

SERVING SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS IN THE LAKE UNION SINCE 1908

# HERALD

MARCH 2024



"IT WAS A  
SECOND  
HOME  
FILLED WITH  
LAUGHTER  
AND LOVE EVERY  
SABBATH!"

UNTIL  
a pandemic  
EMPTIED THE PEWS.

THE  
BUILDING  
fell INTO  
DISREPAIR.

HOW THE  
DETROIT  
CENTER  
CHURCH WAS  
revived.





If you've been in the church long enough you've heard the term "right arm of the gospel" banded about. It's something I've been thinking about lately for a few reasons. For one, it's because of this month's dental clinic, a joint effort between AMEN medical ministry with Lake Region and Michigan conferences. How heartening it is to see our churches caring for their communities.

You may already be familiar with this information, but I found this bit of history, much of it tied to our territory, very interesting. Notice how healthy living paired with the gospel commission is in our DNA. In June 1863, the church's co-founder Ellen White had a vision in Otsego, Michigan, delineating the relationship between physical and spiritual wholeness. Her second vision, on Dec. 25, 1865, this time in Rochester, New York, laid out the case more clearly for health becoming a critical part, the "right arm," of the Seventh-day Adventist mission. She noted medical evangelism had the potential to reach people who could not be reached by other types of evangelism.

Enter John Tindall, a successful gospel-medical missionary evangelist whose work had a lasting impact on the Lake Union and beyond. He was the first person to answer the vision given to Ellen White on Feb. 27, 1910, to reach the cities through the formation of companies where "workers should labor two and two, and from time to time all should meet together to relate their experiences, to pray and to plan how to reach the people quickly." In his Indianapolis and Milwaukee meetings, he baptized 132 people in each place. His early efforts across North America resulted in nearly 1,000 baptisms.

However, his greatest achievements were not in the numbers he baptized but in an unheard-of retention rate of 75 percent to 90 percent. Forty years after evangelistic meetings in Wisconsin, Tindall visited the same Milwaukee church and the congregation still had 30 to 40 faithful converts from his initial campaign back in 1918.

Now here we are 161 years after White's vision connecting the spiritual to the physical and this important work continues in our region. Let's pray for the Detroit residents attending the March 10 dental clinic. Pray for our churches and members leading out. ■

Debbie



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## The Revival of Detroit Center Church

*By Danni Thaw*

COVER PHOTO: At Detroit Center Church's grand re-opening,  
Steve Bramwell baptizes Robert Averhart.

PHOTO BY CHRISTINA COLLARD

TELLING THE STORIES OF WHAT GOD IS DOING IN THE LIVES OF HIS PEOPLE

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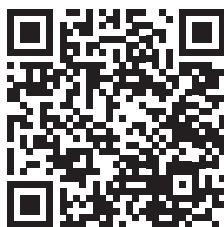
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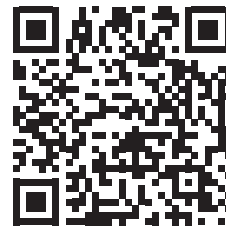
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# Evangelism is not Optional

AFTER BEING IN MINISTRY FOR 23 YEARS AND WORKING WITH SO MANY CONGREGATIONS THROUGHOUT NORTH AMERICA AND ABROAD, I HAVE DISCOVERED THAT MISSION-DRIVEN CHURCHES ARE ALWAYS CONCERNED WITH THE NEEDS OF OTHERS IN THEIR COMMUNITY. AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF MATTHEW 9:35-38 WILL REVEAL THE FIVE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES THAT WILL HELP KEEP CHURCHES ALIVE AND MISSION-DRIVEN.



▲ CLAVAL HUNTER

## Genuine Care for the Community

In Matthew 9:35, 36, notice that the compassion of Christ moves Him to action. Jesus was constantly moving from one community to another that was helpless, weary, and plagued with injustices. Like Christ, the church must care not only about a person's spiritual well-being but also for one's physical, emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Communities are more likely to respond favorably and trust a church that builds authentic relationships and shows a desire to comprehend their particular identities and needs. Building these relationships enables the church to integrate meaningfully into the fabric of the neighborhood, encouraging respect and trust between neighbors.

## Prayer and Dependence on God

To avoid utter failure, the church should never undertake any missional assignment without praying and trusting God's divine power. According to Matthew 9:38, God is seeking spiritual individuals who will stand in the gap for others, fight for their

rights, provide a protective hedge around the helpless and defenseless, work to destroy the strongholds of the devil, and release people from issues that are enslaving and have them gripped with fear. By praying and participating in God's mission, we will discover that it is invigorating and life-changing.

## Proclamation of the Gospel

Every church member must consider innovative ways to share the good news of Christ to draw individuals into the family of God. I have realized in my years of ministry that if a church is going to communicate the gospel message effectively, it must take the time to study the cultural, social, and linguistic context of the community. The gospel message should be clear, relatable, and relevant. Furthermore, developing relationships based on trust and empathy is essential for the effective proclamation of the Gospel. When people witness the gospel practiced in the lives of Christians, they are more open to it.



## Demonstrating God's Love Through Action

Seeing how God has demonstrated His love for humanity (see John 3:16 and Romans 5:8), Christians are to be some of the most generous people on planet Earth. For the past three years, my church, the Berean Transformation Center (BTC), has been actively involved in transforming lives in South Bend, Indiana. Through fasting and prayer, especially in 2023, we sought the miraculous, and miracles unfolded before us. As we mingled with our neighbors, nurturing loving relationships and addressing their needs, we were humbled to witness 40 new individuals baptized into the family of God. Demonstrating God's love for a broken world will always make a difference.

## Training and Equipping Lay Members for Mission in Their Ministry Context

Lastly, with so many people suffering from life's punishing blows and trying hard to cope with dashed dreams and disappointments, Matthew 9:38 reveals that God is looking for workers who have a zeal and self-denying love for souls as He does. Pastors and church leaders must understand that people will not be reached for Christ by great sermons. The best place to reach people is not in a church building. It's beyond the walls, in the communities where they are. Lay members should be rightly trained to actively participate in the community and serve as Christ's hands and feet (see Matthew 5:13-16). To ensure that lay members succeed in this mission, I suggest churches continue to offer support, mentoring, and accountability. For support, churches can contact Andrews University Center for Community Change ([www.communitychange.world](http://www.communitychange.world)). ■

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**Claval Hunter** is associate director of the Center for Community Change at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary on the campus of Andrews University.

► Berean Transformation Center members have been actively involved in transforming lives in South Bend, Indiana. Through fasting and prayer and mingling with their neighbors, 40 new individuals were baptized into the family of God in 2023.





# Money Management at Your Fingertips



▲ JERMAINE JACKSON

THERE ARE SOME EXCITING CHANGES TAKING PLACE WITH THE LAKE UNION REVOLVING FUND. BUT BEFORE WE GET TO THE NEWS, LET'S DISCUSS: WHAT IS THE REVOLVING FUND?

In 1993, the Lake Union Conference established an incredible ministry, a monetary fund called the revolving fund, which allows our members to take their personal finances and deposit them into this investment fund, receiving quarterly interest. Your local church can participate, as well. Now, this may seem like an ordinary savings account with your local bank, but there's nothing ordinary about it. By depositing into the revolving fund, your dollars are assisting local schools, churches, and even your local conference with ministry projects necessary to grow God's mission. Therefore, while your deposited funds are in an account receiving interest, those same funds are being used to help build a church or school in this Union territory. Talk about putting your money to work! Isn't that a form of stewardship?

However, that's only half of the amazing news. I am pleased to announce the soon arrival of the Lake

Union Revolving Fund online and mobile app. You'll be able to access your account from a computer or smart device. You can open an account, make deposits and transfers, track your history, even assign beneficiaries, all in minutes—anytime and anywhere. It's highly secure, using today's leading security standards to protect your information.

Stewardship is more than just giving money to your church. It's a financial way of life. It includes how you manage your money, savings and budgeting, planned giving (allocating your financial resources after death), and most importantly, honoring God with what He has blessed you with. By using your financial resources to deposit in the revolving fund, you're committing to saving money while gaining interest. At the same time, your funds are being used to help build and renovate churches and schools and other projects in the Union territory.

So, take the next step and partner with the revolving fund. Depositing your funds, maintaining access at any time, earning quarterly interest, above-typical savings accounts rates, all while allowing your funds to support and enhance local churches, schools and area conferences.

**NOTE:** For current depositors, important details have been sent to you regarding account and processing changes. New applicants must be 18 or older to sign up. Accounts for minors can be established with parental partnership. ■

*Jermaine K. Jackson is associate treasurer and stewardship director for the Lake Union Conference.*



LAKE UNION REVOLVING FUND  
**GOING PAPERLESS**



SO VERY  
thankful  
INCREDIBLY  
grateful  
UNBELIEVABLY  
blessed

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THE MOST AMAZING THING HAPPENED RIGHT HERE IN THE LAKE UNION. IN THE MIDST OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, THE TITHE FOR THE UNION INCREASED. AND IT CONTINUES TO INCREASE. WE ENDED 2023 WITH A 9.7% INCREASE IN TITHE OVER 2022 WHICH WAS ALSO A BANNER YEAR.

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It is still January as this is being written. At the beginning of this New Year, we want to pause and thank you, the members of the Lake Union, for your faithfulness in giving and your commitment to the special mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in proclaiming the Gospel and the Three Angels' messages.

We also recognize that your generous return of the tithe and giving of offerings represents the blessing of God in your lives. We join you in shouting praises to Him "from whom all blessings flow." ■

Sincerely,  
Kenneth Denslow, president  
Elden Ramirez, secretary  
Glynn Scott, treasurer

# Eliminating Hurry



▲ INGRID WEISS SLIKKERS

ALTHOUGH I AM TRAINED TO “BE A LISTENER” AS A LICENSED MENTAL HEALTH THERAPIST AND WORK AT THIS WITHIN MY PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS, I HAVE REALIZED OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS THAT I HAVE NOT BEEN PRACTICING THIS ART WITH THOSE CLOSEST TO ME— MY FAMILY.

After my husband and sons, respectfully but openly, said to me, “You are interrupting me” or “hear me out!” I recognized I needed to address this, and it was humbling. After all, I was supposedly trained.

In what I believed was a desperate desire to help, I found that I frequently interrupted them and barged forward with rapid questions and solutions so that ultimately, at least from my perspective, I am somehow helping.

With some prayer and intentional self-analyzing, I identified that when I am in my professional persona (or “working”) my interactions are different. I grasped that the reason I sometimes interrupt in my wife or mom mode is simply because I am in a hurry! I concluded that sadly my train of thought was “Let me just help you get to the point so I can help you and we can move on to the next thing because of so many things that I need to get done.” Does anyone share this with me?

In my busyness of managing errands, finances, medical issues, aging parents, and all the other

countless important things, I noticed that I am simply too frequently stretched to be able to listen, truly listen, to my loved ones.

Some of the pastors on my team at our trauma education center recently shared they had been reading a book by John Mark Comer, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, where he draws the reader to the concept that during his earthly ministry, Jesus was never in a hurry. Was He busy? Were there constant needs He needed to respond to? Resoundingly, yes! Yet, *He was never in a hurry*. Spending time with this concept has created some changes in my thinking and daily activities.

How am I altering some things? Firstly, I have openly encouraged my family to call me out and say, “Let me finish.”

Secondly, I am finding it helpful to ask, “Are you looking for comfort or solutions?” This is from a tweet that went viral in 2021 by Alexander James, who used it as a method of communication between him and his wife. Popular psychology has promoted this saying as it is implementable in multiple communication situations and with varying ages. I started using this short phrase shortly after I became familiar with it in talking with students or colleagues. Now I am committing to using it with those closest to me. I am finding that verbally asking this has caused me to pause and help me listen. It has surprised me that it is allowing me to slow down to be more fully present and intentional—and hopefully, more like Jesus—who wasn’t in a hurry. ■

**Ingrid Weiss Slikkers, LMSW, CCTP, CFTP**, is an associate professor in the School of Social Work and executive director of the International Center for Trauma Education & Care at Andrews University.





# Sum of All Parts

THOMAS WOLFE WROTE: “WE ARE THE SUM OF ALL OUR PARTS.” EVERY PART OF OUR EXPERIENCE IS IMPORTANT TO, AND HAS A PROFOUND EFFECT ON, THE OTHER PARTS—INCLUDING OUR HEALTH.



▲ LEE WHITMAN

Scripture breaks down the parts in Jesus’ life that made His “sum” so powerful: Luke 2:52: “...Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”

The four parts are: the mind (wisdom/learning), health (stature), a relationship with God (in favor with God), and our relationship with others (man). If we wish to be wholesomely healthy, shouldn’t we address all four of these areas?

In 3 John 1:2, we see that God is interested in our whole experience: “Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers.”

