

A full-page photograph of a night scene featuring a vibrant aurora borealis (northern lights) in shades of green and purple. The aurora is reflected in a body of water, likely a lake. In the foreground, there is a sandy beach with some tall grass and a few people. A long pier or bridge structure is visible in the middle ground, illuminated with lights. The sky is dark with some stars visible.

# HERALD

SERVING SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS IN THE LAKE UNION SINCE 1908

OCTOBER 2025

This is our Father's world

UNPLUG. REVIVE OUR SENSE OF AWE.

# Called to be Stewards

**H**ave you ever stopped to listen to the chirps of crickets? The hoot of an owl on the hunt at dusk? Maybe to watch the tall, fluffy storm clouds floating high in the sky?

Oftentimes we fill our days with the loud noises of our TVs, music and endless scrolling through our phones and social media. But nature encourages us to slow down and take notice of small, quiet things.

Watching the northern lights had been a big item on my nature photography bucket list. It was last October, and I sat waiting along Lake Michigan for the promise of the aurora. Just as the sun's glow began to fade, the hint of color crept overhead. I watched the lights come in like a storm for two hours until, like a tidal wave, they burst over my head in a display of quiet brilliance, as seen on the cover.

As we reflect and pause to appreciate the nature displayed between the pages of the October issue in your hands, I encourage you to venture out to appreciate God's nature for yourself. After all, it's not the days we spend on our phones that we remember, but the memories we create going on a nature walk or camping trips with friends, family or maybe just your favorite four-legged companion.

In Genesis 2:15 (NKJV), God "puts [Adam] in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it." From the beginning, God placed all His creations into our care, down to even the smallest insect. From the beginning, we were made to be stewards.

There's no question as to how comfortable we've become with living in front of a screen, falling into the complacency of easy entertainment. I challenge you to break that cycle. As technology takes over our daily lives, it's even more important for us to remember to ground ourselves not only in His word, but in His creation. ■

*Katie Fellows is assistant communication specialist for the Lake Union.*

## Lake Union HERALD

Official publication of the  
Seventh-day Adventist Church/Lake Union Headquarters  
lakeunionherald.org Vol. 117, No. 7

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Indexed in the Seventh-day Adventist Periodical Index  
Member of Associated Church Press

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**ABOUT THE COVER:** Northern lights in St. Joseph, Michigan, Oct. 2024. Captured by Katie Fellows

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

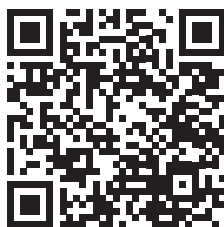
The Lake Union Herald (ISSN 0194-908X) is published monthly (except January/February, May/June, July/August, November/December) by the Lake Union Conference, P.O. Box 287, Berrien Springs, MI 49103-0287. Periodicals postage paid at Berrien Springs, Michigan, and additional mailing offices. Yearly subscription price is \$15. Vol. 115, No. 7. POSTMASTER: Send all address changes to: Lake Union Herald, P.O. Box 287, Berrien Springs, MI 49103-0287.

**Note:** If you are a member of a church in the Lake Union but are not receiving the Lake Union Herald, please request it through your church clerk or local conference secretary.

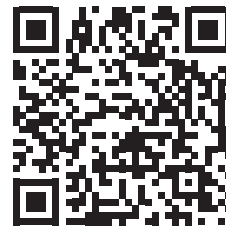
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# Making All Things New

As a pastor, I have seen lives that mirrored Genesis 1:2 — without form or void and overshadowed by darkness. Marriages on the brink of collapse and lives bound by despair. Yet just as surely as God spoke light into existence, He spoke hope and healing into those lives. The same God who ordered creation is still restoring His children today.



▲ ELDEN RAMIREZ

The apostle Peter reminds us, “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9). Creation and redemption share the same divine signature. God calls us out of darkness into His light and order. On the first day of creation, God declared, “Let there be light” (Genesis 1:3). In Christ, that same creative command continues. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (John 8:12).

Depression, anxiety and despair may feel like a night without dawn, but the Creator shines His light into the darkest valleys. His light reaches beyond this life. Ellen G. White wrote: “The work of redemption involves consequences of which it is difficult for man to have any conception. ‘Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him’” (Christ’s Object Lessons, pp. 162–163). The light God brings into our darkness today is only a glimpse of the far greater restoration He is preparing for us, a redemption more glorious than we can imagine.

Creation also brought order where there had been disorder. The waters were separated, dry land appeared, and seasons were established. Just as God placed boundaries in nature, He places divine order in our lives. If the One who orders the stars can maintain the heavens, He can surely put the pieces back together for those facing a broken relationship or a broken spirit. If you are in such a season, do not give up on your family, your calling, or yourself. The Creator who spoke galaxies into existence can also speak peace into your storm.

After filling the earth with light, beauty and life, God still declared that something was missing. Creation was incomplete until He made man and woman in His image. Scripture records, “So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27). The world was not whole until His children were there to enjoy it with Him. In the same way, the promise of a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1) will be incomplete if we are not there with our Creator.

In creation, God gave humanity dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:28). Dominion was never exploitation. It was stewardship. Just as we are called



Photography by Nick Radivojevic

to care for our homes, families and communities, we are called to care for the earth itself. How we treat creation reflects how we value the Creator. The sunrise, bird's song and mountain majesty are gifts from God. His creation is both fragile and precious. We cannot claim to honor the Creator while neglecting His creation. Protecting the environment is not just good ecology. It is faithful discipleship.

The parallels between creation and redemption are unmistakable. At creation, God made something new out of nothing. In Christ, Scripture assures us, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). At creation, He gave life to dust. In redemption, He breathes eternal life into sinners. At creation, He entrusted Adam and Eve with stewardship of the

earth. In redemption, He entrusts us with the mission of caring for people and for His world.

If your life feels empty or dark, take courage. The same God who said, "Let there be light," still speaks today. He brings beauty from ashes, order from chaos, and life from death. He restores the broken and makes all things new.

Let us therefore entrust our lives, our families, and our world to Him. For the Creator is also the Redeemer, and He has promised, "Behold, I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5). ■

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**Elden Ramirez** is president of the Lake Union Conference.

# Healthier Families and God's Creation



▲ INGRID WEISS SLIKKERS



▲ ROBERTA COLWELL

*It is often said that nature is God's second book for learning, healing and growing. As we look for ways to help families, churches and communities live happier and healthier lives, we need only to look to nature as a source of support.*

Spending time among natural elements, indoors or outdoors, can promote good physical and emotional health while also encouraging a more personal connection to our Creator. God often uses nature to reaffirm his loving care for us and science supports its benefits.

A King's College London (2021) study found that spending time in nature boosts mental and physical well-being for up to eight hours, especially through seeing or hearing birds. Another study showed that simply listening to nature sounds can refresh a tired mind.

With the average child spending only 4–7 minutes in unstructured outdoor play each day, even a short amount of time spent in nature or engaging in nature-based activities can provide many benefits. These include developing the cognitive skills essential for learning, building stable family relationships and boosting their immune system.

Incorporating simple activities that make connecting with nature a part of daily life not only helps to create love and respect for God's miraculous work, but regular routines provide a sense of stability in a busy world that can sometimes feel overwhelming to children.

Here are just a few easy ways to inspire a connection with nature.

- Spending a few minutes each morning watching the sunrise can set a positive tone for the rest of the day. Sharing an age-appropriate devotion during this time helps connect God with His creation in a child's mind.
- Draw or write about observations in the yard

or neighborhood. Things like changes in the weather, the presence of insects, small animals, rocks or leaves. Observe a bird nest from a respectful distance while recording the progress.

- Plan a treasure hunt for leaves, flowers and twigs that sparks all the senses and inspires curiosity. Afterwards, do an art project with the treasures. By filling an empty container with small sticks, dried rice or small pebbles and glueing on the lid, a simple rain stick is created.
- Plan picnics, nature themed parties or seasonal celebrations outdoors. Combine healthy foods with time for play and exploration to reinforce the emotional connection to nature.
- Create small gardens at home — even a windowsill one. Planting and caring for flowers, herbs or vegetables can provide an educational experience and connect children to the life cycle of plants.
- Observe the night sky, identify constellations and enjoy the vastness of God's creation.

Making nature a regular part of daily life is a God-given, powerful way to support mental health and resilience. ■

**Resource:** <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2020/04/nurtured-nature>

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# Shepherding the Shepherd

The pastor was at the end of his rope. Many demanding days of ministry had caught up to him, and now, burned out and bitter, he contemplated his own death.

It was predictable considering his developmental story. His childhood was marked by early experiences with adversity, including being born in what might be described as a war zone, with parents who initially struggled to care for his needs. In adolescence, he was placed in a foster home with a wealthy single mother from a politically influential family. Struggles with his own sense of identity and inability to manage his own emotional outbursts put him in conflict with the law. It was only much later that God extended a call to ministry. While he became a spiritual leader and demonstrated a unique gifting, there was still much work God desired to do in his life.

You may have never considered the story of Moses in the above terms, but once you notice the developmental dimensions preserved in Scripture, you can't unsee them. Moses struggled with emotional dysregulation, inability to delegate, and ultimately gave evidence for a clinical diagnosis of burnout and compassion fatigue, which threatened his ministry and his life.

All of this led a deeply heartfelt cry to God:

"Why have you dealt ill with your servant? And why have I not found favor in your sight, that you lay the burden of all these people on me? ... I am not able to carry all these people alone; the burden is too heavy for me. If you will treat me like this, kill me at once, if I find favor in your sight, that I may not see my wretchedness" (Numbers 11:11–15).

Moses had taken on himself things that belonged to God alone, and confusing these responsibilities with his own caused him to view the congregation with contempt.

Years ago, I was warned by a wise personal ministries' leader: "We appreciate all the good work you

are doing, but I'm concerned you are going to burn yourself out." Unfortunately, my own experience with childhood adversity kept me from really hearing what she said. When church culture rewards instead of warns, burnout is almost always inevitable.

Groundbreaking research at the seminary at Andrews University and at least one other institution outside our faith community indicates that some forms of childhood trauma among pastors are roughly twice the rate of the general population. Consider the possibility that, like Moses, your pastor may also come from a place of developmental adversity. Personal pain tends to make one intuit the pain of others and sensitizes the soul to God's call. However, childhood trauma cuts both ways and may result in the kinds of struggles experienced by Moses.

