastfulness etc. and realized I had some improvements to make.

I come back to these verses from time to time, and while I'm nowhere near perfect, I do believe that God has helped me

improve in several areas. I encourage you to try this self-assessment on love and ask God to work in those areas where you don't believe you are the strongest.

The beginning of this chapter really emphasizes the importance of love in the grand scheme of things. Without love, any attempts to enhance ministry are pointless. Without love all of our actions and behaviors are pointless. We must do things in love.

What does that look like? Try putting your name in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and think about who you are to your family, your friends and to strangers. What do they know you for? How would they describe you? Remember, "the greatest of these is love." 

## Putting Yourself in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

\_\_\_\_\_ is patient, \_\_\_\_\_ is kind.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ does not envy, \_\_\_\_\_ does not boast, \_\_\_\_\_ is not proud.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ does not dishonor others, \_\_\_\_\_ is not self-seeking, \_\_\_\_\_ is not easily angered, \_\_\_\_\_ keeps no record of wrongs. \_\_\_\_\_ does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. \_\_\_\_\_ always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. \_\_\_\_\_ never fails.

# Plant a Seed to *Serve Love*

## It started with a small seed

tucked away in the form of a room over 30 years ago. A small closet that then-pastor Gayle Tucker set apart for the purpose of collecting cans of food to give to anyone facing hardship at the Arlington Seventh-day Adventist Church. As the needs grew, the closet was exchanged for a bigger room and different leaders stepped up to water the seed she had planted. When Tammy Yaden, a member of Arlington's Younger Generation Church, pitched an idea to go out into the community to serve the homeless, a movement began. That movement was given a name and eventually became Revive Community Care. Years passed by and special leaders, such as former directors Ashley Ortiz and Maria Kutzner poured the water of their hearts into the movement and the Revive plant grew. The food pantry that had once started in a small closet, began to serve 60 families every time it opened.


Then, I heard God call me to do the same and tend to this seed of service planted. Little did I know that a few months after I answered His call, the COVID-19 pandemic would begin. As every business, church and entity began to shut down, we were forced to make a very tough decision. Would we continue to leave our doors open or would we close them and wait until it was safer to do so? The decision was easy. We would not close the doors to those who were depending on the church for food, shelter or aid. Instead, we began to reinvent the wheel together.

Fueled by Matthew 25:40, our mission was clear: to not only continue to serve food but to serve love and tend to the needs of those who needed it most, the least of these. Instead of a brick-and-mortar pantry, we switched our strategy to a drive-thru model, one by which our food pantry members could have their groceries deposited in the back of their vehicles. As the lines grew, we began to serve approximately 500 families each month and other ministries were born.

A free clothing store named Revive Re-Stored gave free clothing to those in need. The Revive Homeless Ministry Team began serving lunches and making dinners for homeless shelters. As we began to branch out our efforts to serve love to the community, we began to see God's provision in a way unlike any before: not only from the generous donations of the local church, but the equally generous donations of the church at large, like Adventist Community Services, who provided Revive with hygiene kits, blankets, clothing and shoes, provisions we began to distribute to the homeless in North Texas.

Today, Revive is one of the expressions of mission at the Arlington Adventist Church and the entire downstairs portion of the church has been remodeled and dedicated to community service. The space features a food market, clothing store, homeless ministry base, a community space for gatherings and an in-house vision clinic that provides vision care and glasses for those who are uninsured. Every



ministry is made possible through God's grace and because one person planted a small seed long ago, to serve love to the least of these. A seed that many watered along the way. 

*By Heidi Jackson. Jackson is the Community Outreach Pastor and Director of Revive Community Care at the Arlington Seventh-day Adventist Church. Arlington is a church in the Texas Conference.*

# Impacting THE COMMUNITY WITH *God's Love*



**Comparte Amor is “share love” in Spanish.** Created by the youth group of the North Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the ministry aims to “Impact Our Community with God’s Love.” The ministry was born from a desire to bless the community and church during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

When the youth department approached me with the Idea of Comparte Amor, I was amazed. As their pastor, I thanked the Lord for our church youth leaders: Karen Marquez, Aimee Monge, Frida Rosas, Saul and Melisa Jaquez, Gerardo and Anissa Jaquez and all of the North Valley Church youth. They focused on a few areas to make a difference through acts of compassion.

The first was to create a safe environment where people could share their mental health struggles. Our youth made an effort to share the importance of speaking about stress, depression and anxiety. They invited the community to participate in drive-thru prayers in various locations using the hashtags #prayingforyou and #comparte. We felt the compassion of God come to the Albuquerque community through prayer.

When an officer from the Bernalillo County Sheriff’s Department was killed in the line of duty, there was distress and pain in our community. Our youth created “Appreciation for the Blue,” a way to show gratitude towards law enforcement. Our youth took more than 200 goodie bags with treats and

notes saying thank you to the sheriff’s department. The following Saturday, we honored two local police officers who are members of our church.

Our youth also noticed that some of our elderly members did not return to church after the COVID-19 pandemic. After learning how to make vegan cookies, our youth prepared baskets with tasty treats and surprised our elderly church members. However, they didn’t stop there. They decided to expand their reach to visit elderly members of the community. In both instances, they offered to sing songs and pray with them. I know our elderly of the church and community were very happy and felt blessed.

An important event for our youth was “Making Strides of New Mexico 2021,” the annual breast cancer awareness walk. Our youth were prepared with their slogan, “Faith Over Fear, Together We Are Stronger.” They made a conscious effort to share the importance of love and support to the ones who are going through breast cancer.

I thank God for the North Valley Church youth and their ministry, Comparte Amor. I pray for them every day, for the Lord to fill them with His Holy Spirit and for them to continue to share God’s love in our community. <sup>®</sup>

*By Saul Flores.  
Flores is the Pastor of the North Valley Spanish and La Roca Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Churches in Albuquerque, New Mexico. North Valley Spanish and La Roca Spanish are churches in the Texico Conference.*



# Easy Vegan Apple Cake

By Ashley Melillo, Author, Recipe Writer and Photographer at Blissful Basil

This easy vegan apple cake is packed with crisp, sweet and nourishing apples. Made with just eight ingredients (plus salt and water) and requiring just 15 minutes of active kitchen preparation, it's as easy to make as it is to enjoy.

**Prep Time:** 15 mins

**Cook Time:** 45 mins

**Servings:** 8 slices

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons ground flaxseed
- ¼ cup + 2 tablespoons filtered water
- 1 stick (½ cup) vegan butter
- 1 cup raw cane sugar, plus more for topping
- ½ tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 1½ cups all purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 2½ cups peeled, cored and chopped apples (about 2 apples)
- Powdered sugar (optional for icing)

## INSTRUCTIONS


1. Preheat the oven to 350F. Line the bottom of a 9-inch springform pan with parchment paper and lightly grease the sides. Alternatively, line a regular 9-inch round cake pan with parchment paper. If you're using a springform pan, place it on top of a baking tray (this will catch any drippings in the event that the pan leaks).
2. In a small mixing bowl, whisk together the flaxseed meal and the filtered water. Let stand for 5 minutes, or until thickened.



3. In a large mixing bowl, use a stand mixer or hand mixer to beat together the vegan butter and brown sugar on high for 2 minutes (set a timer). Add the thickened flaxseed mixture, vinegar, and vanilla, and beat again for 30 seconds, or until thoroughly incorporated.
4. In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, and sea salt. With the mixer off, add the dry ingredients to the butter mixture. Slowly turn the mixer on low, increasing to medium, and beat for 30 seconds, or until thoroughly combined. The batter should be very thick and fluffy.
5. Fold the chopped apples into the batter.
6. Evenly spoon the batter into the prepared pan, using a spatula to smooth. Sprinkle the top with a thin layer of cane sugar.



7. Bake for 40 to 50 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center of the cake comes out clean.
8. Transfer the cake pan to a heat-safe cooling rack. If you used a springform pan, release the wall of the pan and remove (this allows the cake to vent steam and expedites the cooling process). Cool completely.
9. If you'd like to ice the cake, vigorously whisk together about two cups powdered sugar with a few tablespoons filtered water, adding more powdered sugar as needed to thicken or more water as needed to thin. Drizzle over the cooled cake.
10. Slice and serve! Leftovers will keep for up to three days in the refrigerator.

More delicious vegetarian and vegan recipes at [BlissfulBasil.com](http://BlissfulBasil.com). 

## September Events

**2-4**  
**ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE**

Spanish Family Camp  
Camp Yorktown Bay  
JPagan@arklac.org

**2-5**  
**SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE**

God-Powered Singles:  
Navigating Life His Way  
Singles Ministries Retreat  
Lone Star Camp  
Raglandvera07@gmail.com

**9-10**  
**SOUTHWESTERN UNION**  
Growing the Kingdom Summit  
El Paso, Tex., MMauk@swuc.org

**9-11**  
**ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE**  
Women's Ministry Retreat  
Texarkana Seventh-day Adventist Church, LBeiber@arklac.org

**9-11**  
**ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE**  
Pathfinder/Adventurer Senior Leadership; TLT Leadership  
Camp Yorktown Bay  
AudraHuff@cox.net

**9-11**  
**OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE**  
Youth Leadership Training  
Wewoka Woods  
NShepherd@okadventist.org

**16-17**  
**TEXICO CONFERENCE**  
Filipino Convocation  
Albuquerque Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church  
ARazon@texico.org

**16-18**  
**TEXAS CONFERENCE**  
Women's Retreat (English)  
Hilton Dallas/Plano Granite Park  
TexasAdventist.org

**22-24**  
**SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE**  
Adventure Family Retreat  
Lone Star Camp  
LMassiah@swrgc.org

**23-24**  
**ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE**  
Bonnerdale Cowboy Camp Meeting  
Bonnerdale Seventh-day Adventist Church  
Sylvia Weatherford: 870.828.2857

**23-25**  
**OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE**  
Native Ministries Training,  
Celebrate Life in Recovery  
Wewoka Woods  
1gratefulprincess@gmail.com

**23-25**  
**TEXAS CONFERENCE**  
Women's Retreat (Spanish)  
Camp Hoblitzelle  
TexasAdventist.org

## October Events

**Sept. 29- 2**  
**TEXAS CONFERENCE**  
Master Guides Camporee  
MasterGuides.org

**Sept. 30- 2**  
**SOUTHWESTERN UNION**  
Cowboy & Biker Camp  
Lone Star Camp  
MMauk@swuc.org

**1-15**  
**SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE**  
Fall Revival Evangelism Meetings  
Dallas-area Churches  
214.943.4491

**7-9**  
**SOUTHWEST REGION CONFERENCE**  
Chosen for Royalty  
Women's Ministries Retreat  
Omni Houston Hotel  
Hattitude20.eventbrite.com

**14-16**  
**ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE**  
Adventurer Family Camporee  
Camp Yorktown Bay  
Marsha Salzman: 501.337.1026

**14-16**  
**SOUTHWESTERN UNION**  
Public Campus Ministries  
Tulsa, Okla., MMauk@swuc.org

**14-16**  
**TEXICO CONFERENCE**  
Women's Retreat  
The Clyde Hotel Albuquerque  
NMonge@texico.org

**20-22**  
**OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE**  
Youth Rally  
Adventist Fellowship, Tulsa, Okla.  
NCoutet@okadventist.org

**21-22**  
**TEXICO CONFERENCE**  
Elder's Training - West Texas  
ACano@texico.org

**28-29**  
**TEXICO CONFERENCE**  
Elder's Training - Albuquerque  
Albuquerque Central Seventh-day Adventist Church  
ACano@texico.org

**28-30**  
**ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE**  
Teen Prayer Conference  
Camp Yorktown Bay  
LBieber@arklac.org

# A Generation Searching for God!



**AMARILLO, TEX.** – On July 22 and 23, 2022, the Southwestern Union Conference, the Texico Conference and the Amarillo Seventh-day Adventist Church came together to host an annual Prayer Conference. This year’s theme was “A Generation Searching for God” and what a blessing it was!

