

Record

November | December 2022

- 4 A Gift to Receive,
A Gift to Share
- 7 Eating Healthy
During the Holidays
- 8 A Changed
Heart
- 13 Serving in
Christ's Name

Receiving the Greatest Gift
Salvation Through the Promised Savior

Receiving the Greatest Gift

Salvation Through the Promised Savior

Record

November | December 2022
Vol. 121, No. 06

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

EDITOR

Kristina P. Busch
kbusch@swuc.org

ASSISTANT EDITOR/CIRCULATION

Tammy G. Prieto
tprieto@swuc.org

DESIGNER

Rachel A. Ortiz
info@rortizdesign.com

ADVERTISING

Bradley Ecord
becord@swuc.org

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA

Frances Alcorn, news@arklac.org

OKLAHOMA

Wes Via, news@okla-adventist.org

SOUTHWEST REGION

Leslie Soupet, news@swrgc.org

TEXAS

Kenn Dixon, news@txsda.org

TEXICO

Deby Márquez, news@texico.org

SOUTHWESTERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

Tony Reyes, communication@swau.edu

Southwestern Union Conference

P.O. Box 4000
Burleson, TX, 76097
Phone: 817.295.0476
Email: Record@swuc.org

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.

Features	}	4	A Gift to Receive
		8	A Changed Heart
Columns	}	3	On the Record: The Greatest Gift
		6	AdventHealth: Caring for Our Communities
		7	Wholeness: Eating Healthy During the Holidays
		12	Education: 2023 Robotics Competition
		13	Ministries: Serving in Christ's Name
News	}	14	Southwestern Happenings
		15	Southwestern Union
		20	Southwestern Adventist University
		22	Arkansas-Louisiana Conference
		27	Oklahoma Conference
		32	Southwest Region Conference
		37	Texas Conference
42	Texico Conference		
Back Pages	}	47	Classified Ads
		47	Obituaries

Editor's Note

As the year comes to a close and we reflect on the birth of Christ, how can we better grasp this greatest of gifts? To know the Savior and accept His sacrifice is the ultimate reason for living. Isaiah 9:6 describes the gift like this: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." John 3:17 says, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."

When we introduce others to Jesus, do we describe Him as wonderful, a counselor, a Prince of Peace, the Savior? How can we better convey the message of hope and salvation so that others can embrace the greatest gift we have been given?


Kristina P. Busch

Cover Photo by Sam Covarrubias



The Greatest Gift

Nothing is more rewarding than receiving a good gift as a child. I remember the excitement of receiving gifts for my birthday and Christmas during childhood. I felt that there could be no better days in life than days that culture and community had set aside for receiving gifts. I reflect now upon those childhood gifts that I received with great anticipation and happiness; whatever happened to them? The candy and fruit have long been eaten, the toys and action figures have long been broken or missing and the clothes have been worn out and outgrown.

The greatest gift is not a thing nor food nor wear. The greatest gift is a gift that continues to give, even for eternity. The greatest gift is a person, and that person is Jesus Christ. The Old Testament prophet foretelling of this great gift stated, "For unto us a Child is born,

Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6 (NKJV).

Jesus Christ is this wonderful gift. He is fully God but gifted as a baby wrapped in humanity through birth, also making Him fully man. I am so glad

that through His rule of righteousness, we might have peace. For He is the Prince of Peace.

Not only is Jesus the greatest gift, but furthermore the greatest giver is God. As recorded in the gospels, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16 (NKJV). Paul, speaking of the gift and the giver, wrote, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23 (NKJV). Humanity through sin had fallen into a state of being lost without hope of ever being saved, bringing the consequence of death. Due to the great love of God, He gave the gift of salvation, life, peace and hope in the person of Jesus Christ.

The greatest gift is Jesus Christ, the greatest giver is God, and this gift was given from the beginning and realized when Jesus Christ gave His life as a ransom for many.

The automatic response to the gift of Jesus Christ is thanksgiving. Paul exclaims, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" 2 Corinthians 9:15 (NKJV). I am so thankful and grateful to

Jesus. He changed my heart and my direction. He saved my life, even providing eternal life. I cannot keep it to myself. I must share it with others. I must share it with the whole world. I am too appreciative of Jesus Christ for giving himself for me to keep this good news to myself. I feel like the author of the hymn "When I Think of the Goodness of Jesus" who wrote, "When I think of the goodness of Jesus, And what He's done for me, My soul cries out Hallelujah, I thank God for saving me." [®]

*By Stephen E. Brooks
Executive Secretary*



A Gift to Receive, A GIFT TO SHARE



What do you want for Christmas this year? For some, it is very simple; a new book, a new pair of shoes, a new dress. For others it is much more lavish—a new power tool, a new kitchen appliance or the latest flatscreen TV. For still others, it might not be something material but the wish that you can be with your family on Christmas. What do you want for Christmas this year?

The idea of gift giving goes back to the Magi bringing three gifts to Jesus in Bethlehem. Since then, millions of gifts have been given to loved ones at this time of year. Hours are spent thinking of the perfect gift for those you care about. As I think back to my childhood, some of the gifts that meant the most to my mom were gifts that my brother and I had made by hand either at home or at school. She told us later that no amount of money could buy a gift that made her as happy as that ceramic figurine or construction paper drawing. Sometimes the gifts we receive are very unexpected.

Author James Dobson relates a story of Stella Thornhope who was spending her first Christmas alone. Her husband had died just a few months prior as a result of a long, drawn out illness. Now, a few days before Christmas, she sat looking out at a storm that was promising to snow her and her neighbors in. She was stuck and felt terribly alone.

As she continued to sit and look out her window, she noticed a young man carrying a box come up the sidewalk and ring her doorbell. "Mrs. Thornhope?" She nodded. He said, "Would you sign here for this delivery?" As she signed the paper she asked, "What exactly is in the box?"

The young man laughed and opened the flap. Inside the box was a little puppy. He put the box down on the floor and picked up the squirming puppy. "This is for you, ma'am.", he explained. "He is six weeks old and completely housebroken."

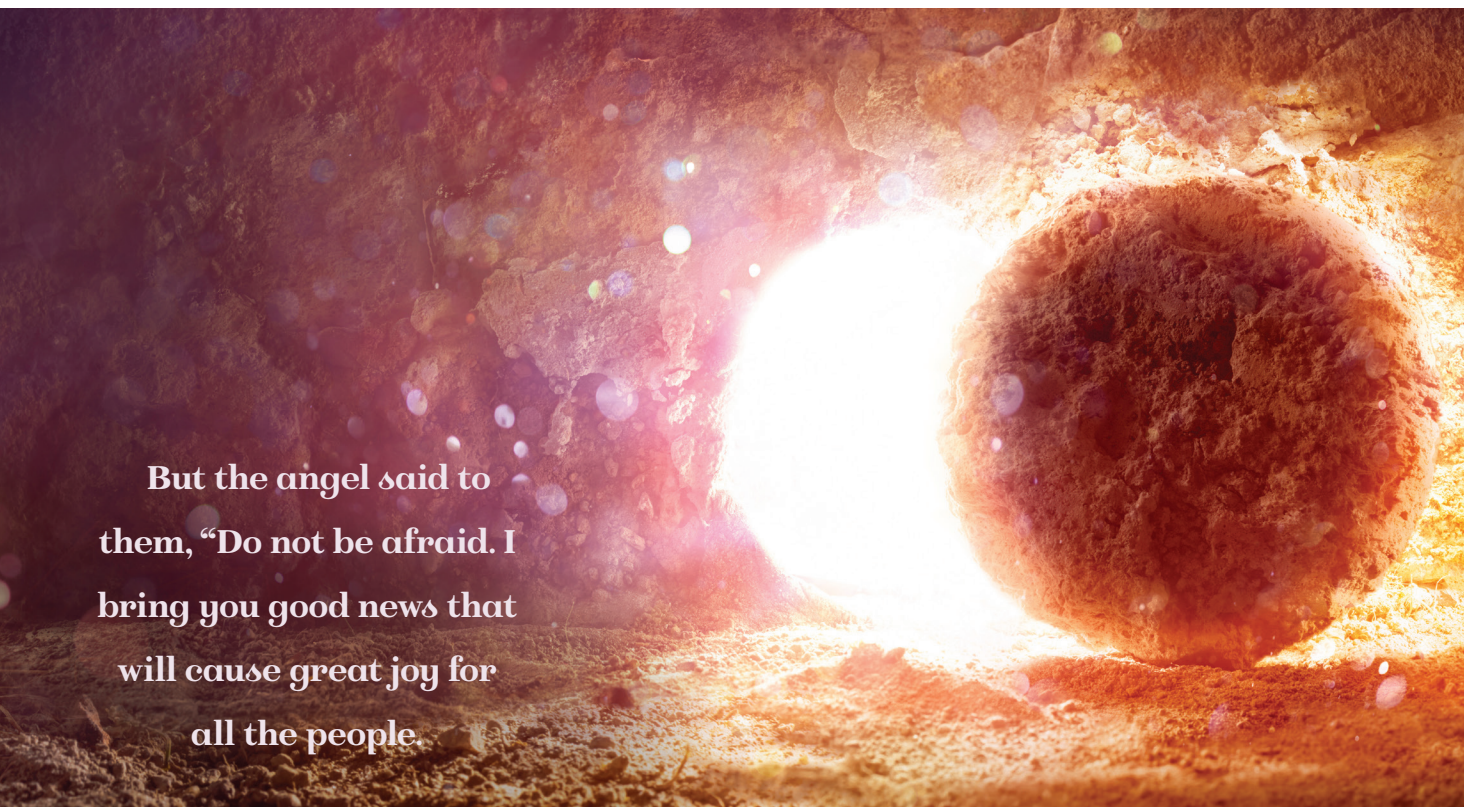
"Who sent this?," a surprised Stella asked. The young man sat the puppy

down and handed her an envelope. "It's all explained in this envelope, ma'am. The dog was bought last July while its mother was still pregnant. It was meant as a Christmas gift for you."

Stella was flabbergasted. "You didn't answer my question. Who sent this?" As the young man turned to leave, he said, "Your husband, ma'am. Merry Christmas."

"My husband?" She opened up the envelope, took out the letter and looked at the date at the top. Her husband had written the letter three weeks before he died. He had left it with the kennel owners to be delivered with the puppy as his last Christmas gift to her. The letter was full of love, encouragement, admonishments to stay strong and the longing to see her again. He wrote, "I have given you this animal to keep you company in my absence."

Stella wiped tears from her eyes as she read. She put the letter down, leaned over and pulled the puppy up on her lap and hugged him tightly.



But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

Luke 2:10-12


Sometimes, the unexpected gifts are the best. As we celebrate this Advent season, we are reminded of the greatest gift that could ever be given to mankind: Immanuel, “God with Us.” While His coming was very much anticipated, the way the gift came was unexpected.

By the time of His birth, it was anticipated that Jesus would come as a

conquering king to overthrow the Romans. It was expected that His reign would surpass in glory even the splendor of David and Solomon’s kingdom. The hopes for this divine gift, promised back in the Garden of Eden, were enormous by the first century. But when the Gift finally arrived, it was so unexpected that, save for a few shepherds, Magi, Anna and Simeon, He was not received (John 1:11).

This gift expected to be born of the highest royal pedigree instead was born to a teenage girl and her betrothed husband from Nazareth. The gift was expected to be born in a palace surrounded by the highest levels of religious and secular society, but instead was born in a cave surrounded by ordinary animals. This gift, which was expected to be laid in a gilded crib and whose needs would be met by a plethora of servants, instead was laid in a stone feeding trough for and whose need was met by His young, inexperienced mother. The gift was expected

to grow up having the best teachers and best curriculum offered but instead learned at the feet of His mother and beside Joseph in the carpenter’s shop. And it was this gift who gave His life on the cross, was raised from the dead and who is coming back soon to take those who accept Him to spend eternity with Him.

So, in the midst of all the gift giving that goes on this time of the year, let us never forget the divine gift, Immanuel, who fulfilled the promise made millennia ago and whose promises again to take us home one day soon. May we, until that day, receive the gift ourselves and share it with everyone we meet. 

By Tom Grove. Grove is the Associate Director for Ministry and Evangelism at the Texas Conference.

Caring for Our Communities

By Ama Akoto-Boateng, AdventHealth Communications Specialist



Eighteen years ago, Tammy Rodriguez set out on a mission to become a cardiology nurse—a career interest sparked by the loss of her grandmother during a routine heart procedure. At the time, she questioned what might have gone wrong and why she received little empathy from the health care providers at the facility where her grandmother was treated. By entering the nursing profession, she hoped to learn more. Now, as chief nursing officer (CNO) for AdventHealth Central Texas, Rodriguez says her work is not only a personal mission, but also a professional calling.

"I connect the work I do to my larger community," she said. "I have been inspired by my mother who was a nurse. I saw how nursing fulfilled her, made her compassionate and enabled her to exceed her own expectations in life. As a woman of faith, I feel nursing is one of the truest ways to live, and I'm proud of how the professional nursing practice is alive and well in our organization."

Rodriguez says seeing her Hispanic culture and heritage in action has had a strong influence on who she is today, adding that her husband and children have been a great source of inspiration



throughout her career journey. As a Mexican-American, Rodriguez fondly recalls memories of her grandmother advocating for the Hispanic community, the largest ethnic minority in the United States and in San Antonio, Texas, where Rodriguez spent a great amount of time during her formative years.

Her grandmother treated everyone in their San Antonio neighborhood like family and actively promoted inclusion and social justice for Hispanic-Americans. Recalling these experiences, Rodriguez said her grandmother's actions and example left a lasting impression.

"For my grandmother, family wasn't only someone related by blood," Rodriguez said. "We just took care of each other." Rodriguez says seeing the world through her grandmother's eyes has had a large influence on how she fosters relationships with her team and builds connections with patients and their families. She believes connecting with people is at the core of her calling.

"People need to feel connected to feel safe," she said. "And I think that applies to every level of nursing, from a new nurse to a nurse leader. Although I felt educated and ready to take on the

world as a new nurse, keeping close connections with my colleagues has helped me throughout my journey."