God records the human foibles of His heroes to remind us that spiritual leadership is not immune from the same influences today. During this month of pastoral appreciation, I invite you to prayerfully consider ministering to your pastor in ways that we often overlook. Young pastors in particular may be blessed by being held accountable to consistent rhythms of rest, better balance and boundaries, and prioritizing family needs.

Just as God provided Moses with needed support through the counsel of Jethro and the 70 appointed elders, our pastors today need congregations who will step alongside them — not merely to appreciate their service, but to actively encourage their well-being for the journey ahead. ■

**Jarod Thomas** is a former pastor and now practices as a therapist based in suburban Detroit, Michigan.



▲ JAROD THOMAS



# Restored to Serve



▲ DENIS KAISER

After the death of her husband in August 1881, Ellen White was overwhelmed by grief and physical illness. For an entire year, the thought of continuing life alone filled her with dread. “[We] stood side by side in our ministerial work,” she reflected. How could she bear alone the burdens they had always shared together?<sup>1</sup>

In late August 1882, she was struck by a severe chill and fever, a condition that lingered for weeks. Her condition remained frail into the autumn. Yet, in this state of weakness, Ellen White chose to attend the California Conference camp meeting in Healdsburg, held October 5–17, 1882.

Friends from across the country sent word they were praying for her recovery. On the first Sabbath, October 7, she remained too weak to leave her bed. But at noon she requested, “Prepare me a place in the large tent where I can hear the speaker. Possibly the sound of the speaker’s voice will prove a blessing to me. I am hoping for something to bring new life.”

That afternoon, J.H. Waggoner spoke on the development of the Seventh-day Adventist movement and the growing threat of Sunday law — an issue absent from the political discourse in America just 25 years earlier. Ellen White, pale and frail, was brought onto the platform on a couch. Observers whispered that she looked like a “candidate for the grave.” No one expected her to speak.

But when Waggoner finished, she turned to her son W.C. White and assistant Jenny Ings. “Help me onto my feet,” she said. She wanted to say something.

What followed astonished everyone. “Her voice and appearance changed,” Waggoner recalled, “and she spoke for some time with clearness and energy.” At the moment she began to speak, her strength returned. Uriah Smith, also present, wrote that “she was immediately and wonderfully strengthened, so that she was able to attend meetings thereafter as usual.”

Calling people to commit themselves to God and His service, she invited those ready to take a stand to come forward. Many did. The following Sabbath, October 14, she renewed her appeal. “Over seventy came forward,” Waggoner recounted. On Monday, 35 were baptized, with others choosing to be baptized later at home.

By the end of the camp meeting, Ellen White had spoken six times — more than any other speaker.

Ellen White’s experience at the 1882 Healdsburg camp meeting reminds us that God often meets us in our weakness and restores us for His purposes. Her healing was not just for her own comfort — it was for the blessing of others and the advancement of His work. When we are at our lowest, God may be preparing us for our most fruitful service. ■

<sup>1</sup> The information is based on Ellen G. White, Lt 82, 1906; Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White*, vol. 3, 203; Ellen G. White, *Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, 262; [J. H. Waggoner], “California Camp-Meeting,” *Signs of the Times*, Oct. 26, 1882, 474; Uriah Smith, “Editorial Correspondence,” *Review and Herald*, Oct. 31, 1882, 680; Ellen G. White, “My Health Restored,” *Signs of the Times*, Nov. 2, 1882, 484.

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

▼ McLaughlin, R.R. 1868. Michigan camp meeting grounds, 19th century. Database online.



Courtesy Center for Adventist Research

# ¿Cómo está su fe?

“Si alguna vez se sienten sin fuerzas, cansados y desanimados en sus caminos de fe, piensen en el ejemplo de Jesús, quien soportó con resiliencia el maltrato contra él mismo de parte de los pecadores” (Hebreos 12:3) (*Traducción Contemporánea de la Biblia, Nuevo Testamento*).

Al leer el libro *Hechos de los Apóstoles* escrito por E.G. White, me llamó la atención la experiencia de un joven que por un tiempo se sintió desanimado. En Hechos 15:37-39 leemos que Pablo y Bernabé tuvieron una fuerte discusión sobre la idea de que Juan Marcos, un sobrino de Bernabé, quien ya había ido con ellos en el primer viaje misionero a Europa pero que los había abandonado, los acompañara otra vez. En el primer viaje se habían encontrado con muchas personas que aceptaron las buenas nuevas que predicaban y a otras que se oponían. Fue un viaje de dos años de duración y los apóstoles habían recorrido más de 1.400 millas. Fue una experiencia difícil pues los únicos métodos de transporte eran viajar en barco o caminar. Fue, además, una misión peligrosa, a tal punto que Pablo fue apedreado por sus enemigos.

El desacuerdo entre Pablo y Bernabé fue tan serio que se separaron. Bernabé llevó a su sobrino Juan Marcos por un camino, y Pablo se fue con Silas por otro. Esta separación resultó para bien pues de esta manera pudieron contactarse con más personas. Creció la obra y pudieron ganar a más almas para Cristo y establecer nuevas iglesias. Es interesante notar el cambio de actitud de Pablo, al referirse más tarde a Juan Marcos como “colaborador” (Colosenses 4:10), “compañero” (Filemón 24) y “útil para el ministerio” (2 Timoteo 4:11). Elena White explica que en los siguientes años la experiencia cristiana de Juan Marcos se profundizó mucho. Ella dice lo siguiente:

“Leyendo en las cicatrices de las manos y los pies de Cristo las señales de su servicio por la humanidad, y el extremo a que llega la abnegación para salvar a los extraviados y perdidos, Marcos se

constituyó en un seguidor voluntario del Maestro en la senda del sacrificio... Ahora, compartiendo la suerte de Pablo, el preso, comprendía mejor que nunca antes que es una infinita ganancia alcanzar a Cristo, e infinita pérdida ganar el mundo y perder el alma por cuya redención la sangre de Cristo fue derramada. Frente a la severa prueba y adversidad, Marcos continuó firmemente, como sabio y amado ayudador del apóstol” (*Hechos de los Apóstoles*, p. 366).

Al pensar en esta experiencia podemos notar que los jóvenes que nos rodean nos ven como mentores y cuán importante es que seamos pacientes con ellos. Cuando cometen errores, lo que necesitan es apoyo, no crítica. Sin duda Bernabé, por medio de sus palabras, le enseñó mucho a su sobrino Juan Marcos, y por su ejemplo, la necesidad de fijar los ojos en Cristo. Es mi deseo que cada uno de nosotros siga el ejemplo de Bernabé y de nuestro Señor al hacer todo lo posible para ayudar a los jóvenes y a los nuevos en la fe a mantener su confianza y compromiso con Dios. ■

**Carmelo Mercado** es el vicepresidente de la Unión del Lago.



▲ Carmelo Mercado





▲ The author Tonya (back left) with a friend Heidi, plus their children, pose before their dune climb adventure, in 2015.

# A Summer Storm and the Miracle We'll Never Forget

Do you think of how God has shown up for you? Sometimes we don't recognize it until we are way past the incident. I want to share with you as our family celebrates the 10-year anniversary of feeling God's *immediate* and *unmistakable* presence.

We were vacationing around Sleeping Bear Dunes. We ate lunch and made afternoon plans around predicted rain showers. The dads stayed fishing on a lake, and the moms/kids went to hike the Dune Climb, a dune trail more than 2 miles long.

It's not the "steep one," but a dune that stretches from a parking lot to Lake Michigan. Before we headed out, my uncle warned us we would reach a sign that said, "mile to go, do not proceed unless you have proper equipment/stamina." He advised us to turn back at that sign.

While parking we looked at the weather app to gauge the next storm's arrival. It was 2 p.m. and the next rain was expected at 4 p.m.

At 2:55 p.m., we made it to the sign and turned around. At that moment, we looked at the sky and noticed the storm was headed our way — FAST. While walking back, I asked Max, then age 9, to give me his shirt so I could wrap my camera in it as we had no protective gear on us — just swimsuits and random T-shirts on a couple of the kids. He obediently took off his shirt and gave it to me.

BY TONYA SNYDER



Within a minute of wrapping the camera and tucking it in my coverup, the weather started. Rain, wind and hail hit all at once. Max and Jackson were 25 feet in front of us, and we immediately lost visibility of them. We shouted for them to run and meet us at the car. We held onto the hands of Monty, then 7, and Addison, then 8, as we ran. It felt like a thousand needles hitting our backs. Did I mention that we were on a sand dune?

I kept a tight hold of Monty's hand as with every wind gust he would burst forward. While running, I wondered if we should stop and I should cover him with my body. It was hard to know what to do, and we were over a mile from any shelter. Monty surged ahead with the wind the moment my grip loosened, and my girlfriend Heidi caught him and continued to run.

A fun detail to mention was that I was "keeper of the keys." When the storm started, I had the presence of mind every 10 feet to check that they were still there in my incredibly shallow pockets.

Just as Monty ran out of my grip, I checked and no longer felt the keys. I stopped. I figured that if I put my head down to protect it from the sand and looked back that I would find the keys. I went to perform this maneuver, but the wind, rain and hail were so violently strong I could not turn against them. At this point, the first prayer was uttered — only He could find keys in sand dunes.

The wind and hail subsided as we arrived at the car, leaving us with torrential rain as we assessed the situation. I told Heidi about the lost keys, *and* that Max and Jackson were not near the car. At this point, we huddled and prayed — please protect Max and Jackson, help us to find them, and oh yes, the keys!

We ran to a nearby gift shop to see if our boys were sheltered there. There were about 70 people seeking safety in the dark gift shop, but not Max and Jackson. They also weren't in the nearby restroom. The rain had calmed down and was lightly falling as we again prayed in that bathroom about our lost boys and keys.

Desperate to find them, we split up. Heidi went up on the dune to be sure they weren't there. I went car to car asking people if they had seen them and describing them. After 10 cars I headed to the ranger station in the parking lot. The ranger was

kind as I described our missing boys and added that we would need help as we had also lost our keys. His response, "There are a lot of people that need help right now, we won't be able to get a locksmith into the park to help you tonight," hit me hard. It was at that point I started to process what we had just lived through. I thanked him and went back to the row of cars to continue my hunt for Max and Jackson.