Friday night began with a focus on the young adults with Eric Chavez, Texico Conference Young Adult & Youth Ministries director, presenting a message about our need to communicate with God.

Sabbath morning continued with Texico Conference Children’s Ministries Director Kathy Clifford and Southwestern Union Children and Sabbath School Ministries Director Sonia Cano helping everyone understand the importance of teaching our children to pray and helping us understand that we must make the young ones a part of our family worship time.

The main service was led by Carlos Craig, Southwestern Union president. He focused on our need to pray, staying connected to God and re-

membering that our prayer life keeps us connected to God—and if we are connected to Him, we will be known as the loving and welcoming church. Music and sign language was provided by a team from Houston which added a special blessing to all.

After lunch the blessings continued. There were breakout sessions with Roderic Bishop, Texas Conference volunteer prayer coordinator, Osvaldo Rigacci, Southwestern Union vice president for multicultural ministries, Rick Mercer, Oklahoma Conference ministerial director and Cindy Mercer, Prayer Ministries coordinator, Carlos Craig, Southwestern Union president, and Letty Craig, Southwestern Union Family, Ministerial Spouses and Women’s Ministries director.

The union and conferences’ children ministries hosted an eventful weekend for the children. Together, they held children’s church and in the afternoon and set up special stations to help the children to pray.

But what is a prayer conference without prayer? Not just prayer with each

other, but prayer with our community. How can the local church be a center of influence in our community if we do not pray for and with them.

It is a tradition in the Texico Conference that every prayer conference we host, we have a time that we set aside to hold a “Drive-thru Prayer” session. Fourteen people from the prayer conference, led this year by Morris McPherson, Mount of Blessings Seventh-day Adventist Church pastor, did just that; standing out in the 104 degree heat. People were invited to drive up to the tent and the team would pray with and for them.

We ended our evening with a message from Tony Anobile, Southwestern Union vice president for church ministries, about passing on our beliefs to future generations. The weekend was truly a blessing, with each of the two hundred plus attendees leaving the two-day meeting knowing that they had truly been blessed.

*By Bobby Harris, Pastor  
Amarillo Church and Tulia Company*



# Growing Together: Cumbre Hispana de CRECIENDO JUNTOS

**KEENE, TEX.** – On August 29-30, 2022 the Southwestern Union and its five conferences hosted the first Cumbre Hispana de CRECIENDO JUNTOS (Growing Together Hispanic Summit) on the campus of our Southwestern Adventist University. In fact, it is one of the first Hispanic Summits in the North American Division.

Thirty-one churches and 149 youth and adult leaders participated in the launch of this initiative in the Southwestern Union territory. We shared ideas and strategies on how to integrate and engage young people of all ages in the different ministries of our churches. The Growing Together Initiative calls for youth to be able to actively participate in community outreach and mission accomplishment in our churches with the counsel, mentorship and empowerment of adult leaders.

Presenters José A. Barrientos, Potomac Conference Youth Ministries director; David Craig, Arkansas-Louisiana Conference Youth Ministries director and Federico Revollo, Potomac

Conference district pastor explored the project’s six essential strategies for developing young leaders who love and enjoy church.

They explained how to promote the distribution of leadership by empathizing with young people, prioritizing their needs and integrating them to participate in everything. They spoke of the need to sincerely emphasize the message of Jesus.

The presenters discussed the importance of promoting a comprehensive sense of family in our congregations, as well as an atmosphere of love and acceptance. These simple, yet important Christian principles help impact our church communities and allow us to be the best neighbors.

The summit was led by the Southwestern Union Youth Ministries Director Helvis Moody with the support of Southwestern Union administrators Carlos Craig, president, Tony Anobile, Church Ministries vice president and Osvaldo Rigacci, Multicultural Ministries vice president.

We are confident that the experience of these churches will help retain and develop vibrant young people who are effective leaders working alongside adults in the ministries of our churches. We also hope that the journey of these congregations will motivate other churches.

The hope is that this initiative spurs an awakening and revival that impacts communities and promotes the fulfillment of the Gospel mission.

*By Osvaldo Rigacci  
VP for Multicultural Ministries*



# AdventHealth Expands Mission Footprint



**BURLESON, TEX.** – AdventHealth has signed an agreement for the growth of medical work in two major hospitals located in Asunción and Hohenau, Paraguay, establishing these hospitals as the twelfth footprint in AdventHealth’s Global Missions program, which focuses on cooperation, training, community care and medical equipment.

Asunción is one of the most densely populated regions of Paraguay with suburban and high-rise buildings along with several higher education institutions. The Asunción Adventist Sanitarium is in the heart of downtown Asunción. Just a five-hour drive from the capital, Hohenau is more rural, surrounded by streams and fields. The sanitarium is at the center of Hohenau, near businesses and residential areas.

Part of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist health care network, the sanitariums are medical missionary institutions providing services ranging from pediatrics and gynecology-obstetrics to cardiology and neurology. Asunción recently celebrated its 60th anniversary in 2019 with a medical campaign providing free services for its community, aiding 250 people. Hohenau will celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2023.

AdventHealth first connected with the two hospitals when Paraguayan nurses were invited to the Annual Nursing Conference, organized by AdventHealth Global Missions, to connect with nurses from other mission footprints and expand their clinical knowledge. The conference was held virtually because of the pandemic and nurses from both hospitals were able to attend. Focusing on the COVID-19 response, the conference provided an excellent, and safe, opportunity to learn ahead of the anticipated spikes to come.

Communication and joint activities between the two institutions continued sporadically until 2022, when leaders from the AdventHealth Southwest Region and AdventHealth Global Missions visited the two hospitals to launch the conversation that would result in a signed cooperation agreement.

“Though the hospitals themselves are set in vastly different areas of the country, the passion for excellence and quality was evident in the people from each location,” said Penny Johnson, president and CEO of AdventHealth in the Southwest Region. “We spoke

with some patients in the Hohenau hospital, and they shared that they would drive two hours to the Hohenau facility because they preferred the faith-based care and service received there.”

Kevin Roberts, CEO of AdventHealth Central Texas and AdventHealth Rollins Brook, said the Paraguay hospitals are well established and modern with great potential to deepen their impact in the communities they serve. AdventHealth’s role will be to help accelerate their mission within their communities through supporting the acquisition of modern equipment, consulting on quality and leadership and providing medical team outreach into rural communities.

“Knowing that the leaders within the organization make personal contributions to support this ministry is also inspiring and vital to success,” said Roberts.

“We’ve always had a heart for mission in this region. We just didn’t have a mission footprint until now,” said Johnson. “We will be just as blessed by this partnership as the two hospitals in Paraguay will be.”



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### SPEAKERS:

- Carlos Craig, President
- Stephen Brooks, Executive Secretary
- Tony Anobile, VP for Church Ministries
- Carol Campbell, VP for Education
- Vanston Archbold, Southwest Region VP for Diversity
- Oswaldo Rigacci, VP for Multicultural Ministries

## See you there!

**FRIDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> | 7:00 PM**  
 El Paso East Spanish Adventist Church  
 7456 Alameda Ave  
 El Paso, TX 79915

**SABBATH 10<sup>TH</sup> | 4:00 PM**  
 El Paso Central Adventist Church  
 1801 McRae Blvd  
 El Paso, TX 79925

SouthwesternAdventist.org



# God's Love, What a Powerful Impact It Makes



**KEENE, TEX.** – Years ago, Tina Turner sang a song entitled “What’s Love Got to Do With It?” in which her soulful voice belted out these iconic words: “What’s love got to do, got to do with it?” The words of the song conclude with the simple, two-word question, “What’s love?” Writers and poets write about love, singers of almost all musical genres sing about it, church and culture talk a lot about it, yet our souls long to have answers to these two basic questions: What is love, and how does love impact life?

As Christ’s followers, we seek answers to life’s questions from Scripture. The Old Testament gives a powerful example of God’s love for His wayward people through the story of the Prophet Hosea’s love for Gomer. Even though Gomer had been unfaithful to Hosea, at the lowest point of her life, Hosea found her, saved her and brought her home. This story leaves us wondering how Gomer responded to Hosea’s love, which is the point of the story because in this story is a gentle invitation to accept God’s love.

The New Testament writers had three Greek words: *eros*, *phileo* and *agape*, to choose from when writing about God’s love. Simply put, *eros* has to do with romantic love, *phileo* has to do with friendship and *agape* has to do with unconditional love.

New Testament writers mostly used *agape* when speaking of God’s love. *Agape* is best understood as loving others even if we think they do not deserve our love, even if they disappoint us and even if they reject our love. Keep in mind, though, that *agape* was never intended to mean treating others with unfeeling kindness toward others that is prompted by a sense of duty, as R. E. O. White explains in the *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*. *Agape* in the New Testament means a deep, unconditional love that is based upon and reflects God’s love.

The two major writers of the New Testament, John and Paul, say a lot about love. John 3:16 tells us that God’s motivation to save us is based on love. 1 John 4 expands on this love by challenging us to love others with

the same love God has shown us. In 1 Corinthians 13, Paul gives a detailed outline of what love is and is not, then he continues in 1 Corinthians 16:14 to challenge followers of Christ to evaluate their motives and to make sure that everything they do is prompted by love.

At the Last Supper, Jesus modeled love. The Master shocked His disciples when He took the role of a servant and washed their feet. Later, He told the disciples that the world would know His followers by their love. (John 13:34).

So, from a theological perspective, to answer Tina Turner’s question, “What’s Love Got to Do With It?” Well, quite literally, everything! Our love for God motivates us to love unconditionally all those around us the way He loves us.