Rodriguez also believes inclusion should be an all-encompassing priority where every person is valued for their uniqueness in culture and perspectives. "Our team members and the patients who come to our hospitals come from different parts of the country and the world," she said. "I believe that by broadening my cultural horizons, I have been able to relate better with them. Building connections isn't just successful. It's sustainable."

Looking back, Rodriguez hadn't imagined herself as a leader. As she progressed along her career path, her own leader encouraged her to play a more active role in affecting change by honing her leadership skills.

She continues to nurture others to become leaders and feels a great sense of pride. "Nurturing leaders is close to my heart because I didn't imagine myself as a leader," Rodriguez said. "I think that sometimes we just need to pause and listen, because people might see in us what we might not see in ourselves." **R**

How to Eat Healthy During the Holidays

By AdventHealth

'Tis the season of hope, joy, generosity and, sometimes, overindulgence. Delicious treats are everywhere and can be tough to resist when they're shared by coworkers, family and friends. If we're not careful (or simply distracted by the festivities) we can come dangerously close to consuming our entire daily caloric needs in one sitting.

Committing to a healthy eating strategy will help you avoid temptation at this season's parties and family gatherings. It's also a great way to ensure you start the new year feeling your best. Here are a few dietitian-approved tips for staying on track in the coming weeks:



Don't arrive on an empty stomach. Try not to show up to a holiday meal or party with an empty stomach. Skipping meals typically leads to eating more than if you had eaten something earlier in the day.



Check out your options. You're more likely to eat less when you look over all your options first. So scout out the buffet table before loading up your plate.



Hang out with someone who eats slowly. Find someone who you know takes longer to finish their meals and follow their pace. Eating slowly makes it easier to eat less and still feel satisfied.



Move away from food!

If you linger around the buffet or dinner table, chances are you'll continue to nibble. Aim to be more than an arms length away from the food whenever you aren't eating.



It's okay to enjoy your favorite holiday treat. Better yet, share the holiday spirit by splitting your favorite treat with someone else.

It's exciting to celebrate the holidays with food, fun and those you love, but taking a little time beforehand to focus on your self-control and health goals will go a long way toward keeping over-eating impulses at bay. So enjoy the amazing flavors of the season (in moderation). [®]



The Greatest Gift



Yedenia Lemes never expected to find God during a quick browse on social media. With a family history in Cuban Santería, a religion rooted in spiritualism and polytheistic worship, Lemes knew nothing about God or Christianity. It was the last thing on her mind when she opened Facebook that fateful day. Yet, she stumbled upon a video that would transform her life in just ten days.

An evangelical preacher pointed her finger at the camera in a direct manner. The preacher spoke candidly, imploring

A Changed Heart

A LIFE TRANSFORMED

viewers to give up all wrongdoing and to turn to God. It grabbed Lemes' attention immediately. "I like it when people talk to me directly," said Lemes. "When they say, 'This is wrong. This is right.' I think that's why God used her."

For the next ten days, Lemes watched a video sermon at every free moment, including during her 200-mile daily commute in New Mexico. Not only did the messages deeply impact Lemes on a spiritual level, but Lemes also felt convicted to make immediate life changes. For example, she decided to give up idolatry and to leave a relationship that did not honor God. Most importantly, she gave her heart to Christ. "What made me make that decision, always, was God," she said. "For me, I do not think I would do it on my own. It was God's mercy."

This all took place before Lemes had ever met a Christian. Now, Lemes just needed to find a church. This was no easy task, as Lemes knew almost no one in Albuquerque. Most of her friends and family lived in Cuba and practiced Santería. "I used to be considered a good person by my friends," said Lemes. "But, there were many things, including idolatry and more, that I followed."

AN INHERITED TRADITION

From birth, Lemes' life revolved around spiritualism. All of the women in her family spoke with spirits. One day, a spirit sent a warning to Lemes' mother, then pregnant. The warning said that Lemes would be born with severe disability—unable to speak or even function. If the family worshiped this



spirit, it promised to protect the baby.

Because of this, Lemes had to carry a small idol of that spirit—a figure of a man in black clothes. The spirit cast a dark shadow over her life. At Christmas, they dressed in black and sacrificed a specifically cared for pig. Also, the spirit did not allow Lemes to celebrate a quinceañera. Instead, the family planned a party in the spirit's honor.

"My family comes from really bad idolatry," said Lemes. "Satanic stuff. I was afraid. I knew that many things

could happen to me, so I needed support at that time." In desperate need of a church family, Lemes tried to recall anyone who might help her find a congregation. Only one person came to mind: an old friend from Cuba. This person had also abandoned a life of idol worship. As it happens, the friend now worshiped at a Seventh-day Adventist Church.

"My friend told me that I had to buy a Bible and she recommended that I buy the book *Steps to Christ*," said Lemes.

"I asked her, 'Why are you in this congregation?' She explained it to me like this, 'I have studied and this is the one religion that has the truth from the Bible.' So I went online and searched for a Seventh-day Adventist Church."

A CHURCH HOME

One week after accepting Jesus, Lemes walked into the lobby of the Albuquerque North Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church for the first time. The greeter wrapped Lemes into a big hug

“I WOULD NEVER HAVE THE WORDS TO DESCRIBE WHAT JESUS DID FOR ME,” SHE SAID. “IT’S SOMETHING THAT I CAN FEEL, BUT THERE ARE NO WORDS I CAN SAY THAT WILL COVER ALL OF THOSE FEELINGS.”



and helped her find a seat in Sabbath School. They were talking about the Sabbath that morning.

“I had just come from work,” said Lemes. “I said to myself, ‘Why is that guy talking about the Sabbath? Is it bad to work on the Sabbath? Well, God, let’s see how we can fix this.’” From then on, Lemes no longer worked on Sabbath. She wanted to be baptized as soon as possible, but the pastor encouraged her to take Bible studies first. That day, they studied one lesson. That week, Lemes finished the entire set of Bible-study lessons on her own.

On March 7, 2020, Lemes was baptized. “I would never have the words to describe what Jesus did for me,” she said. “It’s something that I can feel, but there are no words I can say that will cover all of those feelings.”

Now, Lemes wants to help others learn about God’s transforming power. First, she reached out to her mother,

who also lives in Albuquerque. With much prayer and study, Lemes’ mother also accepted Jesus. She was baptized five months after Lemes.

In addition, Lemes recently visited Cuba to witness to her extended family. “I have to do something for my family,” she said. “I cry for my family every single day. I know God will take care of it, but He won’t force anyone.”

Upon her return from Cuba, the North Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church nominated Lemes to lead out in the evangelistic department at church. “I decided, God, if you are calling me, then I will do it,” she said. “God doesn’t care what you know, or if you know how to speak well. He chooses people who really want to work for Him. That’s what I’m learning to understand.”

As Lemes continues to grow in her spiritual journey, she hopes to follow God’s call to be a missionary, both inside and outside of the church.

“Matthew 28:19-20 really tells us what we need to be doing as Christians,” said Lemes. “But, you must always remember what Jesus did for you. If we really appreciate that, we don’t care if we are tired. We just go ahead and do what Matthew 28 tells us to do.”

Matthew 28:19-20 says, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” ^R

By Makala James, freelance writer based in Granbury, Texas. Photos by Sam Covarrubias, freelance photographer based in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Yudenia Lemes is a member of Albuquerque North Valley Spanish Church in the Texico Conference.

2023 Robotics Competition

By Buford Griffith, III, Southwest Region Conference Education Superintendent



Many people are familiar with the term STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). STEM, which was developed in the early 2000s, is an education and career pathway that emphasizes the importance of these areas to increasing participation and job growth in related careers.

Every year, hundreds of thousands of students ages 4-18 from more than 110 countries come together to tackle tough, real-world problems through FIRST®, a global community that helps young people discover their passions for STEM through exciting, hands-on robotics-based challenges. Because many of these challenge competitions take place on Sabbath, Adventist Robotics was founded so that Adventist Christian schools from across the North American Division could participate in this exciting and engaging program.

In March, the Southwest Region Conference hosted one of the regional competitions at Lone Star Camp in Athens, Texas. Three Southwestern Union schools, Bentonville Seventh-day Adventist School, Excel Adventist Academy and North Dallas Adventist Academy advanced to the national



Adventist Robotics competition that was held in May at Forest Lake Academy in Apopka, Florida.

On March 17-19, 2023, the Southwest Region Conference will once again host one of the regional Adventist Robotics competitions at Lone Star Camp. We are expecting 15 to 20 teams at next year's competition. The Southwest Region competition is the only regional competition that offers an entire week-end of spiritual emphasis, as well as a

friendly robotic competition using the FIRST Legos Challenge platform and we invite Adventist schools to participate.

If your school would like to participate in this year's competition or you would like to volunteer, contact Southwest Region Education Superintendent and Tournament Director Buford Griffith, III, at BGriffith@swrgc.org or 214.943.4491. 

Serving Communities in Christ's Name

By Bo Gendke, Southeastern Union and Texas Conference Adventist Community Services Director

I have been asked many times, what is Adventist Community Services (ACS)? I have heard many answers given, even the corporate line: the official community outreach ministry of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the North American Division. But the best answer I have come across was from a predecessor of ours, whom our headquarters facility is named after. George Schram said that, "If we take care of the basic needs of people, God will pour out His blessings. Isaiah 58 is the basic message for Christian service."

Throughout the Southwestern Union, we are blessed with amazing volunteers that believe in this calling. Using ACS's holistic approach allows us to minister in such a way as to proclaim the Gospel and demonstrate the love of God to people in need. We're inspired by the amazing stories that take place across the territory.

My first day on the job was taking the first of three truckloads of supplies to Louisiana after Hurricane Ida in 2021. Two of our conferences, Arkansas-Louisiana and Southwest Region, were out there working hard to help these communities get back on their feet. From cleaning up debris and distributing clothes, blankets and electric heaters, their efforts focused on the lower part of Louisiana for months, only to have the northern area of Arkansas get hit with tornadoes that ravaged 6 states a few months later. The efforts of the volunteers throughout our union are tireless as our territory is often affected by natural disasters like hurricanes, tornadoes and wildfires.

A story that really embodies our work at ACS is the story of the lone shoe. The Conroe Cougar Pathfinder club was preparing donated items to take to Mexico. There, they would give gifts and donations to orphanages, schools




and a center for the handicapped. As they were loading up supplies they found a lone shoe. Thinking it just got misplaced they loaded it in a box believing they would find its mate at the next stop. But after that stop, they still couldn't find its mate.

Why were we still taking the lone shoe? It seemed pointless. At the final stop, after devotional and prayer, the group began to hand out the gifts and donations when a man named Elias came in. Elias was a shoemaker by trade and he had lost a leg in an accident. He needed a new shoe badly. Would we have one in the right size and for the right foot? As the lone shoe was placed on his foot, an overwhelming feeling

came over all. God had a point and a purpose for that shoe all along.

When we do God's work, we see God's true character and love for us. Serving others is a privilege. May we live to serve and love others as God serves and loves us.

Interested in getting involved? Join us as we share encouragement and ideas for church leaders to develop community outreach ministries at the Southwestern Union Adventist Community Services Convention on February 16-18, 2023 at Lone Star Camp in Athens, Texas (see page 17). Visit SouthwesternAdventist.org for information. 

NOVEMBER

4-6

OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE

Forward On Our Knees
Prayer Retreat
Wewoka Woods Adventist Center
OKAdventist.org

6

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Children and Women's Ministries
Leaders Training and Lunch
Reservations required.
SYanez@swuc.org

11-12

TEXICO CONFERENCE

Texico Youth Rally
El Paso Adventist Junior Academy
EChavez@texico.org

12

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Spanish Children's Ministries Training
Longview Spanish Seventh-day
Adventist Church
SCano@swuc.org

14

TEXAS CONFERENCE

Together As One Constituency
Town Hall Meeting
Tyler Seventh-day Adventist Church
TexasAdventist.org

15

TEXAS CONFERENCE

Together As One Constituency
Town Hall Meeting
Richardson Seventh-day
Adventist Church
TexasAdventist.org

17

TEXAS CONFERENCE

Together As One Constituency
Town Hall Meeting
Burleson Seventh-day
Adventist Church
TexasAdventist.org

DECEMBER

3

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

English and Spanish Children's
Ministries Training
Odessa Seventh-day
Adventist Church
SCano@swuc.org

5

TEXAS CONFERENCE

Together As One Constituency
Town Hall Meeting
Houston Spanish Spring Branch
Seventh-day Adventist Church
TexasAdventist.org

6

TEXAS CONFERENCE

Together As One Constituency
Town Hall Meeting
McAllen Valley Central Spanish
Seventh-day Adventist Church
TexasAdventist.org

9

TEXAS CONFERENCE

East Texas Convocation
Tyler Seventh-day Adventist
Church and Tyler Spanish
Seventh-day Adventist Church
TexasAdventist.org

12

TEXAS CONFERENCE

Together As One Constituency
Town Hall Meeting
San Antonio Scenic Hills Seventh-
day Adventist Church
TexasAdventist.org

13

TEXAS CONFERENCE

Together As One Constituency
Town Hall Meeting
Austin Spanish First Seventh-
day Adventist Church
TexasAdventist.org

JANUARY

9-11

ARKANSAS-LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

Minister's Meeting
Arkansas-Louisiana
Conference Office
Shreveport, La.
FAlcorn@arklac.org

20-21

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Fanning the Flames Evangelism
Rally and Training
El Paso, Tex.
SouthwesternAdventist.org

27-28

SOUTHWESTERN UNION

Fanning the Flames Evangelism
Rally and Training
New Orleans, La.
SouthwesternAdventist.org



Bringing Hope and Encouragement to Uvalde



UVALDE, TEX. – The month of May was a tragic one for the community of Uvalde, Tex. Several organizations were looking for ways to help them during that terrible time. Vicente Osorio, Eagle Pass Seventh-day Adventist Church pastor, and Sarai Sanchez, Fort Worth First Church member, contacted me with a fantastic plan: a Vacation Bible School (VBS) program for the kids! We decided that it was very important to minister to the parents too. We planned to have a missionary group of about 30 participants, but we were short on time and needed supplies, decorations, a cook, transportation, a place to stay and the actual missionaries!