As I moved through the cars a woman named Jen suddenly came up to me and asked, "Are you looking for two boys?" I said, "Yes!" She assured me that they were safe and sheltered in their Subaru during the storm.

It was 27 frantic minutes between losing visibility of the boys and being reunited with them.

Our angel, Jen, along with others, wrapped us in towels as we gathered by the restrooms and prayed a thanksgiving prayer that we found Max and Jackson, and we were all safe. We also mentioned the keys.

As we caught our breath, Jen encouraged us to come home with her as she had lasagna waiting in the oven and we could meet up with our husbands at her place and make a plan from there. Her offer of hospitality brought relief, and we said yes!

While heading to Jen's car, a park ranger walked up to me and asked, "Are you the one who lost your keys?" I said "Yes." He asked me to describe them as he pulled them from his pocket!

While leaving the parking lot our usually chatty group was silent, in complete awe of what God had just done for us. He was with us through the storm *and* cared about details like the hassle of getting keys made while on vacation.

We stopped counting downed trees at 300. They call what we lived through on August 2, 2015, a "storm of the century," complete with 90-miles-per-hour straight line winds. There were books and T-shirts made about it.

Prayer is powerful! God has mighty ways that he wants to show you He is there for you, and that it is unmistakably Him! ■

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**Tonya Snyder** is a Michigangster through and through. When she isn't out exploring the beauty and wonder in the world, she is working as the program administrator for high school STEM students and raising Max and Monty with her husband Chris.

FEATURE

# THE BEAUTY OF CREATION

GOD'S WONDERFUL WORLD





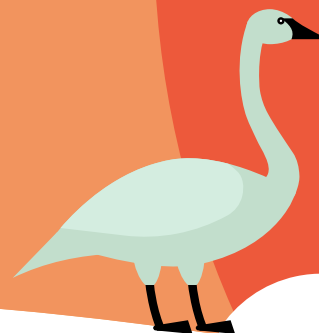
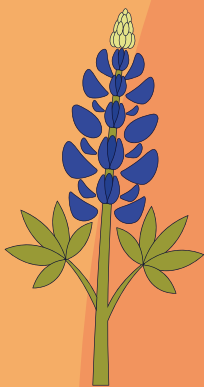
The Bible opens with God creating matter and all life! It is notable that the Christian Canon opens with a comprehensive “theology of life.” Considering that the book of Genesis covers some 2,500 years in 50 chapters, it is remarkable that the first two chapters “slow down” this vast sweep of time, highlighting only seven days to describe the miraculous emergence of everything — including all life plus the structuring of seasons and time itself.

BY JOANN DAVIDSON

# FUN FACTS

Compiled by Katie Fellows

More than 3,500 species of plants and animals live in the Great Lakes basin, including 170+ species of fish.



The first two chapters of Genesis are indeed an epic environmental treatise, exhibiting the:

- (1) goodness of nature — divinely so declared each day;
- (2) lavish diversity of life;
- (3) structuring of time with “earthlings” ever since living within the timed cycle then set in place;
- (4) rhythm of work and rest, with rest offered before work;
- (5) interdependence of all life systems;

A perfect and harmonious great “web of life” is presented.<sup>1</sup>

This fundamental perspective on origins then undergirds the entire biblical canon.

Many of the things worshiped by the cultures that surrounded ancient Israel (such as the sun, moon and various animals) were created effortlessly by God’s “word of mouth.” He invited all life and matter into existence with His “command performance” of “let there be” — and then He marveled with great exuberance at what He had created! God doesn’t only rejoice over Adam and Eve. His joyful comments each of the first six days suggest that the whole world is praiseworthy. His exuberant appreciation expressed with “And God saw that it was good” [in

English] translates the Hebrew word *tov* as “good.” Notably the word *tov* also includes the broader meaning of “beautiful” — as is seen when describing the beauty of the Genesis matriarchs!<sup>2</sup>

In other words, God sees all creation — seas, lands, vegetation, swimmers, birds, plus heavenly lights as beautiful. Learning to appreciate creation’s beauty can help us value the created world. Creation’s scents and flavors, exotic colors and sounds can stimulate our senses, triggering a higher admiration of this world. Yes, much has been damaged by sin, yet this world still manifests many glories!

Day seven of that first week God completes His creating activity, and it becomes the final day of the first weekly cycle that God deliberately set in place. The first six days are pronounced “good” and “very good,” with the seventh day declared “holy” — and established with four verbs (Genesis 2:1–3)! Notably, Sabbath blessings are not only for human beings. Animals and the land are also included (Exodus 20:8–11).<sup>3</sup>

Humans and all creatures along with their Creator are invited to rest, suggesting a deep correspondence and connectedness.

Sabbath was never intended to be a legalistic ritual. Adam and Eve certainly weren’t keeping the Sabbath to be saved for they hadn’t sinned yet when they began celebrating the Sabbath. And if they had never sinned, we would still have the Sabbath — an amazing gift of rest and restoration. Its special hours give all life “time off” for fellowship with the Creator — and to join with the myriad different voices of praise in the created world (see Psalm 148, discussed below).

The Sabbath day is truly remarkable. It is not a legalistic requirement but a beautiful gift. Jewish philosopher Abraham Heschel calls it a “palace in time.”<sup>4</sup>

The divinely instituted weekly rhythm, not grounded in any celestial movements (as are day, month and year measurements) reveals the Creator’s sovereignty even over time itself. Nothing was outside of His directives, and nothing had been overlooked.

Rudyard, Michigan, is considered the snowy owl capital of Michigan.



Total length of Great Lakes shoreline, including islands:

# 11,000

In just seven days, the earth was formed and filled, with the different ecosystems necessary for life to flourish lovingly put into place the first three days — and the subsequent three days filling the new habitats with life! The Sabbath day marks the climax. Creation is complete and can rest.<sup>5</sup>

Divine activity created an amazingly intricate network of blessed domains manifesting an interwoven complexity that we are slowly beginning to appreciate.

Later psalmists were not insensitive to this and often praise the glorious origin of life — suggesting that we too should be awestruck when contemplating the gift of life in all its forms. Note the praising choirs of Psalm 104, 148 and 150, where the many different voices in nature are giving praise! The “Psalm for the Sabbath,” Psalm 92, is also a cheering chant for the glories of creation!

“It is good to give thanks to the Lord, And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High;

To declare Your loving kindness in the morning,

And Your faithfulness every night,

On an instrument of ten strings,  
On the lute,  
And on the harp,  
With harmonious sound.  
For **You, Lord, have made me glad through Your work;**

**I will triumph in the works of Your hands”** Psalm 92:1–4 (emphasis added)

This same perspective is found again in the book of Revelation: “Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice:

‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom,

And strength and honor and glory and blessing!’

And **every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:**

‘Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne,

And to the Lamb, forever and ever!’

Then the four living creatures said, ‘Amen!’” (Revelation 5:11–14, emphasis added)

God’s longest speech in Scripture (Job



38–41) reminds us of the same. There, God Himself again rejoices in the many animals He created and the amazing complexity and elegance in the animal kingdom that we have been slow to comprehend. Paul Santmire is correct: the Jobean vision can be read not only in terms of God’s purposes with the wilderness areas of this planet — the fecund mountain ranges, the majestic oceans and their fragile coral reefs, the great whales and grand polar caps, the Siberian tigers, wildebeests, hummingbirds, and snail darters. It can also be read in terms of God’s purposes with the “great things” of the whole cosmos, purposes that we can only barely begin to imagine — purposes with the billions and billions of galaxies, the supernovas, the black holes, and the nearly infinite reaches of dark matter. Even more, it can be read in terms of the final fulfillment of all things .... its final cosmic fullness and rest.<sup>6</sup>

No wonder the prophets quote God lamenting over the human ruining of His “real estate” (Jeremiah 9:7–10)

“Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts:

‘Behold, I will refine them and try them;

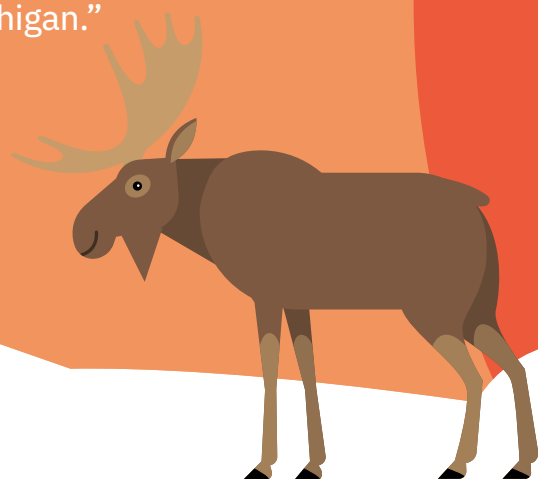
For how shall I deal with the daughter of My people?

Their tongue is an arrow shot out;

A tree species once thought to be extinct is thriving in Michigan. Michigan's collection of dawn redwoods includes the tallest, measuring 106 feet, in Holland. The girthiest, with a 4.8-foot diameter, is in Jackson. More than 60 dawn redwoods are dispersed throughout Michigan State University's campus.



Newberry, Michigan, in the Upper Peninsula is known as the "Moose Capital of Michigan."



It speaks deceit;  
One speaks peaceably to his neighbor with  
his mouth,

But in his heart he lies in wait.

Shall I not punish them for these things?'  
says the Lord.

'Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation  
as this?'

I will take up a weeping and wailing for the  
mountains,

And for the dwelling places of the wilder-  
ness a lamentation,

Because they are burned up,

So that no one can pass through;

Nor can men hear the voice of the cattle.