By Russ Laughlin  
VP of Spiritual Development

# What Makes Love Last

**KEENE, TEX.** – We are remarkably made by a Creator who intended for us to have intimate relationships. According to the psychologist Abraham Maslow, the need for love is one of our most basic needs. It motivates us to continuously strive to achieve and maintain loving and intimate relationships. Intimate relationships also offer us protection from stress-related illnesses, depression and accidents, and they increase our self-esteem.

God gives us the blueprint for not only how to love each other, but how to sustain a loving relationship. When describing love, 1 Corinthians 13:7 (NKJV) states, “[It] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” Research supports what the Bible teaches us about the important relationship between love and trust.

In the field of psychology, there are several theories about love. One of them is Robert Sternberg’s triangular theory of love. Sternberg theorizes that love is composed of three key elements: intimacy, commitment and passion. Interestingly, out of those three components, intimacy is unique in that it is at the core of all loving relationships. This means that inti-

macy is a crucial factor in our loving relationships with our parents, spouses, children, friends and God. When comparing short-term and long-term relationships, Sternberg found that both commitment and intimacy are present in long-term relationships. If we want to cultivate loving relationships throughout our life, we need to nurture the central component of intimacy. It can be easy to mistake intimacy with romantic physicality, but when discussing intimacy, we are referring to feelings of closeness and connectedness in loving relationships.

When we closely examine intimacy, researcher Hook found that it is created through the presence of love, affection, trust, personal validation and self-disclosure. So how do we strive to always trust like 1 Corinthians states and cultivate intimacy in our loving relationships?

We find that trust is built through our everyday conversations and interactions. According to the researcher and psychologist John Gottman, couples can benefit from learning the art of an intimate conversation. An intimate conversation has four components: putting your feelings into words, asking open-ended questions,

following up with statements that deepen connection and expressing compassion and empathy. Incorporating intimate conversations into our everyday interactions will fortify our trust and self-disclosure, therefore increasing our intimacy levels with our loved ones. These everyday interactions are what helps make love last.

Although the research focuses on interpersonal relationships, I cannot help but wonder about our everyday interactions with God. Are we engaging in intimate conversations with God? Are we being intentional about deepening our connection, or are we simply using a repetitive prayer that does not self-disclose our true thoughts and emotions?

Throughout the Bible, God repeatedly asks us to trust Him and lay our burdens at His feet. These actions allow us to have intimate conversations with Him. Through these conversations, we build a long-lasting, loving relationship with God and others.

*By Zaira Rico  
Assistant Professor  
Education and Psychology Department*





# I Give You Jesus

**During the Fourth of July each year,** I like to pause and remember the huge sacrifice of love that was given for my freedom, initially by a band of patriots and then repeated over and over again. I treasure this freedom! There is nothing like it on this planet. It is not perfect. It is not without its challenges. Nevertheless, the love that it took to preserve that freedom is precious indeed.

So, too, is the incredible freedom that I have in Jesus Christ. In Christ, I am free and loved with an everlasting love. 1 Corinthians 13 is often used as the basis for love for many things. Often it is used at weddings. Sometimes, it is inappropriately used as means to dismiss bad behavior or as a reminder for being tolerant. The original word for love in this chapter is one that is often called "brotherly love" or "charity," as it is in the King James Version (KJV).

Frankly, it is a word of principled love, not a sexual love or the love between family members. This love that Paul speaks of is a love that acts responsibly and acts with dignity. Philippians 4:8.

The Bible tells me: First, all of us have sinned and come short of the

glory of God. (Romans 3:23); Second, the wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23); Third, the Godhead had a plan to save mankind from sin. The first evidence of this is a promise given to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:15); Fourth, Jesus gave us the sanctuary service to help us visually see the plan of salvation in its beauty. And from that experience we learn clearly what Paul shares with the Hebrew believers, that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. (Hebrews 9:22).

Jesus then demonstrated this principle very clearly. He came to Earth, took on humanity and then died in your place and mine as the law demanded.

He loved so much that He gave His life as an atonement for sin. Praise God! That is genuine love! The same as demonstrated in the Old Testament in the most Holy Place where He came down in the presence of light, the Shekinah, as a form of His great love. God's law was contained in the Ark of the Covenant and where God's law and God's love met was at the Mercy seat. Praise God that is principled love! That is genuine grace!

And God requires you and I to love like He does, with principle. We love in order to restore and love to encourage and love to live responsibly. Two thousand years ago, Jesus did this for you and me. Let us love one another with the same passion and compassion as Jesus did: "He has shown thee O man what to do and what is required of thee, but to do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God." Micah 6:8 (KJV).

*By Richard C. Dye, Sr.  
President*



## First Arkansas-Louisiana Conference Master Guide Camporee

**SHREVEPORT, LA.** – On May 13-15, nearly 200 Master Guides from 10 clubs across the Arkansas-Louisiana (ARKLA) Conference convened for a historic, first ever Master Guide camporee of the ARKLA conference. It was a blessed weekend. The event took place at the conference office headquarters in Shreveport, where clubs camped under the beautiful pine trees on the grounds. There were many activities and honors that took place, includ-

ing marching, knots, Roman cars and more. Worshipers were led by the special musical guests "In the Promise We Stand" that came from Dallas, Tex. Arkansas-Louisiana Conference Youth Director David Craig was the speaker for the weekend, with Multilingual Ministries Director Jose Pagan translating.

One of the highlights of the camporee was the investiture of long time Youth Department Administrative Assistant Sylvia Downs. Downs began her

Master Guide training in 1961 and recently became motivated to complete the requirements to become an invested Master Guide. That became a reality as she received her final requirement signature in 2022. She was invested as a Master Guide at the camporee and was also inducted into the Pathfinder Hall of Fame. Downs's words of wisdom for others: "Don't ever give up; if I can do it, anyone can."

*By David Craig, Youth Director*



## Through the Storm: Bonnerdale Miracle

**BONNERDALE, ARK.** – On April 13, 2022, the Ewing Adventist Junior Academy experienced a particularly scary school day. During class, a strong wind picked up outside the building. Within moments, Mrs. Mooney, principal, announced the tornado drill and the staff and children quickly made their way downstairs to safety.

Mrs. Mooney said she could see the direction of the wind as it came down toward the ground, then turned upward as it came to the little agricultural greenhouse, swooping upward to avoid the building.

When the children and staff came back upstairs there was flooding everywhere. Water was leaking through the roof. Looking at the damage from

outside, one could see where the corner of the roof had lifted and turned back up on itself. There was tar paper scattered across the lawn.

We're very thankful it didn't hit the windows and it missed the greenhouse. It went right over it. From two of our youngest students, we heard these words of wisdom: "I cried" and "I prayed." And God kept everyone safe.

With mitigation and the insurance company, the repairs are being done. While the building is being repaired, classes are being held in the Sabbath School rooms of the church through the end of the school year.

*By June Bates*



# Arkansas-Louisiana Outdoor School: Going Strong in 2022

**MOUNTAIN PINE, ARK.** – Arkansas-Louisiana Outdoor School was started by Twila Brown in 1998. The following year, Stephen Burton brought his Ozark Adventist School (OAS) fifth-grade class to Outdoor School at Camp Yorktown Bay (CYB) and the following year all OAS students in fifth and eighth grade attended.

Twila had to run two weeks of Outdoor School, because the camp could not accommodate everyone. In 2001, Twila asked Karen Ryder, teacher at Shreveport and Stephen Burton to codirect the second week of Outdoor School. Burton has continued to direct Outdoor School every year since, with the exception of two years due to COVID-19.

The 2022 Outdoor School program marked 20 years with Burton directing. The program has blessed hundreds of students over the years. This year we had about 90 students and 45 adults attending. Twenty students asked to study the Bible to prepare for baptism

and several indicated wanting to get to know Jesus as their personal friend.

The theme was “Gifted” and focused on 1 Peter 4:10, which encourages us to use our gifts to bless others and bring glory to God. Sally Streib, an aquatic naturalist and children’s author from Tampa, Fla., was invited to be the guest speaker. Streib is an excellent storyteller and draws spiritual lessons from life experience, sea-shells and other creatures in the ocean. Each student received a copy of her book, *Octopus Encounter*.

The eighth-graders enjoyed a unique program directed by Renee Otts and Jake Krein. They met in the horse barn attic for various project-based activities and went on several day trips. Ben Roy, 3ABN Science Zone presenter, was the guest speaker for the eighth-graders. Ben used chemistry and physics to illustrate spiritual lessons. Eric Bray, CYB ranger, helped students enjoy the “Big” swing and pamper pole.

Other highlights included dissecting frogs with Joyce Fortner, petting cockroaches and other animals with Debra Rivera, making catapults with Lisa Tonack, doing puppets with David Grant, learning about nature with Rusty Litten and Phillip Walkup, seeing what a salmon’s life is like with Jessica Durichek, building bird feeders with Janet Lopez and learning about raptors with Sharon Clark.

Students enjoyed a two-hour recess each day. In the afternoon, students took one of four classes that lasted two hours. Rene Zambrano taught canoeing, David Craig and Mike Martinez taught archery, Crystal Beierle taught wilderness CPR/first aid and Ben Roy taught a science class exploring chemistry and physics.

The program concluded with a shirt signing and the students did an excellent job cleaning the camp before they headed back home. God blessed with a safe time and two rain-free days.

By Stephen Burton





## Northwest Arkansas Camp Meeting

**GENTRY, ARK.** – The Northwest Arkansas Camp Meeting was held May 31-June 4 as an on-site, Gentry Seventh-day Adventist Church Camp Meeting that was also live-streamed. The theme was “Hope in the Storm.” Jim Stevens, M.Div., D.Min., was the speaker for Friday and Sabbath. Alex Rodriguez, evangelism director and associate director of the World Bible School for the Voice of Prophecy, was the

weekday speaker. The King’s Heralds quartet provided special music. The children’s divisions were well-attended and lively.

The Northwest Arkansas Spanish Camp Meeting was held at the same time, in the Ozark Academy gymnasium, with Southwestern Union President Carlos Craig as the speaker and his sidekick, Antonio Bigote (a delightful puppet). The theme for

the Spanish Camp Meeting was “Tell Your Story,” with Arkansas-Louisiana President Rick Dye, Executive Secretary Jeff Villegas and Ministerial/Evangelism/Multilingual Ministries/Family Ministries Director Jose Pagan in attendance to welcome our Spanish-speaking constituents. Several baptisms occurred on Sabbath afternoon and we celebrated the new souls committing their lives to the Lord.



## Baptisms at Mena Seventh-day Adventist Church

**MENA, ARK.** – The Mena Seventh-day Adventist Church has been slowly dwindling for several years. We’ve lost members to COVID-19, including our dear pastor, Ron Patterson, and others to cancer and Alzheimer’s disease.