God provided all of it! We were able to rent the civic center from Sunday to Friday. The Austin First Seventh-day Adventist Church donated the stage decorations while the Southwestern Union Adventist Community Services and ministerial departments provided funds for lodging and the evangelism department donated 150 bibles! We also received donations from individuals that provided for snacks for the kids and their parents.

On July 29, Omar Sanchez drove a U-Haul truck with the decorations and supplies from Burleson to Uvalde, Tex. On Sunday, Eusebio Lima and his daughter Eliza Lima from Henderson, Tex., along with Michelle and Ema Quiej made a one-day trip to help with decorations. Osorio, his wife Isela, Herberth Quintero, Ron Carlson, Raquel

Sosa, Arlene Ryan, and the Porras family did a fantastic job setting up registration booths and decorated all the VBS stations. Soledad Prieto and I did the grocery shopping in San Antonio on our way to Uvalde. I want to recognize Eliza Lima, Insly Osoria and Jair Osorio. These teens volunteered along with their pastoral parents and helped sing with the kids, serving as group leaders and bathroom runners. They also helped decorate posters to promote the VBS in the community.

The VBS program was presented every day from Monday to Friday at 5 p.m. Our registration and welcome team was the best! Christopher Bradford and Sophia Llewellyn Bradford from San Antonio and Krystal Berrios from Fort Worth welcomed each child. After the opening program each day, Sarai Prieto instructed the groups to visit the different stations. Hugo Cisneros, from San Marcos, played with the kids at the games station and Maricela Enright, from Keene, served delicious snacks! Akin and Lola Kilanko from Uvalde shared the Bible stories in a very creative way, while Marlene Montalvo from Richardson and Nadine Kottonya from Oakwood University were busy doing crafts with kids of all ages. I had the privilege to pray and share praying activities at the prayer station with Javier Aguilera from New York. David Asillo and Felicia Asillo, also from New York, assisted in different areas with a great disposition.

One of my favorite moments was watching children ministering to other children. Kayla and Karen Kilanko, Kian and Elian Berrios, Hanah and Abigail Barrios were part of the children that made up the praise team, teaching the songs to all the participants. We have very talented kids in our territory!!

Tony Anobile, Southwestern Union vice president for ministries and pastors, Vicente Osorio and Eusebio Lima shared messages of faith and hope in Christ with the parents during the VBS meetings. Liz Barrios, counselor from Laredo, also presented important and practical seminars to parents.

We had 81 kids and 40 adults visit our VBS! On Friday, we had a special celebration where each child received a VBS t-shirt and a “My Place with Jesus” Bible. We had games, food and a visit from “Canines 4 Christ.”

We want to thank the Texas Conference and Southwestern Union leaders, as well as other volunteers who came out for one-day visits and helped serve food and assist as needed. I praise God for the wonderful Adventist Church family—the church members, pastors, administrators and leaders that worked together to share the love of Jesus to a suffering community. I praise God for the work of the Holy Spirit, touching little hearts, guiding parents and bringing hope to the Uvalde community.

*By Sonia Cano
Children’s Ministries and
Sabbath School Director*

Texico Conference Holds 42nd Regular Constituency Session

ALBUQUERQUE – The Texico Conference held its 42nd Regular Constituency Session on Sunday, Sep. 18, 2022, at the Albuquerque Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church in Albuquerque, N.M., where delegates met to elect officers for the 2022-2027 quinquennial term. The registration process for this constituency session was developed with a sensitivity to concerns related to the on-going issues of COVID-19; therefore, there was no on-site registration. In attendance were 201 regular delegates and delegates-at-large. The following were elected to serve for the next five years: Lee-Roy Chacon, president; Phil Robertson, executive secretary/treasurer; Michael Jon Cookenmaster, Ed.D., superintendent of education; Antonio Cano, ministerial director; Eric Chavez, youth, young adults and club ministries director.

Upon being reelected as president, Chacon shared comments with the delegates: “Thank you for your confidence. It is always an honor and pleasure to serve the Lord,” said Chacon.

Prior to the opening of the session, the Organizing Committee met to nominate the Nominating Committee and the Constitution & Bylaws Commit-

tee to present to the delegates for their approval once the Constituency Meeting was called to order. The morning began with a devotional message from Southwestern Union President Carlos Craig, who challenged the delegates to pause and ask themselves, “What are we doing here?” based on Acts 1:7. Craig encouraged attendees to not let fear, trepidations and agendas keep them from doing the will of God. “Handle the business at hand. Represent the Lord, and the Lord only in all that you do. We must make it clear that we don’t represent each other, churches, ethnic groups or cultures, we represent the Lord in everything that we do, and He holds us responsible for it.”

Delegates voted to accept the El Paso West Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church and Santa Fe Airport Spanish Church into the sisterhood of churches officially changing their status from that of a company to a church. In addition, the Santa Fe Rabbit Road and Rancho Viejo Churches merged to become the Advent Life Seventh-day Adventist Church and the San Angelo English and Spanish churches merged to become the Advent Hope Bilingual Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Video reports from the administration and departments highlighted departmental ministry activities and evangelistic efforts that took place throughout the Texico Conference over the past four years.

Despite the financial challenges throughout the country, Treasurer Phil Robertson reported that the Texico Conference remained in steady and healthy financial condition over the past five years. Robertson reported that the Conference’s working capital increased to 108% of the amount recommended by the North American Division (NAD) and General Conference policies.

Michael Merrifield, General Conference Auditing Service (GCAS) regional manager, presented the auditor’s report, highlighting the excellent work done by the treasury that resulted in a very positive audit opinion. The Texico Conference & Association received an Unmodified Opinion for 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 which is the highest opinion that an organization can receive.

Delegates voted to accept changes to the Constitution & Bylaws which included the adjustment that the Texico Conference Constituency Sessions be convened every five years changing the term of service from a quadrennial to a quinquennial term.

Southwestern Union Vice President for Ministries Tony Anobile stated that the presence of the Holy Spirit was felt throughout the day and offered a special prayer of dedication for the officers, the departmental directors, the new executive committee, and for every member of the Texico Conference.

*By Debby Márquez
Texico Conference
Communication Director*

From left: Eric Chavez, Youth, Young Adults and Club Ministries; Lee-Roy Chacon, President; Phil Robertson, Executive Secretary/Treasurer; Antonio Cano, Ministerial. Not pictured: Michael Jon Cookenmaster, Education Superintendent.



BRIGHTEN THEIR CORNER

SOUTHWESTERN UNION ADVENTIST COMMUNITY SERVICES CONVENTION

Encouragement and ideas for church leaders to develop community outreach ministries.

FEB. 16-18, 2023

LONE STAR CAMP | ATHENS, TX

EARLY BIRD | DEC 1-JAN 5 | \$100

REGULAR | JAN 6-JAN 26 | \$125

LATE | JAN 27-FEB 9 | \$150

SOUTHWESTERNADVENTIST.ORG



Seventh-day
Adventist Church
SOUTHWESTERN UNION

FANNING THE FLAMES OF EVANGELISM

*EVANGELISM, PERSONAL MINISTRIES,
AND WITNESSING RALLY & TRAINING*

SAVE THE DATE!

**JANUARY 20-21
IN EL PASO**

**JANUARY 27 - 28
IN NEW ORLEANS**

SOUTHWESTERNADVENTIST.ORG | 817.295.0476



Seventh-day
Adventist Church
SOUTHWESTERN UNION

2022 Southwestern Union Leadership Camp Invests in Youth

ATHENS, TEX. – Every year, the Southwestern Union hosts a leadership camp for the academies in our territory. This year was the first in-person camp held since 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of Leadership Camp is to help our student leaders become more efficient leaders on their own respective campuses. It is sponsored by the Southwestern Union education and youth and young adult departments.

This year, the theme was “Identify, Equip, Release.” We wanted the students to identify themselves as followers of Jesus and, at the same time, as leaders on their own campus. We wanted to equip them with some of the tools needed to be Christian leaders and then to release them to lead others and share Jesus on their campus and throughout their lives.

We had close to 200 people present

including both students and sponsors, representing 11 academies at Lone Star Ranch in Athens, Tex., on Sept. 15-18. The programming was planned and led by Helvis Moody, Southwestern Union director of youth and young adults.

Student Association officers, led by Christian Tarbox, and spiritual life and development officers, led by Kyle Barrow, from Southwestern Adventist University led out in breakout sessions and were also some of the worship speakers. These Southwestern students were very engaging and were much appreciated by the academy students.

Other speakers included Helvis Moody, Carl Ming, Southwest Region Conference youth director, and Justin Yang, Texas Conference young adult ministries director. They all gave us a clearer picture of Jesus and how He will make us better leaders for Him if we al-

low Him to.

When the students were not in meetings, they had the opportunity to participate in recreational opportunities including basketball, volleyball, swimming, canoeing and horseback riding.

Every school should be proud of their student leaders for how they represented their school! The overall tone of the weekend was very spiritual and positive. Music, skits and dramatic monologues, presented by the students, made us feel the presence of Jesus. The food and fellowship were great and everyone left better equipped and ready to share Jesus with their classmates. We look forward to next year’s Leadership Camp and investing in the future youth leaders of our academies.

*By Mike Furr
Director of Secondary Education*



SAVE THE DATE
MARCH 10-12 | 2023
LONE STAR CAMP

 Seventh-day
Adventist Church
SOUTHWESTERN UNION

REGISTRATION OPENS
DEC. 5 | 2022

SEEK & FIND

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES TRAINING RETREAT



Save the Date

MAY 19-21, 2023
Embassy Suites, San Marcos, Texas
More information to follow soon.

THE SOUTHWESTERN UNION
WOMEN'S MINISTRIES
PRESENTS

Brave & Bold

Facing my Fears

SPIRITUAL WELFARE
Women's Retreat





The Gift of Grace

KEENE, TEX. – Who in your life gives the best gifts? Think about your parents, grandparents, best friend or spouse. Do you have a person in mind who knows exactly the right gift for every occasion? I have a friend who knows how to give gifts that are meaningful and beautiful. She is an expert at selecting, wrapping and presenting the perfect gift. Each time I receive a gift from her, regardless of what it is, I feel loved.

This time of year provides an opportunity to reflect on the greatest gift given to mankind. God knew that the world needed a savior, and He knew that this gift would have to be delivered in a specific way. The gift of Jesus Christ, born into this world in the humblest of circumstances, for the purpose of our salvation, full of grace, is the greatest love story ever told. A love story where the recipient of this great gift is each one of us!

“The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth... Out of His fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given.” John 1:14, 16.

The gift of grace arrived when Jesus Christ was born, but His purpose on this earth would not be complete until He made the sacrifice of His life on our behalf. The death of Jesus demonstrated the depth of His love and served as the fulfillment of a promise that gives us access to eternal life. What do we have to do? Simply accept the gift.

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.” Romans 5:1, 2.

The truth is, the greatest gift is nei-

ther one we can ever earn, nor one we deserve, it is the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Grasping the magnitude of this gift changes how I want to live.

If God loved me enough to send Jesus Christ in human form to sacrifice His life to cover my sins, then what choice do I have other than to extend the grace of God’s love to anyone in my path? This is not an easy task, because to truly extend grace, I must also admit that I have a need for grace to be extended to me. This puts me in a vulnerable position. I want to protect myself, and it doesn’t feel powerful to need grace. However, when I understand that my justification is through faith, then I can boast, not in myself, but in the glory of God who is the Giver of the gift of grace. A gift wrapped and presented perfectly for each of us.

By Ana Patterson, President

Carlos Charnichart Joins Southwestern Adventist University

KEENE, TEX. – Southwestern Adventist University welcomes Carlos Charnichart, D.B.A., as vice president for financial administration and chief financial officer. He will be responsible for the financial position of the University, budgeting, financial reporting to higher institutions and the government and he will oversee the University’s operational departments.

Charnichart has an extensive background in the financial field. Previous to coming to Southwestern Adventist University, he worked almost five years for the Pennsylvania Conference as conference treasurer. Tamyra Horst, communication director for the Pennsylvania Conference, wrote on their website, “A heart for mission, evangelism and education, he not only leaves the conference in a strong financial place, but helped to grow a stronger Hispanic ministries program, made huge impacts in education, created publishing ministries and has been supportive of the various departments and ministries of our conference.”

Before joining the Pennsylvania Conference team, Charnichart served the Hope Channel as their accountant. Prior to this, he was the treasurer of HHES at the Review and Herald Publishing

Association. Charnichart not only has strong accounting experience, but he also owned his own business and was a manager and sales and marketing executive. He significantly expanded sales for several companies in the Inter-American Division as well as his own company that he grew into a successful enterprise before moving to the United States.

Charnichart has taught as an adjunct professor at Washington Adventist University and served as the dean for the School of Accounting and Business Administration at University of Navojoa, an institution of the Northern Mexican Union, in Navojoa, Sonora, Mexico. There, Charnichart earned his bachelor’s degree, master’s degree and doctorate in business administration.

“Carlos Charnichart, D.B.A., joins our administrative team as vice president for financial administration with a wealth of experience in accounting, finance and strategic leadership.” shared Southwestern Adventist University President Ana Patterson. “He has a passion for Adventist education and approaches this work as a ministry. We look forward to welcoming Carlos as an integral team member as we strive toward growth and excellence in



Christ-centered higher education.”

Charnichart and his wife, Liz, have two adult children. Their daughter, Paola, graduated from the nursing program at Southern Adventist University and works for AdventHealth. Their son, Charlie, is a student at Southwestern Adventist University.

By Michelle Bergmann, Freelance Writer, and Tamyra Horst, Pennsylvania Conference Communication Director



SAVE-THE-DATE

A night at the Meyerson

March 26 2023

Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center
2301 Flora Street, Dallas, TX 75201

Get your tickets today!
For group discount please contact
Tony Reyes at treyes@swau.edu







Thank You for the Gift

November and December are two amazing months for reflection and rejoicing. Frankly, most of us should do this much more often at this season of the year. Nevertheless, it is always good to reflect on the goodness and greatness of God.