So, as you think about health, reflect on these four areas of your life:

- **Wisdom.** Renown mathematician Neelakantha Bhanu wrote: “To improve your brain health, you need proper nutrition, physical fitness, and mental exercise to develop and maintain cognitive health by increasing blood flow to the brain.” Ask God to help you apply what you learn to the life He has given you. This is wisdom.
- **Stature.** Take time to become familiar with your body, and learn how to better take care of it. In 1 Corinthians 10:31, Paul wrote: “Whether therefore you eat, or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.” We are to live for God’s glory, and this includes how we take care of our health, or bodies. In I Corinthians 6:19, he also wrote: “What? Don’t you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own?” He then follows with this amazing statement, in verse 20: “For you are bought with

a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

- **In favor with God.** How is your relationship with your Creator? Are you daily in vital connection with Him through Bible study and prayer? Ellen White, in the powerful little book, *Steps to Christ*, wrote: “...In order to have spiritual life and energy, we must have actual intercourse with our heavenly Father. Our minds may be drawn out toward Him; we may meditate upon His works, His mercies, His blessings; but this is not, in the fullest sense, communing with God, we must have something to say to Him concerning our actual life.” (93.1)
- **In favor with man.** Our relationship with others is important. “People who have healthy relationships are more likely to feel happier and satisfied with their lives. They are less likely to have physical and mental health problems. Healthy relationships can: increase your sense of worth and belonging and help you feel less alone,” according to EHealthDirect Australia.

So, let’s be more like Christ, and live a truly healthy, meaningful, and awesome life, for God’s glory. ■

*Lee Whitman is health director for Indiana Conference and pastors in La Porte and Michigan City.*

*Healthdirect article: <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/building-and-maintaining-healthy-relationships>.*





# Our Need of Christ



▲ DENIS KAISER

WHILE THE 1888 MINNEAPOLIS GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION CONSTITUTES A PIVOTAL MOMENT IN ADVENTIST HISTORY, SOME SAW THE NEED FOR A REFOCUS ON REDEMPTION THROUGH CHRIST YEARS EARLIER. IT APPEARS THAT JAMES WHITE WAS ONE OF THEM.

To illustrate a prevalent issue in the church, James White talked about a particular incident a few weeks earlier in the spring of 1880. A Methodist elder had traveled through Battle Creek and decided to attend the large Sabbath school group at the Dime Tabernacle. He had done the same already 7 years earlier and he got the impression that Adventists were discussing the same subject again, namely, the biblical end-time prophecies. James White doubted that the lesson really dealt with the same subject but acknowledged a possible underlying problem. “It is very possible that the prophecies, the sanctuary, and the messages have occupied time in our Sabbath-schools, a portion of which could have been improved to better advantage in teaching the practical lessons given by Jesus Christ and his holy apostles.” He added that by frequently covering the same doctrinal ground, Adventist ministers might become destitute of the life and power inherent in the various aspects of “the great scheme of human redemption.”<sup>1</sup>

A few months later, James White expressed his conviction that “we should write more for our periodicals on the theme which presses upon the mind constantly; namely, Christ the Way of life from Paradise lost to Paradise restored. We have sermons and books to write, and ask time to do that which presses on the mind as a neglected duty. If others think differently, ‘What is that to thee? Follow thou me’ [John 21:22]?”<sup>2</sup>

In mid-October 1880, he reasoned that during the early years of the church, “Bates, Andrews, Waggoner, Smith, and others” defended, in their sermons and writings, the Adventist position on “the law, the Sabbath, the sanctuary, and the last

message” against those opposing those points, yet over time Adventists may not have made the importance of Christ always sufficiently clear though, giving the impression that “the law and the prophets [were] of greater importance than Christ.” Therefore, he said, “Let him be exalted from the pulpit and from the press.” To exalt Christ more, they were planning to issue, first, a 600-page volume “on the life, teachings, and miracles of Christ, by Mrs. White,” made up from *Spirit of Prophecy*, vols. 2–4, and, second, “another volume, embodying our views of redemption through Christ,” entitled *Christ the Way of Life from Paradise Lost to Paradise Restored*, containing “a rich engraving” with the same name, to be sold by five hundred canvassers.<sup>3</sup>

Although those publishing endeavors may have died with James White in 1881, it appears that the printing of the engraving *Christ the Way of Life* (1883), J. H. Waggoner’s book *From Eden to Eden: A History of Prophetic Study* (1888) that included that engraving, and Ellen G. White’s single-volume *Life of Christ* (1885–1888), published in several foreign languages, and her masterpiece *Desire of Ages* (1898) were still intended to accomplish his goal. ■



<sup>1</sup> James White, “Beasts, Heads, and Horns,” *Review and Herald*, April 1, 1880, 216.

<sup>2</sup> James White, “Present and Future: And What Shall This Man Do?” *Review and Herald*, September 23, 1880, 216.

<sup>3</sup> James White, “Law, Prophets, Christ: What Our Opponents Think of S. D. Adventists,” *Review and Herald*, October 14, 1880, 248; James White, “Five Hundred Canvassers Wanted,” *Review and Herald*, October 14, 1880, 256.

**Denis Kaiser** is an associate professor of church history at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University.



# La Educación más Esencial

HACE YA MÁS DE CINCUENTA AÑOS QUE LLEGUÉ POR PRIMERA VEZ AL ESTADO DE MICHIGAN. AÚN RECUERDO LA ANSIEDAD QUE SENTÍA AL BAJAR DEL AVIÓN.

Por primera vez había volado solo y estaba por comenzar una nueva etapa de vida fuera del hogar en que había crecido en Nueva York. Al graduarme de la escuela secundaria, no tenía duda alguna que mi siguiente paso sería estudiar en una universidad. Había enviado solicitudes a tres universidades en el estado de Nueva York, y fui aceptado en las tres con becas que cubrían todos mis gastos. Sin embargo, mi deseo era estudiar en una universidad adventista.

Para muchos de los jóvenes adventistas que vivíamos en el estado de Nueva York la universidad adventista más cercana era *Atlantic Union College*. De manera que envié una solicitud allí. Esperé por bastante tiempo pero no recibí respuesta, lo que encontré extraño. Le comenté mi situación a otro joven adventista, y me dijo que había sido aceptado para estudiar en otra universidad adventista en el estado de Michigan. No había oído yo de la Universidad Andrews, pero les envié mi solicitud y en poco tiempo recibí la aceptación. Sin embargo, no me ofrecían becas como lo habían hecho las universidades públicas. Consulté con mi querida madre acerca de mi situación, y ella me dio ánimo con las siguientes palabras: “Ellos ofrecen una educación más esencial por ser una institución que enfatiza la educación cristiana. Ve allí a estudiar y Dios suplirá todas tus necesidades”.

De manera que llegué a la Universidad Andrews con pocos recursos financieros, pero sí con la confianza de que Dios me iba a bendecir. Al comienzo mi deseo era prepararme para ser médico misionero en algún país extranjero. Poco a poco me fui adaptando a vivir en el internado de jóvenes, a levantarme temprano y tomar clases como biología

y química. Pero lo que más me interesaba eran las clases de religión y las actividades de obra misionera en la comunidad en las que nos animaban a participar. Finalmente, después de tres años de estudio, decidí cambiar de carrera y seguir en la rama de ministerio pastoral. La realidad es que la decisión de estudiar en la Universidad Andrews cambió mi vida.

Estoy convencido que Dios estableció esta universidad con el propósito de ayudar a jóvenes a conocerlo y a crecer espiritualmente. Comprendo que existe la preocupación en cuanto a la parte financiera porque los costos aparentan ser altos. Quisiera informar a los lectores de este artículo que la Unión del Lago está en el proceso de desarrollar un plan junto con la Universidad Andrews para ayudar a los jóvenes hispanos a obtener el apoyo financiero que necesitan. Es mi deseo que los jóvenes de esta Unión aprovechen la educación más esencial que ofrecen las instituciones adventistas y que de esta manera puedan mantener su fe en Dios. Les agradecería que oren para que Dios nos dirija en los planes que se están desarrollando. ■

**Carmelo Mercado** es el vice presidente de la Unión del Lago.



▲ CARMELO MERCADO

▼ Jóvenes Hispanos celebrando su graduación de la Universidad Andrews en un servicio especial auspiciado por AULA (Andrews University Latino Association).





# Sharing Faith, Sharing Time

BY DELCY KUHLMAN

I'LL SHARE MY FAITH WITH OTHERS  
ON LIFE'S WAY.  
I'LL SHARE MY FAITH; THERE'S NO  
TIME FOR DELAY.  
WHEN JESUS CALLS FOR  
VOLUNTEERS, I'LL HASTEN TO OBEY.  
I'LL SHARE, SHARE, SHARE MY  
FAITH EV-'RY DAY!

Rayno Victor

From our seats high in the balcony, I recognized one man below on the platform. He wore a black suit and carried an accordion. He had visited my school. Now he was teaching us a new song, his own composition. In my 10-year-old mind, recognition meant friendship. Pastor John H. Hancock was my friend, and here we were, singing with many of the 10,000 Missionary Volunteers gathered for one purpose—to share our faith.

It had been a long drive from my family's home in Loma Linda to the 1948 North American Youth's Congress in San Francisco. As we set about mastering Pastor Hancock's catchy chorus, we couldn't have guessed it would soon be published in the *Singing Youth* and become one of our denomination's musical rallying calls for the next 50 years.

After the singing, various speakers addressed us. "Let your enthusiastic joy of salvation overflow to others," one speaker urged. "Bear witness by word and deed that you are 'not ashamed of the gospel of Christ,'" another counseled. A third charged us to "Live the truth, speak the truth, write the truth, and be willing to die for the truth." That one really troubled me.

Recently, some older, larger boys had stormed into my fourth-grade classroom during morning worship, demanding that we provide answers to support our beliefs. This disruption, a skit of sorts, was meant to impress upon us the urgency of memorizing key Bible texts. Now, listening to the Youth Congress speakers, fear returned. I didn't want to die for my faith—or for any other reason.

The belief and duty to share my faith followed me into adulthood. I remember the stresses of a particular Sabbath. Somehow, I got our five little ones dressed, fed, and ready for church. Once



there, I managed to keep them quiet through early church, then successfully delivered them to their respective Sabbath School rooms. Back in my own Sabbath School class, the personal ministries director encouraged us to take the new tracts he was holding and distribute them—that very afternoon! “People are hungry,” he insisted. “We need to feed them spiritually.”

Our family rushed home after church, gobbled down the lunch that I had left warming in the oven, and the smallest children were settled for a nap. Their father happily joined them, and after some bribery, the older children did too. Finally, I was free to leave my family and share my faith.

I knocked on doors for several blocks. The reception was varied. Some were welcoming. Others were less so. I don’t remember much from that afternoon other than a vague sense of internal satisfaction that I had fulfilled my Christian responsibility.

Years later, when our children were grown and in their own homes, my desire to share my faith led me to seek more knowledge and qualifications. I decided to become a hospital chaplain, a vocation requiring an extended unit of Clinical Pastoral Education and a graduate degree from the seminary. I completed both.

My early days as a chaplain were rewarding and challenging. I struggled to prepare and deliver Sunday morning worship services for any who might come to the hospital chapel when I was on duty. I was to share God’s love, offer comfort and support, but proselytizing was forbidden. I had always believed that sharing my faith meant trying to persuade others to become Seventh-day Adventists. Offering empathy, sympathy, and compassion at a patient’s bedside came naturally to me, but during those Sunday worship services, I worried that I might offend someone. “Sharing my faith” was not getting any easier.

While in seminary, I learned about spiritual companionship. I sensed God leading me to seek out that spiritual friend. I found a woman of strong faith and clear spiritual direction. We began meeting regularly. She helped me see that while I knew a lot about God, I really didn’t know God.

Seeking a sustaining relationship with the Divine, I reread *The Desire of Ages*. There I learned, “our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven’s chosen

agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; **but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience**” (p. 347; emphasis added). Suddenly, I realized that the tension I felt about faith-sharing had its origin in the tempter. I recognized that faith is intimately connected with how I live my life every day. It extends far beyond doctrines accepted since childhood. I kept reading, embracing Ellen White’s comments in a chapter discussing Jesus’s baptism: “The voice which spoke to Jesus says to every believing soul, ‘This is My beloved child, in whom I am well pleased’” (p. 113).

I still struggle with the nitty gritty of living. Life is difficult. Hope and trust only come through knowing that He sees me as His beloved daughter. I realize now that faith-sharing takes more than resolve and commitment. It takes time. Often it involves sitting with someone who is struggling. Asking for and offering spiritual companionship requires vulnerability. Trusting and sharing take time. For me, faith-sharing is a slow and steady process. It cannot be rushed or consigned solely to evangelistic imperatives from the pulpit. Faith-sharing is less about preaching and more about listening. It is less about instructing and more about relating.

To share faith, to share *anything* requires developing and exercising the mutual gift of knowing and being known. Jesus modeled this gift-giving and gift-receiving when he walked among us. He knew others. He spent time with them, so they could know him. Yes, I’ll do my best to “share, share, share my faith ev-’ry day,” as the old chorus urges, but instead of the anxious, hurried approach that “no time for delay” and “hasten” suggest, now I take my time. More importantly, I give whatever time another child of God may need. ■

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**Delcy Kuhlman** has called Southwest Michigan home since 1953. She enjoys reading, writing, gardening, and especially sitting with people and seeking God. She gratefully acknowledges writing and editing assistance from her friend, **Beverly Matiko**.

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I realize now  
that faith-  
sharing takes  
more than  
resolve and  
commitment.  
It takes time.





# The Gun That Would Not Sell

A WHILE BACK I WAS ON A FLIGHT HOME AFTER VISITING MY SON, SCOTT, AND HIS FAMILY IN GERMANY. THEY WERE ADVENTISTS AND VEGETARIANS AND DURING THOSE TWO WEEKS EATING VEGETARIAN I BEGAN FEELING BETTER PHYSICALLY. I HAD LEFT THE CHURCH 22 YEARS BEFORE BUT NOW FELT THE HOLY SPIRIT SPEAKING TO MY HEART. AN HOUR AWAY FROM LANDING IN CHICAGO, I DECIDED TO COME BACK TO GOD AND SURRENDER MY LIFE TO HIM.