Both the birds of the heavens and the  
beasts have fled;

They are gone." Jeremiah 9:7–10<sup>7</sup>

According to the Protestant Belgic  
Confession, creation is before us "a most el-  
egant book."<sup>8</sup>

And though now fallen, it is still the theater  
of God's glory, John Calvin insists: "Wherever  
you cast your eyes, there is no spot in the  
universe wherein you cannot discern at least  
some sparks of his glory. You cannot in one

glance survey this most vast and beautiful  
system of the universe, in its wide expanse,  
without being completely overwhelmed by  
the boundless force of its brightness."<sup>9</sup>

Though appreciation of the beauties of na-  
ture has often been non-existent in Seventh-  
day Adventist official statements of faith,  
this insensitivity to the glories of God's cre-  
ated world needs to be changed. Some have  
even suggested that the beauty and good-  
ness of creation is God's first gift of grace.<sup>10</sup>

Such glories of beauty embedded in all of  
creation can become a window into God's  
heart and presence. Since God is the jubi-  
lant source of the beauty and goodness of  
creation, and since we are created in His im-  
age, we should surely grow in appreciation of  
the wonders of creation. In fact, Ellen White  
wrote that the Sabbath is a special day to do  
this — and if we do, we will feel God's pres-  
ence there too: Christ's purpose in parable  
teaching was in direct line with the purpose

of the Sabbath. God gave to men the memo-  
rial of His creative power, that they might  
discern Him in the works of His hand. The  
Sabbath bids us behold in His created works  
the glory of the Creator. And it was because  
He desired us to do this that Jesus bound up  
His precious lessons with the beauty of natu-  
ral things. On the holy rest day, above all oth-  
er days, we should study the messages that  
God has written for us in nature. We should  
study the Saviour's parables where He spoke  
them, in the fields and groves, under the  
open sky, among the grass and flowers. As  
we come close to the heart of nature, Christ  
makes His presence real to us, and speaks to  
our hearts of His peace and love.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps we need a more "worldly" atti-  
tude! The expansive oceans, majestic moun-  
tain ranges, great whales and dolphins, ti-  
gers, hummingbirds, spiders and small earth  
worms are all part of God's grand design  
of life for this planet we call "home" — and

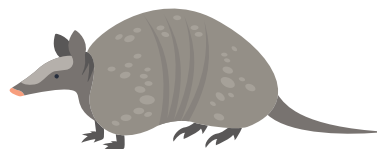


World's supply of  
surface freshwater  
in the Great Lakes:

**20%**



Armadillos, while not native, are present in Illinois and Indiana, particularly in the southern part of the states. Reports indicate they are migrating further northward.



which we share with all living creatures. Remember, too: this planet is merely one tiny speck amid the billions and billions of galaxies, the supernovas, the black holes, and the seemingly immeasurable reaches of dark matter.<sup>12</sup>

When the Divine Creator assumed the human flesh He had created and then walked on the soil and the water He had made, Jesus gave ample evidence that He still treasured this world, often referring to it.

Jesus drew attention to the natural world in His “Sermon on the Mount,” again stressing the divine concern for earth’s smaller creatures which are often underappreciated: “Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them” (Matthew 6:26).

And the Architect of two lavish Old Testament sanctuaries (Exodus 25:10–30:10; 1 Chronicles 28:1–19), marveled at

the astonishing beauty of the flowers His own hands had designed and made: “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these” (Matthew 6:28–29).

Jesus displayed fondness for the grand things of nature, including flowers and birds in which can be found a beauty and perfection that no human artist can produce. The Master Artist also bids us notice and appreciate His designs — and learn of Him through the things He created: Christ might have opened to men the deepest truths of science. He might have unlocked mysteries which have required many centuries of toil and study to penetrate. He might have made suggestions in scientific lines that would have afforded food for thought and stimulus for invention to the close of time. But He did not do this .... In all His teaching, Christ brought the mind of man in contact with the Infinite Mind. He did not direct the people to study men’s theories about God, His word or His works. He taught them to behold Him, as manifested in His works, in His word, and

by His providences. Christ did not deal in abstract theories, but in that which ... will enlarge man’s capacity for knowing God ....<sup>13</sup>

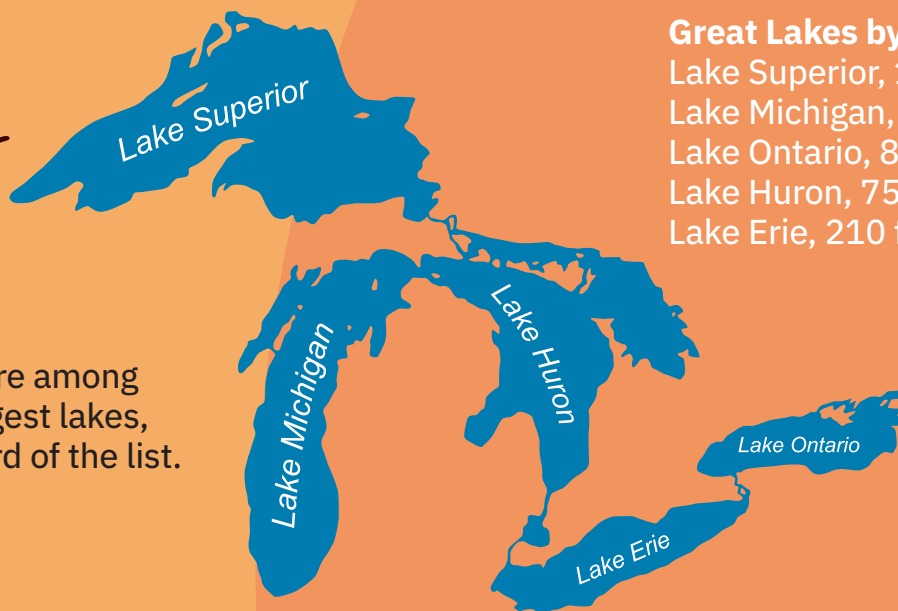
With only a very brief review of the created world in Scripture, it is obvious that this now-sin-damaged planet is still treasured by God and much of the natural world is still beautiful to behold.

Although we sometimes discuss how we should “care for the environment,” the Bible writers instruct us that it is the other way around! What we call the “environment” is God’s bountiful creation into which He put us! He instructed Adam and Eve to “tend and care for the garden” — and He has never cancelled that mandate! And if He did not continuously sustain and renew earth’s processes no life could exist — as the heavenly chorus chants:

Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: “You are worthy, O



The Great Lakes are among the world's 15 largest lakes, representing a third of the list.



**Great Lakes by depth**  
 Lake Superior, 1,333 ft  
 Lake Michigan, 923 ft  
 Lake Ontario, 802 ft  
 Lake Huron, 750 ft  
 Lake Erie, 210 ft

Combined surface area of all the Great Lakes: 94,000 square miles (244,000 square kilometers)

**Gallons of fresh water:**  
 6 quadrillion (22.7 quadrillion liters), enough to submerge the entire continental United States in nearly 10 feet of water.



Lord, To receive glory and honor and power;  
 For You created all things, And **by Your will they exist and were created.**" (Revelation 4:9–11, emphasis added)

The Creator is no distant landlord — and our earthly home is part of the vast universe of His constant providence and care.<sup>14</sup>

Everywhere in Scripture all life, human and nonhuman, is treasured. And when the divinely promised salvation is finally bestowed, the whole world will be included — and the Creator's dreams for this place will finally come true. Such a perspective should bring praise to our lips — as it did for one hymn writer who wrote:

This is my Father's world,  
 And to my listening ears  
 All nature sings, and round me rings  
 The music of the spheres.  
 This is my Father's world:  
 I rest me in the thought  
 Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas —

His hand the wonders wrought.  
 This is my Father's world:  
 The birds their carols raise,  
 The morning light, the lily white,  
 Declare their Maker's praise.  
 This is my Father's world:  
 He shines in all that's fair;  
 In the rustling grass I hear Him pass,  
 He speaks to me everywhere.  
 Amen!

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Ellen Bernstein, "The Splendor of Creation: A Biblical Ecology" (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2005), xiii.

<sup>2</sup> For example, Exodus 24:16 and 26:7 when speaking of Rebekah.

<sup>3</sup> See William C. French, "Beast-Machines and the Technocratic Reduction of Life: A Creation-Centered perspective," in Good News for Animals? Christian Approaches to Animal Well-Being, Charles Pinches and Jay B. McDaniel, eds. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993). In contrast to modern values placed on animals (expedient and ruthlessly slaughtered with no regard for their well-being), the fourth commandment of the Decalogue includes concern for animal life. In fact, the very structure

of this commandment highlights those included in the Sabbath's rest:

A — Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy

B — six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God, in it you shall do no work.

C — you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates

B1 — in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day

A1 — Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

<sup>4</sup> Abraham Heschel, "The Sabbath" (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1983), 10.

<sup>5</sup> "The word Shabbat actually means 'to sit,' and this day is about learning to do just that, Sit and listen. Sit and don't miss your life passing by. Sit and hear it. Create a time when all you have to do is look at God's creation. If you look long enough, it begins to speak to you. But it can't speak unless you give it the time and the setting. It can't speak unless you listen. Sit." Yehoshua Rubin, "Spiritual Awakenings: Illuminations of Shabbat and the Holiday" (New York: Urim Publications, 2003), 18.

<sup>6</sup> H. Paul Santmire, "Partnership with Nature According

Michigan hosts the largest Sequoia east of the Rockies, named Champion, at the Lake Bluff Farms Nature Preserve. It is one of only a handful of these giant trees in the state.

The surface area of the Great Lakes is larger than Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont combined.



to the Scriptures: Beyond the Theology of Stewardship," *Christian Scholar's Review*, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2003, p. 411.

<sup>7</sup> Jeremiah is not alone. See also: "Hear the word of the Lord, You children of Israel,

For the Lord brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land:

'There is no truth or mercy

Or knowledge of God in the land.

By swearing and lying,

Killing and stealing and committing adultery,

They break all restraint,

With bloodshed upon bloodshed.

Therefore the land will mourn;

And everyone who dwells there will waste away

With the beasts of the field

And the birds of the air;

Even the fish of the sea will be taken away." Hosea 4:1-3

Various other prophets repeat this type of sorrowful litany.

<sup>8</sup> Belgic Confession, Article 2: "The Means by Which We Know God: We know him by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe,

since that universe is before our eyes like a beautiful book in which all creatures, great and small, are as letters to make us ponder the invisible things of God: his eternal power and his divinity, as the apostle Paul says in Romans 1:20. ..."

<sup>9</sup> John Calvin, *Calvin: Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, The Library of Christian classics, XX (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press) 1.5.1.

<sup>10</sup> Gregg A. Mast, "An Elegant Book" in *Reformed Review*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Spring, 1999), pp. 280-288.

<sup>11</sup> "Christ's Object Lessons," pp. 25-26.