I want to publicly thank the Lord for the greatest gift He has ever given me: Jesus! I know of no greater or more important gift than the Savior. He has become my Friend and Brother beyond anything else in this world. He and I walk together. And as we walk, He is patient, gracious and loving.

Because of that gift, and my walk with Him, I most assuredly thank Him for my beautiful wife. What a gift from God! She has been my strength and encouragement. My partner through thick and thin. Through her wisdom, she has been able to be frank and share the most honest, trustworthy insights when I need it most.

I thank God for the gift of an incredible set of parents. The Lord blessed me with two sets, one at birth, and another when I got married. What a blessing! They are not perfect, but their love, guidance, encouragement and dedication have helped me to keep moving forward and not give up, but reach for new possibilities.

I thank the Lord for grandparents that always were loving, gracious, fun and supportive. What an amazing group to help me have perspective and keep a bright vision.

I thank the Lord for my siblings, both biological and adopted. God gave a wonderful gift to spur on fun, excitement and the understanding to care and share for life.

Another gift that is extremely precious are my children! I am proud of them. I know of no greater joy than children. Each one of them brings their own unique ideas, outlook and understanding. I have learned from them all.

And if children are amazing, grandchildren are outstanding. I know of no greater gift from the Master, to keep us energized, focused and seeing what the future holds. Our four grandchildren definitely know how to make my day! What a treasure! What a gift!

One of the most remarkable gifts for me, a precious gift that God has blessed me with, is my staff. What a great blessing! Each of them brings a wealth of experience, perspective and vision.

In addition to the staff, I praise God for the gift of fellow teachers and preachers who share in the challenge to share Jesus Christ each and every day! Their dedication and friendship

are lifelong. What a treasure Heaven and the new earth will be because of the gift of these friends!

And finally, I reflect on the powerful gift of the church. God's people are amazing! Their kindness and enthusiasm are warm and winsome. I have been immensely blessed by their love, their heart and their joy.

You have read just a few of the gifts that I praise the Lord, which are the outgrowth and the design of the first gift, the gift of Jesus. May each one of you take time to come up with your list beginning with the greatest gift God has ever given.

*Richard C. Dye, Sr.
President*



It Was No Accident—God’s Miracles Clearly Seen

BATON ROUGE, LA. – Miracles are not just something we read about in our Bibles; we see them everyday—if we are willing to. I saw my dad’s guardian angels hard at work protecting him just this past spring. My father, Juan Chapa, is a truck driver. He has been since about 1984. He always tells us of the events he sees while on the road; many are about vehicular accidents so that we will always be aware of our surroundings as we travel.

My dad’s route begins in the Rio Grande Valley (usually Saturday night or Sunday), in Houston he takes Interstate 10 East then up to the Carolinas through Mississippi and Alabama, next West on Interstate 20, and finally South on Interstate 35 (usually on Thursday mornings) heading home. Even with the COVID-19 pandemic, his work has been steady. Truckers are essential!

On the morning of Feb. 7, 2022, my mom informed me that my father would be staying home that week because his truck was in the shop and, to avoid being stuck on the road on the Sabbath, he had decided that he’d wait until the following weekend to head out again. Wednesday night I was chatting with my younger daughter, Adrianna, at Southwestern Adventist University and we were discussing how worried I was that her clinicals were the next morning. I told her I was praying that they would cancel classes and clinicals due to the freezing weather and icy roads.

Thursday morning, she woke me up and through text told me the school had closed for the day. “Thank you, Lord”, I thought. A few minutes later I began seeing the report of the pileup on Interstate 35 in Fort Worth. What horrific scenes! Once again, I thanked God for protecting my child! I spoke to my mom, and we were discussing how my little sister had also stayed home—she’s a teacher and her school in Cleburne had closed, as well.

While talking with my mother, she reminded me that had my father’s truck not been in the shop, my dad would surely have been involved in that pileup. I was floored! I hadn’t even given it a second thought since I knew he was safe at home. Wow! But our Lord says he will fill our cup until it overflows. We just didn’t yet know.

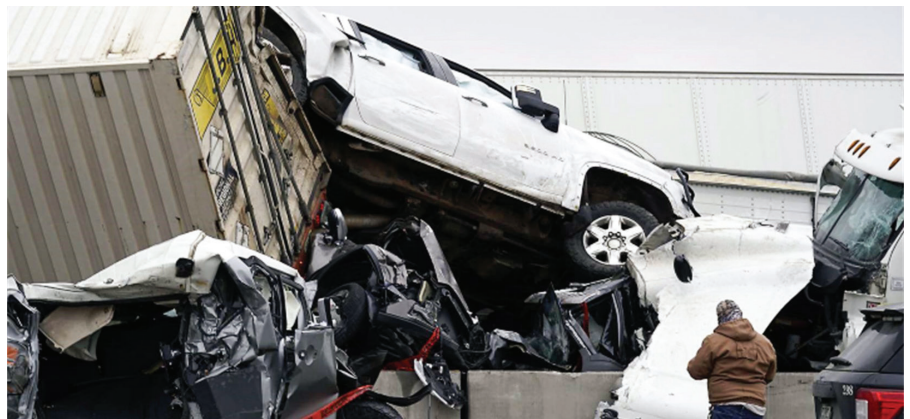
The weekend came and the weather continued to steadily decline. My dad was back on the road Feb. 14. We, in Baton Rouge, had warnings that there would be sleet and ice. I called my dad to tell him about our local news since he would be driving through and it was sure to hit him. He told me he had already passed, barely missing the scheduled beginning of the freeze by a mere two hours. The freezing weather hit Texas and Louisiana hard on Feb. 15 while my dad was safely nearing the Carolinas. Thank you, Jesus! While watching a national weather channel, I saw the warnings for severe tornadoes

in the Carolinas and I called my dad on Feb. 16 to warn him. His reply? “Oh, I saw that, but my load was running ahead of schedule, so I’m already on my way back.” There were several tornados that hit that day.

Did I mention my God works miracles? My earthly father is never left unprotected by my Heavenly Father! Why do we doubt what we see? Why do we refuse to give God credit for His miracles and instead choose to attribute things to luck or coincidence? I, myself, have had a couple encounters with my guardian angel and I cherish those memories. But this was a miracle for my family! I pray for those affected in the pileup on Interstate 35 on Feb. 11. As I watched the video of the FedEx 18-wheeler plowing into the pileup, I cannot imagine what those people in the cars must have felt. Being a trucker’s daughter, I am horrified and well up with tears at the thought of what the truck driver must have seen and felt as he was heading full speed into those small vehicles, knowing there was nothing he could do to stop the impending tragedy.

I cannot thank God enough for the many blessings he bestows. We are ungrateful and yet he never ceases to love us and show us his infinite mercy. It’s a miracle!

By Roxanna Chapa



Two Shreveport First Members Celebrate 100 Years

SHREVEPORT, LA. - Shreveport First Seventh-day Adventist Church held a special celebration on Aug. 6, for Lillie May Hernandez and Mary Brice Parker who celebrated their 100th birthdays together on Aug. 7, 2022. Both have been longtime active members of the Shreveport First church.

Lillie (Smith) Hernandez was born in the small town of Fryeburg, La. Her parents accepted the Seventh-day Adventist message before she was born, due to the efforts of a pastor who held meetings in Fryeburg. On Sabbaths, the kids would go out to distribute literature "sowing seeds" they called it. When Lillie was 12 years old, she was baptized by Isaac Baker.

Lillie met her husband, Jimmie Hernandez, on a blind date. He was a young Adventist sergeant stationed at Barksdale Field. He was a wonderful husband and father to their two boys, Ronnie and Larry. When the war was over in 1945, they moved to Mooring-sport, about 20 miles from Shreveport. She was active in the dorcas society and served in many offices such as deaconess, flower coordinator, telephone

committee and Sabbath School secretary, but mostly she gave her service in the children's department.

Mary Brice Parker was born in a tent during the oil boom in Haynesville, La., on Aug. 7, 1922. At age nine she moved to Mansfield, La. It was here where she joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She attended Southwestern Adventist Junior College and married her late husband, AJ "Doc" Parker in 1942. Mary Brice is the mother of three children and a great-great grandmother.

Mary and "Doc" enjoyed traveling and camping in their RV, sometimes just staying in campgrounds enjoying nature. She likes games and has always been an avid fan of "42" and "Chicken-Foot." She loves people and has always enjoyed "get togethers" and fellowship.

Mary Brice is a longtime member of the Shreveport First church where she previously served as treasurer and deaconess. She and Lillie May have been friends for a long time. She loves her church and church family and eagerly awaits the return of Jesus.

By Steve Orian



Medical Missionary Work in Eureka Springs

EUREKA SPRINGS, ARK. - The Abundant Health Wellness Center in Eureka Springs, Ark., has been in operation for several years with a couple of Rheumatology doctors, a nurse practitioner and a registered dietician. Recently it came under the direction of Dana West, registered dietician. With the influx of

patients and people interested in Medical Missionary work, the Rogers Seventh-day Adventist Church with Rodney Weyer, pastor, have begun a church plant. Approximately 10 people meet each Sabbath at the Abundant Health Wellness Center in Eureka Springs. Two have been baptized. They have recently finished a successful evangelistic series by Rex Frost, retired pastor, in the Cedar Room of the Convention Center in Eureka Springs.

Abundant Health Wellness Center is now offering hydrotherapy treatments, the therapeutic application of water in all its forms, liquid, vapor or solid, to restore health. It involves the use of water for pain-relief, inflammation, treating

illnesses, viruses, infections and improving the immune system and circulation. Participants attending Sunny Dawn Acres' Medical Missionary Training studied reflections in the *Ministry of Healing*, the blueprint for medical missionary work, program organization and development, hydrotherapy and herbal remedies lab, mental health ministry and enjoyed good ethnic food!

If you would like to be trained in Medical Missionary work, please call Dana West at 417.459.5201 to reserve your room for the next training or visit SunnyDawnAcres.com.

By Nancy Riedesel



Youth Evangelism Through Vacation Bible Schools



SHREVEPORT, LA. – The Mountain View Seventh-day Adventist Church held the Jasper Canyon Vacation Bible School (VBS) program June 24-29. This was the first VBS program the church held in nearly 15 years, and the members knew it was far past time for it. This church loves children, but finding a handful of people who could commit to a full week in the summer has been a real challenge. However, many members quickly volunteered this year when someone mentioned VBS. The program was a great success with VBS serving 23 young people, including some from the community. The staff members were very creative and showcased their rock collections. The children were quick students and memorized 1 John 4:7-8 by Wednesday, then they memorized 2 Timothy 1:7. On Sabbath morning, the VBS theme continued into the worship service where the children and youth carried out the entire service, including a full report of their week. The young people raised money for the ADRA water kiosks for Mozambique and also picked up the offering on Sabbath morning. They raised an astonishing \$324!

The young people have been asking if we will have another VBS next summer. They loved it so much. This was a wonderful way to share Jesus and His love with the children of our church and other local families. Also, this was

a fantastic way to foster relationships between adults and children within the church. The church has been creatively thinking of other ways to serve the children in the community with other special events in addition to VBS.

The Slidell Seventh-day Adventist Church was also blessed with a successful and fruitful VBS this year. The theme was "Camp Out" and the church was entirely decorated in a camping theme. The kids enjoyed games and crafts, and they also learned a lot about Jesus through Bible stories, memory verses and songs. Angelina Jones was the VBS leader, and she had several helpers to keep everything on track. On Friday evening, everyone came together for Friday night vespers with a bonfire!

In June, the Baton Rouge Seventh-day Adventist Church had a flurry of activity as VBS preparations were made by Jennifer Kepper, director, and others for evangelistic efforts for the children in our church, school and community. Prior to VBS, church members went out to a local park on two consecutive Sundays with a snowball ice machine and VBS pamphlets in tow to share with community children and their families.

Finally, June 6 arrived with the opening day for the Jasper Canyon VBS in Baton Rouge where every child is a treasure of God. Each day began at the dig site with songs, skits and a meeting

with Rocky, the Rockhound. Kids went on to Excavation Post (prayer time), Gemstone Mine (Bible stories and picnic snacks), Artifact crafts and the Testing Pit (games). Kids, volunteers and parents all had a great time as the program closed on Friday evening in Jasper Canyon. On Sabbath morning during worship, a video presentation highlighting the whole week was shown and several songs were performed by the children.

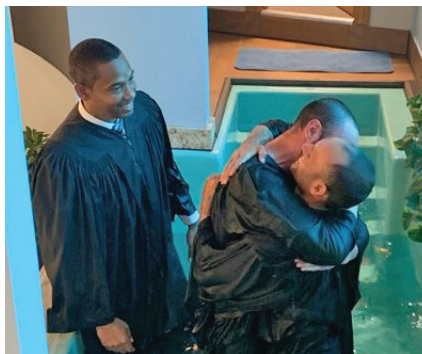
The Tontitown Church Group held their Jasper Canyon VBS on July 18-24. The kids learned all about Noah, Abigail, Solomon, Ruth and Elijah at the Gemstone Mine (story station). At the Excavation Site (prayer station) they dug for gems and artifacts daily. Then, at the Artifacts Stations (craft station) they made petroglyphs and mosaics. At the Testing Pit (game station), the obstacle course and Sniff-Sniff Rockhound were the favorites for everyone. After working through Jasper Canyon, everyone came back to the Picnic Station for treats. Over the course of the week the kids learned the Bedrock Verse, Romans 8:38-39. Ask the kids now and they will tell you "I dig it."

*By Esther M. Doss, Mountain View;
Vernella Rogers, Slidell; Tracy Francis,
Baton Rouge; Monica Thames,
Tontitown*

Friendship Evangelism Pays Off in Lake Charles

LAKE CHARLES, LA. – In 2015, while at Olive Park in Burbank, Calif. with my son one afternoon, I noticed a tall, long-haired, long bearded man sitting under a tree. He was sitting with his eyes closed and looked to be meditating. I approached him to share about Jesus and as I shared, he continued to sit quietly with his eyes closed meditating. He didn't agree or disagree, and I continued to share about the power of Christ when we allow Him into our lives. I shared some of my personal testimony and thought, if he's willing to listen then I would keep sharing. After about 20 minutes, he finally opened his eyes and said to me, "I've never heard anyone talk about Jesus like that." I invited him to lunch and he accepted.