As I re-started my Christian walk, I sensed hunting and killing animals was wrong. I decided to sell all my guns and become a vegetarian. All the guns sold the first week, except one. Which takes me to God's providence in my life and how it can affect people I never knew.

Scott's job with the army took him to a town by an army base in Hungary. The town had an Adventist church and my son got to know the pastor. There were four widows with children in that church who needed help.

It was in May, a month after my last gun did not sell, that I decided to give it to God to help the widows and children that Scott told me about. In early June, there was a knock at my door. It was a friend and the first thing he asked me was, "Have you sold that gun yet?" Before this visit he had looked at the gun and decided he did not want it.

"I did not sell it," I replied.

"How much you want for it?" he asked.

"Two hundred" I said, to which he countered, "How about \$175?"

"I would have taken that for it before," I told him, "but I've dedicated the gun for the needy widows and children in Hungary."

He didn't argue and paid me the \$200, plus added another \$100 for the widows, for a total of \$300.

Scott was living near Frankfurt, Germany, and I contacted him right away to let him know I had \$300 for the widows and children he met in the Adventist church in Hungary. The challenge would be getting the money to Hungary since he only went there when the army's equipment broke down or needed service.

From June, and every month after, I asked him about getting the money to the widows and children; his answer was that he was still looking into it. When December came, I told him I wanted to get the money to the widows before Christmas. He told me to send the money to him by check and added that he and his wife were going to double the amount, for a total of \$600. He said that he did not know when his job would take him to Hungary again but when he returned, he would get the money to the pastor. I left it up to God to get the money to the widows by Christmas.

On Dec. 20, Scott's boss called him into his office and said that he wanted him to leave for Hungary the upcoming Sunday, Dec. 22. When my son called me with the news, I praised God! On his arrival in Hungary, he settled into his hotel and then headed to the Adventist church. The pastor was not there. Scott



Sue LaPoint

▲ Mike sensed hunting and killing animals was wrong. "I decided to sell all my guns and become a vegetarian." This decision set in motion a series of faith-building events in his life.

happened to have his number and called to let him know he had \$288,140 forints, the equivalent of U.S. \$600, for the church's widows and children. What the pastor said next proved God's timing is perfect.

The pastor asked, "Do you know where I am right now?" He continued, "I am at one of my widow's homes and we were on our knees having prayer asking God to help her and her children." If you know nothing about Hungarian winters, they are about the same as in Michigan. All this widow had were shoes made of plastic which did not keep her feet warm.

Earlier that morning, before the pastor showed up, two colporteurs selling books had knocked on her door and she told them she was an Adventist. They had prayer for her and her children. She had a pot of soup on the stove that she had just made and shared it with them.

"I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begg-  
ing bread." (Psalm 27:25, KJV)

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." (Matthew 7:7-8, KJV)

Friends, don't stop trusting God. He is faithful! ■

**Mike Lambert** is a member of the Manistee church in Michigan. He and his wife, Dotti, are the Personal Ministries leaders and have presented healthy weight loss seminars for 26 years.





# FROM CONDEMNED TO CORNERSTONE

HOW THE  
**DETROIT  
CENTER**  
CHURCH WAS  
*revived.*

The day of Detroit Center Seventh-day Adventist Church's long-awaited reopening in January 2024 was one of the coldest days in memory. Inside the unassuming beige brick one-story building, a familiar sense of warmth and fellowship filled the air, a welcomed contrast to the frigid bite of winter.

BY DANNI THAW

PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA COLLARD  
AND JASON GLOUDON



The praise team led the congregation in songs of gratitude, restoration, and resilience. A chorus of “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms,” could be heard down the quiet street. It had been almost four years since anyone worshiped there on Puritan Avenue.

More than 90 smiling faces reflected the light of a spiritual home reborn. Worshippers from Pontiac, Flint, and Saginaw churches helped to fill the pews alongside the remaining Detroit Center members and a few new converts. The congregation buzzed with a renewed sense of faith, connection, and purpose.

With the support of his wife and former church members, Pastor Steve Bramwell had helped steer the church through a transformative period of outreach and rebuilding. Assigned in early 2023 to lead both Pontiac Southside and Detroit Center churches, Pastor Bramwell hustled between pews greeting congregants and ensuring everything was in place.

“Who’s excited to be back here?” asked Charles Branch, an elder from the Pontiac Southside church. “This building is a metaphor. It doesn’t look how it used to look. We don’t look how we used to look.”

The pandemic had emptied the pews of Detroit Center. The building fell into disrepair.

Although the building had reopened, the long road back had not been easy. And with only 10 to 15 members in the post-pandemic era, Detroit Center has its hands full with the effort to repopulate the pews with new members.

#### A SMALL CHURCH FAMILY

Before the shadow of COVID-19 fell, Detroit Center Church thrived as a close-knit family. Every week, 50 to 70 members gathered — bound not just by faith, but by deep, interwoven personal histories.

A small church body, in a small church building. Many of the members knew each other for decades. Many of them were related.

This was a place where generations had grown, celebrated, and mourned together — from dedications and weddings to funerals.

“It was like a second home, filled with laughter and love every Sabbath,” said Shelia Johnson who grew up there with her three brothers.

For Shelia and many others, the church was more than a building; it was the people. It was a home. She was married there. Her children were dedicated there. When her father passed away, the church was the venue for the funeral.

“This church means everything to me and my family,” she said.

Myrtha Pettiway, a Detroit native and lifelong member, echoed this sentiment. She has been going to Detroit Center for over 50 years — since she was 9 years old.

“Before the pandemic, we weren’t just a church; we were a family,” Myrtha said. “Every face was familiar, every story shared.”

As Myrtha reminisced during divine service, her daughter Tawana Pettiway busied herself in the kitchen preparing Sabbath lunch. The menu included vegetarian prime steak, green beans, rice, macaroni, salad, warm rolls, and more. No one was leaving the reopening hungry.

“When my mom passed away in 2022, I felt so supported,” Myrtha said. “Everyone at Detroit Center was sweet and loving. A lot has changed since I was younger — but here, that’s a good thing.”

For lifetime members like Shelia and Myrtha, Detroit Center church was not just a building, but the heart of their community. Its restoration wasn’t only wanted, it was a deep need.

Detroit Center represented decades of shared memories, faith, and the spirit of a family that had weathered life’s storms together.





### QUARANTINED, CLOSED, CONDEMNED

Multiple weekend winter storms tormented the Detroit Metro area in February 2020. Church was canceled, and members weren't happy. As Detroit residents, they were used to venturing out despite several inches of snow on the ground.

The contentious decision to cancel the church service due to a snowstorm foreshadowed the impending isolation the pandemic would bring.

When the COVID-19 pandemic swept through the globe in March 2020, it devastated Detroit Center church in its wake. The virus, indiscriminate and ruthless, tore through the fabric of the congregation, claiming the lives of key, lifelong members and forced doors shut.

"I was scared when COVID hit," said Myrtha, a lifelong member. "We didn't know what was going to happen to our small church family."

The loss of cherished members — a head deacon, a beloved aunt, and a cornerstone senior citizen — left a palpable void.

"The pandemic was devastating for our church," said Toson Knight, elder and lifelong member. "We lost key members, including my aunt who led women's ministry and AY for years. This was a major loss for a small, family-oriented church like ours."

Communities all around them reeled and suffered. The four counties encompassing the Detroit Urban Area, Wayne, Macomb, Oakland, and Detroit city, reported a staggering 19,000 COVID-related fatalities to date, according to Michigan Disease and Surveillance System and Vital Records.

The church, too, found itself in a state of desolation.

"The building was completely condemned when my family and I were reassigned to this district [in early 2023]," said Bramwell. "It needed a lot of work to be operational."

The church's structure, already aged, deteriorated further with time. Hidden asbestos and a collapsed air conditioning unit, which led to a caved-in roof, marked the decline. This damage ushered in the unforgiving elements. Soon, moisture crept in and created an environment where mold began to spread.

"It was heartbreaking watching your home fall apart," said Shelia. "I felt helpless. I wasn't sure what to do or what we could do. It was heartbreaking seeing the church I loved in this condition."

The church's attempts to pivot to virtual sermons captured only a fragment of the congregation as the devastating impact of the pandemic became apparent.

"Virtual church services had its benefits," explained Shelia. "We were still able to receive the Word. But it was different. With virtual church comes a certain level of comfort with staying at home."

A decline in church membership and attendance was not unique to Detroit Center. The closure echoed a broader nationwide trend.

Pew Research Center's data showed a slight nationwide decline in monthly religious attendance, with in-person participation dropping from 33% to 30% post-pandemic.

A large number of Black churches struggle to attain pre-pandemic membership and giving levels. Drops in attendance, finances, and clergy wellbeing were especially pronounced for Black churches, according to a





January 2024 study by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research.

While 65% of white congregations say their finances stayed the same or improved since 2018, only 50% of Black churches could say the same.

Detroit Center, a once-warm church family—resilient in the face of even the heaviest snowfalls—found itself grappling with unprecedented silence.

Now charged with the task of reopening the doors of Detroit Center, Bramwell faced the challenge of reaching a community hungry for connection and guidance.

But it wouldn't be easy. The needs of the community were great and his manpower was limited.

#### A COMMUNITY IN NEED

Bramwell is no stranger to communities in dire need. When he stepped into the role at Detroit Center, he brought with him not just hope but a blueprint for revival honed through years of ministry under trying circumstances.

With God's guidance, he pastored a church in Flint, Michigan, at the height of the water crisis in 2014. He then led that congregation through the pandemic before being reassigned to serve both the Detroit Center and Pontiac Seventh-day Adventist churches last year.

His time in Flint during the water crisis and pandemic taught him to remain flexible and to pool resources for cost-savings and the greater good. Detroit now presented its own challenges that demanded faith.

Detroit is the most populous city in Michigan. But many of its residents live in poverty. Detroit has a poverty rate of roughly 30%, nearly three times higher than the national average. Here, the child poverty rate is even higher, at more than 43%.

So Bramwell took a data-driven approach to meeting the needs plaguing those near the church. He found a database which scraped demographic information from the Detroit

census. The data showed a need for access to children's clothing, haircuts, healthy food, and medical check-ups and information. The "Seven Touches in Seven Sabbaths" approach, which Bramwell had refined over the years, became his strategic cornerstone for Detroit Center.

His demographic data allowed him to tailor his outreach events to the needs of the community. But since Detroit Center was closed, Bramwell needed space to host his program. He received permission from Cornerstone Lincoln High School to use their parking lot for a series of community-focused events.

For four Saturday afternoons between July and August 2023, the church transformed the high school parking lot into a hub of outreach and community support. Bramwell seized the good weather as an opportunity to grow his flock by connecting with the community in a tangible way.

Bramwell, alongside his family and congregants from Detroit Center and neighboring churches in Pontiac, Saginaw, and Flint, hosted weekly health fairs, back-to-school rallies, sneaker giveaways, and food distributions. Across all three locations plus Detroit Center, the team distributed more than 300 backpacks and sneakers to families in need.

It wasn't easy — the giveaways were attended by hundreds of community members. Bramwell and the team were stretched thin. Although they planned to do seven touchpoints, manpower limitations only allowed them to do four.

Despite the challenges, particularly the scarcity of volunteers to lead Bible studies, the community programs were a beacon of hope, signaling the rebirth of a church community determined to rise from challenges and tribulation.

Bramwell's research also revealed that around 500 to 700 children were born in the area after March 2020.

"It's simple: Hundreds of newborns means that our community needs diapers,"

"GOD TOLD ME IT WAS TIME TO RECONNECT WITH HIM. IT'S ABOUT COMING BACK TO CHRIST. THAT'S WHAT I BELIEVE, AND THAT'S WHAT DETROIT CENTER REPRESENTS TO ME. I'M HAPPY TO BE PART OF THIS SMALL CHURCH FAMILY."

-MIKE FOGLE





explained Bramwell. They bought and distributed hundreds of diapers during the Seven Touches in Seven Sabbaths program between July and August 2023.

Detroit Center has continued the diaper distribution every second and fourth Sabbath.

“The goal is to make sure the community views us as a reliable resource,” said Bramwell. “We meet their needs, following the blueprint that Christ laid out.”

Bramwell’s strategy to rebuild focused on acts of service to touch hearts and showcase Christ’s love. It was a reflection of the profound kindness once shown to his own family decades earlier by Elder Peter Leonce and Sister Sarah Peterson. These Bible workers stepped in to support him and his young family in a time of great need.

“When my father-in-law passed away in Jamaica, we couldn’t afford the plane fare to fly from New York to attend his funeral. My wife, Shyenn, was devastated,” recalled Bramwell.

“But for the first time in my life, I saw Christ when those Bible workers volunteered to pay for our plane tickets. We didn’t ask. They saw our need, and they met it,” said Bramwell. “I learned that day that you can speak about Christ’s love, but people need to see it. In ministry, it’s that simple. We’re here to actually show people Christ.”

For Bramwell, this act of generosity not only opened his heart to the teachings of Christ but also instilled a profound understanding of ministry as primarily an act of service to those in need.

The success of the touchpoints was measured not just by the goods distributed or services rendered but by the names gathered for follow-up and Bible study, marking the beginning of new spiritual journeys for many.

## THE LOVE OF CHRIST IN ACTION

Now months later, it was a frosty January morning in Detroit. The grand reopening was just days away — set for Jan. 20.