We’re delighted to welcome back Tommy Blount and his wife, Kohne, to our church leadership. He led plans for an evangelistic campaign in the fall

and realized several who were attending church were ready for baptism. On May 28, 2022, five people were baptized into the Mena fellowship. Photographed from left to right: Consuelo McMillin, Wayne McMillen, David Carlisle, Robbilee Rath, Tommy Blount and Emmaline Rath.

We rejoice and celebrate these commitments to the Lord!

Together, we are looking forward to a fantastic evangelism program. We have 12 people requesting Bible lessons from a mail-out. Some of our newly baptized members have led the way in distributing these lessons. We look forward to the fall, and to the soon coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

*By Klinda Rath*



# Ministers Attend CALLED Convention in Kentucky

LEXINGTON, KY. – Arkansas-Louisiana pastors and their wives attended the North American Division CALLED Pastors’ Family Convention, joining over 7,000 other pastors from all over the division in Lexington, Ky. The program ran from Sunday through Wednesday, June 19-22, 2022, was jam-packed with training seminars on various topics and pastors were given a chance to connect and fellowship with other pastors and leadership from the North American Division. Meetings were held for the pastors, their wives and even the children were ministered to. Arkansas-Louisiana had about 48 pastors that attended with their wives. Most of the families were able to take the trip to visit the Ark Encounter, a life-size replica of Noah’s Ark, which was within an hour’s drive of the area.



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# Love Is the Fulfilling of the Law

**Imagine if there were a “love detector,”** like a lie detector, that we could use to determine if our acts and behavior towards others were truly an act of love. And that before we said or did anything we would test it by the “love detector.” We would ask, for example, “Is this act, or word, loving?” I wonder if all our words and deeds would pass the test.

In a sense, we have a love detector in the Ten Commandments. Jesus summarized them by saying it means loving God with all of heart, mind and soul and loving our neighbor as ourselves. We could then ask before we did something, said something or thought something, “Is this reflecting love toward God and others?”

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul wrote that love is the fulfilling of the law. (Galatians 5:14). That is, if our acts are done in and through love, we are passing the “love meter.” But how

practically do we live a life such as this in our sinful fallen nature?

God’s love is unselfish, other-centered and self-sacrificing. Our natural condition in sin is selfish, self-centered and concerned for getting not giving. I believe it is beholding, and experiencing God’s love for ourselves first, then we can pass it on.

There is a Biblical principle in 2 Corinthians 3:18, which is by beholding the glory, goodness and love of God, we are changed into wanting to be like Him. We want to love others because God first loved us. The apostle John said it this way, “We love because He first loved us.” 1 John 4:19. John also writes, “By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren, or others.”

When we are touched, impacted and moved by God’s love revealed to us in the life and death of Jesus, we

are motivated to love others. Love begets love. Let us spend more time beholding and experiencing the love of God for us and I believe it will overflow to others by the power of the Holy Spirit.

*By James Shires  
President*



# Conference Pulls Together to Build Up Summit Ridge



**HARRAH, OKLA.** – Summit Ridge Retirement Village and Amities is an Adventist retirement community located just outside of Oklahoma City. It is a sprawling community that offers its residents the opportunity to spend their golden years surrounded by others who share their faith and hope in the return of Jesus. In April 2022, members, pastors and leaders from across the Oklahoma Conference came to Summit Ridge for a mission trip.

Summit Ridge has several empty homesites that are available to build on, but it has been a while since a new home went up in the community. With the help of Maranatha Volunteers International, a new home has been erected and will be available to a new

family joining the community. This is just the beginning of the planned development of Summit Ridge. According to Apple Park, Oklahoma Conference executive secretary, “Two more houses will be built in the near future. An event center is planned for the Summit Ridge community for residents to have a center to keep their bodies and minds spiritually, physically and mentally healthy as they reach out to others.”

Over the course of the four-day build, the Conference officers—James Shires, president, Apple Park, secretary and Charles Reel, treasurer—joined a team of 20 members, 10 pastors and students from Parkview Adventist Academy to raise up this new home. Their service saved over

\$32,000 in labor. When the material suppliers heard that this was a volunteer project, several of them offered to provide materials at their cost.

Dominick Alipoon, pastor, shared why he chose to take time away from his family and churches to join the project. “I wanted to help provide a new home for some people who will love and cherish it. Summit Ridge provides a great place for people to connect, develop friendships and support for the elderly. The past generations have done so much for us. Giving up two days for them? Easy.”

For more information about Summit Ridge visit us online at [SummitRidgeOk.AdventistChurch.org](http://SummitRidgeOk.AdventistChurch.org).

*By Wes Via, Communications Director  
Photos by Dode Gepford and Wes Via*

# Young Lives Are Impacted for Eternity at Wewoka Woods

**WEWOKA, OKLA.**— The theme for this year's Junior Camp at Wewoka Woods was "Rescue." A crew of 72 campers and 35 staffers embarked on a special six-day journey to unpack the biblical concept of salvation based on John 3:16, God's ultimate rescue plan of love. And God indeed was with us at camp! Through the evenings or mornings for worship and during the day for activities ranging from water sports, archery, go-karting, hikes and horseback riding to crafts, God was there.

You can imagine that, by Wednesday night, we had become a family. It was a special night at the lake; we asked if there was anything that came between us and God. If so, then we would write that on a piece of paper and offer it as a "burnt offering" to the Lord. Many of the young ones pondered intently before writing, others requested more

paper, yet others wrote down their burdens but had a hard time surrendering the paper to the Lord ... but once the first person came forward, it encouraged the entire camp family to join. Tears were shed, songs were sung, prayers were lifted and God's Spirit moved them to repent from old ways and be saved! A call was made for recommitments and first-time commitments as a public demonstration of faith through baptism. I wish that everyone could have seen what happened next.

With the sun setting over the lake, we closed the evening by singing "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus." Campers began to come forward to take their stand with Jesus. The young people began to appeal to each other to make their decision. In all, 20 young people came forward. At the end of

the week, 10 were baptized and four more will be baptized in their home churches.

Thank you to everyone who prayed and/or sponsored a child to be there! Lives are changed for eternity at summer camp.

*By Erwin Nanasi*



# Food Drive Benefits Norman Adventist Community Services

**NORMAN, OKLA.**— The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) conducted its 30th annual national food drive on Saturday, May 14. The Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive, the country's largest single-day food drive, provided residents with an easy way to donate food to those in need.

On Saturday, May 14, as they delivered mail, the nation's 175,000 letter carriers collected donations left by residents near their mailboxes. Each year, people are encouraged to leave a bag containing nonperishable foods for mail delivery on that Saturday.

The Norman Seventh-day Adventist Church has utilized this donated food for several years. Our church volunteers hauled several truckloads of food to the church where volunteers spent several hours sorting and boxing. This annual infusion of food helps reduce the amount of food that must be purchased by our local Adventist Community Services (ACS) for the upcoming year.

Carol Buckmaster, ACS director, hears firsthand the impact this outreach has on our community. "We assist clients through times of crisis,

such as sickness, loss of employment, a death in the family and other critical life events. Our clients are very diverse. A few days ago a homeless family of five living in their car came to our pantry and clothes closet. They had been evicted from their apartment after complaining about mold. They had no place to cook, so we let them go through our pantry and select items that had pop-top cans containing fruits, soups and vegetables. There were also packets of whole milk and juices that did not require refrigeration. They also selected laundry soap and personal care items, such as hand sanitizer, wipes, toothbrushes, toothpaste and deodorant. They were very appreciative that we had made their circumstances more livable."

Each year the church provides assistance for thousands of neighbors with food, clothing and personal items. Our primary source of funds is received from church members and a fixed percentage of our church's monthly combined budget.

During the early months of COVID-19, the ministry was operating by appointment only. Carol Buck-

master was obviously disappointed and troubled by the closure since its impact on the local community would certainly be felt by those most vulnerable. She sought help from Joy Pelfrey who is a public health professional specializing in infectious diseases. Pelfrey wrote health and safety protocols for the reopening of the ACS ministry to safely serve local families.

Please pray for our continued success in serving our neighbors and planting seeds of hope and salvation.

*By Mark Pelfrey*





## Spiritual Revival at Oklahoma Camp Meeting

**WEWOKA, OKLA.** – There are very few long camp meetings left in North America these days. But here in Oklahoma we are holding on to these ten sacred days spent together every year in the July heat at the Wewoka Woods Adventist Center. This year, the Camp Meeting theme was “Three Angels, One Message.”

Over the course of ten days, we spent our time together considering the significance of Revelation 14 in light of the Gospel and our mission.

Many years ago Ellen G. White wrote the following in a pamphlet titled *Camp-Meetings Their Object, and How to Conduct Them*, “If the Children of Israel needed the benefit of these holy convocations in their time, how much more do we need them in these last days of peril and conflict . . . Go to the camp meeting, even though you have to make a sacrifice to do so.” These words ring true still today.

God was present at Wewoka Woods and lives were changed. We were

challenged and encouraged by the speakers. We enjoyed the summer camp atmosphere. But the best part was seeing 12 people give their lives to Jesus. Revival happens at Oklahoma Camp Meeting. Plan to join us next year, July 7–15, 2023.

By Wes Via  
Communications Director  
Photos by Bailey Schmidt, Pastor



## Love God and Put God First

In **Exodus 20:3-17**, we find the Ten Commandments as written with the finger of God to His people. These directives are not declarations of rules or restrictions, but they're ten ways to express our love to God. Jesus said in Matthew 22:37-39 (KJV), "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. And thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." When you consider this directive of love, it's merely an expansion of the Ten Commandments as the first four commandments deal with our love for God, and the final six commandments deal with our love for one other.

Jesus further admonished us in John 14:15 (KJV), "If ye love me, keep my commandments." This command also affirms the fact that our obedience to God should be rooted in our love to Him. Put another way, if we love God, we ought to love God in the way He wants to be loved. He wants us to love Him through obedience to His commandments. Hence, the commandments are embedded in love, not merely a law, and I like to refer to them as "Love Letters from God" to us.

In Love Letter number one, God tells

us, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Exodus 20:3 (KJV). God is very serious about this directive, which is why He made it His first commandment, because when we put other things or people first in our lives, we reduce God to anything but first place. God, however, is not to be relegated below anything or anyone. Moreover, the subsequent nine commandments are inconsequential unless you accept and follow commandment one. We are to "seek God first and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto (us)." Matthew 6:33 (KJV). There can be nothing in our lives that comes before God, because if it does, we have breached commandment one, and we can't move to the other commandments. Put God first!

Additionally, God is not saying in this love letter that you can have other gods, and you can worship all the other gods you want. "I just want to be your favorite." When a husband recites his vows to marry his wife, he's not saying, "I want to be your favorite husband," he's saying, "I want to be your only husband." Accordingly, God is saying, "I'm to be your only God, not your favorite God."