We learned we had several things in common: both vegetarians, both named Justin, both with "A" last names. From there, a friendship developed, and we started going on hikes and campouts together centering our conversations on God's Word and on Christ. I moved to a vineyard in Northern California, and he came to visit on a few occasions. Each visit grew longer, and the friendship and fellowship grew



stronger. We worked, worshiped, studied the Bible, learned Scripture songs together and attended a Sabbath fellowship at Angwin Village Seventh-day Adventist Church each week. Over the next few years, we continued to stay in contact sharing our triumphs, our struggles and encouraging one another.

In 2020, my family and I moved to Louisiana. I continued to share with him how God was working mightily on our behalf, and he was inspired and encouraged. He finally came to visit for two weeks. He gladly joined in family worship sharing praise reports for how he experienced God in answer to prayers and through the power of His Word.



Our devotionals focused on surrendering and yielding to the Holy Spirit, as well as keeping our minds centered on Christ. We were pleasantly surprised when, toward the end of his stay, he announced his decision for baptism! I was privileged to assist Hillis Jeffries, pastor of Lake Charles Seventh-day Adventist Church in baptizing him. During his visit, he was tremendously blessed by the members of Lafayette and Lake Charles Seventh-day Adventist Churches. We praise God for His providential leading in the life of my friend and brother in Christ.

By Justin Adamson

Waldron Seventh-day Adventist Group Reaps Baptisms

WALDRON, ARK. – The Waldron Seventh-day Adventist Group is a church plant of the Booneville Seventh-day Adventist Church, under the pastorship of Ken Blundell. About a year ago the Waldron church board started planning an evangelistic meeting to be held at the Waldron Seventh-day Adventist Church. The board started planning this campaign in September of 2021 and began moving forward.

It was quite an adventure during the process of getting things ready for these meetings. We had "Church in the Woods" which was hosted by Carlera Farms and a campout over the weekend of Nov. 8, where 44 fellow believers

and friends of members met for Sabbath church service. It was a blessing for all who attended. Then we really started with the planning of our evangelistic meetings for 2022.

We began with plant-based cooking classes, a health seminar and some sharing of literature with others in our community. We moved forward with our decision to do the evangelism meetings while waiting for God's timing. We have been doing Bible studies, Friday night vespers, along with other things on Sabbaths.

We were able to get Jordan Moore from Amazing Facts to do our evangelistic meeting and it started on July 15

and ran through Aug. 6. We were blessed to be able to record these meetings on Zoom and Facebook under our church's Facebook page.

You can see the meetings archived on our pages @WaldronSDAChurch. Presently, we have had seven baptisms, five new members and two re-baptisms. We want to thank Ken Blundell, Jordan Moore and his wife Brittany Moore for their participation and support.

By Craig Carter



The Gift that Keeps Giving

Probably the best-known Bible verse is John 3:16. We've heard it so many times that it can lose its message and power. "For God so loved the world that He GAVE His one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." This, undoubtedly, is the greatest gift ever given. We see here a picture of God, who is described by the same disciple John in his first letter, as "love."

In 1 John 4:8 he writes, "God is love." And God's love gives. He loved and He loves, so He gives. It's as natural to Him as His very being. God's very nature is self-sacrificing love. Therefore, He gave us His Son, who gave His life for us. But it wasn't a one-time gift.

When Jesus came here as a child, He gave up Heaven with His divinity. He laid it aside and many other things to become part of the human race, in order to give us the gift of eternal life. He gave up being in the presence of His Father and the angels. He became human and gave up the benefits of His divine power. In order to save us He had to become one of us and give up much

of what He had before. But Hebrews 12:2 describes Jesus this way, "who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, scorning its shame." It was a joy for Him to give Himself, to endure the cross knowing that by it we could be saved. Amazing grace, what a gift. But the giving didn't even start there. It started when He decided it was worth it for Him to create us and give us the gift of life despite the cost to Himself. Then, after giving us life, He constantly sustained us, for in Him we live and move and have our being.

And even after His crucifixion and death, He rose from the dead and ascended to Heaven to begin a new phase of His gift of giving. Scripture says that He ever lives to make intercession for us. He is there by the throne of God working and giving of Himself for us. For it is only through His merits, righteousness and sacrifice that we receive daily help for our needs and our prayers are answered. He is on duty 24/7 serving us, loving us, protecting us and interceding for us. And after His ascension, He also sent us the gift of the

Holy Spirit to take His place as our helper. The Spirit works in answer to Jesus's intercession to answer our prayers and even to make them understandable and acceptable for what is best for us. It is incredible that within the image of Jesus in the manger is wrapped up the amazing gift of God's love, which has always been and will always be. Jesus is the gift that keeps on giving. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.

*By James Shires
President*



Students Find Home at Norman Seventh-day Adventist Church

NORMAN, OKLA. – Sharing a church home with students, complete with responsibility, respect and family. That is how I would describe the college/high school ministry at the Norman Seventh-day Adventist Church. The friendly atmosphere at the Norman church has something students enjoy and the feeling is mutual.

The students focus on growing the college/high school Sabbath School. The idea is to provide an atmosphere of learning and encouragement that one would find in their home church. The students assemble in the Sabbath School room each week for timely lessons facilitated by Joy Pelfrey and Giovanni Corrodus.

University of Oklahoma student, Crisbeth Castaneda shared her experience, “When you think of coming to college, you probably think of preparing by finding the best parking spot close to your classes, getting the best seat in the classroom so that the teacher can recognize you and trying to make friends with the smart kid of the class so they can help you with your homework. When I came to college, I realized that it was going to be a new chapter of my life, not only in my per-



sonal life, but also in my spiritual life. I was no longer going to be with my parents or with my own church. My own faith and principles were now going to be just mine and nobody else’s. Thankfully, I found exactly what I was looking for when I moved to Norman. I was able to find comfort in the friends and family of Norman church. But the best part about the Norman church (besides pot-lucks, of course!) is the college class. Philippines, Rwanda, Jamaica, and more we have college students from all around the world who are attending schools in the area! I have been blessed to listen and learn about their cultures and faith experiences. However, we are more than just a ‘college class.’ We support each other personally, spiritu-

ally and even academically. We always will find a way to spend time together and be there for each other. So, if you are coming to any schools in the area or just visiting, I invite you to come join us. I am sure you will be able to find your place in our family too.”

If you know of any students in the area, let us know! We’d love to reach out to them. In *Education*, Ellen G. White says, “With such an army of workers as our youth rightly trained might furnish, how soon the message of a crucified, risen and soon-coming Savior might be carried to the whole world!”

Contact us at 405.366.7772 or email at NormanAdventist@gmail.com.

By Mark Pelfrey

Tulsa Adventist Academy Overwhelmed by Donor Generosity

TULSA, OKLA. – As the 2022-2023 school year began, Tulsa Adventist Academy (TAA) staff were excitedly preparing their classrooms, beaming about the increase in enrollment and new teachers. Over the summer, the school transitioned to online registration and financial aid applications, so there was a slight learning curve that revealed not everyone who had requested aid would receive it. Families were notified of the lack of funds and/or late application status. Seventeen children would be unable to return to school without additional funding from donors. Meanwhile, a local church member had accidentally

left \$1,000 in cash at the church, though he does not normally carry that much in his wallet. That particular Sabbath, Ruth Vargas, the 7th and 8th grade teacher, pleaded with her church members to give what God moved them to give to help the 17 students return to school. As she left the stage, a man motioned to her and gave her ten \$100 bills. He told her, “Now I know why I was carrying this cash around all week!” The following week the same man told Vargas that, when he went to work on Monday, he received an unexpected bonus of \$1,000. Elated, he shared that he was blessed by his giving.

Other teachers and staff also raised more than \$15,000 in gifts and pledges in about two weeks, enabling all 17 students to attend TAA. The families of these students are also contributing to their children’s tuition, so the blessings continue to rain down on our growing school! TAA teachers and staff are truly thankful for every donation from those with a heart for Christian education. Thank you for helping us fulfill our mission to prepare students for Heaven!

By Caroline Fisher

Father and Son Pool Escapade

WEWOKA, OKLA. – The Oklahoma Conference children’s ministry department held its second annual Father-Son Pool Escapade on Aug. 21, at Wewoka Woods Adventist Center. In this busy world, spending time with our children helps strengthen the relationship between us.

After much hot weather, we anticipated a refreshing time swimming and playing in the pool. However, we woke to rain and cooler temperatures. The leaders worked out a second plan in case we got rained out. Praying that God would clear the weather, we went forward with our plans. As the fathers

and sons arrived, sunshine poured from the sky! However, during a special worship by Luis Prieto, Oklahoma Conference Spanish ministries coordinator, and dedication prayer for the special bond between fathers and sons, the clouds parted and the sunshine warmed the air. There were storms all around Wewoka Woods, but our weather was perfect for fun in the sun!

A rousing game of water polo, bellyflops, cannon-ball contests and swim time ensued. At noon we gathered in the lodge for lunch, followed by a Corn-hole contest. The smiles on the faces of those attending were a blessing to see.

When times of stress come and Satan tries to put a wedge between us, the bonds of father and son help bridge the gap. The relationship between fathers and their sons points us to the relationship between us and our Heavenly Father: “As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear Him.” Psalm 103:13. Thank you fathers, for spending time with your sons, and thank you to our Father for allowing us to spend quality time with our children.

By Norma Shepherd



Broken Arrow Welcomes New Pastor

BROKEN ARROW, OKLA. - On Saturday, July 30, the Broken Arrow Seventh-day Adventist Church filled with members anxious to greet their new pastor, Nathan Shires and his wife, Gurpreet. This is a new season for the Broken Arrow congregation. For the past 17 years, the church was faithfully shepherded by Clayton Calvert, a lay pastor and a charter member of the church when it was planted in 1978. In March of 2022, Calvert went to rest in Jesus.

Nathan Shires was introduced at the pulpit by his father, James Shires, Oklahoma Conference president. James Shires led out in a moving dedication ceremony for Nathan, Gurpreet and the Broken Arrow church.

"My wife and I feel humbled and privileged to serve in ministry at the Broken Arrow church. We have found the church to be a warm and welcoming community with people who are

excited to serve and share the Gospel in their larger community. I look forward to growing together with our new church family and to fulfilling God's vision through His church in Broken Arrow," Shires said.

The service included special music by Moses Kalebaila accompanied by Jeff Davis, D.O., and a great children's story about trust by Carol Mathews. The children's story went right along with the theme this church has been holding fast to for the past 40 years: when we trust God, He will supply all our needs!

Shires then preached his first sermon, "The Posture of Victory." He said, "The real victory posture is in prayer on our knees. That's where the battle is determined and won!"

During this impactful service the congregation sang "His Name is Wonderful," a song they've been singing



every Sabbath for over 40 years. Judy Marquette, charter member and church historian, says "We look forward to the leadership of Shires as we worship together."

The Broken Arrow church members are thrilled to partner with God in the future and are excited to see God leading in their church through Nathan Shires.

By Judy Marquette

PAA Students Assist with Free Vision Clinic

OKLAHOMA CITY - On Aug. 26, Parkview Adventist Academy (PAA) students worked with the nonprofit organization Better Vision, Better Hope to hold a vision clinic for the local community. Anyone could come and receive vision care for eye exams, prescription glasses, cataract evaluation, diabetic screening and glaucoma screening free of charge.

With 35 appointment slots available, students, teachers and volunteers joined forces to put on this clinic. PAA

students jumped right in and helped with pre-screening and glasses fittings.

Vision care is not something everyone has access to, but thanks to Better Vision, Better Hope, residents from around Oklahoma City were able to come and receive the care they needed. It was a blessing to those who received services, but an even bigger blessing to our students, teachers and volunteers who served.

Deuteronomy 15:11 tells us, "There

will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be open-handed toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land."

PAA students have taken this verse to heart. They will be partnering with Better Vision, Better Hope again and putting on another free vision clinic in the coming months. Stay tuned for details!

By Sarah Shepherd



Oklahoma Camp Meeting Orchestra

WEWOKA, OKLA. - The Orchestra Music Program at Oklahoma Camp Meeting is always a highlight, but you may not know how it all comes together. After all, musicians traveled from seven different states to be a part of the orchestra this year. How do they practice together in preparation for camp meetings? Easy answer: they don't. In fact, this was the sixth year that Harvey Gil, pastor, has organized the orchestra at Oklahoma Camp Meeting, and to this day, their only practice time is the two and a half hours before they perform!

Here are the details. Gil, being the music artistic director/Jesus lover that he is, started a ministry called the "Festival of Lights" when he pastored the Claremore Seventh-day Adventist Church. The goal was simple: to bridge the community members and church members in a night of sharing holiday joy and Jesus. He led this program for almost 20 years! This is where he met some of the musicians that were in this year's music crew.

Through the years, Gil has kept a list of participants and does his best

to stay in touch with them from "back in the day." He also relies on friends bringing friends! The musicians this year came from as far south as Houston, as far north as Lincoln, Neb. and from the Carolinas, Missouri, Arizona, Arkansas, Texas and a good handful from Oklahoma.

Gil selects the music, musicians and conductors for the weekends. "We get together two and a half hours before the worship service and that's the only time we get together to practice, so you better know how to sight read!", said Gil. The first weekend, a Texas woman named Lanice conducted the concert. The second weekend, Giovanni, a second year choral director doctoral candidate from the University of Oklahoma led the orchestra.

World-renowned musician, Jaime Jorge, popped in for the orchestra, sat down and joined in with his violin! When Gil chatted with him later that day, Jaime said, "This is very rare. This is very rare indeed."