<sup>12</sup> H. Paul Santmire, "Partnership with Nature According to the Scriptures: Beyond the Theology of Stewardship," *Christian Scholar's Review*, Vol. 32, No. 4, 2003, p. 411.

<sup>13</sup> Ellen G. White, "Christ's Object Lessons" (Washington, D.C.: Review & Herald Publishing, 1941), 22-23). The apostle Paul also instructed the Roman Christians that they could become acquainted with God through study of the created world: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20).

<sup>14</sup> Terence Fretheim elaborates: Even life outside the garden is "good" (verse 12) so that when Adam and Eve move out into that world, they will not move from a world of blessing to one devoid of blessing. God's good creation will be there to continue to support life .... The earth belongs to God, not us: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: the world, and they that dwell therein." (Psalm 24:1) — and this fundamental perspective never varies in Scripture. And since we are created in God's image, our appreciation for the beauty of this world should be apparent.

**JoAnn Davidson** is senior research professor of systematic theology at the Seventh-day Theological Seminary at Andrews University.



# OUT OF SERVICE

## FIVE PLACES TO VISIT AROUND LAKE MICHIGAN

**W**hen you think of visiting the Great Lakes area, you might first think of Sleeping Bear Dunes in Michigan or Door County in Wisconsin. But while planning a weeklong road trip around Lake Michigan with my four-legged companion, Nori, we found a couple hidden gems along with some well-known areas. The best part? Limited cell service.

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY KATIE FELLOWS

### **1 GEORGE MEAD WILDLIFE AREA**

Tucked into mid-Wisconsin on your way to Michigan's Upper Peninsula is 33,000 acres of wetlands, forests and grasslands that make up the George Mead Wildlife Area. On a rainy day, Nori and I walked around the inner trail spying on a wide array of wildlife from a Great Horned Owl and a raccoon to a plethora of birds and wildlife.

Over 80 miles of internal roads and dikes, along with three easy walking trails around the visitor center, make this an immersive outdoor experience for people of all ages and abilities.



2

## THE UPPER PENINSULA

Michigan's Upper Peninsula boasts a wide range of wild areas to explore. From waterfalls and remote beaches to wildlife sightings, you can easily find yourself enjoying the rugged nature with ancient volcanic rocks, forests and rocky Lake Superior coastlines.

The Keweenaw Peninsula, the Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park and Tahquamenon Falls are three areas you don't want to miss in your adventures.

3

## PICTURED ROCKS NATIONAL LAKESHORE

Nestled along the Lake Superior shoreline sits the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. Known for its beautiful cliffs and vistas, there are approximately 100 miles worth of trails to explore and appreciate nature.

Bringing your furry companion does limit your access to the backcountry trails, so we trekked from Miners Castle down along the small portion of the North Country Trail appreciating the sunlight filtered trees, views through the branches and crossing the Miners River before emerging from the woods to Miners Beach.

4

## SENEY WILDLIFE REFUGE

Tucked into the center of Michigan's Upper Peninsula sits the Seney Wildlife Refuge. This was a highlight of my adventure as it is the summer home to the world's two oldest documented Common Loons.

Featuring a peaceful roadway between ponds, you can mosey your way through the refuge by foot, bike or car. I'd recommend driving as slow as possible or you risk missing out on spotting the local wildlife like migratory birds, beavers, turtles and resident osprey eagles. If you're lucky, you may even spot some bears or otters.





## 5 SLEEPING BEAR DUNES NATIONAL PARK

Known for its towering sand dunes along Lake Michigan, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Park is a popular site for people from all over the world to visit. Aside from the miles of sandy beaches and scenic drive, you can take a leisurely walk along the Empire Bluff Trail for a scenic overlook of the famous sand dunes.

What's the biggest takeaway of doing a nature road trip? Slow down. Adventuring takes time and being in a hurry to check off that nature spot can leave you feeling rushed and missing out on fully appreciating nature.

Places we didn't get to explore, but would recommend:

Indiana Dunes National Park  
Isle Royale National Park  
Door County, Wisconsin  
Nachusa Grasslands, Illinois  
Apostle Islands, Wisconsin

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**Katie Fellows** is assistant communication specialist for the Lake Union Conference.

# A Nurse's Journey of Care and Purpose Inspired by Her Sister's Legacy

**Kim Mathews had never given much thought to a career in nursing, but then an unexpected turn led to more than a decade of community and belonging as a nurse at UChicago Medicine AdventHealth Hinsdale.**

With encouragement from her sister Lisa, Kim began working at the hospital's cafeteria, stepping into the same role Lisa once held before she went on to pursue a nursing degree.

Kim was initially hoping to work in therapy, but it was not long before Lisa convinced her to consider nursing. Kim recalls deeply admiring her sister's unwavering commitment to the field.

"When Lisa went to nursing school, I just thought, 'Oh my, how does she do all of that?' But she did and she showed me that it was possible," said Kim. "It was cool to see her go from a patient care technician to a licensed practical nurse to a registered nurse."

Kim began her own nursing journey, obtaining her associate degree to become a registered nurse (RN) and then her bachelor of science in nursing (BSN). While pursuing her education, she received support from AdventHealth's educational assistance program and she completed her BSN in just one year, working alongside a fellow team member who was earning the same degree.

Sadly, a few years later, Kim experienced the heartbreaking loss of her sister. Their special bond is one of the things Mathews said she misses the most, remembering the countless memories they shared traveling, going to concerts, and chatting on the phone.

"I miss everything about my sister and I miss just being together," she said. "We

didn't get enough time to share nursing. I would have encouraged her to get her BSN and invited her to come and work at the hospital again with me."

Knowing how important nursing was to Lisa, Kim is determined to spend her life serving in the profession, caring for others on behalf of her sister and her own calling.

Since the start of her nursing journey, Kim has experienced growth opportunities both personally and professionally. She's participated in several nursing committees and is active in AdventHealth's clinical ladder, the Nursing Professional Excellence Program (PEP).

Being a part of the PEP's first year at UChicago Medicine AdventHealth Hinsdale, Kim is already seeing the rewards of her hard work. She credits the program for being a great motivator and getting more nurses involved in leadership.

Kim has served in the hospital's mother-baby unit for 12 years and loves being able to care for moms just hours after delivery — what she calls "the happiest time after birth."

"My favorite thing is truly knowing that the work we do each day matters and is impactful. I love being able to help people. Seeing their special moments is something that has never gotten old and adds joy to my day," she said.

As she reflects on her career, Kim can't help but think of the impact Lisa had on her.



▲ Kim Mathews



▲ Kim Mathews and her sister, Lisa

"I hope I am making my sister proud. She was a part of me," Kim said. "Who knows where I'd be if it wasn't for her. I am grateful for that and I'm happy to honor her."

**Gianni Arroyo** is a communications specialist at AdventHealth.



**UChicago Medicine**

**AdventHealth**

# Record Number of Students Enter Top STEM PhD Programs



World Changers Made Here.

**In recent years, a record number of Andrews University graduates have been accepted to the nation's top STEM PhD programs.**

Gary Burdick, professor of physics and dean of research, notes, "While we have long led in training Adventist students for advanced study of science and mathematics, we have noticed a significant uptick in those accepted into fully funded doctoral programs, even as these programs are becoming more competitive." As a faith-based university, Andrews is committed to preparing graduates who approach their scientific study with the distinctive purpose of glorifying God as Creator and serving humanity.

One such student, Ian Neidigh, graduated in May 2025 and started his PhD in chemistry at Yale University this fall. Neidigh follows alumna Hannah Castillo, who is currently finishing her PhD in chemistry at Yale, having graduated from Andrews in 2022. David Randall, chair of the Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry, expresses, "We are grateful to see students from our American Chemical Society-accredited program excel at the highest levels and continue our legacy of preparing scientific researchers, leaders in industry and future faculty for Adventist higher education."

Additionally in recent years, alumnus Sam Clough graduated with undergraduate degrees in engineering and computer science in May 2024 and was accepted to the electrical engineering PhD program at the University of Notre Dame. Also at Notre Dame, Eric Inae, a 2022 graduate, is pursuing a PhD in computer science.

Noah Koliadko and Wesley Martin started their PhD programs in physics at Duke

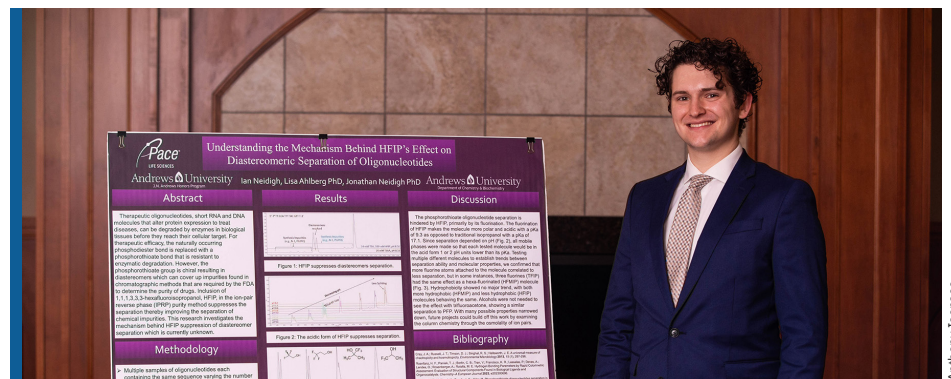
University and the University of Colorado Boulder, respectively, in 2024, following their graduation from Andrews. "While undergraduates, Wesley and Noah were already doing work at the level of graduate students and gave impressive talks at international conferences and specialized NASA working groups," Johnson notes. Another student from the class of 2025, Yoel Kim, also started a doctoral program in physics at The Ohio State University this fall.

Recent graduate Jamie Shepard began a PhD in mathematics at the University of Tennessee this fall. Additionally, in 2024, alumni Alex Navarro and Moises Reyes Rivas began PhD programs in mathematics at the University of Maryland and the University of California, Los Angeles, respectively. The year prior, Noe Reyes Rivas started his PhD in applied mathematics at Brown University. He reflects, "Thanks to Andrews' holistic

education, strong spiritual foundation, and the support of my professors, I have excelled in my field."