There was still much to do before 11 a.m. divine service.

The once-condemned building now echoed with sounds of renewal, revival, and restoration. Hammers knocked, drills buzzed, and vacuum cleaners hummed.

Pastor Bramwell and his wife, Shyenn, were leading a team of eager volunteers through cleaning and preparing the church for the first Sabbath service in almost four years.

Volunteers like Glenda Mosley, Bobby Porter, Danny Watley, and Carol Conner were there to help. Carol and Bobby, active Flint church members, dusted and vacuumed the sanctuary. In the next room, Mike Fogle, once imprisoned due to choices in his past, worked tirelessly to finalize construction in the room that would soon host Sabbath lunch.

Just six months prior, Mike sat at the local police station for a program. An officer noticed his infant daughter and told him about a church giving away diapers to families in need.

Mike wanted the diapers, so he told his wife about it. He had no way of knowing he would become integral to that church building’s restoration.

“I’ve never experienced church outreach like that before,” said Mike. “I told my wife Ayisha about the free diaper program so she could get some for our youngest daughter, Honesty.”

Although they ran out by the time Ayisha arrived, Bramwell followed up and made a house call to deliver not only diapers, but new Nike sneakers for their 11-year-old son, Robert.

“He brought us diapers, clothes for the baby, and shoes for my son,” said Mike. “We developed a relationship with the pastor.”

Before long, the couple began Bible study with Bramwell.

“He would have us do different readings, and he made sure we understood everything,” said Mike. “We received so much help and counsel from him. I learned more about God and the love of Christ. Eventually, we started to ask him where the church was.”

But Detroit Center was still not operational — the building needed repair. Bramwell let them know it would open eventually; the building was currently under construction.

“I’m licensed to support home improvement projects,” Mike volunteered. “I’ve done a lot of remodeling work, so I told the pastor that this is what I know how to do if you need help.”

For Mike, this was an opportunity to get further connected to the church community that had helped his family. He didn’t take it lightly.

That’s how within six months of meeting Bramwell, Mike was among the team of busy volunteers preparing the church for reopening.

“This means a lot to me,” Mike explained. “They believed in me and came out of their comfort zone to trust me to come into their home. They’ve invested their time and money into this building, and it feels good to be trusted.”

Through consistent community connection, Bramwell and his small but mighty team of congregants showed the love of Christ in action.

His team helped meet the needs of people like Mike who found both a new spiritual home and a place where he could meaningfully contribute, rebuild, and find redemption.





Bramwell's vision for the church's future was clear and ambitious. He saw beyond the immediate restoration, envisioning a new facility that would not only serve as a place of worship but as a vibrant community service center.

He successfully secured a \$200,000 grant from the state to support afterschool programs in Pontiac and Flint. Motivated by this, he now seeks to replicate this success at Detroit Center.

### REBUILT AND RESTORED

In keeping with the theme for the year, rebuild and restore, Shelia Johnson, a life-long member, stood on the day of the grand reopening to share a heartfelt presentation. Her voice, laced with emotion, spoke of the church's journey through painful years.

"Church is more than receiving the Word," said Shelia. "It's about fellowship, connection, and being the arms and legs of Christ in the community."

And as Pastor Bramwell delivered his sermon, titled "God Restores," he drew parallels between the biblical promises of renewal and the church's own story of revival. The congregation listened intently, with Mike among them. His presence was a powerful symbol of the church's mission actualized.

The Sabbath service culminated with an altar call, a poignant moment as Mike stepped forward.

In many ways, Mike's journey mirrors the church's path to restoration. His family is a reminder of the grace of God and His ability to use the church body to touch lives.

Mike's hands, once marked by the challenges of his past, had actively contributed to the church's future and physical renewal. And now he was preparing to embrace a new beginning.

The Sabbath after the grand reopening, Mike and his entire family were baptized. And a week later, Bramwell baptized 10 more new believers into the church.

"No one is perfect," said Mike. "But God told me it was time to reconnect with Him. It's about coming back to Christ. That's what I believe, and that's what Detroit Center represents to me. I'm happy to be part of this small church family."

As the service drew to a close, a benediction by the pastor's wife, Shyenn, reminded everyone that the day's celebration was not an end but a beginning.

The church, once on the brink of being forgotten, now stands as a symbol of hope and help to the community they serve.

"Meeting people's needs opens their hearts to Christ," said Pastor Bramwell. "Once the heart is open, it provides a pathway for us to introduce Christ's love and teachings. That's what Detroit Center is focused on." ■

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**Danni Thaw** is a freelance writer and alum of Andrews University.





# “Miracle Patient” Experiences Phenomenal Recovery

**THE TERM “MEDICAL MIRACLE” IS SOMETIMES USED TO DESCRIBE ANY SITUATION IN WHICH THE PATIENT’S OUTCOME DEFIES THE ODDS. BUT 42-YEAR-OLD AARON CENGIZ AND THE MEDICAL STAFF AT UCHICAGO MEDICINE ADVENTHEALTH BOLINGBROOK BELIEVE THAT HE IS ALIVE TODAY BECAUSE OF A REAL MIRACLE.**



Beth Kraft

▲ Aaron Cengiz (left) and Elizabeth Kraft, RN, (right) walked together in the 2023 American Heart Association Heart Walk at the DuPage County Fairgrounds in Wheaton, Illinois.

In late June 2022, Cengiz, a father of six and an avid runner, was on a run with his dog when he rolled his ankle badly. A few weeks later, he thought he might have COVID-19 because of his incessant cough. He also began experiencing severe pain in the back of his knee. He made an appointment to take a COVID-19 test, but when he went to get tested, he felt dizzy and light-headed, and had difficulty breathing. He called his wife, Tami, but his breathing worsened. Then he called 911 and started to pray.

After he was admitted to the hospital, Cengiz’s oxygen level was determined to be dangerously low at 79 percent despite being at 100 percent oxygen.



Aaron Cengiz

▲ “Miracle Patient” Aaron Cengiz is back to running and cycling after suffering a pulmonary embolism that caused his heart to stop multiple times in July 2022.

“My breathing got worse, and I actually thought: This is it. I am going to die here,” Cengiz said. At that point, the staff sedated him and that is all he remembers for a long time.

Cengiz’s lungs were full of clots that had developed after his ankle injury, and the clots were causing a massive pulmonary embolism. He was taken to the Interventional Radiology Lab where doctors used the Inari device, which removes clots from the bloodstream and then filters the blood and returns it to the patient. The device successfully removed the clots, but Cengiz’s heart stopped twice during the procedure. “There was significant improvement with no more clots

present. But his heart had just had enough,” said Elizabeth Kraft, RN, manager of Cardiac Services at the hospital.

After the procedure, Cengiz was moved to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) for monitoring. The doctors talked to Tami and explained to her that Cengiz’s heart was failing and even if he survived, he might suffer permanent brain damage because his brain had been deprived of oxygen. “We were not hopeful he was going to recover,” said Dr. Ali Bawamia, who noted that Cengiz nearly died again in the ICU.

When the medical staffers who had worked with him on Friday night checked on him Saturday morning, they feared the worst. But the staff found that not only had Cengiz survived, but he had improved considerably.

“We became hopeful,” Bawamia said. “I was very emotional. It is one of those cases I cannot forget. As human beings we do the best we can. But sometimes it takes intervention from above.”

Cengiz’s progress continued. He woke up fully on Sunday evening, and by Monday morning he was off the ventilator. Amazingly, the medical team could not identify any lingering issues from his near-death experience. A week later, he was home.

“Sometimes in health care, we need a miracle to keep us going, to remind us why we do what we do,” Kraft said. “This man walked out of the building because of our amazing work as a team and by the grace of God!”

Cengiz also believes his recovery was miraculous. “I felt like God had used these professionals as instruments in His hands to perform this miracle,” he said. ■

**Julie Busch** is associate vice president, marketing and communications for UChicago Medicine AdventHealth.



**UChicago Medicine**

**Advent Health**

# Chased by Fate, Embraced by Faith

**IN THE CORRIDORS OF ANDREWS UNIVERSITY, ONE ANONYMOUS STUDENT'S STORY OF FAITH, RESILIENCE, AND SURVIVAL EMBODIES THE GLOBAL MISSION OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION, TO SAVE LIVES.**

John Doe's\* journey began in a politically turbulent country, where his father, a principled chaplain and influential military figure, bravely stood against government corruption. But this stance soon brought dire consequences to their family.

In a cruel twist of events, an orchestrated ambush decimated his family.

"My father's enemies attacked while he was away," shared John. "One Sabbath afternoon, my mother and all but one of my siblings were killed in a secret ambush."

John barely escaped.

"I fled with my surviving brother to a nearby country," said John. "We lived on the street in fear until we were imprisoned. My father soon found us and took us home."

Undeterred by the tragedy, his father's integrity never wavered, even when tempted by

the lure of wealth and power. His refusal ignited the wrath of his colleagues, who branded him a spy and catapulted his name to the top of a hit list.

"My father made plans for us to leave the country, but he was betrayed," said John. "I hid, but I was eventually found, arrested, and thrown in prison for eight months."

John faced the grim reality of execution. But God prepared a way for his miraculous escape.

"When the time came for my execution, God delivered me. I walked for five months until I found somewhere that seemed safe."

God's guiding hand led him to a local Seventh-day Adventist school. But danger loomed, as investigators, like hounds on a scent, came perilously close to finding him. Thinking it best for his safety, a school administrator urged him to flee.

It was then that Andrews University emerged as his next option, a place of peace and refuge.

Together with Stephen Payne, special assistant to the president, pastors and government officials facilitated a partnership between Andrews and the government.

Signed in February 2021, this agreement offered an annual \$14,000 scholarship to qualified students and a 50% discount on most graduate tuition.

"This partnership offered John a beacon of hope," said Payne. "We created a combination of tuition discounts and scholarships from various donors."

John was able to pursue his graduate studies at Andrews.

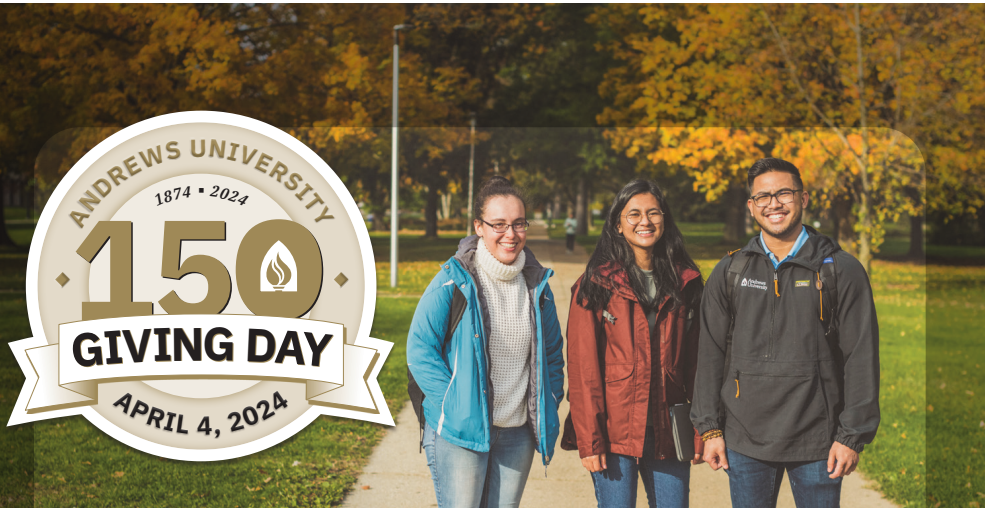
"John's committed to using his studies to be a World Changer," said Payne. "He's focused on helping others who endured heartbreaking experiences and loss."

"I had no family and nowhere to go," said John. "God used Andrews University to save my life."

The generous support of the university's community saved a life, restored a future, and etched a story of faith into the legacy of Andrews University. ■

*\*name changed to protect identity*

*Andrews University alum Danni Thaw is a freelance writer.*



## Join Us For An Historic Celebration!

Celebrate AU's 150th anniversary by making a difference on Giving Day, April 4, 2024.

Let's ensure that Andrews continues to educate and inspire future generations to faith, mission, and service for another 150 years.





▲ Through stories and scripture, Jerry and Janet Page reminded the prayer retreat attendees to take time to dwell in God's Word, pray praises along with requests, and talk with Him throughout the day.

# Illinois Prayer Retreat Ignites Spiritual Experiences

**PRAYER IS POWERFUL. SPEAKERS JERRY AND JANET PAGE SHARED THIS CLEARLY AT THE ANNUAL ILLINOIS CONFERENCE PRAYER RETREAT AT CAMP AKITA FROM OCT. 13–15, 2023.**

The Pages are passionate about knowing Jesus and seeing His power unleashed through prayer. They retired in June after 12 years with the General Conference. They traveled together for the world church, with Jerry Page serving as ministerial secretary and Janet Page as associate ministerial secretary for Prayer Ministries and Pastoral Families.

At Camp Akita, the Pages fulfilled the theme, “Ignite Your Spiritual Experience,” by sharing stories of how God led in amazing ways during the twists and turns of their personal lives, including how God brought them together. Many of their experiences clearly exhibited God's abiding love and direction.

Their teaching was refreshing. Through stories and scripture, they reminded us to

take time to dwell in God's Word, pray praises along with requests, and talk with Him throughout the day. Building this strong relationship, and taking time to listen, makes it possible to hear God's voice, feel His guidance through Scripture or even through dreams. He will talk to us.