The words "favorite" and "only" are not synonymous. "Favorite" means the one that is "preferred above all others of the same kind," according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary. "Only," however, means no one else, nothing more, solely, exclusively. When God says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," God is saying there is only one God, not a favorite god, not a god instead of, in addition to, or in opposition to the one and only true God.

By Carlton P. Byrd, D.Min.  
President





# Moving Southwest '4' Ward Camp Meeting

**ATHENS, TEX.** – Maybe it was the theme song “Every Praise” by Hezekiah Walker, maybe it was the theme “Moving Southwest ‘4’ Ward,” or maybe the fact that we had not gathered in person for Camp Meeting for two consecutive years, maybe it was Carlton Byrd D.Min., Southwest Region Conference president’s, first Southwest Region Camp Meeting, or the myriad of renowned speakers and musicians or just the aura of those plush grounds and generous acreage. Whatever it was, many agreed that it was an unprecedented camp meeting.

Southwest Region Conference Executive Secretary/Vice President for Administration Jason North’s Wednesday evening message in the open-air adult pavilion began it all. Thursday through Sabbath found campers making their way to the pavilion for the 7 a.m. meeting with God via “Morning Manna” delivered by various pastors. The 10:30 a.m. workshops presented captivating subjects such as evangelism, family life, nutrition and self-care. Some afternoon workshops such as the one with 3ABN’s Master Chef Nyse Collins saw

an overflow audience present for his lecture/demonstrations.

The pastors’ spouses led out Thursday night. On Friday evening, Youth Director Carl Ming exclaimed, “When God’s people pray, God moves! And now the walking, talking testimony of Jesus Christ!” as 20 youth dressed in blue t-shirts with the word “unstoppable” proudly marched onto the stage. Eric Thomas, Ph.D., motivational speaker, followed by summoning all youth to the front where his directives included their shouting “Unstoppable!” “COVID-19 was an opportunity for ministry; don’t be selfish with the Gospel,” he said to them. His appeal would result in several being among the 45 baptized in the camp pool following Sabbath service.

Byrd prefaced his introduction of our Sabbath speaker with Wintley Phipps who sang the Negro spiritual “Talk About a Child Who Do Love Jesus.” Henry Wright’s “Moving Forward in Babylon” emphasized that we live in modern-day Babylon and what we’ve failed to do in the light will now have to be done in darkness. “The only way

out of our Babylon is to do God’s will. We must want to take someone with us is why we want out of Babylon. Seek His face and He’ll hear your Babylonian experience,” Wright assured us in his closing.

Following the evening concert, Byrd delivered his message. “We’re going to move forward” was the charge to the audience. Using Numbers 13:25 as his basis, he relayed the Israelites’ 40-year wilderness experience and how God provided their every need. “Our belief in God will result in our conquering everything that plagues us. Seek liberation from a grasshopper mentality [an early reference to the Israelites’ assessment of themselves] which has retarded growth in so many of our churches.” Byrd then began singing “I Can’t Go Back to the Way I Used to Be.” He continued, “I believe in this Church, but over time, we’ll have to change our methods. Let’s go forward because ‘To whom much is given, much is required.’ Let’s go Forward!”

*By Evelyn M. Edwards*



## I'm A Disciple: Hispanic Camp Meeting

**ATHENS, TEX.** – We are grateful to God that after two years of meeting virtually, we finally made it back to the campground to celebrate our Hispanic Camp Meeting.

Under the theme “I’m a Disciple Moving Southwest Region Forward” we enjoyed an amazing and blessed memorial weekend that started with a Hispanic ministerial retreat. Our pastors came together for two days of fellowship and spiritual enrichment. The presenters included Southwest Region Conference President Carlton P. Byrd, D.Min. and the Southwestern Union leadership team, President Carlos Craig and Vice Presidents Osvaldo Rigacci and Tony Anobile. After this experience, we were ready to receive our members.

Arkansas-Louisiana Conference Multicultural Director José Pagán spoke and challenged the attendees to be disciples and disciple-makers. Madero,

the guest musical group, took us to the throne of grace through their worship in song. Milton Coronado, pastor, spoke to the youth and inspired them through his graffiti ministry and life experience that they can use their gifts and talents to be disciple-makers wherever they are.

Camp meeting culminated with the graduation of more than 100 disciples who completed the discipleship certification program. At graduation, they committed to return to their local communities and churches to inspire others to be disciples and to make new disciples.

Women’s Ministries offered a seminar on women and entrepreneurship from a biblical perspective, as Raquel del Orbe inspired mothers to fulfill their career dreams while still being able to care for their children and family. Sergio and Nilda Rodriguez spoke to the couples and shared ways to

enrich their marriages. Leslie and Jose Soupet motivated the attendees to grow their own food at home in order to secure nutrient-rich and safe foods amid economic and environmental turmoil. Southwestern Union Ministerial Spouses Director Letty Craig met with our pastors’ spouses and shared tools they can use to help the local women who are facing abuse.

The camp meeting concluded on Sunday with recreation and sports events for everyone. We left joyful and grateful to God for the time spent together with brothers and sisters from all over the conference. We look forward to next year and beyond to the time when we will all gather together to celebrate the greatest camp meeting in Heaven with all of God's people.

*By Vanston Archbold, Jr.  
VP for Multicultural Ministries*



# Gift Given to the Youth Ministries Department

**DALLAS**— Dorcas Mildred Peterson Calvert was born April 25, 1925, and joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church as an adult in Los Angeles, Calif. In the early 1950s, Calvert, her husband and their five children relocated to the Austin area and united with the Alpha Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Calvert loved her family, the church and the Lord! She served the church faithfully as a community service leader, Sabbath school teacher, deaconess, investment leader, Ingathering band leader and Bible worker. Her Smithville, Tex., Bible School was a visionary project to which she dedicated her time, energy and funds. Given her evangelistic efforts, many accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and were baptized.

In the early 1970s, Calvert decided to help the church reach a wider audience. To facilitate this, she began taking television broadcasting classes with the goal of broadcasting Bible lessons. Her goal was realized when she began funding and broadcasting the program “An Hour With Your Bible.” Continuing well into the 1980s, Austin-area viewers were greeted every Sunday morning by Dorcas Calvert

preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ!

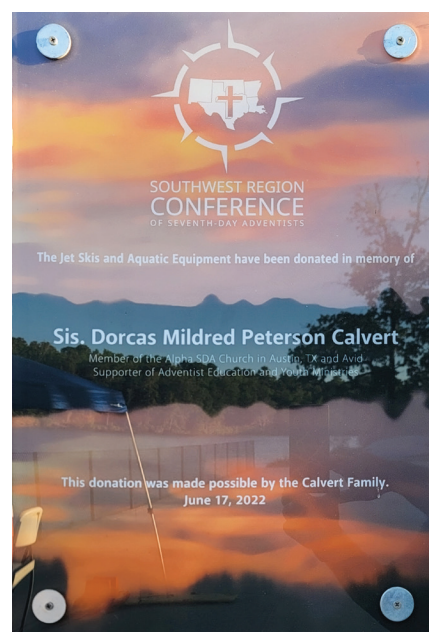
In addition to serving her church, and engaging in television ministry, Calvert was an avid supporter of Adventist education and youth ministries. Supporting and sponsoring youth to attend Adventist schools, summer camp and youth federations were focal points of her ministry. Many youth today attribute their membership in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and, most importantly, their relationship with the Lord to Calvert’s influence.

Although Dorcas Calvert has fallen asleep in Jesus and is awaiting the voice of the Savior at the first resurrection, her influence still lives on, particularly in young people. To help solidify this legacy, her children and grandchildren shared proceeds from her estate to continue to fund youth initiatives in the Southwest Region Conference with specificity to young people.

Most recently, her family presented a tangible monetary gift to the Southwest Region Conference Youth Department for the purchase of jet skis at the conference campground, Lone Star Camp, enabling youth to benefit by engaging in this fun, recreational activity for camp meeting, summer

camp and other events. On Friday, June 17, 2022, for “Youth Night” at the Southwest Region Conference Camp Meeting, Conference President Carlton P. Byrd, D.Min. and Carl Ming, Southwest Region Conference Youth Ministries director, recognized and acknowledged the Calvert family for their gift, presented them with a plaque and also shared that a commemorative plaque had been affixed to the office building of the aquatic area of the campground identifying the gift made by the Calvert family in honor of the life, legacy and ministry of Dorcas Mildred Peterson Calvert.

*By Communications Team*



# Southwest Region Conference New Hires

**DALLAS** – The Southwest Region Conference is pleased to announce its newest pastoral hires in Darriel Hoy, Mackenzie Kambizi and Juan Cabrera. We also welcome back Sheree Brown to our treasury department.

Hoy, who comes from the office of regional conference ministries, having served as the director of communications, will now serve as lead pastor at Faith Seventh-day Adventist Church in Baton Rouge, La. and Morning Star Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Lafayette, La. district. Kambizi comes from the Minnesota Conference and

will be the lead pastor at Fondren Southwest Seventh-day Adventist Worship Center in Missouri City, Tex. Juan Cabrera joins us in a part-time capacity and will be the lead pastor of the Pilgrims of All Nations Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church in Oklahoma City and the Rogers Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church in Rogers, Ark. Sheree Brown rejoins the Southwest Region Conference treasury department as undertreasurer, having served as CFO/treasurer of the Southeastern Conference.

We are very excited about these ad-

ditions and believe that God is going to continue to bless our conference through their ministries. We solicit the prayers of our brothers and sisters in the Southwestern Union Conference for our new hires, their families and their new assignments in the Southwest Region Conference.

*By Jason C. North, Sr.  
Executive Secretary  
Vice President for Administration*

## How Can We Serve You?

**BATON ROUGE** – On the flier appeared the question: How can we serve you? The choices are Prayer, Counseling, Clothing and Church Fellowship. This recently appeared on a Youth and Young Adult Ministry outreach flier announcing a drive-thru prayer station along with chili and red beans with rice bowls, a dessert and a beverage.

The drive-thru prayer station resulted in requests for prayer with Ron Weegar, pastor of Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church, and the youth gathered to pray with occupants and invite them to fill out contact cards. Even though 60 bowls of chili, red beans/

rice and their fixings were distributed, “Several simply drove on to the church’s parking lot for prayer and refused the hot lunch.”