Yosia Nurhan and Jonathan Homan, who both graduated with dual degrees in mathematics and physics, also benefited from research at Andrews, working on NASA-funded projects that allowed them to publish original research on space physics while they were still undergraduates. They are now pursuing PhDs in applied mathematics at the Georgia Institute of Technology and the University of Colorado Boulder, respectively, and continue to collaborate with Johnson on research. Several other alumni are also completing doctorates in the mathematical sciences, including Christiane and Dorothea Gallos (mathematics, Indiana University Bloomington), Lucinda Ford (mathematics education, Texas State University) and Mykhaylo Malakhov (biostatistics, University of Minnesota). ■

**Anthony Bosman** is chair of the Andrews University Department of Mathematics.



▲ Ian Neidigh, pictured presenting his undergraduate honors research project at Andrews University, will be beginning a fully funded PhD in chemistry at Yale University this fall. The successful placement of students into top STEM doctoral programs reflects Andrews University's commitment to prepare undergraduate students for a variety of in-demand STEM careers and advanced scientific study in the context of its mission to Seek Knowledge, Affirm Faith and Change the World.

Anthony Isensee



▲ Pastor Russian (right) speaks to the Chicagoland congregation.

## Russian-speaking Church Celebrates 15 Years

**Hope Church celebrated its 15th anniversary on June 7 with a special service that brought 200 people together to honor God's faithfulness through unprecedented times.**

### The Story

Hope Church was born out of a need for spiritual fellowship among immigrants from Ukraine, Russia and other former Soviet territories. While several of these families initially attended various churches across Chicagoland, the language barrier — many were not yet fluent in English — made it difficult to feel truly at home.

The idea emerged to gather Russian-speaking believers in hopes of forming their own congregation. "Out of that need, vision, and deep sense of community, Hope Church was born," says Pastor Ruslan Drumii. "It was planted to be a place where people from across the former Soviet Union could worship, grow in faith, and support one another as they built new lives in America."

### Celebrating God's Faithfulness

The war in Ukraine, which began in February 2022, sent shockwaves through the Hope Church community. Refugees fleeing the conflict arrived with a desire to worship in Ukrainian. In response, some existing members left, taking up to half of the children and youth group to form a distinctly Ukrainian fellowship.

For a time, the future of Hope Church seemed uncertain. But the 15th anniversary service proved God's faithfulness, showing a church that is not only surviving, but thriving despite the challenges.

### Next Steps

Over the past 15 years, between 200 and 300 people have called Hope Church home. While many have moved away in pursuit of new opportunities, the church continues to serve as a refuge in the city — a place of healing, connection and growth.

Pastor Ruslan shares the church's vision: "We want to serve people both offline — in our local community — and online, where our reach has extended far beyond America's borders."

Hope Church is also committed to discipling second- and third-generation members to help them embrace their heritage, their identity, and, above all, their God. ■

**Matthew Lucio** is the Illinois Conference assistant to the president for communication.

## Grand Rapids Area Churches Offer Mental Health Support

**As Pastor Garhett Morgan and his team set up a large black wall in downtown Rockford, a woman stopped. She told him, "I just I just lost somebody due to suicide in my family and this just this just means the world to me."**

Morgan said, "It was like the easiest transition into deep spiritual conversation ever."

Rockford and Sparta churches, near Grand Rapids, launched the initiative on Sept. 6,

during the city's weekly farmers' market. The day also coincided with "Art in the Park," drawing even more visitors. In all, Morgan estimates between 300 and 400 people came by.



▲ The wall, four sides of aluminum painted black and marked at the top with the words "Mental Health Solidarity," quickly filled with notes, Bible verses and doodles. Children crouched low to draw hearts and flowers. Teens filmed themselves leaving messages for Instagram. Parents walked with their children, reading what others had written.

Rockford is a relatively affluent suburb where many professionals live and conventional giveaways don't always connect. As Morgan explained, "Traditional outreach in this area, while I still believe in it, it's kind of hard to reach."

Members suggested focusing on mental health, a pressing concern in the community after several teen suicides at the local high school, including a 14-year-old who took his life in August 2023. "It really rocked us a bit," he said.

Planning began six months earlier, with Morgan seeking approval from the township. The feedback was so strong that two weeks before the event the city manager emailed

to make sure it was still happening. They told Morgan, "We believe in it and we want to make sure that it happens." The city gave them a prominent spot near the river and band shell.

Church members contributed their spiritual gifts. Three Adventist mental health professionals were present for anyone who needed immediate support. An aircraft mechanic welded together the aluminum frame. Youth answered questions from passersby and explained the purpose. Older members gave encouragement and prayed. The intergenerational participation was a major highlight for Morgan. "The volunteers of our church coming together—that was great to

see people young and old working side-by-side," Morgan said.

The church handed out "Steps to Christ" and gained a few Bible study interests. For Morgan, the event reinforced the value of simple initiatives. "I believe in public evangelism. I believe in prophecy series—in fact, we're doing one in October—I believe that's so important. However, I do think that having events like this, they're just as important," he said. "It was not flashy. It didn't cost hardly anything. It just took a little bit of planning."

The wall, he added, will be used again.

**Debbie Michel** is editor of the *Lake Union Herald*.



▲ Our outreach also included a strong focus on health. Dr. Mike and Melanie Quion, Michigan Conference health ministry leaders, organized a mini health expo where visitors could check their blood pressure and find out their "health age."

# Michigan Churches Team Up to Reach Fairgoers

**The 176th Calhoun County Fair became more than just a summer tradition this year — it turned into a meaningful opportunity for outreach and service.**

Four local Seventh-day Adventist churches — Marshall, Urbandale, Tabernacle and Hispana (Battle Creek Spanish) — came together on August 10, to share Christ's love with the community in a united effort.

Since April, members and leaders from each church have been praying, planning and working side by side. The momentum really picked up after the Michigan Conference

camp meeting in July, giving the team a renewed sense of mission as they prepared for the fair. At the center of our booth was a clear message of hope — the everlasting gospel of Revelation 14. Fairgoers were invited to attend the upcoming Keys to Revelation prophecy seminars, which will be hosted at all four churches. Guests were also offered uplifting books like "The Great Controversy,"

"Steps to Christ," "The Desire of Ages" and a variety of GLOW tracts, each one given with prayer that it would meet a need in someone's life.

These simple services opened doors to deeper conversations about wellness, lifestyle and faith — showing that the gospel touches every part of life.

On Friday, August 8, volunteers from all four churches gathered early in the morning to set up both the health and spiritual booths. By Sunday everything was in place and the ministries were in full swing, ready to welcome the community.

Throughout the fair, our members were able to connect with neighbors, pray with visitors, and share invitations to study the Bible further through BibleStudyOffer.com. Each interaction was another chance to point someone to Jesus.

The fair reminded us how powerful it is when God's people work together. We believe the seeds planted will continue to grow through the Keys to Revelation seminars and through the ongoing ministries of each church. Our prayer is that many in Calhoun County will come to know Jesus more personally because of what was shared at the fair. ■

**Ian Santos** pastors the Jackson and Marshall churches in the Michigan Conference.



▲ Ronny Nalin, director of the Geoscience Research Institute, served as a keynote speaker for the conference.

# Adventist Conference on Family Research and Practice Celebrates Creation

**Andrews University hosted the annual Adventist Conference on Family Research and Practice (ACFRP) from July 17–19 at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. Under the theme “Celebrating Creation: Marriage, Family, and the Sabbath,” Adventist counseling and theological professionals gave presentations on what a biblical lifestyle should look like in a contemporary context. The Department of Family Ministries of the General Conference, in collaboration with the North American Division (NAD) and Andrews University, co-sponsored the event.**

The conference targeted family life leaders, pastors, students and professionals from local churches, conferences and other Adventist institutions. Caundee Cauvin, a conference organizer and graduate assistant at the seminary, further described ACFRP as a space for “meaningful research and dialogue,” with the end goal of promoting family healing and restoration. Attendees were given the opportunity to attend both in person and online, taking part in discussions on strategic ways to approach family therapy, family studies and family ministry.

The ACFRP had six plenary presentations and several breakout sessions over the three-day gathering. Some of the conference’s highlights were its four keynote speakers, starting with Ronny Nalin, Geoscience Research Institute director. Nalin spoke Thursday evening on the topic of “Uniformitarianism, Catastrophism, and God’s Agency in Nature,” pointing out how geological data and studies can provide evidence for the intentional and divine Creation found in the book of Genesis. Nalin also provided the opening plenary session on Friday, July 18, with “The

Great Reversal: How the God of Creation Week Transforms Lives.” He discussed how “Christ’s silent will to rescue” is illustrated through Creation and the rest of Scripture.

On Friday afternoon, the first set of breakout sessions took place. Attendees selected from presentations given by psychologists, professors and pastors from across the U.S. One of the presentations was given by Elaine Oliver, associate director of the GC Department of Family Ministries, who spoke on “Religion, Purpose and Happiness as Predictors of Student Resilience.” Other breakout presentation topics included post-pandemic stress on Chinese immigrants, familial anxiety, domestic violence, Sabbath rest and worship, and premarital counseling.

The third plenary session, which also served as a vespers service to open the Sabbath on Friday night, was presented by Richard Davidson, senior research professor of Old Testament interpretation at Andrews University. He spoke about Christ’s vision for relational intimacy with the topic of “God’s Creation Intent for Marriage: Heterosexual, Monogamous, and Permanent.” Using Scripture, Davidson identified God’s ideal and perfect intent for His children and their romantic relationships.

On the final day of the conference, the Sabbath morning plenary was given by Hyveth Williams, director of the Doctor of Ministry program in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary. Williams spoke about “restoring the broken,” sharing God’s appreciation for beauty and sentimentalism through Creation and the gift of the Sabbath. She also emphasized that “Sabbath wasn’t a rule but a relationship” and noted the importance of modeling spiritual relationships, especially amid a modern world of rising divorce rates, envy and violence. Williams concluded that through strengthening the values of family, marriage and the Sabbath, church members can find meaning in their lives — rather than letting “algorithms fuel the quest for purpose,” as many do through social media consumption.

In the afternoon, attendees engaged in additional breakout sessions. Andrews faculty members Ainsworth Joseph, assistant professor of discipleship and family ministries, and Kristina Freed, adjunct professor, led two sessions. Joseph spoke about helping at-risk children from a biblical perspective, and Freed shared a “blueprint for relational thriving.”