To have people from all over come and practice together for two hours and

perform such incredible music is a true heaven-like experience. Sometimes, musicians don't get the appreciation that God calls us to give them. But at the Oklahoma Camp Meeting, they are more than just their instruments. We pray for them, their families, their personal ministries and their future. They have purpose, names and needs. They need direction, correction, protection and love. Remember that like David, the one who used to play for you, may one day be your leader. Love them well.

"From gas cards and meals to purchasing the sheet music and mailing it out to each musician, this orchestra wouldn't be possible without the help from our sponsors," according to Gil.

As we start planning for Camp Meeting 2023, Gil is ready to meet some new young musicians who want to join this orchestra! If you'd like to join the orchestra or support it financially, please reach out to Harvey Gil.

*By Ashley Alipoon & Harvey Gil
Photos by Bailey Schmidt*





Don't Miss the Miracle

The Bible records in Matthew 14 that Jesus had just received the terrible news of the untimely death of His cousin and forerunner, John the Baptist. Our Savior wanted to spend some time alone to contemplate and grieve the loss of His fellow minister of the gospel. He boarded a boat and sailed away from the shore. Because the people heard that He was leaving, they tracked His course by the time He reached the other side of the lake, they had already assembled en masse to have Him speak to them, care for them and heal their sick.

Jesus wasted no time and immersed Himself in the work of healing and nurturing the people who were waiting and anticipating a personal audience with Him.

By the time Jesus had finished caring for all the people, no one wanted to leave. The time had simply drifted away, and no one had thought about food. The disciples came to Him and urged Him to send the people away so they could purchase meals in the neighboring towns. Yet, In Matthew 14:16 Jesus responded with a simple challenge, "You give them something to eat."

This challenge was incredibly im-

practical and totally implausible. They responded saying they only had five loaves of bread and two fish.

Jesus petitioned His Heavenly Father, and no sooner than the moment He prayed, His request was granted. The disciples watched in amazement as Jesus began to divide the fish and the loaves with His hands becoming more and more full until they were overflowing.

The disciples scurried quickly to gather baskets to catch the food that fell from the Master's hands. Requiring the people to sit down, the disciples delivered this miraculous, extemporaneous meal. When the disciples finished serving, everyone had eaten until they were satisfied, but there were still twelve extra baskets of food left!

The disciples tallied the number of individuals served, and to their surprise, they counted about 5,000 men, plus women and children. What an amazing miracle! What was intended to feed one little boy, turned into a feast for 5,000 families! But that's not the greatest miracle here!

The greatest miracle was that in the mind-blowing moment, the disciples are once again being transformed into

a faith-filled mission taskforce! They go from expecting that they would bear no responsibility in the feeding of the multitude to participating in the act of the miracle themselves!

And that's what God wants to do for us today! He wants to work a miracle through us! He has said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Mathew 19:26. He wants to use you to do the impossible. He wants to use you to carry out His mission and change the world. Don't miss the miracle! He's going to perform it through you!

*By Carlton P. Byrd, D.Min.
President*



Houston Berean Celebrates Deacons and Deaconess Day

HOUSTON - The Houston Berean Seventh-day Adventist Church celebrated Deacons and Deaconess Day, under the leadership and guidance of Claudia Lewis.

The twenty-first century deaconess and deacons reflect the biblical, Jesus Christ model of a servant ministry. There were female deacons in the first century Christian church, as well as male deacons. The biblical account of the selection of the deacons in the first century Christian church is recorded in Acts 6:1-8, Stephen, Phillip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicholas and Stephen, full of faith and

the Holy Ghost. As we trace the root of the office of deacons, we find that the reason they came into existence was to serve and share the responsibility of the work. The primary function of the first century deacons was to solve problems that arose within the Church. The deacons were not simply ordinary men; they had to be men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom to look beyond the symptoms to see the real issues, then bring about solutions.

Through Bible studies with Joyce Mason and seminars on Daniel and Revelation, Claudia Lewis, a new Seventh-day Adventist, found the biblical truth she

sought at the Houston Berean church. Upon experiencing this overwhelming desire to join, she prayed and asked the Lord to show her if she should. His answer was clear, and the Lord gave her five key offices in the church: church clerk, head deaconess, women's ministries leader, assistant director of community services and communication director to prove to her this is where she should be. She accepted and has been a member for 26 years.

By Claudia Lewis



Voice of Hope Celebrates 100 Years

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Voice of Hope Seventh-day Adventist Church celebrated 100 years of ministry in the Oklahoma City metroplex on May 20-21, 2022. Excitement was in the air after a two-year delay due to COVID-19 challenges and restrictions. The theme “Rooted in the Past, Growing In the Future” was chosen to honor the history of the church (known as Beulah, 1920-1957; Tenth Street, 1958-2016 and Voice of Hope, 2016 to present), while stating the commitment to moving forward to proclaim the goodness of Jesus until He returns.

Our celebration began with a Friday evening vesper service, with a message from Alex Horton, Longview Heights senior pastor in Memphis, Tenn., who grew up in the Tenth Street/Voice of Hope church. The anniversary weekend continued on Sabbath morning with Sabbath School, taught by Stephen

Brooks, former pastor of Tenth Street/Voice of Hope and current Southwestern Union executive secretary, who also gave the intercessory prayer during divine worship.

Our Sabbath divine worship service was filled with gratitude to God for His goodness throughout the years. The worship experience included family and friends of Voice of Hope, as well as, conference and union workers and officials: Martin Lister, Enid/Lawton, Okla. district pastor; Terrell McCoy, Voice of Hope/North Highland pastor; Carlos Craig, Southwestern Union president; Phillip Palmer, Southwest Region Conference executive treasurer. Local government officials also participated in the celebration through their presence or a proclamation.

The divine worship speaker, Carlton P. Byrd, D.Min., Southwest Region Con-

ference president, brought an inspiring message with an appeal for individuals to come in dedication or rededication to God.

On Sabbath evening, the anniversary celebration culminated with a concert featuring gospel recording artist, Byron Cage, and a vesper message by Eliot Brooks, a beloved son of Voice of Hope. Terrell McCoy brought our memorable weekend to a close with remarks and prayer. Afterwards, light refreshments were served, and many families and friends took pictures at the photo stage to remember the momentous occasion of Voice of Hope that was “Rooted in the Past” and continues “Growing in the Future!” Praise to God for such a blessed day of celebration!

By Patricia Collins and Beverly McCoy



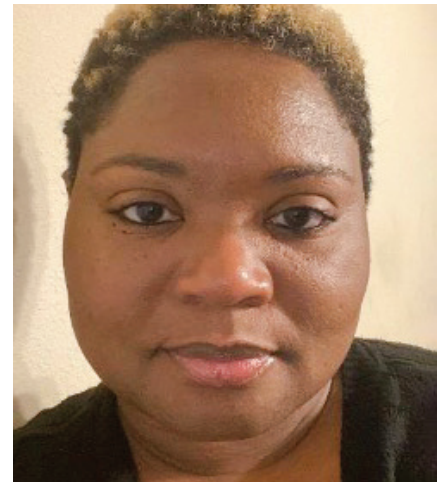
Philadelphia Member and Educator Helps Students Make History

SHREVEPORT, LA. – The recent 2022 graduates from the School of Nursing at Grambling State University (GSU) passed the National Council Licensure Exam (NCLEX) as first-time test takers. The National Council of State Boards of Nursing exam is used to test the competency of nursing school graduates in the U.S. and Canada. The 100 percent pass rate for first-time test takers is a first in the history of the School of Nursing at GSU for all Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) graduates testing in a calendar year. The statewide benchmark for first-time test takers to be successful is 80 percent.

The significance of this accomplishment is that the BSN Program Director, Rikki Murff, Ph.D., R.N., is a member of

the Philadelphia Seventh-day Adventist Church in Shreveport, La. Murff has grown up in the church and is very active as the leader of both the music ministry and Adventist Youth Society. Murff has served as the BSN program director for only one year. She stated, "While we celebrate this outstanding achievement, we still have work to do. We are prayerful that this will become a GSU School of Nursing standard. The students worked hard to accomplish this goal and they deserved it. The BSN faculty are a praying faculty and we put God first in all our endeavors. He is in the midst of it all. We never fall short when He is in control. God is Good!"

By Jimmie Gibson, Pastor



Grace Temple Reaches Out to Community

FORT WORTH, TEX. – Grace Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church hosted a Community Fest and Car Show on Sunday, Aug. 21, 2022. The object of the fest was community outreach. We believe that we are not only a church *in* the community but a church *for* the community. We registered 125 people from the community with some expressing interest in Bible studies.

The fest was inclusive of prizes, emergency vehicles to explore, backpacks with school supplies (over 100

given), massage therapists (about 50 massages given), a bounce house waterslide, a challenge course, live music, food trucks, novelty vendors and more than 20 business sponsors, making this an event to remember.

In addition, our food pantry registered individuals for its regularly scheduled free groceries give-out days, the second and fourth Mondays of the month. It also gave on-the-spot services to individuals in need of immediate food. Medical personnel provid-

ed health screenings, including blood pressure and blood sugar screenings, with private consultations available, and vision exams were performed, as well as free prescriptions for eyeglasses. The main attraction for this year's Community Fest was the car show spearheaded by Helvis Moody, Southwestern Union young adult and youth director, and Cliff Sparks.

Thanks to our visionary shepherd, Cedric Belcher, M.Div., D.Min., and our event coordinators, Cherri Wright and Sandra Manning, for successfully leading out. Special thanks to all our volunteers, our iTouch Coordinator Johnny McKenzie and our Conference President Carlton P. Byrd, D.Min., who supported the event in person.

Lastly, there was approximately an 80 percent chance of rain on event day, but God heard our prayers and held the rain back. It rained all around the church area, but we managed to get through the event with slight inclement weather interruptions. God can do anything when His people serve their communities!

By Toia Russell and Sandra Manning





Singles Enrichment
ENRICHMENT

with

ANDREA D. HICKS

GOD-POWERED SINGLES;
NAVIGATING LIFE HIS WAY
DECEMBER 9-11, 2022

SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA



FULL EVENT REGISTRATION
\$150 (2 DAYS \$125; BALL ONLY \$55)

CONTACT: VERA RAGLAND
(214) 830-8121

HOTEL: (318)-686-0148

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
LOCATION AND ACCOMMODATIONS VISIT:

Eventbrite



The Most Wonderful Gift

“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Isaiah 9:6 (NKJV).

This verse serves as an annual reminder that the world is not as it should be. God is redeeming and restoring it. He, and only He, is the true reason for the season.

Have you ever thought that if you empty the spiritual meaning of CHRIST-mas, you’re left with triviality? This seems to be a common cultural narrative of our time. Somehow something so prolific, historical and important was traded for something shallow and insignificant.

As Christians, we celebrate the Savior, the Incarnation. However, when our focus is on snowmen and flying reindeer, we do the world a disservice. These take away from the importance of the season and transfer it to something secular.

Can you imagine having a baby in a stable surrounded by animals instead

of family? Do you think Joseph and Mary were concerned for the baby being born in such conditions? Here they were delivering the Son of God. I would not have imagined that is how He would have been born.

Yet, in the middle of this situation, in the middle of circumstances that were anything but ideal or what they had imagined or hoped, God showed up. In the middle of this calamity and chaos, God showed up. And He is still showing up today.

As you’re heading into the holiday season, you may be feeling your circumstances are less than ideal, like Mary and Joseph’s. You may be surrounded by chaos. Life may not be how you imagined it to be or how you wanted it to go.

When you are feeling overwhelmed, remember, God still shows up. When our lives seem out of control, when things are not going as we want, when situations are not working out like we hoped or what we imagined, God shows up!

God’s redemption and restoration

began in Bethlehem and continues today as God shows up for us when things start to spiral. What a wonderful gift!

May you accept His gift knowing He is right there with you surrounding you with His everlasting love, wanting to give you peace in whatever situation you find yourself. Will you let Him show up for you today?

*By Elton DeMoraes, D.Min.
President*



Vacation Bible School Brings Hope for Uvalde

UVALDE, TEX. – It was a quiet morning in the seventh-grade classroom at Fort Worth Adventist Junior Academy in Fort Worth, Tex., where I was assigned that day when I received an alert: “Uvalde Shooting.” It wasn’t until later, though, that I realized the magnitude of that notice.

As the school year ended, I couldn’t stop thinking about that terrible scene. I told my husband, “I would like to go to Uvalde and be there just praying for those people.” Within days, Texas Conference Youth & Club Ministries Director Paulo Tenorio shared a post on Facebook inviting people to go to Uvalde. I couldn’t join them for the first visit, but within a short amount of time we were discussing a summer program for the children.

Southwestern Union Conference Children’s Ministries Director Sonia Cano helped me find a curriculum for the program. We chose, “Heroes: Making a Big Difference in Small Ways” Vacation Bible School program which focused on five child heroes in the Bible.

It was amazing to receive support, financial and otherwise, from individuals, churches and organizations. We saw God work in a mighty way as the SSGT Willie de Leon Civic Center in Uvalde was secured for the event. Even with the challenges, we could see the need for God. There was an entire community crying out for help and hope. “Hope for Uvalde” was born.

Though resources and funds began

pouring in, volunteers were still lacking. I reviewed all the messages on social media and decided to personally ask people if they could join us in Uvalde. Some wanted to but could not get off work. Others could only come for a few days. A few bravely traveled from New York to Uvalde. I truly believe God chose each participant with His own divine hand working out the details for their arrival.

Just like any church VBS, the set up day was busy as we decorated the stage where we prayed that many children would meet our beloved Jesus. Even though the volunteers came from different places, we greeted each other naturally as if we had known each other for a long time. It was obvious that we were there for the same purpose to bring hope to this community.

As the program start time came Monday at 5 p.m., I was anxious since few people had arrived. Then, God reminded me this was His program. Approximately 35 people joined us for the first night. The next day we went door-to-door personally inviting people and praying with them. Others shared signs in front of the civic center so people would know about the event.

During that week, the benches were delivered that were made for each victim with their photograph. It was sad to see those parents and relatives go through so much pain and anguish.