They addressed the hard part – sharing with others. By asking God to help plan our own approaching words, and give us courage, it is easier and gets easier each time. If we ask God to put someone in our pathway, it will happen. And always have small tracts to give.

The Pages have ministered to people in abusive relationships, in health crises, and in spiritual challenges. No matter how much

physical or emotional pain, God is there, they said. So often He turns a trial around to where good things happen. “God never wastes your pain.” He will orchestrate something good, often better, to come from it.

The Pages emphasized the importance of sharing all burdens with Him, no matter how small. But also, to have big visions. Prayer is powerful. They encouraged the audience to pull our church community together in prayer, and watch God make things happen.

## Testimony of Small Church Receiving Big Answers to Prayer

One of the most amazing testimonies came from the Stewardson church that only has 10 active members. One of the members had a big vision – to have a Christian radio station. Two years ago, another member mentioned it to her cousin who works for Strong Tower Radio in Michigan. He offered to help. Facing an estimated cost of \$25,000, they began to pray and share the vision with family and friends. This year the cost went up to a whopping \$45,000. Prayers continued. In early summer, when \$10,000 from the new goal, they received two unexpected large donations. With an additional \$5,000 from the Illinois Conference, their big dream is about to come true. Another incredible miracle: The FCC hadn't had an open radio slot in this area in 10 years—and then one opened up. It's all in God's timing.

This retreat was “a mountaintop experience,” said Ivys Ramirez.

Sandee Siddel was reminded not to ever give up – sometimes answers to prayer take a long time, even years.

“Prayer is incredible, prayer is powerful,” said Cheryl Frieze. “To come together is an amazing thing. With Jesus, amazing things can happen.”

“When we pray, don't always pray alone,” Dan Joyce learned. “Come together in a community of people. God can speak to us through others.”

Other key takeaways mentioned by those in attendance:



▲ Jerry and Janet Page were the Illinois Conference Prayer Retreat speakers. They encouraged the audience to pull the church community together in prayer and watch God make things happen.

Don't skimp on your time with God. Be unrushed. Carve out special time for daily Bible study and prayer.

Take time to listen. God speaks back in many ways. God knows when the time is right.

Ask God to impress you with what to pray specifically for an individual.

A strong prayer life provides power and is vital to give God access.

Always include praises, even when life is not going well. And give thanks for things you dislike. Trials can turn you to God.

The retreat included testimonies and prayer circles, nature walks and healthy

meals, and opportunities to mingle and make new friends. Don't miss the blessings of another prayer retreat. Come next year.

When the Illinois invitation arrived, Jerry Page said he was delighted with the opportunity to return to Illinois where he started his pastoral ministry 40 years ago. The Pages are parents to two sons and grandparents to six grandchildren. They now live in California, where they responded to a request to "come and help" with their three youngest grandchildren. ■

**Dorothy Deer** is a freelance writer and photographer from Warrenville, Illinois.



▲ Lake Region General Vice President for Multiethnic Ministry Eddie Allen declared Chicago Seventh-day Adventist International Church as a duly recognized and full member of the worldwide sisterhood of Adventist churches.

# New Ethnic Congregations Launched in Chicago and Green Bay

**THE CHICAGO SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST INTERNATIONAL CHURCH CELEBRATED ITS FORMAL INAUGURATION ON SABBATH, JAN. 27, 2024. THIS VERY HISTORICAL EVENT WAS ATTENDED BY CARMELO MERCADO, GENERAL VICE PRESIDENT OF THE LAKE UNION CONFERENCE, AND EDDIE ALLEN, VICE PRESIDENT FOR MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY AT LAKE REGION CONFERENCE.**

Pastor Mercado delivered a very inspirational sermon to an audience of more than 100, wherein he challenged the members and

officers to "share their lights to the community wherever they are," based on Matthew 5:16 (KJV).

He emphasized that as Christians living in the last days we should, "fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come" (Rev. 14:7). Situated in an urban setting in the heart of Chicago, the third largest city in America, Mercado told the audience this is a challenge faced by the members to spread their light brightly in this part of the country.

He cited statistics where the Adventist population worldwide is now comprised of 21 million members worshipping in more than 100,000 churches. He challenged members to be more united, strong and steadfast in Christ's love, so the great "gospel of the kingdom shall be preached into all the world for a witness unto all nations," as mentioned in Matthew 24:14. SDAIC, located at 6015 N. Francisco Ave., is a community of Adventists largely from the northern and western Chicago suburbs. These active members are diverse in ethnic origins hailing from the Philippines, Jamaica, Peru, Costa Rica, Israel, Malawi, Kenya, South Korea, Canada and the United States. Most of the attendees wore their respective national costumes.

"I can sense unity," said Elder Jaime Batanga in a later interview. "These are people of faith who have grown together and want to have meaningful worship together."

Two additional Lake Region ethnic churches are planned for launch in 2024.





▲ Green Bay Hispanic Church members celebrate their organizing into a church.

### Green Bay Hispanic Church Organized

On Dec. 30, 2023, the Green Bay Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist Company celebrated their organization as a church. The service took place in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Conference administrators were present for this special occasion. President Titus Naftanaila gave the message and Secretary/Treasurer Amir Gulzar oversaw the organization process to change from company to church status. Evelio Miranda,

Hispanic ministries coordinator, and district pastor, Cristofe Guzmán, were also present, each with their respective families.

“It was a joy to see not only fellow church members but also friends and visitors praise God and rejoice in this historic moment for the congregation,” Miranda said. ■

**Lloyd Leodie D. Sols** is communication director of the Chicago Seventh-day Adventist International Church and **Evelio Miranda** is Wisconsin Conference Hispanic ministries coordinator.

FRIDAY MORNING

*Fellowship*  
WITH *Andrews*



▲ During the “Friday Morning Fellowship with Andrews” meetings, three university leaders, including President John Wesley Taylor V (above), and about 10 pastors pray together, with one of the pastors sharing a devotional with the group.

# Communication Channel Opens Between Andrews President and Pastors

UNIVERSITY UPDATES A KEY LAKE UNION GROUP DURING WEEKLY MEETING

**THE LAKE UNION CONFERENCE BENEFITS FROM AND CELEBRATES THE VITAL MINISTRY PROVIDED BY PASTORS IN THE MICHIGAN, INDIANA, ILLINOIS, WISCONSIN AND LAKE REGION CONFERENCES.**

What is sometimes lost track of, however, is ministry provided in so many additional ways. Consider the academies and

grade schools, healthcare ministries, literature, community services, outreach and engagement and more. And, of course, a vital

institution of higher education – Andrews University.

Late last summer, Andrews University created a new channel for communicating regularly with pastors across the Lake Union. This weekly virtual gathering with different small groups of pastors takes place via Zoom and is called “Friday Morning Fellowship with Andrews.”

During the Friday meetings, three university leaders and about 10 pastors pray together, with one of the pastors sharing a devotional with the group. In turn, university representatives provide important spiritual, academic and campus life updates with the pastors, and engage in dialogue, answering questions.

Six of these fellowships took place in November and December, enabling interactions with more than 50 pastors. Follow-up surveys showed that pastors greatly appreciated this intentional outreach from Andrews University, and that pastors feel better equipped to share timely and relevant information about Andrews with their congregations following these discussions.

“I and other members of the Andrews leadership team have been so blessed by praying with our pastors and hearing their affirmation of our active ministries on campus – and by our ability to let pastors know directly how much we at Andrews value the contributions

of these pastors who serve on the front lines of ministry across the Lake Union,” said Dr. John Wesley Taylor V, president of Andrews University. “Friday Morning Fellowship with Andrews has exceeded our expectations in a variety of ways, including deepening our relationships with this vital group.”

The new winter series of Friday Morning Fellowship with Andrews is underway (they take place from 9:00 – 9:45 ET on most Fridays). Email invitations have been sent to interested pastors in each conference, but for

any pastors who may not have seen this invitation, you may write to [president@andrews.edu](mailto:president@andrews.edu) and let them know which of the following dates you could be available to participate: March 1 or 8. When you write, please include the name of the church(es) you pastor, as well as your conference. You will then be scheduled for a specific date and receive a calendar invitation soon thereafter.

In addition to pastors, interested academy principals and teachers may participate in these upcoming fellowships. Please write

to the same email address and include the academy you work for, and your role there, along with your available dates.

We praise God for this collaborative ministry and the commitment to strengthened relationships as our leaders explore ways to amplify the ministry of one another in service to the Lord. ■

**Jeff Boyd** is director of university communication for Andrews University.

# Academy Students Serve in the Dominican Republic

**IN EARLY JANUARY, A GROUP OF 41 STUDENTS FROM ANDREWS ACADEMY IN BERRIEN SPRINGS, MICHIGAN, SPENT TEN DAYS OF THEIR HOLIDAY BREAK SERVING ON A PROJECT WITH MARANATHA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL, A SUPPORTING MINISTRY OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH.**

The group laid block walls for the Ágape Adventist congregation’s new church building in the Dominican Republic. After years of worshipping in whatever available space they could find, the 45-member congregation is grateful and excited to finally have an official church building of their own.

“The church said we were an answer to their prayer,” said Gina Pellegrini, project coordinator for the team. “They were really grateful and thankful that things worked out for them to be able to have [a church building].”

In addition to construction work, student volunteers led community outreach efforts. They hosted a five-day Vacation Bible School (VBS) program for local children, which saw a turnout of about 50 kids each night. While this group of highschoolers taught kids about Jesus through songs, crafts, and Bible stories, other students shared the gospel with adults during a five-night evangelistic sermon series for the local Adventist congregation and surrounding community.

Every other year, Andrews Academy students travel somewhere in the world to serve a community in need. The school collaborated with Maranatha on past trips, until the number of students signing up began to dwindle and the COVID-19 pandemic limited travel options. After arranging trips independently for several years, Andrews Academy gained



▲ Students from Andrews Academy in Berrien Springs, Michigan, were an answer to prayer when they helped build a church in the Dominican Republic.



enough student interest to team up with Maranatha once again this year. Pellegrini appreciates Maranatha's construction projects because they give teenagers the opportunity to see the tangible results of their hard work. "There's some satisfaction in building something from the ground up," she said.

Students on this trip shared Pellegrini's opinion, enjoying the fulfillment of hard manual labor despite sweltering temperatures. When offered a day off from the jobsite to prepare for that night's VBS program, one group of students turned it down. They had already prepared their portion of the program

and chose a day of physically demanding blockwork instead.

"They didn't want to take a day off. They wanted to stay at the jobsite. I have not experienced that before," remarked Pellegrini.

For senior Marco Sciarabba, the most impactful moment of the trip was when he heard the story of how the church started from a small group of people in the upstairs of a house.

"The trip made me see the power of prayer in a real-life example," he said. "It gave me a new perspective on how important prayer really is and also proved that God is so good

and that He will provide always, all we have to do is have faith."

Maranatha organizes mission trips for private volunteer groups, like Andrews Academy, and open teams that anyone can join. These groups build churches, schools, water wells, and other urgently needed structures around the world. Since 1969, Maranatha has constructed more than 14,000 structures and more than 2,200 water wells in nearly 90 countries. ■

**Sidney Needles** is communications specialist for Maranatha International.

# Michigan Conference Restructures Youth Department and Welcomes New Associate Director

**ON DEC. 5, 2023, THE MICHIGAN CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE APPOINTED DAVID GLENN TO SERVE AS THE NEW ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRIES, BEGINNING JAN. 1, 2024. IN THIS CAPACITY, GLENN WILL OVERSEE BOTH THE MINISTRY AND OPERATIONS AT CAMP AU SABLE.**

This appointment marks an adjusted configuration within the Youth department, where Chad Bernard serves as director, and Camp Au Sable will now fall under its purview. Bernard and Glenn will fulfill the responsibilities that were previously held by Ken Micheff over the past 16 years. We appreciate and extend our thanks to Pastor Ken for his dedicated service as a youth and camp director during that period. Pastor Ken supervised various expansion projects at camp, and he's widely acknowledged as a leader in camp ministry within the Division.

Currently serving as a religion and English teacher for freshmen and senior grades at Great Lakes Adventist Academy (GLAA),

Glenn has served in this position since the last school year. He will finish the academic year before fully transitioning to his new responsibilities at the end of the school term.

Glenn brings broad experience to his new role, having been involved with Camp Au Sable since 2017. His previous roles include working as a team member of the summer staff, serving as a camp intern, and being assistant director since 2019. In these capacities, he organized and implemented summer programs, played a key role in ensuring compliance with camp licensing and accrediting bodies, assisted the director in personnel recruitment and hiring, managed staff placement, and contributed to the development of



▲ David Glenn, pictured with his wife Bailey, is the new associate youth director for Michigan Conference

summer camp logistics and programming, among other responsibilities.

We prayerfully anticipate the positive impact that his experience working with young people and holding leadership roles at Camp Au Sable and GLAA will bring to both camp and Youth ministries moving forward. ■

**Andy Im** is the Michigan Conference communication director.



▲ One of the golden youth evangelism stories which has emerged from the Youth Evangelism Congress is a Food Love Outreach spearheaded by Indiana's Evansville First Church member Levi Pemberton, seated on couch, fourth from left.