Willie Oliver, director of the GC Department of Family Ministries, led the third breakout session. His presentation was titled, “In the Image of God: Giving Attention to Who We Are,” and he spoke on the biblical standards for sex and marriage, citing 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 and Leviticus 18:22. He spoke against the potential harmful methods of “reparative therapy” and shared, “the Seventh-day Adventist Church is not against anyone; we are for what’s in the word of God.”

The closing keynote presentation was given by JoAnn Davidson, senior research professor of systematic theology at Andrews. Her talk, titled “God is a romantic,” detailed the positives of a God-filled marital relationship. Davidson affirmed human sexuality and romance as a God-given blessing, illustrating the loving relationships between men and women, like Jacob and Rachel, found throughout the Bible. She also shared biblical examples of God’s immense love for His people and the church.

“The ACFRP is more than just a conference — it’s a community and a growing network of professionals, scholars and students passionate about family life and faith,” said Cauvin. “It provides opportunities for continuing education, mentorship, research exposure, and real-life application in ministry and clinical settings. It’s open to individuals across backgrounds who are committed to making a difference in homes and communities.”

The next ACFRP will take place in 2027, with further details to be announced. More information about the ACFRP and the Family Ministries departments of the GC and NAD can be found on their respective websites. ■

**Andrew Francis** is a student writer for the Office of University Communication.

# New Book About Faith, Science and the Genesis Creation Account

Exploring a wide range of issues in the creation/evolution debate, a new book by Adventist scientist J.C. Walton was recently released by Andrews University Press. “Justice for Genesis: A Scientific Exploration” addresses the most important questions that scientists ask about origins regarding the claims of the first book of the Bible.

It is divided into five sections, each containing chapters dealing with topics such as the clash of worldviews in the scientific community regarding origins; the literary composition of the book of Genesis; chronology and earth history; archaeology issues; and the ultimate portrait of God in Genesis.

Walton serves as emeritus professor of chemistry at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. A widely published and recognized scientist, he has been honored by the Royal Society of Chemistry and by Scotland’s National Academy. Walton has also authored and co-authored hundreds of scientific articles, along with two books published by Cambridge University Press.

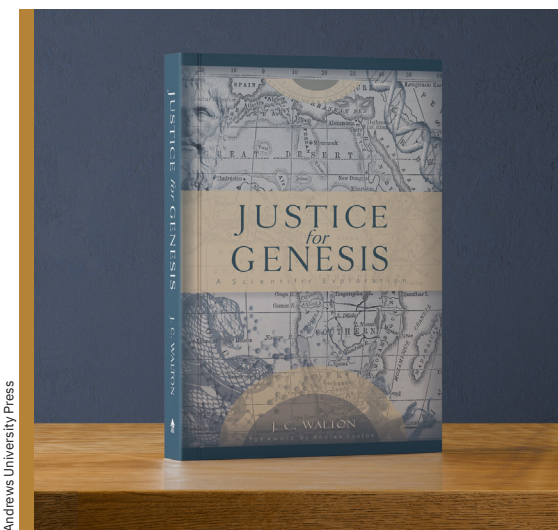
The foreword to “Justice for Genesis” is written by Andrea Luxton, former president of Andrews University. “Walton is careful not to overstate,” writes Luxton, “but he levels the playing field by showing how the logical positions of those that debunk Genesis are in fact significantly lacking in logic themselves. ... For those who hold to the vital role of Scripture, and particularly Genesis, in forming their worldview, this book will be a refreshing and encouraging read.”

The publication of “Justice for Genesis” is part of a succession of works from Andrews dealing with faith and science issues, according to Ronald Knott, director of Andrews University Press. “We’re proud to publish Dr. Walton’s important book,” Knott says, “and we’re pleased to have it take its place beside Leonard Brand’s

classic ‘Faith, Reason, and Earth History,’ the two volumes of ‘The Genesis Creation Account’ and ‘Design and Catastrophe: 51 Scientists Explore Evidence in Nature.’” These and all other Andrews University Press publications are available at Adventist Book Centers, online retailers and directly from the press at [universitypress.andrews.edu](http://universitypress.andrews.edu).

Andrews University Press is the primary academic publishing house serving the Adventist Church worldwide. Its publications are authorized by a board of directors chaired by John Wesley Taylor V, president of Andrews University. ■

*Andrews University Press*



▲ “Justice for Genesis: A Scientific Exploration” was released in July 2025.

# Lake Union Names New Multicultural Ministry Assistant Director

**Magaly Torres was promoted to the position of multicultural ministry assistant director where she will take on expanded responsibilities within the department, working alongside Vice President Carmelo Mercado.**



Her expanded role involves the establishment of a program funded through the Lilly Endowment, the Nurturing Children Through Worship and Prayer Initiative. This national initiative is designed to help Christian congregations more fully and intentionally engage children in intergenerational corporate worship and prayer practices.

“We are excited to launch this initiative in collaboration with our five conferences, and I’m especially grateful to have Magaly Torres leading its rollout,” said Mercado. “Magaly was instrumental in preparing the proposal for this highly competitive grant, and her deep experience in cross-cultural ministry and humanitarian service makes her the ideal person to guide this important work. I’m confident she will help shape a program that empowers children to actively participate in worship and grow in their relationship with God.”

Originally trained as a computer lab teacher at Peruvian Union University, Torres began her career in Peru, serving as assistant program director and later as emergency response coordinator and logistics manager for ADRA Peru from 2005 to 2008. She led volunteer mobilization, coordinated emergency aid, and oversaw logistics and procurement during national crises.

From 2008 to 2009, she worked in Spain as a finance audit operator with the Altius Foundation, supporting international development projects and fundraising efforts.

Torres joined ADRA International in Maryland, where she worked as an assistant in the Emergency Management Unit, helping coordinate crisis response efforts and prepare humanitarian reports. She later served the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists from 2022 to early 2024 as an administrative professional for Multilingual Ministries and Chaplaincy, where she supported advisory boards, immigrant ministry programs and the chaplaincy credentialing process.

She holds a master’s degree in immigration and international development from Francisco de Vitoria University in Madrid, Spain, and a bachelor’s degree in computer systems engineering from Peruvian Union University in Lima, Peru. She is married to Ignacio Goya and together they have three children.

“I’m honored to be part of a program that sees the spiritual potential of children and equips churches to empower them in worship,” said Torres. “As a mother, I know how important it is for the home, school and church to work together in shaping a child’s faith. Congregational worship and prayer help children grow spiritually, learn the language of faith and experience God’s love in community. This initiative is about more than just including children in services — it’s about helping them feel they belong and have something meaningful to contribute.”

You can learn more about the Nurturing Children Through Worship and Prayer Initiative here. ■

**Debbie Michel** is editor of the Lake Union Herald.

# Save the Date



GIVING **TUESDAY**



*November 4, 2025*

# MILEPOSTS

## OBITUARIES

**BOROUGHFF**, Alberta M. (DePas), age 92; born May 17, 1933, in Wilson, Michigan; died June 18, 2025, in Marquette, Michigan. She was a member of the Wilson Seventh-day Adventist Church in Wilson, Michigan. She is survived by her daughters, Marcia Mills, Jeanne' McCoy, Charlene (Russ) Lehmann, Paula Burmeister; sister, Inez Schmidt; sister-in-law, Ione DePas; eight grandchildren; and 9 great-grandchildren. A memorial interment was conducted by Pastor Tony Ludwig on July 7, 2025, at the Wilson Seventh-day Adventist Church Cemetery in Wilson, Michigan.

**JOVANOVIC**, Zorica, age 92; born February 9, 1933, in Orahovac, Yugoslavia; died July 12, 2025, in Des Plaines, Illinois. She was a member of the Yugoslavian Seventh-day Adventist Church in Chicago, Illinois. She is survived by her son, Vladimir Jovanovic; daughters, Mirjana (Grada) Markovic, Jelena (Miguel) Santiago; relatives, Jasmina (Rick) Pedi, Violet and Lillian, Milos Markovic, Nikolas (Sara) Santiago, Milena Santiago; four grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. A funeral interment was conducted by Pastor Pavle Korac on July 22, 2025, with private graveside service at the Memorial Park Cemetery in Skokie, Illinois.

**KEENEY**, Joan E. (Marsh), age 92; born April 20, 1933, in Hope, Michigan; died May 25, 2025, in Haslett, Michigan. She was a member of the University Seventh-day Adventist Church in East Lansing, Michigan. She is survived by her husband James V. Keeney; sons, Gary (Darla) Keeney Jim (Daphne) Keeney; daughter, Marsha Brandon (Wes) Greene; brother, Robert E. Marsh; nine grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; and one step-grandchild. A memorial inurnment was conducted by Pastor Roy Castelbuono on August 2, 2025, at the Rose Lake Cemetery in Bath, Michigan.

**MCQUISTION**, Heidi (Lessel), age 67; born Sept. 28, 1958, in Highland Park, Michigan; died July 5, 2025, in Traverse City, Michigan. She was a member of the Traverse City Seventh-day Adventist Church in Traverse City, Michigan.

She is survived by her husband, Jeff McQuistion; father, Ewald Lassel; sister, Hilde (Lessel) Bonesteel; stepsister, Ludia Moore; half-sister, Karin Villanova; and sisters-in-law, Lori Aab, Jan Jury and Mona Garvin. A memorial inurnment was conducted by Elder John Hill on August 10, 2025, in Michigan.

**REMMERS**, Eugene T., age 89; born September 4, 1935,

in Pickrell, Nebraska; died October 5, 2024, in Dayton, Maryland. He was a member of the Triadelphia Church in Clarksville, Maryland. He is survived by his wife, Carolyn E. (Numbers) Remmers; son, Rick Remmers; daughter, Susan Welke; sister, Arlene Hart; and two grandchildren. A private inurnment was conducted by Pastor Rick Remmers on March 15, 2025, in Cleveland, Tennessee.

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.