Alma Liz Martínez Berrios, a professional therapist and one of our volun-

teers, shared that having the opportunity to go to Uvalde with her family was a blessing. “As the children went to each station,” she said, “I had the privilege of speaking to parents and grandparents about issues that are of concern to them trying to bring them hope during these difficult times that the community is facing. The Hope for Uvalde Mission Trip brought Hope to Uvalde.”

On Friday afternoon, each child was given a Bible. We pray the Bible would be a blessing and that each boy and girl will know the living God. An Adventurer Club was also started in Uvalde to continue the connection and hope.

Javier Aguilera, a young man who traveled from New York, shared that the experience of coming to Uvalde was a blessing. “Seeing the parents’ smiles and support in bringing their children every night and also wanting their children to learn about Jesus by enrolling them in the Adventurer Club was very moving for me.”

We will not see the full impact of this week until Heaven, when God Himself will wipe away every tear. Until then, let’s continue to pray for Uvalde and help where we can. I challenge every person reading this article to visit Uvalde on a weekend with your church to experience the love and harmony of this beautiful community.

By Sarai Sanchez



Saving Lives Through Literature



ALVARADO, TEX. – The Texas Conference Literature Ministries department works to spread the love of Jesus through the printed page. One of the ways we do this is through student programs commonly referred to as Youth Rush. Youth Rush works to infuse youth like Caleb Trujillo, Diana Urtiz, Dana Gutierrez and Karla Martinez, pictured, with a love for mission and a desire to spread God’s Word. At the same time, Youth Rush provides a way for students to pay their way through school. As students go door-to-door and place-to-place, they meet people, share literature, pray with them, collect Bible study leads for churches and offer books given by donation. The student receives a percentage of the donation giving them much-needed money for their college tuition. In addition to the financial benefit, the satisfaction of spreading God’s love to others is immeasurable.

Edwin Regalado, Jr., pictured, a student at Southwestern Adventist University in Keene, Tex., decided to join the Youth Rush scheduled for spring break. It was his first-time canvassing, and it was a challenge. Close to the end of

the week, he had a divine appointment.

“I was canvassing in an Aldi parking lot after lunch,” Regalado, Jr., shared. “It had been a very hard day. I faced many rejections. Finally, I decided to stop canvassing and pray. I prayed for God to send me someone who truly needed the book I was offering. When I finished praying, I saw a car with tinted windows. As I got closer, I saw the window roll down. There was a guy inside. He had seen me looking at him. As I approached him, I noticed that he was a young man, probably still a teenager. I thought for a second that I should go to someone else because he probably wouldn’t be interested, but I decided to go anyway since I was close to the car. I introduced myself and presented the book, *Promise of Peace*. It is a compilation of the *Desire of Ages* and *Patriarchs and Prophets* by author Ellen G. White.

“After explaining the book, he stopped me. I noticed something changed in him. He said, ‘let me be honest with you. This morning, I was about to end my own life. I had everything prepared but for a reason I can-

not explain I didn’t go through with my plan. I came here instead. I didn’t even really know why I came here, so I was just sitting here in my car wondering what to do and then you came up to me, prayed with me and offered me this book.’ I told him that I had just prayed for God to send me someone who really needed the book. It was then that I noticed tears in his eyes. He told me that he had no money. I wasn’t going to leave, though, without giving him the book. He finished telling me that he now knew why he had come to Aldi and told me thank you for the work that I was doing. Something that I took away from this story is that God is always there and is listening to our prayers and working things out so that our prayers can be the answer to someone else’s prayer.”

Through literature ministries, our students, as well as our full-time colporteurs, see God at work. We know the harvest is plentiful and sometimes we find the harvest in unexpected places.

By Joshua Reyna
Literature Ministries Director

‘Tell Your Story’ Initiative Looks to Motivate Members

ALVARADO, TEX. – One of the greatest challenges every individual faces in life is the ability to discern and differentiate between the important and not so important, the things that concern us and the things that should not.

Jesus addressed this very issue. When pressed about the restoration of “the kingdom to Israel,” He answered, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority,” Acts 1:7 (NKJV). In other words, do not invest time, energy and/or resources in things that should not concern you. Because Christianity is not defined by don’ts, Jesus continued, “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth,” Acts 1:8 (NKJV).

It is necessary, then, to be clear of

the content of what we are to witness. To this, the apostle John wrote, “That which ... we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled ... that which we have seen and heard we declare to you,” 1 John 1:1-3 (NKJV).

Author Ellen G. White tells us in *Early Writings*, “All should have something to say for the Lord, for by doing so they will be blest.... I saw that God has been merciful in giving us the power of speech.... We should glorify God with our mouth, speaking in honor of the truth and of His unbounded mercy, and overcome by the word of our testimony through the blood of the Lamb.”

This inspired counsel generated the “Cuenta tu Historia” (“Tell Your Story”) initiative in the Spanish field of the Texas Conference with the desire to mo-

tivate members and guide congregations to generate an environment that invites the fulfillment of the Adventist mission of witnessing (“...go and make disciples...” Matthew 28:18-20) both individually and collectively.

We envision each witness telling his or her story. Through a step-by-step guide prepared by our great team, any potential witness can tell his or her story in five minutes or less.

In 2023, we will share 52 five-minute videos, one for each Sabbath of the year, that churches can share to inspire others to be faithful and to motivate others to be witnesses.

Connect with @HispanosTxC via Beacons.ai/hispanostxc.

*By Ismael A. Castillo, Vice President
Hispanic Ministries &
Spanish Evangelism*





Your Year-End Giving Makes a Difference



Scan to Give Today!

Consider a Gift to One of the Following



Lake Whitney Ranch Development



Texas Adventist Community Services



Determined Education Scholarships

If you would like more information about how to support these or other Texas Conference ministries, not only now, but through planned gifts, contact our Planned Giving Representative today.

Planned Giving & Trust Services | PO Box 800 | Alvarado, TX 76009
Phone: 817.790.2255x2105 | Email: trust@txsda.org

J17:21





God's Greatest Gift

We all like to receive gifts. In fact, giving gifts is an important part of our human interaction. The act of giving and receiving gifts can help us form a strong bond and connection with individuals. Gifts are often given to express our love and appreciation, and remind others that we value the relationship that is shared. When we receive a gift, it makes us feel special.

When God gave His Son to save humanity, it was to demonstrate His love for us. John 3:16 is a Bible text most know: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." God's greatest gift was based on love! This gift is not like something that is made, bought or something tangible that can be given to our friends and family. Jesus is the ultimate gift.

The Bible tells us that Jesus was the Son of God, who came down from Heaven to give us the greatest gift any person can ever receive—the gift of eternal life. God's gift cost the life of Jesus Christ. The sacrifice of Jesus on

the cross was an example of generosity and selflessness.

Why did Jesus come to this world? He came to seek and to save us (Luke 19:10). He came to die for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3). He came to bear witness to the truth (John 18:37; 8:32, 36). He came to destroy the power and works of Satan (1 John 3:5, 8).

Jesus left His kingdom in Heaven to take on our human flesh. The first chapter of John tells us that Jesus came to be God with us. He was God in the beginning and He was God from the beginning (John 1:1). Everything was created through Him, and life and light belong to Him. He came to earth to give that light to us (John 1:9).

But the people did not recognize Him. Most didn't receive Him (John 1:11-12). The problem with this gift is that many people throughout history have left this gift unopened. Yet, to those of us who do receive Him, He gives us the right to be His children and reign with Him throughout all eternity (2 Timothy 2:12).

God has done everything possible to

give us the gift of salvation. We must accept it by inviting Him to come into our lives. We need to accept God's free gift of salvation.

How do you open God's gift and let Him into your life? John 1:12 (NKJV) tells us, "But as many as received Him (Jesus), to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."

Do you want to accept Jesus, God's greatest gift? It is a free gift to us.

By Lee-Roy Chacon, President



Amarillo Spanish Church Opened New School in 2022

AMARILLO, TEX. – Since its inception, the Amarillo Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church has dreamed of opening a church school. This past fall, that dream was fulfilled, and the Amarillo Seventh-day Adventist Christian Academy (ASDAA) opened its doors on Aug. 10. The school is now enrolling grades K-8.

As the pastor of this precious church, it was evident to me that God brought all the pieces of this project perfectly together. I was most amazed at how God led us to find and hire ASDAA's head teacher, Jean Turpen. During her interview, we knew she was exactly who we needed to take on the important task of teaching our students. Turpen is humble, a great teammate, she is open to learn and she shares our vision and values Christian education. Initially, we worried about how long it would take to find an Adventist head teacher. As many school administrators know, it can take months or even an entire school year to find individuals who are

available and/or are willing to relocate. It was wonderful to learn that Turpen was just around the corner! She is from Hereford, Tex., which is only 45 minutes from Amarillo. Turpen is a former 4-H leader and has taught for over 30 years. She was also a member of our sister church, the Amarillo English church many years ago.

The Amarillo Spanish church is grateful that God has led the launch of ASDAA from start to finish. He knew our desire to have an Adventist school in our community and He knew of

our need for Turpen long before we did. We praise the Lord for that! To date, ASDAA's school year has been successful, and we are looking forward to the many blessings that God has in store for our students, teachers and staff. There is nothing more satisfying than to see beloved children being prepared for a higher calling and getting ready for eternity.

By Carlos Arellano, Pastor



Odessa Women's Ministries Forges New Bonds

ODESSA, TEX. – On July 24, the Women's Ministries team from the Odessa Seventh-day Adventist Church hosted a fun tea and hat brunch. An invitation was extended to nearby churches, and a total of 27 women attended including seven from the Midland Seventh-day Adventist Church. The women sang

songs and Leida Gonzalez presented a devotional that focused on women and Christianity. The ladies had fun wearing their favorite hats and using lovely teacups. More importantly, they enjoyed the opportunity to meet new friends and fellowship with sisters in the church.

In October, the new friends bonded at the Texico Women's Retreat and have made plans to continue meeting and planning events that will foster spiritual growth and celebrate the group's diversity.

By Leigh McCallum



Texico Welcomes New Pastors and New Director



CORRALES, N.M. – The Texico Conference was pleased to introduce and welcome several new staff members in 2022. Most recently, Eric Chavez, pictured left with his wife, Shanna, joined the team as the new full-time youth, young adult and club ministries director. Chavez brings with him vast experience and passion for youth ministry.

Chavez and his wife Shanna are both natives of the Texico Conference as both were born and raised in Amarillo. Eric and Shanna left Amarillo in 2010 to pursue a theology degree at Southern Adventist University after which they pastored in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference and the Upper Columbia Conference for several years. The Wisconsin Conference then called Chavez to be the youth, young adult, club ministries and youth camp director where he served, along with Shanna, for more than six years. Shanna will continue

to support Chavez’s ministry and will serve as an assistant in the youth department. Eric and Shanna have been busy since their start and have a full schedule for the upcoming year with exciting Club and Youth Ministry events and activities.

“The Texico Conference is very grateful that God has led Eric and Shanna back to the Texico Conference,” said Phil Robertson, Texico Conference executive secretary/treasurer. “It is our prayer that God will bless them greatly as they continue to share their ministry gifts.”

Texico is also excited to welcome pastors, Ray House (pictured top right) and Samuel Garbi (pictured bottom right), as the newest pastors of the Texico Conference. House is serving the El Paso Central and El Paso Northeast churches and Garbi is pastoring the Lubbock church. Both Garbi and House

have an impressive background. Garbi has pastored in London, and in several churches on the East Coast. Most recently, he pastored a district in Southwest Wisconsin. Garbi is also a skilled and talented violinist who has won multiple awards. House has extensive pastoral experience and most recently he was president of the East Timor Union Mission in the South Pacific Division.

“We are happy to welcome each of these individuals and cannot wait to see how God will use their talents,” said Robertson. “We believe their skills, experience and passion for the things of God will have a real impact and will further our mission to expand God’s kingdom in our territory.”

*By Debby Márquez
Communication Director*

Pathfinder Club Food Drive Reaches the Community

ODESSA, TEX. – “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16 (KJV).

Meeting needs, improving morale and making the love of God known in our community was the goal behind a food drive that was hosted by the Odessa Seventh-day Adventist Pathfinder club early this year. The Light Bearers Pathfinders, led by Almyra and Andrew Padin, started the food drive initiative and joined efforts with church members through their donations. On Feb. 4, a vast amount of food and non-edible essentials were successfully handed out to the community by the

club members.

The activity was meant to train the youth for survivability during dire times and served as a great opportunity for them to see that they could be a blessing to individuals, families and communities in need. The Light Bearers learned that during His earthly ministry, Christ accomplished more by helping and healing than by preaching. He first addressed the immediate, physical needs of humanity to provide a groundbreaking foundation for the good news of the gospel to grow and flourish in people’s lives. Ellen G. White encourages us by saying, “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people.

The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”

This approach to outreach is what the Odessa Light Bearers Pathfinder club is emulating and pursuing so that the great Gospel commission in Matthew 28 is accomplished in this crucial time and the soon coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be hastened. Maranatha!

By Dodie Pelopero



Albuquerque Central Celebrates God's Greatness During VBS



ALBUQUERQUE - The Albuquerque Central Seventh-day Adventist Church held a weeklong Vacation Bible School in June. The theme for this year's session was "Monumental: Celebrating God's Greatness," which included Southwest decor, including desert plants, animals and vistas.

Each of the five days introduced a key Bible point and verse, an associated Bible story, and a Bible Buddy – one of the desert animal friends who brought God's wisdom in a way more relatable to the children. Each evening began and ended with a song service and

prayer for everyone in the sanctuary while attendees moved from station to station enjoying dramatic renderings of Bible stories, activities and crafts, games and snacks!

The program itself was a great success, with children of elementary and preschool age getting to know Jesus in a safe, friendly and inclusive environment. Children from families within and outside of the church participated, and everyone had fun! After the separation during the COVID-19 pandemic for the last couple of years, it was wonderful to make connections and share God's

love again especially in an interactive and educational setting.

Members of the Albuquerque Central church, both adults and teens, served as the staff and prepared for weeks so that the program would go off without a hitch. Amanda Dady led the team as the director, and her outstanding organizational skills made the tasks easier for the staff and the events more enjoyable for the kids!