The ministry’s next outreach was a community shower for infants to eight-year-olds. On the designated Sabbath, following an abbreviated indoor worship service and directions, the youth and adults headed onto a vehicle-free church parking lot, where tables of clothing, footwear, hygiene products, infant wear, hair products and infant furniture were neatly displayed. The team then dispersed themselves to strategic points while holding up signs

announcing the event. There were those just interested in prayer, which they received from Weegar and other team members. As the ending time approached, shoppers had claimed 85 to 95 percent of the available items with the items in boys’ sizes 6 to 8 leading the way. At the end of the event, ministry leader Roquel McCarter stated that, “Even though we had pretty much achieved our objective, we’re praying that we created more than just an event, but rather a sustaining relationship with the church community.”





# The Greatest Possible Impact

**If you had to choose one strategy** to be impactful to others, what would it be? The apostle Paul shares the answer in one of the most beloved chapters in the Bible found in 1 Corinthians 13.

In chapter 12, however, Paul focuses on the importance of spiritual gifts, sharing, “And yet I will show you the most excellent way,” 1 Corinthians 12:31 (NKJV).

Paul shares that it is okay to desire greater gifts, but reminds us that it is not the most excellent way. Paul gives examples of greater gifts counterposed to his idea.

He says, “If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal,” 1 Corinthians 13:1.

On July 8, 1741, American theologian Jonathan Edwards preached a powerful message called “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.” When Edwards gave this speech, it rocked Europe so much so that it is known in history as the First Great Awakening. It rippled through Europe. People fell on their faces before God. You may think that Edwards had the gift of speaking or that he was a very influential pastor

with many connections, and that is why he made a great impact in Europe. Historians tell us that, when Edwards gave this speech, he was in a place of deep love with God and a deep love for the people he spoke to and, when he gave this sermon as a humble man, he literally put his head down and read this manuscript word for word. It wasn’t his ability or connections that created the impact; it was what was inside of him—a love for God and a love for people.

Back to 1 Corinthians, Paul emphasizes that words spoken without a foundation of love have little impact. However, when you have earned the right to speak out of the loyal love you have for another person or a group of people, those words, simple though they may be, can have their most significant impact. Have you heard the phrase, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care?”

Our greatest impact doesn’t come from what we do but comes through who we are. A person can do many things without being a loving person and have little or no impact on

people’s lives. But a genuinely loving person can possess none of the big gifts and can radically impact people.

The idea is simple: Having God anchored in your soul will enable you to discover the gifts God deposited in you. Only then can you dispense that love through your gift—whatever it may be, however big it may be, however small it may be—and you will have positioned yourself for the greatest possible impact with your life.

*By Elton DeMoraes, D.Min.  
President*



# The Skinners: Two Hearts, One Beat

**GARLAND, TEX.** — At the time of this writing, Roy and Evelyn Skinner were the oldest surviving senior couple at the Garland Faith Community Seventh-day Adventist Church in Garland, Tex. They were charter members. Unfortunately, Roy Skinner passed away June 18, 2022, before this article was printed.

Their combined dedication of more than 60 years saw their service in a variety of church areas, including clerk, treasury, children’s ministries, Vacation Bible School, deacon and deaconess, hospitality, outreach, maintenance and beyond. They are the “rarest gems” of the Garland Faith Community church “I will go” members.

Evelyn Anderson Skinner is an Arkansas native while Roy Skinner was a Texan. They were born the same year, just months apart. In 1963, the two were married.

Evelyn was brought up in the Seventh-day Adventist faith while Roy was a member of the Dallas First Baptist Church. Yearning for deeper biblical knowledge, Roy was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the early 1990s, making Garland Faith Community church their second home.

Roy earned the title, “Best Flower

Garden and Lawn Manicurist” for the church grounds during that time.

Evelyn, deemed, “The Smiling Flower” and indisputable, “Best Greeter of All Time,” is a genuine fragrance of love, wrapped in hugs, kind words, gentle handshake, warm embrace and thoughtfulness.

Now, in their sunset hours, their unwavering faith in God and each other remained faithfully intact, with their hope firmly fixed on the horizon of eternity.

“The Skinners were the embodiment of what real Christians should be,” said Barbara Griffiths, who, across the miles in Jamaica, made weekly, Tuesday phone visits with them, in appreciation of their Christ-like example to her.

A national treasure they’ve been too. Roy served in the Korean War and worked for the United States Postal Service. Evelyn worked many years for the Republic National Insurance Company.

They were blessed with three children, seven grandchildren, four great-grandchildren and one great-great-grand-child. They celebrated their 59th wedding anniversary on April 27, 2022.

When asked to share the longevity to their marriage, they shared their thoughts on three areas:

Personally: “Love, respect, a quick resolving of uncomfortable issues, a sense of humor and always trust God to be your guide in everything.”

Matrimonially: “Never go to bed mad with each other. Dismiss unhealthy contacts and entertain no assumptions—you don’t have to know or solve everything....” Roy interjected, “We kiss and make up so we can have a good night’s sleep.”

Spiritually: “People come; people go, but God’s word stands forever.” “One thing anyone should ... contemplate, this stage of the Christian walk is: ‘Do I want to be saved or be lost?’” “Avoid the power struggle path.” Evelyn added, “We never had much but we had God.”

The Skinners’ faithful service in Christ’s vineyard has greatly impacted all past and current Garland Faith Community church members and beyond. They’ve been truly the “I Will Go” couple.

*By Marcia Waugh*



# Houston International Hikers' PBE Journey



**HOUSTON** – Houston International Seventh-day Adventist Church members are extremely passionate when it comes to club ministries. The Houston International H.I.S. Hikers Pathfinder Club works hard every year to participate in the North American Division (NAD) Pathfinder Bible study program called Pathfinder Bible Experience (PBE).

PBE is the official NAD Pathfinder Bible study program where Pathfinders from across North America commit to memory verses, chapters and books of the Bible and are tested over assigned books of the Bible as well as the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary introduction. They compete for four different levels: area, conference, union and division finale.

Doreen Davis, Pathfinder director, appointed the H.I.S. Hikers Master Guide club, under the leadership of directors Hannah and Elijah Muthondu, to organize the PBE for 2022. The Master Guide's worked with the 24 Pathfinders to make it to the top levels. Hannah and Elijah divided the large group of 24 Pathfinders into four

different teams: Ruth, Naboth, Micah and Elijah. The teams met three times a week to study and memorize their assigned chapters. Two out of the three meetings were via Zoom.

The process for every level of PBE is consistent studying, memorization and practice tests. The Master Guide directors and club worked to help them memorize the assigned chapters from the Bible and Seventh-day Adventist Bible commentary. But, of course, this would have never been possible without the Pathfinders' parents devoting their time and money. The parents drove them to church and the coaches' homes throughout the week before each round to meet. Each practice, each Bible test and each trip, the parents showed how important it was to support their own children on the PBE journey.

The five different teams all participated in the area level but only a few moved on. All PBE levels, except for area level, required travel. The conference level was held at the Keene Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church on March 5, 2022. The union level was

held on March 26, 2022, at Southwestern Adventist University. The division finale was held in Eugene, Ore., on April 23, 2022.

Team Ruth: Chelsea Osinde, Shukuru Urbain, William Altemus, Eberechi and Chinedum Nwogu participated and passed every level they competed in reaching the division level. They were the only PBE team representing the Greater Houston area that made it to the division finale. They joined other Pathfinders clubs in coming in first place.

No matter what level the PBE teams came in, Houston International church members are extremely proud of the achievements the Pathfinders, the parents, coaches and leaders earned during their PBE journey. They represented Jesus, their church and Houston with pride and worked very hard to make it so far and achieve the most for God's glory.

You can find information about the 2023 PBE at [NadPBE.org](http://NadPBE.org).

*By Hannah Muthondu, Doreen Davis  
and Brandon Zambrano*

# Texans Volunteer for First Egyptian Pathfinder Camporee

ALVARADO, TEX. – From pin trading, honors learning and meeting new friends, the first-ever Egyptian Camporee reminded every Pathfinder who has served through the years that we are indeed one people. Over 240 Pathfinders and staff united on the historical campus of Nile Union Academy in the heart of Gabal Asfar, close to Al Khanka, Egypt, for one week of fellowship, worship and friendship.

Outside the largest city in Africa, Cairo, is the rural and poor town of Gabal Asfar. Nile Union Academy has made its home there for over 50 years. The academy has struggled over the years with local officials, residents and support, but it still educates over 100 students each year.

Surrounded by nine mosques where the calls to prayer are heard five times a day, Pathfinders learned from Texas Conference Master Guides the art of honor and skills training.

As a highlight to most of the young Pathfinders' summer, many made decisions for glory, under the theme "From Pyramids to Glory." In any other situation, these decisions for Christ would bring only joy and excitement. However, along with the euphoria of seeing young people accepting Christ,

the reality is somewhat fearful for their future, including how their communities will react towards them.

Growing up in this generation has its own set of faults, fearful expectations and anxiety. Adding the stress of knowing that the decision you made during a weekend Camporee could also bring about alienation from family, shame and disrespect from your community, or even one's demise.

With the thoughts of an uncertain future, more than 30 Pathfinders answered the altar call and 24 were baptized. Praise the Lord!

The feeling of what the world will do to these Pathfinders for accepting the call from Jesus seems not to affect them. All they know is, as Texas Conference Youth and Club Ministries Director Paulo Tenorio shared, "Jesus loves you so much that there is nothing that would keep Him from that love."

We can be miles from home, away from what is familiar, and still, the message of Jesus' love for His children will always form roots in our hearts.

Texas Conference President Elton DeMoraes delivered the message Sabbath morning, encouraging them to "Just keep running and finishing the race well." As the word of God was

preached, and hearts received it, more young people made their stand for Jesus.

Over 40 Texas Conference Club ministries volunteers spent over two weeks in Egypt. In *The Ministry of Healing*, Ellen G. White states, "Nothing will arouse a self-sacrificing zeal and broaden and strengthen the character to engage in work for others. Many professed Christians, in seeking church relationships, think only of themselves. They wish to enjoy church fellowship and pastoral care. They become members of large and prosperous churches, and are content to do little for others. In this way they are robbing themselves of the most precious blessings. Many would be greatly benefited by sacrificing their pleasant, ease-conducting associations. They need to go where their energies will be called out in Christian work and they can learn to bear responsibilities." Galatians 6:2 reminds us, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Article and photo by Kenn Dixon  
Vice President for Communication  
and Public Relations





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# Risky Love

**“Whoever does not love** does not know God, because God is love,” says 1 John 4:8. When God created us, He created us to love others the way He loves us. But unlike what popular culture tells us, God’s love is not based on warm or passing feelings. It is not a mere emotion, it is a choice that is rooted in serving and looking out for the best interest of others. God’s love is devoted, unrestricted, unrestrained, unconditional, unimpassioned, selfless and intentional.

In her article, “How God’s Love is Manifested,” published in *The Australasian Union Conference Record* on June 1, 1900, Ellen G. White writes that “true love is not merely a sentiment or an emotion. It is a living principle, a principle that is manifest in action. True love, wherever it exists, will control the life. Thus it is with the love of God. ‘God is love;’ and in all His works, in all His dealings with mankind, His character is revealed.”