# Youth Evangelism Congress Funding Innovative Ways to Share Christ

**YOUTH EVANGELISM THROUGHOUT LAKE UNION HAS FLOURISHED DUE TO THE UNION'S BI-ANNUAL YOUTH EVANGELISM CONGRESS, WHICH PROVIDES A DOLLAR-FOR-DOLLAR MATCH FOR YOUTH EVANGELISM PROJECTS APPROVED BY LOCAL CHURCH BOARDS. SINCE THE FIRST YOUTH EVANGELISM CONGRESS IN 2013, 107 YOUTH EVANGELISM CONGRESS-FUNDED INITIATIVES HAVE RECEIVED \$535,871 DOLLARS IN FUNDING INCLUDING ALL MATCHING FUNDS.**

"It's innovation, creativity that's going to take our evangelism impact to the next level," says Lake Union Youth Director Ron Whitehead. "And the more we can create entrepreneurial young adults, that are thinking about evangelism and sharing the Gospel, aren't we better off as an organization?"

One of the golden youth evangelism stories which has emerged from the Youth Evangelism Congress is a Food Love Outreach spearheaded by Evansville First Church member Levi Pemberton in Indiana. Pemberton recalls attending the 2020 Youth Evangelism Congress and coming away inspired. Ultimately, the Food Love Outreach — an evangelism project funded through the 2022 Youth Evangelism Congress — was born.

Pemberton notes that there are a few colleges in the Evansville area, and one of the goals of the Food Love Outreach was to be a public campus ministry revolving

around breaking bread with students in the community.

"Food is cross-cultural [and goes] across language barriers and we have a fair bit of foreign students and out-of-state students, so we thought, 'What if we just reach out to people with food, break the ice in a neutral area and see where it goes?'"

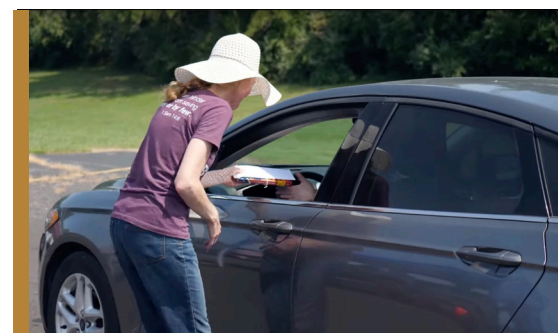
Pemberton recalls that it was the warmth and the hospitality of Evansville First Church members which drew him to the church and paved the way for him to join. He says that as members cooked for him, and ate with him, "I really loved it. It's something that really spoke to me. ... It really made me feel loved. So I thought if that's one thing that our church can do really well, why not play on that and just focus on that — just making people feel loved."

Pemberton says that youth from the church and in the area would go play volleyball Saturday nights and then go out to eat

afterward, "and that's where the real Food Love Outreach kind of began, with eating Denny's at 11:00 p.m. with people who would go and play volleyball with us." And as young people were invited to dinners on Friday nights and invited to go out to eat at Denny's on Saturday nights, they eventually "wanted to start coming to church," Pemberton said.

And something as simple as taking young people to Denny's and fellowshiping with them has paid major dividends as youth have come into the church simply because of feeling the love as they broke bread with church members.

Pemberton recalls a conversation with a young person reached via the Food Love Outreach who told him, "Levi, never before in my life have I come to a young adult group and just felt loved." According to Pemberton, that young person said that in prior encounters with church members, they did not feel like the members were truly genuine. "He said, 'Levi, you've given me just an open space to be loved and to really connect spiritually' .... So they now go to church."



▲ The gas card evangelism event hosted by Illinois' Thompsonville church was held in July 2022, and the individuals reached during that event not only received a free \$50 gas card, but they also received books including E.G. White's The Great Controversy.



Whitehead says that the Food Love Outreach is just one of many innovative Youth Evangelism Congress-funded projects that have reached young people for Christ.

"We tell everybody, do evangelism that you think there's a way you can call people to the Gospel. That's the purpose," Whitehead says. "Do good, but in your doing good, figure out a way to invite them to hear about the Gospel. There's a lot of different ways of doing that," he adds.

#### THOMPSONVILLE GAS CARD GIVEAWAY

Another innovative evangelism project funded through the 2022 Youth Evangelism Congress was a gas card project organized by members of the Thompsonville Church in southern Illinois. Spearheaded by Thompsonville church member Jonathan Babb, the gas card giveaway was a big hit with the community and beyond.

The gas card evangelism event was held in July 2022, and the individuals reached during that event not only received a free \$50 gas card, but they also received books including E.G. White's *The Great Controversy*. Other than the station where individuals received a gas card and ministry-oriented books, they also had the chance to stop by a prayer station offering health screenings. Ultimately, Thompsonville church members

reached many for Christ through this Youth Evangelism Congress-funded project.

"Obviously, there's a place for traditional evangelistic series and prophecy seminars and all of that, but from my perspective, especially as we more and more [see] people suffering on all levels, Jesus's main focus was meeting the people's needs," Babb says. "For churches, even our church, [what] we all struggle with is finding the best ways to meet those needs and conduct effective evangelism, and what the union does with the matching funds helps to spur young people" to think of more creative ways to spread the Gospel.

"My goal was always to try and [meet] people's needs and as you meet people's needs, they're going to be more receptive to hearing the Gospel and coming to church, learning about what you have to present besides the needs," Babb adds.

Whitehead says that even if changes need to be made to projects approved and funded by the Youth Evangelism Congress, "We give permission to the local church to adapt the project if they run into brick walls or can't get permits. ... It's not about the union anyway. We've already invested our dollars. But the local church is working with the young adult to figure out how to [make it work]."

#### CONNECTING A GENERATION TO THEIR LOCAL CHURCH

Reflecting on his work spearheading the Youth Evangelism Congress, Whitehead says that looking across his lengthy career that has been focused on youth ministry, what he has seen God do through the Youth Evangelism Congress stands out. "It has all the components of creativity, innovation, relevancy, and it connects this generation to their local church. We're not taking them away, inspiring them, training them, and then dropping them back to a place that has no connection to their lives."

Khai Khai Cin, who serves as coordinator for the Youth Evangelism Congress, says that he has been a first-hand witness of the tremendous impact the Youth Evangelism Congress has had on efforts to spread the Gospel among young people.

"I was a delegate and now being a part of the backstage, it's a great honor and blessing to me to learn and grow. And with all of the things happening all around us, now is the time to be on fire, to reinspire, to rekindle that [evangelism] desire within young people."

For more information, visit [www.lucyouth.org](http://www.lucyouth.org). ■

*David Pluviose has worked as a journalist and volunteer lay pastor. He is now pursuing an MDiv at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University.*

## New Directors at Battle Creek's Historic Adventist Village

JOHNSONS FOLLOW THE SCHERENCALS WHO RETIRED AFTER 12 YEARS MANAGING THE HISTORIC VILLAGE

IN SEPTEMBER 2023, MARK JOHNSON AND HIS WIFE, BECKY, MOVED TO THE HISTORIC ADVENTIST VILLAGE TO COMBINE THEIR LOVE OF PEOPLE, HISTORY AND ADVENTIST HERITAGE.



▲ Don and Betty Scherencel retired as caretakers for the Battle Creek Adventist Historic Village.

Mark grew up in Ashland, Wisconsin. His Adventist roots went to the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. When his family came through the Depression, they hung onto church publications that formed the basis for his reading material later. He came to love the Seventh-day Adventist pioneers and what they had experienced.

His parents believed in Adventist education and home-schooled him in the early elementary school years before it was popular to do so. His mother was a trained teacher and his father a freelance naturalist who worked with universities and the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago and gave lectures around the country as a herpetologist. When Mark had to transfer to a church school, they sent him to the closest one in Superior, Wisconsin, a one-hour bus ride each way every morning and evening. His next step was Maplewood Academy in Minnesota, and from there he went to Union College in Nebraska, where his grandparents lived. There he met Becky, a California girl with Canadian roots.

From 1974-2024, Mark and Becky answered God's call to serve in ministerial work all over the place. Starting in Missouri, they next moved to Indiana, then Ontario in Canada, on to California, up to Saskatchewan, back to Indiana, then Missouri again, Iowa, British Columbia, Alberta, and finally Ontario once more. But this time, he was president of the Canadian Union Conference after years of experience including as a pastor, evangelist, communication director, conference secretary, and conference president.

"The important thing," he says, "is that we have an amazing story to tell. Just as the Israelites crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land where God told them to build memorial altars and tell their children about what He did for them, so Battle Creek is a symbolic modern altar where we can tell our children the story of our Adventist heritage. If we follow the pillar of fire and the cloud, like the children of Israel did in the wilderness, we, too will arrive at the Promised Land."



▲ Mark and Becky Johnson are the new Battle Creek Adventist Historic Village caretakers.

### THE SCHERENCALS RETIRED IN MAY

Don Scherencel was hired in 2011 as assistant site director and Betty Scherencel as Heritage Shoppe manager. Don's principal assignments fell to repair and maintenance duties, which suited him fine as he really felt no calling to greet guests and give tours. However, the day came when a group of tourists arrived and there was no one else on site to welcome them and give a tour. Fortunately, scripts for each building had been written, so Don hurried into the office to grab a handful of them and went out smiling to greet the tourists. As they went from building to building, learning about many different early pioneers who gave their all to help establish what developed into God's last-day church, Don started really enjoying the tour himself.

As days and weeks went by, Don was parking the lawn mower more often and giving tours to guests from many parts of the world. He thrived on independent study, and no longer needed scripts. Giving tours became his favorite occupation. In 2013, Don became the HAV site director, and Betty added the responsibility of office manager.

Don remodeled the entrance to the welcome center and the front offices in the building. He had a lot of maintenance work to do

and tried to keep the buildings in good shape. He also created a helpful and informative "Outline of Battle Creek Tour" and a "Manual for Volunteers/Tour Guides." Don and a small group of interested persons met early each morning during the week for morning devotions and prayer for God's blessing on the day's events and the people who would visit.

As Heritage Shoppe manager, Betty Scherencel developed a real operating business where inventory is kept current. This was an improvement benefiting all AHM sites because all of them now knew what was in stock. Betty also developed the children's programs for both church families and local schools at the Village and the Federal Center (former Battle Creek Sanitarium). Betty's artistry in sewing was evident everywhere you looked: curtains, tapestries, costumes, and attractive decor in all the site bungalows. She organized offices, the shopping experience, the Christmas walk, flower beds, and multiple tour groups moving through the grounds all at the same time. She also produced the little Adventist Pioneer flags placed on the graves of the pioneers in Oak Hill Cemetery.

Don and Betty worked hard to cultivate good relations with the Battle Creek Police Department. This has resulted in a safer campus for HAV and happier children during the holidays. Donations made at the annual Christmas Walk at the Village have been given to the police department for their annual Christmas fund drive to benefit disadvantaged children living in the city. ■

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**Brenda Kis** is Adventist Heritage Ministries "Bulletin" managing editor and **Markus Kutzschbach** is executive director of Adventist Heritage Ministries.



# MILEPOSTS

## OBITUARIES

### **BURRINGTON, Meredith “Mick”**

**A.**, age 92; born March 12, 1931, in Janesville, Wisc.; died Oct. 20, 2023, in Edgerton, Wisc. He was a member of the Monroe Adventist Church in Monroe, Wisc. He is survived by his wife, Charlotte “Char” Burrington; son, David (Kimberlee Jo “KJ”) Burrington; daughters, Cheri (Dennis) Mittleider and Priscilla Abbott; grandchildren, Chelsey (Jason) King, Adam (Mikaela) Mittleider, Josh Burrington, and Claire (Sam) Palmer; and five great-grandchildren. A funeral service was conducted by Pastor Lisa Isensee on Oct. 28, 2023. Interment at the Saucerman Cemetery, Town of Cadiz, Wisc.

**CLARK, Gary M.**, age 78; born Sept. 24, 1944, in Greencastle, Ind.; died Sept. 21, 2023, in Bloomington, Ind. He was a member of the Spencer Adventist Church in Spencer, Ind. He is survived by his wife, Sandra “Clauser” Clark; daughter, Kimberley Clark; and two grandchildren. An interment was conducted by Pastor Samuel Ngala on Oct. 1, 2023, at the Hudson Hill Cemetery in Gosport, Ind.

**CLARK, Wayne D.**, age 90; born Feb. 18, 1933, in Madison, Wisc.; died Jan. 1, 2024, in Montello, Wisc. He was a member of the Oxford Adventist Church in Oxford, Wisc. He is survived by his daughters, Karen Clark (Clayton) Blair

and Kelly Clark (Bradley) McClave; and two grandchildren. A funeral interment was conducted by Elder William Ochs on Jan. 5, 2024, in Roselawn Memorial Park in Madison, Wisc.

**DENNIS, Annabell L.**, age 95; born Dec. 11, 1928, in Greenfield, Ind.; died Dec. 17, 2023, in Kendallville, Ind. She was a member of the Angola Adventist Church in Angola, Ind. She is survived by her son, Orville (Jeanine) Dennis Jr.; daughter, Debra Ann (David) Barrone; brother, Jerry Walker; sister, Bonnie Flaugh; five grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren. A funeral interment was conducted by Pastor Don Greulich and Pastor Michael Wise on Dec. 22, 2023, at Fairfield Cemetery in Corunna, Ind.

**DOWER, Nadine A. (Platner)**, age 79; born Jan. 6, 1944, in Spokane, Wash.; died Jan. 5, 2024, in Seattle, Wash. She was a member of the Walla Walla University Church in College Place, Wash. She is survived by her husband, Richard “Dick” Dower; son, James (Noel Chavez) Dower; daughter, Mona Dower (Joe) Sarcona; and three grandchildren. A private memorial inurnment will be held on March 16, 2024, in Washington.