By Steve Conyne

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. For information contact Megan Heidtbrink at Megan.Heidtbrink@ucollege.edu.

Stallant Health Rural Health Clinic is accepting applications for full time NPs, PAs or Physicians at our Crescent City, Calif., location. Competitive pay, benefits and ministry opportunity. Send CV to Marva at Marva@stallanthealth.com or call **530.637.4025 ext. 263**.

The General Conference of SDA is looking for individuals who are interested in using their talents and skills in a mission-oriented setting and who have work experience at all levels of Human Resources, Software development and technology, as well as TV and social media. Must be an SDA church member in good standing. For additional

information, contact Johanna Prestol-Dominguez at PrestolJD@gc.adventist.org.

Oklahoma Conference, Oklahoma City, is seeking applicants for an assistant treasurer for payroll. This is a full-time position with competitive compensation and a full benefits package. Please see the full job descriptions and instructions for application at OkAdventist.org/employment. For more information contact Charles Reel at CReel@okadventist.org.

REAL ESTATE

Summit Ridge Retirement Village, an Adventist community in a rural setting, offers affordable homes or apartments and caring neighbors, with a fellowship you will enjoy. On-site church, planned activities and transportation, as needed. On-site Wolfe Living Center offers independent living and nursing homes. Contact Bill Norman **405.208.1289** or visit SummitRidgeVillage.org.

MISCELLANEOUS

Move with an award-winning agency. Apex Moving & Storage partners with the General Conference to provide quality moves at a discounted rate. Call us for all your relocation needs! Adventist beliefs

uncompromised. Contact Marcy Dante at **800.766.1902** for a free estimate. Visit us at ApexMoving.com/adventist.

NEW/USED Adventist Books: TEACH Services helps authors publish their book, including editing, design, marketing and worldwide distribution. Call **800.367.1844** for a free evaluation. Visit LNFBOOKS.com for used books and your local ABC or TEACHServices.com for new book releases.

Don't just retire... live with purpose at Fletcher Park Inn.

An Independent Living Retirement Community, located on the campus of Fletcher Academy near Hendersonville, N.C. Join our family, take part in the many opportunities for staying active, volunteering, making new friends and living with a purpose. Call to find out more about our apartment and villa homes: **828.209.6930**. Ask for our marketing department or visit FletcherParkInn.com.

Come enjoy a 7-day Health and Healing Retreat with Wellness Secrets!

You may be dealing with some serious health challenges or you sense a need for change but as of yet haven't developed anything serious. For more information contact **479.752.8555** or email Contact@wellness-secrets.com.

ADVENTIST TOURS 2023. "Israel in Jesus' Steps," April 16-25 & June 4-13 with Andy Nash and June 18-27 with Clifford Goldstein; "Egypt & Exodus," April 6-14; "Revelation's Seven Churches/Patmos/Greece," March 22-April 2; "Tanzanian Safari," March 1-8; "Germany Reformation/WWII," June 16-28, 2024. For information contact Tabghatours@gmail.com, visit TabghaTours.com or call **423.298.2141**.

Obituaries

Cox, Donald Lee, born May 14, 1934, Farmington, N.M.; died Dec. 18, 1921, Siloam Springs, Ark. Church membership: Tontitown Seventh-day Adventist Group. Survivors: wife, Lucille Cox of Siloam Springs, Ark.; two sons, Ricky Lee Cox of Kernersville, N.C. and Russell Dean Cox of Gentry, Ark; two daughters, Robin Earlene Henshaw of Siloam Springs, Ark and Jennifer Lynn Rumsey of Gentry, Ark. and 13 grandchildren.

Gelbke, Elsie Neyrey, born July 26, 1926; died July 19, 2022. Church membership: Slidell Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by her parents, Joseph and Susan Davidson Neyrey; her husband, Casper, Sr. and

son, Kenneth. Survivors: son, Casper Phillip III; daughter, Susan Gelbke Durr; in-laws, grandson and many, many friends and church family members.

Grove, Rose Ann, born June 8, 1946, Clarksburg, W.Va.; died Aug. 27, 2022, Oklahoma City, Okla. Church membership: Oklahoma Conference Seventh-day Adventist Church. Preceded in death by parents Harvey and Ruby Wright; brothers, Howard and Robert; and, sister, Ruth. Survivors: husband, Rodney; son, Randy; daughter, Renee Pierce.

Hunnicut, Beverly Kay, born Feb. 9, 1975, Gravette, Ark.; died July 2, 2022, Neosho, Mo.

Lambeth, David Alonzo, born Sept. 20, 1941, DeQueen, Ark.; died Aug. 15, 2022, Burleson, Tex. Church membership: Beacon Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church. Survivors: three sons, Tim Lambeth of Hot Springs, Ark.; David Lambeth of Burleson, Tex.; Edmond Lambeth of DeQueen, Ark.; five daughters, Tina Lambeth and Debbie Lambeth, both of Dallas, Tex.; Maria Barlow of Tennessee; Jennifer Lambeth of Chicago, Ill. and Ashley Flowers of Joshua, Tex.; and 18 grandchildren.

Lovell, Patsy Ann, born March 21, 1940, Bentonville, Ark.; died April 5, 2022, West Siloam Springs, Okla. Preceded in death by her parents, Charles and Louelle McDougal; daughter, Deanna Lovell; husband, Leonard Lovell. Leonard Lovell, was the pastor of the Sulphur Springs Seventh-day Adventist Church for 21 years and Patsy was an active Pathfinder and Youth Leader in the church for many years. Survivors: daughter, Hannah Lovell of Decatur, Ark.; son, Jeffery Lovell of Baton Rouge, La.; brother, John McDougal of Bella Vista, Ark.; sister, Sue McDougal of Bentonville, Ark.; six grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.

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 and seven great-grandchildren.



Sam Barajas was beloved by all who knew him. Samuel was Sam's given name, but was known to his family as "Harpy". He loved the Lord and was a beloved son, brother, cousin, uncle, nephew and friend to all. His sense of humor made those around him smile and

his legacy and influence didn't come to an end with his death. He passed quickly and unexpectedly on Sept. 7, 2021, at the age of 43 in Portland, Ore. Sam was born in El Paso, Tex. in 1978 to Manuel Jesus and Mariaelena Barajas. He attended Rio Lindo Academy during his first two years of high school and graduated high school from Ozark Adventist Academy in 1998. He later went on to complete his bachelor's degree in social work at Southwestern Adventist University in 2002. After five years of working as a social worker in Phoenix, Ariz., he went back to school to complete a Master's degree in Social Work with an emphasis in administration. He graduated from Arizona State University in 2007.

Sam's passion was to help others. In 2014, he left his position at Magellan where he was the General Mental Health/Substance Abuse Program Coordinator, to accept a promotion and moved to Portland, Ore. His last position was with Providence Health Plan, A Division of Providence St. Joseph where he was responsible for leading the build of the entire behavioral health network for Providence with a team of six that he oversaw.

He was a talented artist, music composer and guitarist. He enjoyed being a praise and worship leader, as well as being the lead guitarist for many aspiring musicians and bands. The simplest pleasures in life brought great joy to Sam. He loved to laugh, spend time with his family, travel, play sports, bike, scuba dive and spend quiet evenings with friends. His pleasant personality was contagious to everyone he met. Sam is survived by his mother, Mariaelena; sister, Vickie; brothers, Manny, Dan, Joao and many aunts, uncles, cousins, his two nieces Kaley and Neena, nephew Alex and all his friends that loved him.



Southwestern Union, Southwest Region Conference, and Texas Conference present



abc

Christmas Special!

**Come
Adore
Him**

Join us for a live recording of the ABC Christmas Special on Saturday, November 12, 7:00pm
at the Inspiring Body of Christ Church (IBOC), 7701 S. Westmoreland Rd., Dallas, TX 75237.
The ABC Christmas Special, in collaboration with the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission,
will be shown nationally throughout the United States on ABC Television affiliates

Christmas Day, December 25, 2022

For more information and/or to view the television broadcast schedule in your area, please visit:

SOUTHWESTERNADVENTIST.ORG // SOUTHWESTREGIONSDA.ORG // TEXASADVENTIST.ORG



Elsie Castleberry Tyner, one of the oldest members of the Texas Conference, passed to her rest on June 8, 2022, in Longview. Tyner was born near Longview on Jan. 14, 1914. In 1919, her family moved to Dinuba, Calif., where, under the influence of her grandmother, she became a Seventh-day Adventist. The Castleberrys

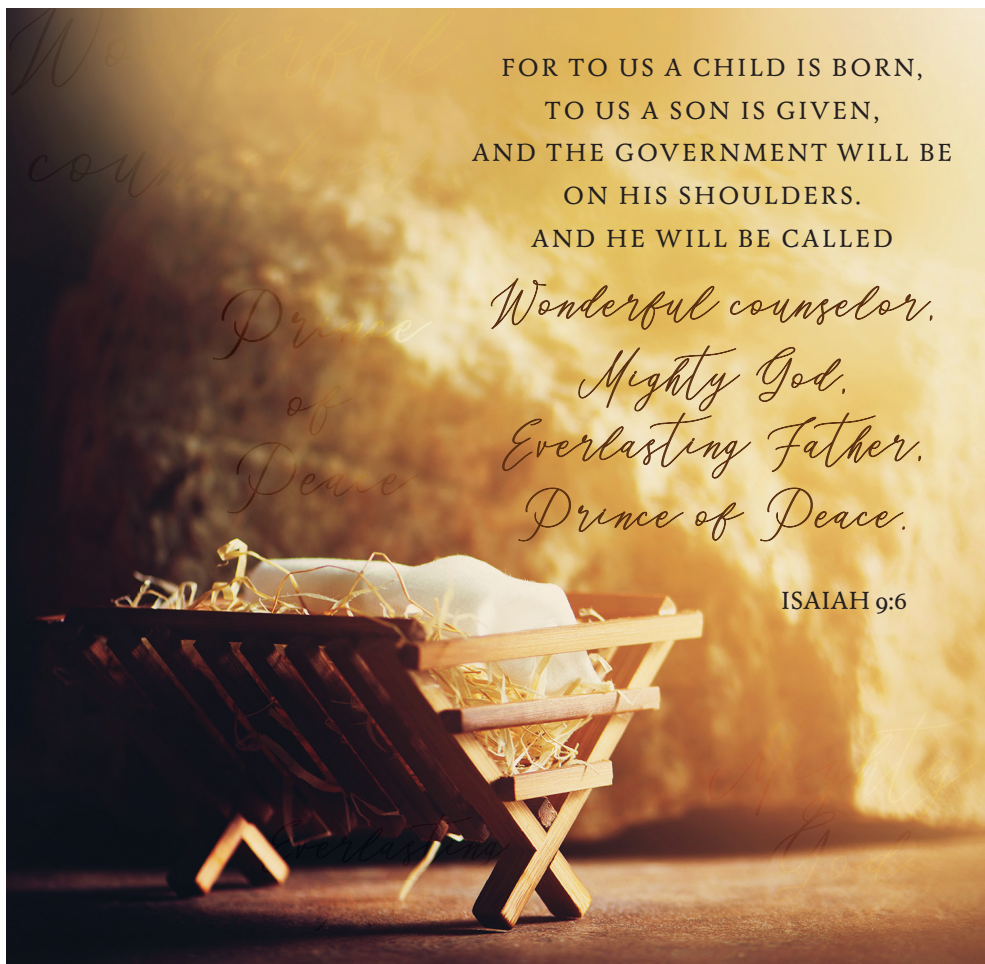
returned to Longview, the family home since 1872, in 1939. In the spring of 1940, she met Mike Tyner on a blind date and they married in October of that year.

During World War II, the Tyners moved to Shreveport, La., where Mike worked at the Louisiana Ordnance Plant. Following the war, Mike was the superintendent on the construction of numerous buildings in Shreveport,

including the Municipal Building and Convention Center. Later, he was in charge of the construction of the administration building at Ozark Adventist Academy, where Elsie served as his secretary and office manager.

During their years in Shreveport, both Mike and Elsie were members and held a variety of leadership offices in the Shreveport First Seventh-day Adventist Church and then the Shreveport South Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Following Mike's retirement, they moved back to Longview, where Mike passed away in 1998. They are survived by their son Mitchell and daughter in law Patsy, of Silver Spring, Md.



Submissions

Back Pages: To submit announcements, milestones, free or paid expanded obituaries or address changes, visit SWURecord.org or email Record@SWUC.org.

Advertising: For cost information and deadlines contact Bradley Ecord at BEcord@swuc.org.

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.

BE INSPIRED.



Download the brand-new AWR360° app!

Inspiration and a full media library at your fingertips!



visit: awr.org/apps



AWR360°
CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Adventist World Radio 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904

Let's Connect!

[awr360](https://www.facebook.com/awr360)

[awr360](https://twitter.com/awr360)

[awr.360](https://www.instagram.com/awr.360)

[awr.org/videos](https://www.youtube.com/awr.org/videos)

[awr.org/apps](https://www.awr.org/apps)

Record

Southwestern Union of Seventh-day Adventists
PO Box 4000, Burleson, TX 76097

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Org
US POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 1255
Liberty, MO



AdventHealth representatives kick-off international partnership during 2022 visit to Paraguay

Faith-based Care in Paraguay

Just a five-hour drive from the capital of Paraguay lies a small city called Hohenau. For almost 60 years, the Sanatorio Adventista de Hohenau has served the people of Hohenau by providing faith-based health care. But people from outside of the city have benefitted from the faith-based care of the hospital, and have come to really appreciate the service. That was the case with a couple from another town (pictured right). They loved the Christian, faith-based care they received at the Sanatorio Adventista de Hohenau so much that they were willing to drive two hours to come to this hospital.

The Sanatorio Adventista de Hohenau is one of two hospitals in Paraguay which make up the newest international partnership from AdventHealth Global Missions. Through these partnerships, AdventHealth can provide support and help to further their work so that others like this couple can benefit from quality faith-based care.



Learn more at [AdventHealth.com/AdventHealth-Global-Missions](https://www.adventhealth.com/adventhealth-global-missions)


AdventHealth