Nothing demonstrates God’s love more powerfully than the cross. When the agonizing decision was made for Jesus to come to earth to die for our sins, it was based on love for the hu-

man race. The greatest act of love the universe has ever witnessed was not based on fleeting feelings.

On the contrary, Jesus willingly and purposefully, with no expectations in return, stretched out His arms on the cross and displayed how much He truly loves us.

This demonstration was so stirring, that even the angels struggled to understand this profound act which in turn left heaven silent. The Bible calls this transcendent description of love, agape love, and it is the highest form of love. A “gift love,” or “universal loving kindness.” Agape love is radical, self-sacrificial, and it seeks to benefit the one who is being loved. It is motivated by free choice of the will. Author Max Lucado calls God’s love for us, a “risky love” because He goes out on a limb and takes a chance on us. He extends His sacrificial and unconditional love and risks not getting anything in return.

Next time you profess to have the love of God in your heart, I invite you to ponder on what your definition of love is. Is it fleeting? Is it “risky love”? Is it agape love? More importantly does

it align with the words that Jesus left us in John 15:12-13, “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” If God loved us so much that He gave his life for us, how are we going to respond to His risky love? The key question is, are we going to love each other the way God loves us? Are we willing to take a risk to love each other, even the unlovable? My hope and prayer is that we do both. Love God and love our fellow men.

*By Lee-Roy Chacon, President*



# The “10/20 Window” in West Texas

**SARAGOSA, TEX.** – I have always dreamed of being a missionary. I recall being enthralled by stories in church that spoke of missionaries who were called to distant lands to spread the Gospel. In my mind, missionaries were modern-day heroes of faith. Although I am now a physician, I was blessed with the opportunity to go on a mission trip to Oriental Mindoro, Philippines, when I was in my 20s. This trip ignited my spiritual life as I learned firsthand how the Lord was able to orchestrate specific answers to faith challenges that arise in the mission field. I credit this experience as being formative in my perception of the human condition and my role in the world as Christ’s disciple.

Since then, I have been blessed by other short-term mission experiences abroad. Although all my experiences have challenged me in great ways, none have ever involved taking the Gospel to countries “closed” to Christianity. I marvel at the courage of those dedicated to evangelizing the “10/40 Window”—the “resistant belt” of countries with the highest population of unreached people groups in the world. In these places, the decision to evangelize or worship can truly be one of life and death.

After 10 years of medical education and residency, I clearly knew God called me back home to work in my

career field and for the local church in rural west Texas. Despite the influx of people to the area for oil field industry jobs in recent years, the Church presence in this region of the Texico Conference has continued to dwindle. Saragosa is home to the only Adventist church in a 100-mile radius I call the “10/20 Window”. This name refers to the interstate highways 10 and 20 that course the west Texas region. Saragosa Seventh-day Adventist Church’s existence is surprising as it has one of the lowest populations in comparison to larger cities like Alpine and Pecos where Adventist churches closed 10 to 15 years ago. With this context there has been a growing burden in my heart for building up the kingdom through mission and church planting in the 10/20 Window instead of abroad as I had always dreamed of.

While the membership at the Saragosa church is small, it has started to grow. We recently celebrated the baptism of two new members who joined our congregation from the Philippines and the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. Members have committed themselves to attending weekly prayer meetings and have started to see God answer in mighty ways. Being made aware of the limitations of a small tithing base in garnering help for evangelism, the members started praying for a Bible worker. To our delight a new visitor

shared he was a former Bible worker that recently moved to the area with his family. Two nurses now attending the church have also moved to the area for work. It has become a routine occurrence to have new visitors every Sabbath, many of which are travelers passing through the 10/20 Window looking for a church to attend. Our weekly potluck has become the most crucial component of our outreach as we get to fellowship more with visitors and build connections.

Like Elijah, we can often lose perspective when we’re weary and focusing on our own efforts. We need to be reminded of the God we serve! At a moment when I was tempted to believe that my efforts would be better served in some far-off land, the Lord started bringing new members and laborers from places near and far. He started filling our pews with more visitors and breathing new life into our church. God taught me that the rural towns and cities of the 10/20 Window are just as worthy a mission field as the 10/40!

I pray that we would all have a passion for the great commission in whatever circumstance we have been placed.

*By James Tarin*



# Rio Rancho Church Ministries Help Community Together



**RIO RANCHO, N.M.** – The Rio Rancho Seventh-day Adventist Church and all its ministries have been busy this year combining their efforts and rallying together with spirit to help its community.

On April 3, the church hosted a Community Health Expo. Beginning with landscape cleanup, preparation teams and contacting local agencies and organizations, 20-plus stations were offered as interactive exhibits for about 200 attendees! The most visual being the inflatable “Walk-through Colon.” Perhaps, among the most popular was the “Fruit Kabob” and other healthy food samples booths. All the ministries of the church, including Personal, Health, Sabbath School, Hospitality, Women’s, Youth, Deaconate and Elders, worked together to accomplish this.

This spring, New Mexico had record fires displacing many residents. In May, a quiet call from the NM Red Cross for

reader glasses was made to a regional insurance adjuster who relayed the need to a church member who happened to be a ministry leader. It is not a usual request in a disaster, but it makes sense when you leave your home quickly without your readers and have many forms to read and sign to obtain help. Within 24 hours the Rio Rancho church members bought and collected a box filled with over 40 pairs for the immediate need in this one area. The youth also got into the action, and are presently collecting health, hygiene and nutritional items (i.e. lip balm, eye drops, wipes and snack bars), that are unique to firefighters’ needs when they’re out fighting fires for days at a time.

May was also Baby Shower month in New Mexico for Care-Net Pregnancy Centers which offer support and resources for women with an unplanned pregnancy. Besides baby items, the centers requested infant formula.

As formula is being shipped to more areas, many mothers still struggle to afford it, even if it is available. Women’s and Personal Ministries worked together to collect items for these needs.

Sometimes, it may feel like church ministries need to sponsor big events or projects, and it is overwhelming, especially for small churches. Nevertheless, working together with two or more—even many—ministries, can make ministry activities much more manageable. The result can be faith-strengthening, inspiring and Spirit-filled! Not to mention the good will spread in the community! Also, these ministries are like small groups to invite quiet attendees to help, increasing member involvement; and to invite new attendees to help, which can be a beginning for Bible study and church membership.

*By Carol Schoun*

# Roswell Celebrates Two Baptisms and a Wedding

**ROSWELL, N.M.** – This past spring, the Roswell English Seventh-day Adventist Church was blessed and thrilled to celebrate two baptisms and a wedding. Katia Gomez was baptized on March 19, and Elizabeth Chavez was baptized on April 2. Katia and Mauricio Velazquez were also married on April 2, in a small legal ceremony and said their vows before relatives, friends and Roswell church members on April 16.

Elizabeth Chavez was raised in Roswell and Lubbock, Tex., and is a sophomore in high school. She plays on Junior Varsity and Varsity soccer teams and her plans are to attend the University of Michigan to study cardiology. Chavez has dreamt of attending UMich since she was in the sixth grade. She knows that no matter where she goes, God is her faithful companion.

“The day I got baptized is the day that I accepted the Lord as my Savior,” said Chavez. “I knew that day that wherever I am, the Lord will always be with me.”

As for Katia Gomez and Mauricio Velazquez, they too have felt God’s presence and leading in their lives.

“March and April were definitely busy months filled with happiness,” said Gomez. “I am blessed to have been baptized and then married to the love of my life.”

After six years of a long-distance relationship, Gomez and Velazquez got engaged in February of this year. On April 2, Ken Davis married the couple in a small court ceremony with their parents and a few witnesses. The couple hosted their official wedding ceremony on April 16 and Jonathan Gonzalez officiated the bilingual ceremony.

“We were more than blessed to see everyone who cares for us cheering us on,” said Gomez. “Having God as the center of our marriage is the reason for our unity. Love triumphs and as 1 Corinthians 13 says, love conquers all.”

Velazquez agrees. “We dreamed of this moment, and it was extraordi-

nary, way better than we could have thought,” he said. “God has blessed and guided us since we first met, and He continues to bless our marriage with each passing day.”

Also memorable for Gomez was the day of her baptism. “My baptism was a true blessing! Knowing that I would continue to grow closer to God was what excited me the most,” she said. “Having my church family close was an addition to the blessings that God was already providing. That day I knew that God was by my side, and He will continue to strengthen me.”

It goes without saying that the Roswell church is very proud of these two young women. The church is very happy to welcome them and Velazquez into the Roswell church family.

*By Tom Jordan*



# Roswell Designates Sabbaths for Children and Youth



**ROSWELL, N.M.** – “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.” Proverbs 22:6.

On April 30, children and youth from the Roswell English Seventh-day Adventist Church officiated the Sabbath morning service.

“We believe it is vital to keep our children and youth involved,” said First Elder Tom Jordan. “After all, they are the future of not only our local church but also the worldwide church.”

Among those who participated were; Waylon Hamill, 3; Zethly Torres, 14; Elizabeth Chavez, 15; Abimael Jimenez, 12; Sarai Olague, 10; Nathaniel Talavera 10; and Benjamin Keeling, 13, who led song service and provided a special music. The kids and teens did the scripture reading and performed a skit based on John 6:1-14, “Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand”. They enlisted help from some parents and even Angel Talavera, 9, who was injured and on crutches, was happy to participate.

The kids and teens encouraged participation from the audience, and they also shared lessons they had learned from their skit.

Moving forward, the Roswell church has designated every fifth Sabbath, on months that have them, as children and youth Sabbaths. The goal is to encourage their participation and remind them of their importance in the church.

## OFFICIAL NOTICE

### TEXICO CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

Notice is hereby given that the 42nd Regular Constituency Session of the Texico Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will be held at the Albuquerque Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church in Albuquerque, N.M., on Sunday, Sept. 18, 2022. The Organizing Committee will meet at 7:30 a.m. and the Session will commence at 9 a.m. The purpose of this meeting is to give reports from the quadrennial session then ending, to elect officers for the ensuing term and to transact such other business as may properly come before the Session.

*Lee-Roy Chacon, President  
Phil Robertson, Secretary/Treasurer*

## Classified Ads

### EMPLOYMENT

**The Union College Physician Assistant Program** in Lincoln, Neb., is searching for candidates for a principal faculty. Qualified candidates must hold current NCCPA certification, a Master's degree and be eligible for licensure in the state of Nebraska. Full benefit package and tuition subsidy benefit for dependents attending local SDA schools included. Please see the full job description and instructions

for application at [UCollege.edu/employment](http://UCollege.edu/employment). For more information contact Megan Heidtbrink at [Megan.Heidtbrink@ucollege.edu](mailto:Megan.Heidtbrink@ucollege.edu).