**HENDERSON, Judith “Judi” V. (Llyod)**, age 79; born Jan. 1, 1944, in Marlowe, W. Va.; died Aug. 10, 2023, in Avon Park, Fla. She was a member of the Avon Park Adventist Church in Avon

Park, Fla. She is survived by her son, Joel (Teri) Henderson; daughters, Karinda (Wernher) Maquera and Staci (Jim) Froelich; six grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. A private graveside service was held; inurnment in West Virginia.

**HUTCHINGS, Duwane E.**, age 72; born May 25, 1951, in Paw Paw, Mich.; died Dec. 2, 2023, in Dowagiac, Mich. He was a member of the Dowagiac Adventist Church in Dowagiac, Mich. He is survived by his wife, Carol (Loft) Hutchings; daughters, Shawn (Jeremy) Starrett and Tracy Hutchings; mother, Margaret Hutchings; brothers, David Hutchings, Dale (Pam) Hutchings and Rich (Pam) Hutchings; sister, Debbie (Duane) Stover; eight grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. A memorial inurnment was conducted by Pastor Tom Shepherd on Dec. 11, 2023, at the Riverside Cemetery in Dowagiac, Mich.

**JOVANOVIC, Nikola**, age 94; born Nov. 26, 1929, in Orahovac, Yugoslavia; died Dec. 7, 2023, in Des Plaines, Ill. He was a member of the Chicago Yugoslavian Adventist Church in Chicago. He is survived by his wife, Zorica (Grkovic) Jovanovic; son, Vladimir Jovanovic; daughters, Mirjana (Gradimir) Markovic and Jelena (Miguel) Santiago; four grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. A funeral was conducted by Pastor Lune Randjelovic on Dec. 14, 2023, at the Memorial Park Cemetery in Skokie, Ill.

**MUNSON, Carolyn E. (Mohr)**, age 82; born July 3, 1941, in Los Angeles, Calif.; died Nov. 29,

2023, in Lansing, Mich. She was a member of the Lansing Adventist Church in Lansing, Mich. She is survived by her sons, Douglas Munson, Dale (Julie) Munson III and Rodney (Cathy) Munson; daughter, Michelle (Stephen) Munson-McCorry; grandchildren, Stephen McCorry Jr., Colton (Anna) McCorry, Devon McCorry, Danyele Plott-Munson, Brandon (Ava) Munson, Zachary (Anna Belle) Munson, Allie (Logan) Anastas, Kyle (Sarah) Nedeau, Abby Nedeau, and Dale Munson IV; and great-grandchildren, Christopher McCorry, Regan McCorry, Rylee Plott, and Luke Nedeau. A celebration of life will be held later.

**SAVAGE, Carol J (Gillespie)**, age 88; born Oct. 1, 1935, in Michigan; died Nov. 16, 2023, in Wilson, Mich. She was a member of the Wilson Adventist Church in Wilson, Mich. She is survived by her sons, Mark Savage and Matthew Savage; daughters, Paulette Miller, Denise Walsh, Brenda Moya and Marlene Moya; brother, Randolph Gillespie; sister, Janice Therrian; 20 grandchildren; and 16 great-grandchildren. No services were held.

**SMALL, Arlene A. (Sluiter)**, age 95; born Nov. 23, 1925, in Missaukee County, Mich.; died Oct. 24, 2023, in Cadillac, Mich. She was a member of the Cadillac Adventist Church in Cadillac, Mich. She is survived by her son, Kevin Small; daughters, Judith Small and Jark Lau; brothers, Martin Sluiter and Wayne Sluiter; sisters, Carol Rolf and Sandra Cole; four grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. A memorial inurnment was conducted by her granddaughter, Karen Drexler, on Oct.

# Prayer Conference

## OUR UNITED CRY UNITY IN MISSION DETROIT



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29, 2023, at the Cadillac Cemetery in Cadillac, Mich.

**SMITH, Donnell “Lamb” L.;** age 80; born Nov. 28, 1942, in Gary, Ind; died Aug. 15, 2023, in Caldwell, Idaho. He was a member of the Mizpah Adventist Church in Gary, Ind. He is survived by his

sons, Sheridan (Pamela) Smith and Peter (Bonny) Smith; and five grandchildren. A memorial inurnment was conducted by Pastor LeeRoy Coleman on Sept. 9, 2023, at the Oak Hill Cemetery in Gary, Ind.

Within the Lake Union, the officiating pastor or church communication leader is responsible for submission of information to this column. Forms are available in print format, or they can be filled out and submitted directly online. Milepost forms are available at [www.lakeunionherald.org](http://www.lakeunionherald.org). Conference addresses and phone numbers are listed in the masthead on the inside front cover.

## CLASSIFIEDS

### SERVICES

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**Florida Lakeside Vacation Rental:** Affordable, peaceful, and spacious. Avoid the beach-town

traffic and crowds for your southern getaway, with kayaks and bikes provided. This 3-bedroom home is near lush/tropical Highlands Hammock State Park on quiet, no-boat-traffic Lake Rachael. The home is available in December and April–October – daily, weekly, and monthly options. Car available, as well. Avoid the Airbnb fees and arrange with a new friend in Christ. Text our family for pics and details: 616-827-8616.

**Vacation-cottage rental** on a 4-acre private lake near Cedar Lake, Michigan. Hot tub, trampoline, kayaks, beach, floating swimming dock, fire pit, fishing poles, yard games, grill, bikes, board games, and more. Perfect for enjoying a family or marriage getaway: 3-bedroom (sleeps 10). Text 616-328-2210 for pics and more information.

### EMPLOYMENT

**Remnant Publications is seeking a candidate who is mechanically inclined to operate, maintain, and troubleshoot printing equipment** as needed in the production of religious materials. Must be physically fit and able to lift heavy items. This is not a remote position. Contact 800-423-1319 or [jobs@remnantmail.com](mailto:jobs@remnantmail.com)

**It Is Written seeks qualified Seventh-day Adventist candidates for full-time Planned Giving and Trust Services (PGTS) positions**--Director of PGTS at the It Is Written headquarters located in Collegedale, Tenn.; and a PGTS Trust Officer for the Central USA states. For more information, go to [itiswritten.com/employment](http://itiswritten.com/employment).

**Union College is searching for a Social Work Program Director.** This faculty role is fully dedicated to the Social Work program and is responsible for administrative oversight of all program options including leading efforts to maintain accreditation. Faculty responsibilities are expected. Master of Social Work degree required, doctorate or ABD preferred. Excellent benefits and warm and friendly campus culture included. Please see the full job description and instructions for application at [ucollege.edu/employment](http://ucollege.edu/employment).

**Union College seeks an Enrollment Counselor** to work specifically with Hispanic/Latino prospects and their families to recruit students to Union College. Provide translation support for parents, visit and speak for church services, attend camp meetings and youth rallies, and help

organize and participate in college recruitment tours. Bachelor's degree required and must be fluent in Spanish. See full job description and instructions for application at [ucollege.edu/employment](http://ucollege.edu/employment).

**Union College seeks a Financial Aid Advisor/Loan Processor** to provide operational and customer support. Process federal aid and loans, provide financial counseling to students and families, assist with development, documentation, and implementation of workflow process in addition to other duties. Bachelor's degree or equivalent experience required. See full job description and instructions for application at [ucollege.edu/employment](http://ucollege.edu/employment).

**Union College is searching for candidates for Director of Integrated Marketing Communications.** Responsible for managing and facilitating the work of IMC, including projects and communications functions while participating in production. Will also work with VP for Enrollment Management to develop marketing and PR goals and strategy. View the job description and instructions for application at [ucollege.edu/employment](http://ucollege.edu/employment).

**Southern Adventist University seeks qualified candidates for the following staff salaried positions:** Academic Administration DHSI Community Outreach Coordinator (reopened), Customer Service and Print Project Manager. For more information, go to [sau.catsone.com/careers](http://sau.catsone.com/careers)

**Southern Adventist University seeks qualified candidates for**



# EARLY PIONEERS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

APRIL  
5-6  
2024

## SPEAKERS



**Claudia Allen**  
Outreach &  
Communications  
Manager, Howard  
County, Maryland



**Kevin Burton**  
Director, Center for  
Adventist Research,  
Andrews University



**Michael Campbell**  
NAD Director of  
Archive, Statistics &  
Research



**Orlan Johnson**  
NAD Director of  
Public Affairs and  
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**Dwight Nelson**  
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**the following staff hourly positions:** Network Technician – Information Technology (Digital Networking), Carpentry Technician, S.A.L.T. Outreach Coordinator for School of Religion, Alarm Technician, Landscape Supervisor, Part-Time Cashier – Village Market. For more information, please visit [sau.catsone.com/careers](http://sau.catsone.com/careers)

**Southern Adventist University School of Religion seeks full-time faculty member to begin fall semester of 2024.** Must be active member of Seventh-day Adventist Church in regular standing and should have Ph.D. (or be near completion) in New Testament. Positive experience in pastoral ministry and teaching is helpful. Must demonstrate contagious love for Jesus, strong commitment to authority of Scripture, and deep passion for Adventist message and mission. Good people skills and the ability to engage students in a positive, faith-building manner in the classroom are essential. To apply, please visit our job board at [sau.catsone.com/careers](http://sau.catsone.com/careers)

**Southern Adventist University School of Nursing seeks full-time faculty to join a mission-focused team.** Teaching responsibilities

will be primarily at the undergraduate level. An earned doctorate is preferred. Requisite qualities include current RN adult health or ICU clinical experience, successful teaching experience, interest in research, flexibility, and commitment to Adventist nursing education. The candidate must be a member in good and regular standing in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. To apply, please visit our job board at [sau.catsone.com/careers](http://sau.catsone.com/careers).

**Southern Adventist University seeks a full-time Engineer teaching faculty member for the School of Engineering and Physics** in the areas of mechanical, electrical, and computer engineering. The ideal candidate will be proficient in developing and teaching undergraduate engineering courses, including both lecture and laboratory components. Master's degree in mechanical, electrical, or computer engineering or related area required. Doctorate preferred. Prior higher education teaching experience and/or relevant industry experience preferred. For a full job description and desired qualifications please visit [www.southern.edu/jobs](http://www.southern.edu/jobs)

**Southern Adventist University seeks full-time teaching**

**faculty in the School of Business.** Candidates should have a graduate degree (minimum). Doctorate in business-related field preferred. Ideal candidates will have successful, professional experience in for-profit companies/organizations. Candidates will bring relevancy to courses through connecting theories, current events, and real-world experience. Candidates will facilitate learning in alignment with a Christian biblical worldview and Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and values. Ideal candidates will be committed to student learning, engagement, and spiritual well-being. For more information, please visit our job board at [sau.catsone.com/careers](http://sau.catsone.com/careers).

**Southern Adventist University seeks full-time faculty in the area of counseling for School of Education/Psychology.** A doctoral degree in counselor education from a CACREP-accredited program is required. Doctoral degrees in clinical or counseling psychology from APA-accredited program could be considered if applicant has been employed as full-time faculty member in a counselor education program for a minimum of one full academic year before July 1, 2013. For a full job description and desired qualifications please visit [www.southern.edu/jobs](http://www.southern.edu/jobs)

**Southern Adventist University seeks a full-time teaching faculty member for the Department of Biology/Allied Health,** beginning fall 2024. PhD in Biology who will teach upper and lower division courses and labs. Candidate should be committed to involvement with undergraduate students in the classroom and guiding

independent student research projects. Additionally, candidate should be a practicing Seventh-day Adventist believing the Biblical record of the creation of life on earth in six literal days. For more details, visit [southern.edu/jobs](http://southern.edu/jobs).

**Southern Adventist University seeks a full-time program director to launch a new Doctor of Physical Therapy degree program.** The ideal candidate will be proficient in managing the CAPTE accreditation process, new program development, teaching graduate physical therapy courses and clinical practice. In addition, the successful candidate will be committed to mentoring advisees, nurturing student learning both in and out of the classroom, and disciplining students in Jesus Christ. For a full job description and desired qualifications please visit [www.southern.edu/jobs](http://www.southern.edu/jobs)

**Southern Adventist University seeks a full-time Associate Vice President for Academic Administration and Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies.** Candidate should have a Ph.D. with a minimum of five years of successful full-time graduate teaching experience at the higher education level. Applicant will assume a leadership role in all aspects of graduate education and provide academic, administrative, and strategic direction to Graduate Studies, Online Campus, and the Adult Degree Completion (ADC) Program. For more details, visit [southern.edu/jobs](http://southern.edu/jobs).

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Broadview Academy Graduates.

Our 2024 School Reunion is April 26 & 27, 2024, at the North Aurora SDA Church, 950 Mooseheart Rd., North Aurora, IL. Let your classmates know. Honor classes: '54,'64,'74,'84,'94,'04. Friday Night Vespers: 7:30 p.m.; Sabbath Services: 9:30 a.m.—till 5 p.m. All are welcome!

## “Ye’ Olde” Cedar Lake Academy

**reunion** will be held June 7-9, 2024 for the alumni and schoolmates of 1974 and earlier at Great Lakes Adventist Academy, Cedar Lake, Michigan. The Honor classes this year include: 1954, 1964, 1974. Details will be sent by either mail or e-mail to all alumni we have correct addresses. You may contact GLAA Alumni office at (989) 427-5181 or <http://www.glaa.net>.

## Wisconsin Academy Alumni

**Weekend** is April 19 - 21, 2024 in the Summertown Hall Chapel on the campus. All alumni and attended students are welcome! We are honoring the classes of 1954, 1964, 1974, 1984, 1994; 1999, 2004 and 2014.