### REAL ESTATE

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### MISCELLANEOUS

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**Lorene A. Harper**, 95, of Keene, Tex., passed away, June 16, 2022.

Lorene was born in Dickinson, N.D., on Sept. 27, 1926, a few minutes before her twin sister, Beverly. They were adopted and raised by George and Julia Lutz.

As a child she loved working on the farm with her father, the greatest influence on her life, and getting into a little mischief with her sister.

While attending Union College in Lincoln, Neb., Lorene met Keith Harper. They wed Sept. 1946, at her in-law's home in Baldwin, Wis. She was very close with her mother-in-law, Mary Harper. Lorene and Keith were married for over 60 years.

Lorene worked multiple jobs while supporting her husband through his Ph.D. and raising their daughter, Debrah. In 1964 they moved to Keene, Tex., where they

were later joined by extended family. Lorene had a wonderful sense of humor. She valued family, in all the forms it can take, and she was a positive and stabilizing force.

Lorene earned her Masters in Education from TCU. She taught fourth grade for over 25 years in Keene, and enjoyed teaching children of former students. She was a natural and made learning fun. She loved meeting new people and touched the lives of many in her community.

Lorene was preceded in death by her husband, Keith.

She is survived by her beloved daughter, Debrah and son-in-law David; three grandchildren and their families, Julie (Gene), Sheree (Daniel, Vivian and Thomas) and Craig (Carolyn, Joe and Cassius); and cherished nieces & nephews, Cheryl (Wes), Harlyn (Jerrilynn), Charles, Doreen (Chris), Angela (Bob), Linda and Twila.



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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**45th Homecoming Anniversary** for the Scenic Hills Seventh-day Adventist Church will be celebrated on Oct. 22,

2022. Join us as we celebrate at 11223 Bandera Rd., San Antonio, Tex. 78250. For more information visit [ScenicHills.org](http://ScenicHills.org).

### 20th Anniversary Celebration

at Joshua Crossroads Fellowship Seventh-day Adventist (Cowboy) Church 400 North Main, Joshua, Tex. Sabbath, Nov. 5, 2022. Concert Presenters: Seven Mile Road Quartet, Ysis España, Jack Fanselau. Guest Speakers: Barry Millet and Terry Darnall. All are welcome! Special invitation to former members. For more information call [817.219.1851](tel:817.219.1851) or [480.818.3486](tel:480.818.3486).

## Obituaries

**Harrison, Theresa**, born April 26, 1929, Perry, Okla.; died March 26, 2022, Harrah, Okla. Church membership: Summit

Ridge Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by her parents, John H. and Dorothy I. Harrison. Survivors: sister, Lasina (Harrison) Rilea and brother-in-law, Lester Rilea, of Apopka, Fla.; and a niece, Cheri (Rilea) Iverson of Florida.

**Miller, Jeanne Adele Pettis**, born Jan. 23, 1938, Topeka, Kan.; died March 26, 2022, Savannah, Tenn. Church membership: Clinton Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by parents, Louis and Florence Pettis, and brother, Gordon Pettis. Survivors: son, David Miller and daughter, Anita Miller, both of Hemet, Calif.; daughter, Holly Joers of Clinton, Ark.; six grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren, besides cousins, nieces and nephews.

## Submissions

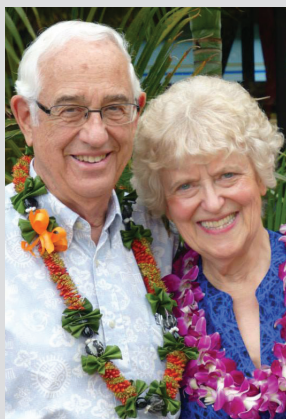
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**News and Articles:** Send local news for your church or school, along with high-resolution photos, to your local conference communication department listed on page 2.

If you are interested in writing for the *Record*, email [Record@swuc.org](mailto:Record@swuc.org).





**Raymond Wayne Elliston**, 84, went to sleep in Jesus on May 20, 2022. Born in Hereford, Tex., on July 30, 1937, he was the sixth child and only son of Raymond and Jewell Elliston. In his early years, Wayne enjoyed spending time with his maternal grandparents, G.A. and LaGrone of Amarillo, and often traveled to the surrounding communities with his grandfather on

pastoral visits.

Wayne attended elementary and middle school in Hereford, and then Southwestern Junior College in Keene, Tex., where he graduated from high school and began college courses. After moving to California, he married Joelle Riederer in 1970. Wayne brought the family back to Hereford a few years later, where he farmed the family land and taught at Tascosa High School in Amarillo. In 1977, the family moved to Lincoln, Neb., where he taught at Union College, then to Denver, Colo., in 1980. After his retirement, Wayne and Joelle moved to Amarillo, to be closer to his sisters.

From an early age, Wayne was a builder; he built custom drag racing cars as a teenager, installed custom

cabinetry, taught building trades at both the high school and college levels, built spec houses with students, coordinated aerospace transport projects and always had a project car (or two). As husband and father, he built strong relationships with loved ones, encouraging his son's own ability to create things with his hands, fostering his oldest daughter's love of horses and passing on woodworking skills to his youngest. He built relationships and community through various volunteer leadership positions in his church. Wayne was known for his hard work, humor, friendships, dedication and devotion to his wife, Joelle, and his role as patriarch of the Elliston family. His death leaves an unfillable gap, even as his family shares Wayne's belief that Jesus' second coming will make life new once more.

Wayne is survived by his wife of 52 years, Joelle Elliston; sister, Evelyn Fitzpatrick of Albuquerque, N.M.; daughters, Michelle (Richard) McMillen of Amity, Ore., and Kristine (Phillip) Lemons of Lincoln, Neb.; grandchildren, Brian McMillen, Amber Elliston Asikis and Micah Lemons; great-grandchildren, Levi and Callie Asikis; and multiple nieces and nephews. His son, Michael Wayne Elliston, preceded him in death.



*"Intelligent people do not fall in love, we scratch, claw, climb and cry ourselves into real love." – Dwight Blackwell, July 23, 2021*

**Dwight Blackwell** passed away on April 28, 2022 in Grandview, Tex., at 77 years old. Dwight was an intelligent man who loved his wife and family

abundantly. He was a man who never met a stranger and gained the respect and love from everyone he met. His love for God and his Christian walk were prominent and he always had an encouraging word for everyone.

He was married to the love of his life, Wanda Faye for almost 60 years. Together they had three daughters, three granddaughters and two great-granddaughters.

In his younger years he enjoyed sailing and camping. He was a strong pillar of a man who worked hard at every

job. When he was given a task, he would approach it as if it were his purpose in life to complete it above and beyond anyone's expectations. Later in life he cherished time spent on his property and he was happiest when surrounded by his family.

He was a member of the Grandview Seventh-day Adventist Church and considered them an extension of his family.

He is survived by his wife, Wanda Faye Blackwell; his daughters Sherri Blackwell, Kristi Hance (Newman) and Tammi DeLana (Robert); granddaughters, Jessicah Hillberry, Emily Avery (Zeik) and Amelia Christopher; great-granddaughters, LilyBelle Hillberry and Arizona Avery. He is also survived by his brother, Douglas; sister, Karan, several nieces, nephews, cousins and a multitude of friends.





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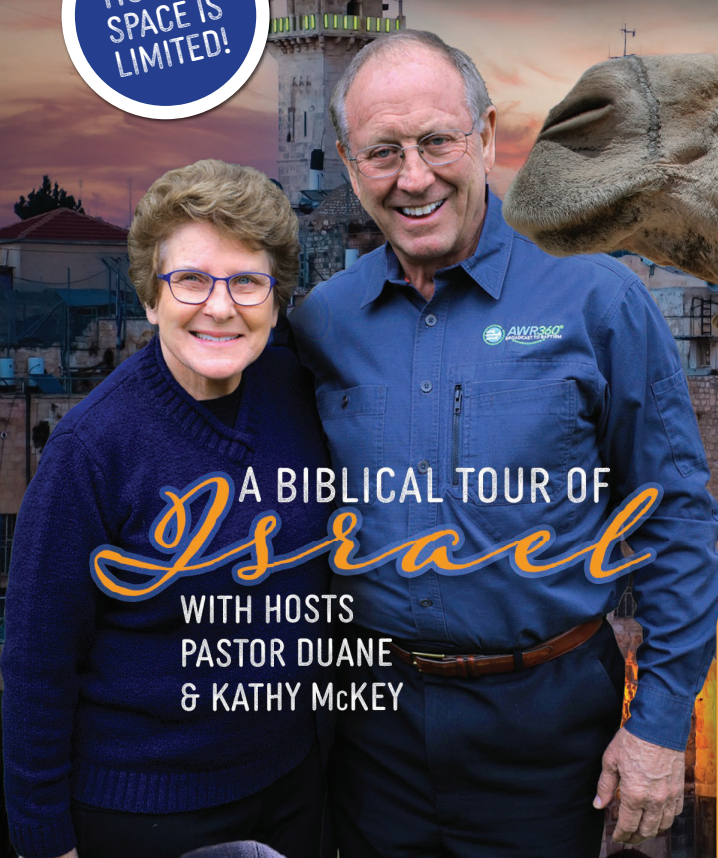
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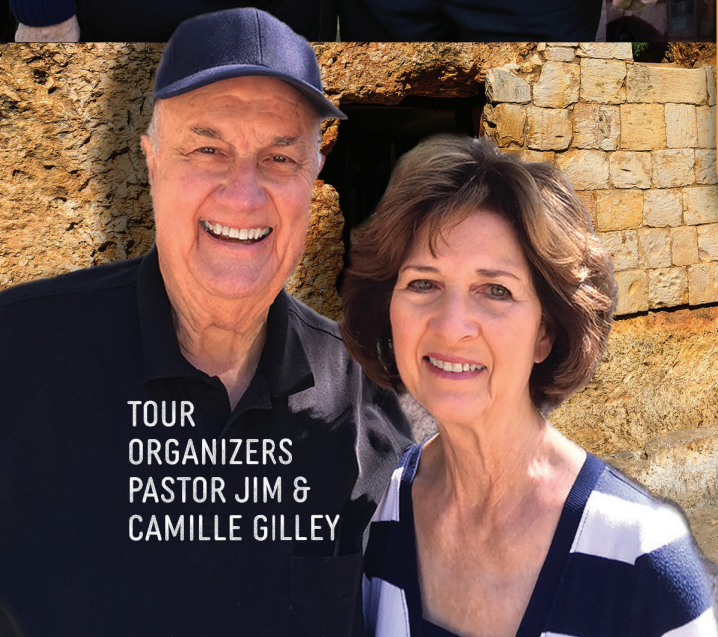
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