Full schedule including a Friday career fair can be found on the website: [wisacad.org/alumni/](http://wisacad.org/alumni/)

### ADVENTIST HISTORICAL MATERIALS NEEDED:

Are there historical items in your home? The Center for Adventist Research preserves letters, diaries, manuscripts, photos, audio-visual materials and artifacts. To donate, email [car@andrews.edu](mailto:car@andrews.edu) or call 269-471-3209.

Churches, schools, conferences, institutions and organizations may submit announcements to the Lake Union Herald through their local conference communication directors. An easy way to do this is to visit the Lake Union Herald website at <http://www.lakeunionherald.org> and submit the announcement online. Readers may verify dates and times of programs with the respective sources, as these events are subject to change. Submission eligibility guidelines are listed at <http://www.lakeunionherald.org>.

## CALENDAR OF OFFERINGS

### MARCH

- 2 Local Church Budget
- 9 World Budget Adventist World Radio (GC)
- 16 Local Church Budget
- 23 Local Conference Advance
- 30 Local Church Budget



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# March

## Women's History Month

### ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

#### GENERAL EVENTS

**Feb. 28–March 2:** Band & Keyboard Music Festival

**March 1, 2:30–3:30 p.m. (general admission):** Honors Scholars and Undergraduate Research Poster Symposium

**March 8–11:** March Preview

#### HOWARD PERFORMING ARTS CENTER EVENTS

For more information on the following events and to purchase tickets, call 888-467-6442 or 269-471-3560, or visit [howard.andrews.edu](http://howard.andrews.edu).

**March 1, 7:30 p.m.:** Andrews University Wind Symphony Vespers

**March 2, 4 p.m.:** Department of Music: Music Festival Concert

**March 8, 7:30 p.m.:** Great Lakes Adventist Academy Vespers

**March 9, 8 p.m.:** Andrews University Symphony Orchestra Concert

**March 10, 4 p.m.:** Sunday Music Series: Andrews University Composers

**March 25, 7 p.m.:** Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association (MSBOA) Middle School Honor Band Concert

**March 29, 8 p.m.:** Andrews University Choirs: Easter Tenebrae

**March 31, 4 p.m.:** Sunday Music Series: Carla Trynchuk and Elena Braslavsky

### ILLINOIS

**March 7–9:** Band Festival, Northern Illinois Schools

### INDIANA

**March 2:** Conference Pathfinder Bible Experience, Cicero Adventist Church

**March 2:** Hispanic Women's Ministry Day of Prayer, Indianapolis

**March 8–10:** Indiana Pathfinder/Adventurer Training Institute, Timber Ridge Camp

**March 15–17:** Disaster Response Training, Timber Ridge Camp

### LAKE REGION

**March 2:** Conference Pathfinder Bible Experience, Camp Wagner

**March 2:** Women's Ministry Day, local congregations

**March 9–10:** Christian Fellowship League "Sweet 16", Kalamazoo, Mich.

**March 16:** Global Youth Day, Detroit

**March 23–24:** Christian Fellowship League Finals, Detroit

**March 30:** Prison Ministry Sabbath, Hyde Park Church

### MICHIGAN

**March 1–15:** Camp Meeting Registration

**March 2:** Conference Pathfinder Bible Experience, Cedar Lake, Michigan

**March 12:** Summer Camp Registration Opens

**March 15–17:** Youth Rush Summit, Camp Au Sable

**March 24–30:** Emmanuel Institute, Conference Office

**March 29–31:** Adventist Community Services Retreat, Camp Au Sable

### WISCONSIN

**March 2:** Conference Pathfinder Bible Experience, Wisconsin Academy

**March 15–16:** Global Youth Day, Milwaukee Adventist School

**March 29–31:** Women's Empowerment Weekend, Camp Wakonda

### LAKE UNION

**March 2:** Joint Lake Region and Michigan conferences, "Our United Cry" Prayer Conference, Silver Gardens Event Center, Southfield, Michigan

**March 10:** Joint Lake Region and Michigan Medical and Dental Clinic, Johnson Recreation Center, Detroit [[amenfreeclinic.org](http://amenfreeclinic.org)]

**March 30:** Union Level Pathfinder Bible Experience, Berrien Springs Village Church

## Sabbath Sunset Calendar

	March 1	March 8	March 15	March 22	March 29
Berrien Springs, Michigan	6:36	6:44	7:52	8:00	8:08
Chicago	5:41	5:49	6:57	7:05	7:13
Detroit	6:22	6:31	7:39	7:47	7:55
Indianapolis	6:37	6:44	7:52	7:59	8:06
La Crosse, Wisconsin	5:54	6:03	7:11	7:20	7:28
Lansing, Michigan	6:28	6:36	7:45	7:53	8:01
Madison, Wisconsin	5:47	5:56	7:04	7:12	7:21
Springfield, Illinois	5:51	5:58	7:06	7:13	7:20

Note that on March 10, 2024, Daylight Savings Time began resulting in a forward shift by 1 hour.

Data procured from [timeanddate.com](http://timeanddate.com). Error not exceeding two minutes and generally less than one minute.

Events listed were scheduled to proceed at press time. Please call ahead or check event websites before making plans to attend.

# Praise in P.R.A.Y.

ON JAN. 4, 2021, MY THEN 18-YEAR-OLD SON, ELIJAH, WAS RUSHED TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM. WE COULD HARDLY FIND HIS PULSE ANYWHERE.

The ER doctor put a central line into his neck to stabilize him and then transported him to another hospital by ambulance. In the intensive care unit, they did test after test on Elijah. He was tested for COVID three times and multiple other diseases. Specialists came in and out of his room eliminating causes.

After three days, the disease specialist came in and said that they were still running a few tests, but he was very sorry that they could find no cause for my son's sudden illness. Thankfully, Elijah was responding to the medicine and recovering. He was moved from the ICU to a ward where he ordered ice cream regularly and they moved to discharge him.

Then a church member called to find out how Elijah was doing. I told them that he was recovering. "Praise the Lord!" they said.

Then it struck me forcefully, *Why do we praise the Lord?*

In front of Elijah I said, "No, we will praise the Lord even if Elijah dies."

Elijah looked at me. "What? You will praise God if I die?"

"It's not about you Elijah," I said. "It's about who God is. God does not change if we die."

Silently we pondered that thought. From that day on I determined to train my soul to praise God for who He is, no matter what happens.

Prayer begun with praise for who God is, allows the heart to enter His presence with a right attitude. The attitude of praise connects best with heaven. When God has our total focus, our *attitude* will follow His *attributes*.

From beginning to end, our prayers should focus on who God is and what He wants. This is what powerful prayers are all about, who God is. We pray to God with certainty when we know what He wants and what He desires to give.

There is a very easy way to stay focused on God in our prayers with these four core concepts when we P.R.A.Y.: *Praise, Repent, Ask and Yield*.

*Praise* focuses on who God is.

*Repentance* lets God reclaim control over us.

*Asking* is only for what God wants.

*Yield* is the soul focused on God in a ready state of action.

I am not an expert on prayer, but if prayer is the breath of the soul, then we should train the soul to breathe correctly. My soul is simply learning how to breathe. ■



▲ DARREL LE ROUX



**Darrel le Roux** pastors the Grand Rapids Central and Lowell Riverside Fellowship churches and serves as the Grand Rapids district coordinator for Michigan Conference.



# What to Know About Hosting Offsite Events



▲ JENNIFER GRAY WOODS

MY CHURCH IS TAKING PART IN AN UPCOMING YOUTH RETREAT. ARE THERE ANY LEGAL STEPS WE SHOULD BE TAKING TO PROTECT OURSELVES? WHAT POLICIES SHOULD WE PUT IN PLACE WHEN DEALING WITH OFFSITE EVENTS LIKE YOUTH EVENTS, SOCIAL OUTINGS, AND MINISTRIES AWAY FROM THE CHURCH BUILDING?

It's common for churches to have events that happen off-site, such as campouts, outreach events or other church outings. When these take place, it's important churches make sure they're considering the following to avoid potential issues which could arise.

## 1. Make sure the church board is aware of and has approved the event.

Official activities, especially those taking place away from the church building, should be presented to the church board for approval. This provides additional oversight and, if voted and approved by the board, the church's insurance policy could cover the event.

## 2. Make sure the event is covered by the church's insurance.

There are some instances when a vote from the board isn't enough to cover the activity under the church's liability insurance. In instances like these, Adventist Risk Management Inc. offers insurance policies that cover specific types of risk, such as higher risk sports, like rock-climbing to short-term travel. This insurance covers medical emergencies, loss of personal property, and security threats. Churches should work

with their conferences to determine what policies are needed for particular situations.

## 3. Consider transportation issues.

Whenever you have church members driving others for church activities, especially if they are transporting minors, you should make sure that you are only using responsible adults over the age of 25 with adequate automobile insurance coverage. If the driver is using a church-owned vehicle, they should be approved by the church board. Of course, none of our churches should be using 15-passenger vans as these are not covered by insurance and are prohibited under church policy.

## 4. Consider whether waivers are needed.

This is true especially when minors are involved or if the activity is high risk. You want to make sure that participants understand the risk and assume liability for those risks by having all parents sign permission forms for minors. It is also a good idea to have signed forms giving consent to treat in case first aid or other medical attention is needed during the outing.

By making sure your church has considered the above issues you can have added peace of mind for your next church event. ■

<https://bit.ly/3SxyeeJ>  
<https://bit.ly/3SxyhHr>

**Jennifer Gray Woods** is the lawyer for the Lake Union Conference, as well as the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director.





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Download the  
**AWR Offering Packet**  
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# In His Image: Creating As We Go

WHEN I STARTED MY EDUCATIONAL JOURNEY IN LUSAKA, ZAMBIA, I COULD NEVER HAVE IMAGINED THAT EVENTUALLY I WOULD FIND MYSELF MORE THAN 8,000 MILES FROM HOME, STILL LEARNING AND HELPING OTHERS TO LEARN.

After grade school and high school, I studied theology at Solusi University in Zimbabwe, and then religion and psychology at Andrews University where, last summer, I earned an M.Sc. in Organizational Management. In my education, my focus expanded from being the best learner I could be to how I could help others learn and become all they can be.

My research led me to the work of the late Sir

Ken Robinson, noted educationalist and advisor on education in the arts to government, non-profits, and education and arts organizations. In a 2006 TED Talk, Robinson claimed that “creativity now is as important in education as literacy, and we should treat it with the same status.” One of his main critiques of traditional educational systems was that they “stigmatize mistakes,” and our young “get educated out of creativity.” In short, by creating a hierarchy of subjects and treating the arts as less important, or

as optional or extras, “we stifle creativity.” Robinson defined creativity as “the process of having original ideas that have value.” He helped me see that when we stifle creativity, deliberately or inadvertently, we devalue individuals, their talents, and their potential, and deprive not only them but ourselves and future generations of all that these young people might have imagined and enacted.

Listening to Robinson, I remembered two passages of scripture that are foundational to my understanding of education. Proverbs 22:6 tells us to “Train up a child in the way he should go: And when he is old, he will not depart from it.” This verse asserts that education matters, and matters supremely. It impacts not only a child’s present but their future—indeed, their entire life, a life that is meant to extend into eternity. Romans 12:2 also has profound implications for education. There we are admonished, “do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (NKJV).

As I continue to ponder the imperative of “renewing” our minds, I have become increasingly convinced that creativity is key. We serve a creative and creating God. We honor the image of God in us when we cultivate, develop, refine, and share our creativity. We honor the image of God in those around us when we encourage them to do likewise.

When I began my studies at Andrews University in 2017, I was given an invaluable creative opportunity. I became a member and co-founder of Watchmen Acapella, a six-man singing group comprised of students from Zambia, Zimbabwe,



Lionel Kanyowa (Blacklions Studio)



▲ The Watchmen performing at the North American Division Adventist Ministries Convention in 2023.

the Cayman Islands, the United Kingdom and the United States. We found our name in Ezekiel 3:17: “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from me” (NKJV).

Singing with Watchmen stretches my creativity in so many ways. When I became manager of the group, the door was opened for me to use what I had learned in all my studies—religion, theology, psychology, business, and administration—and combine this learning with my creative passion, music.

As I continued to grow as an artist, I came to see that the business of music could help to serve more than just Watchmen and our audiences. God-fearing, creative mentors, including my university president, Dr. Andrea Luxton, Provost Christon Arthur, and music mentor, Professor Charles Reid, convinced me that combining Christian commitment with musical talent, business and organizational expertise, and creative partnerships could benefit international students by helping them receive education, internships, and partnerships. These opportunities in turn would enable international students to reach their full potential and

inspire future generations to do the same. To this end, we established the Watchmen Legacy Foundation, a 501(c)3 charitable organization that aims to “empower students through sustainable scholarships and career advancement opportunities” by mitigating “social inequalities that impede students’ access to quality education and career advancement.”

Today, as I look back at my own schooling, I am humbled by how blessed and fortunate I’ve been. In a sense, my journey has been like a group project. It was enriched by the creativity and vision of so many—donors, professors, administrators, and community members alike. They didn’t just teach me how to read and write. They showed me how to think differently, to challenge the status quo, and to look for innovative solutions. This gift—the freedom to be creative—is priceless. It’s a legacy of learning I’m passionate about passing on. ■

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**Abel Siamubi** is a music philanthropist, Hope Channel marketing production assistant, and co-founder of Watchmen Acapella.



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