## CALENDAR OF OFFERINGS

### OCTOBER

- 4 Local Church Budget
- 11 Union Designated
- 18 Local Church Budget
- 25 Local Conference Advance

## Sabbath Sunset Calendar

	Oct. 3	Oct. 10	Oct. 17	Oct. 24	Oct. 31
Berrien Springs, Michigan	7:22	7:11	7:00	6:49	6:40
Chicago	6:28	6:16	6:05	5:54	5:45
Detroit	7:09	6:57	6:46	6:35	6:26
Indianapolis	7:23	7:12	7:01	6:52	6:43
La Crosse, Wisconsin	6:41	6:29	6:17	6:06	5:56
Lansing, Michigan	7:15	7:03	6:52	6:41	6:31
Madison, Wisconsin	6:34	6:22	6:10	6:00	5:50
Springfield, Illinois	6:37	6:26	6:15	6:06	5:57

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# CLASSIFIEDS

## SERVICES

### Shop for New/Used Adventist Books: TEACH Services

offers used Adventist books at LNFBOOKS.com or new book releases at TEACHServices.com or your local ABC. Authors, let us help you publish your book with editing, design, marketing and worldwide distribution. Call 706-504-9192 for a free evaluation.

**Move with an award-winning agency:** Apex Moving + Storage partners with the General Conference to provide quality moves for you. Call us for all your relocation needs. Contact Marcy Danté at 800-766-1902 or visit our website: [apexmoving.com/adventist](http://apexmoving.com/adventist).

**Get free stickers.** LifeTalk Radio has free stickers for kids. Order at: [LifeTalk.net/stickers](http://LifeTalk.net/stickers). Let others know LifeTalkKids.net has awesome programs for kids of all ages. Discover exciting adventure, captivating history, amazing Bible stories and more. Check out: [LifeTalk.net](http://LifeTalk.net)

### Considering Rural Living?

Explore Greeneville, Tennessee! Located near the Smoky Mountains, Greeneville Adventist Academy has an accredited SDA K-12 day school program, supported by two constituent churches, prioritizing the Bible, evangelism, mission trips, academics and a high-quality music program

(voice, band, bells and strings). [MyGAA.org](http://MyGAA.org) / 423-639-2011.

### Adventist Mental Health Counselor: Jarod Thomas.

Find hope and healing through compassionate, confidential, Christ-centered therapy. I help adolescents and adults in Michigan & Illinois overcome challenges and reach their goals via telehealth. Specializing in clergy care. Accepting Aetna & Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Call 331-296-0879 or email [jarod@finishwellgroup.com](mailto:jarod@finishwellgroup.com).

**Ann Arbor Adventist real estate agent** eager to assist you in buying or leasing your next home. Serving transferees, medical and incoming university students in Washtenaw and surrounding counties. Jerlee Taylor-Bond, call or text: 734-358-3866.

## EMPLOYMENT

**Andrews University** seeks qualified applicants: Andrews University is seeking qualified Seventh-day Adventists who may fill open roles in fulfilling our mission to Seek Knowledge, Affirm Faith, and Change the World. If this is of interest to you, please check out our current openings at: [andrews.edu/jobs](http://andrews.edu/jobs)

**Southern Adventist University** continuously seeks qualified candidates to fill various positions around campus, including faculty, salaried staff, and hourly staff

positions. If you are interested in working at Southern, we encourage you to view the positions that are currently open at [sau.catsone.com/careers](http://sau.catsone.com/careers) and apply as God leads. To view current open educational positions Pre-K through college across the North American Division, please visit [jobs.adventisteducation.org](http://jobs.adventisteducation.org).

**Pacific Union College** seeks qualified candidates to fill open positions in fulfilling our mission to Learn with Purpose, Rise in Faith, and Serve in Love. Beautiful mountain campus, minutes to shopping, an hour+ drive to ocean and skiing. If interested, please check out our current openings at: [puc.edu/campus-services/human-resources/](http://puc.edu/campus-services/human-resources/) current-job-postings.

**Union Adventist University** is searching for applicants for the position of life coach in Student Success. This is a full-time, non-exempt position. A bachelor's degree is required; master's preferred. Duties include serving as a life coach/academic advisor for assigned freshman, working with high-risk students and providing specialized services, assisting freshman with registration, providing accountability coaching for the academic probation population, and other duties. Please see the job description

and instructions for application at [uau.edu/employment](http://uau.edu/employment).

**Union Adventist University** is seeking applicants for EMS Coordinator in the International Rescue and Relief (IRR) Program. This is a full-time exempt position with excellent benefits. The EMS Coordinator is responsible for developing and managing the EMS component of the program and includes both teaching responsibilities and program administration. EMS Instructor Certification is required. Please see the job description and apply at [uau.edu/employment](http://uau.edu/employment).

**Union Adventist University** seeks applicants for Doctor of Physical Therapy Program Director to provide leadership to the program and oversee all aspects of the DPT Program including responsibility for communication, program assessment and planning, fiscal management, faculty evaluation/professional development, curriculum development, accreditation, and other duties. This is a full-time exempt position with excellent benefits including tuition assistance. See the full job description and apply at [uau.edu/employment](http://uau.edu/employment).

**Union Adventist University** seeks applicants for SALT (Soul-winning And Leadership

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Training) Program Director to provide administrative oversight and ensure the strategic development of the program in harmony with It is Written. This position also includes faculty teaching responsibilities. A master's degree in religion/ministry/theology is required. This is a full-time exempt position with excellent benefits including tuition assistance. See the full job description and apply at [uau.edu/employment](http://uau.edu/employment).

**Union Adventist University** seeks applicants for SALT (Soul-winning And Leadership Training) Program Outreach Coordinator/Registrar to be responsible for planning the Program's outreach, assisting the director with programming, training, interviewing and advising students and other duties. This is a full-time exempt position with excellent benefits including tuition assistance. Please see the full job description and apply at [uau.edu/](http://uau.edu/) employment.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Andrews Academy** invites alumni (those who attended/graduated, and/or worked at EMCA/AUA/AA) to a reunion from October 17–18, 2025. Honor classes this year end in 0 & 5. The class of 1975 will celebrate their golden (50th) reunion. The class of 2000 will celebrate their silver (25th) reunion. Alumni, please watch your email, our website ([andrews.edu/aa/alumni/](http://andrews.edu/aa/alumni/) reunions), Instagram ([andrews\\_academy\\_alumni](https://www.instagram.com/andrews_academy_alumni/)), and Facebook ([facebook.com/andrewsacademyaa](https://www.facebook.com/andrewsacademyaa)) for any updates.

# PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH

## OCTOBER

### ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

#### GENERAL EVENTS

- Oct. 10–12:** Seventh-day Adventist Colleges Soccer & Volleyball Tournament Invitational
- Oct. 16–18:** Disciple-Making Conference
- Oct. 17–18:** Andrews Academy Reunion, Andrews Academy
- Oct. 17–20:** Andrews University October Weekend Experience
- Oct. 21:** John O. Waller Lectureship on the Arts
- Oct. 22:** Kingman Lecture on Science and Society
- Oct. 23:** Celebration of Community Engagement
- Oct. 24, 12:30–4:30 p.m.:** Celebration of Research
- Oct. 31–Nov. 1:** Andrews Autumn Conference on Religion and Science

### 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).
- Oct. 4, 7 p.m.:** Howard Center Presents: Heritage Singers
- Oct. 19, 4 p.m.:** Sunday Music Series: Jason Marquez & Tyler Ninalga
- Oct. 25, 7:30 p.m.:** Wind Symphony Fall Concert

### ILLINOIS

- Oct. 3–5:** Prayer Retreat, Camp Akita
- Oct. 10–12:** Master Guide Camporee, Camp Akita
- Oct. 15–22:** Mission Akita, Camp Akita
- Oct. 17–19:** Women's Retreat, East Peoria, Illinois
- Oct. 31–Nov. 2:** Young Adult Retreat, location TBA

### INDIANA

- Oct. 10–11:** Indiana Academy Alumni Weekend
- Oct. 24–26:** Women's Retreat

### LAKE REGION

- Oct. 4–11:** Semana Evangelismo
- Oct. 4:** PARL Rally, Detroit
- Oct. 11:** PARL Rally, Chicago
- Oct. 18:** Prevención del Cancer
- Oct. 24–26:** Black Adventist Youth Directors Association (BAYDA) Bible Bowl Championship
- Oct. 25:** Men's Ministries Rally, Michiana
- Oct. 25:** Certificación de la Mujer
- Oct. 25:** PARL Rally, Indianapolis
- Oct. 25:** Día del Niño Adventista

### MICHIGAN

- Oct. 3–31:** Keys to Revelation Evangelism Campaign (various churches)
- Oct. 5–9:** Life Improvement For Teens (LIFT), Camp Au Sable
- Oct. 31–Nov. 2:** Public Hi-C, Camp Au Sable

### WISCONSIN

- Oct. 15–17:** Life Improvement For Teens (LIFT), Camp Wakonda
- Oct. 17–19:** Leadershop, Camp Wakonda
- Oct. 24–25:** Hispanic Women's Retreat and Evangelistic Banquet, Milwaukee

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

# Labor–Pain Praying

Prayer is the breath of the soul.<sup>1</sup> I am not an expert on prayer, but I am learning how to breathe.

Breathing should be as natural to the body as air is to life. God designed communion through prayer, as the breath of the soul, to be so natural. “We may keep so near to God that in every unexpected trial our thoughts will turn to Him as naturally as the flower turns to the sun.”<sup>2</sup> At creation God designed the natural partaking of the human with the divine. It’s amazing to note how the Spirit of God hovered over the waters at creation (Genesis 1:2) and still hovers over the souls of men as He makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered midst the chaos of sin while we groan with the Spirit awaiting our adoption, in sync with all creation that groans with birth pangs (Romans 8:22–26). We need to learn how to breathe through the Spirit.

In antenatal classes mothers are encouraged to breathe through the pain of giving birth. We also need to learn how to breathe through creation’s birth pains. Having observed the pain of giving birth, I am grateful that I will never have to endure it. Yet, every male on planet earth, with everyone else, will experience the painful labor pangs that all creation will endure as this world ends. We all need to practice “breathing” now, so we can naturally breathe through the coming pain.<sup>3</sup> Here are two quotes that have inspired me to learn how to breathe today.

“Although there may be a tainted, corrupted atmosphere around us, we need not breathe its miasma, but may live in the pure air of heaven. We may close every door to impure imaginings and unholy thoughts by lifting the soul into the presence of God through sincere prayer. Those whose hearts are open to receive the support and blessing of God will walk in a holier atmosphere than that of earth and will have constant communion with heaven.”<sup>4</sup>

“Distressed by the increasing wickedness of the ungodly, and fearing that their infidelity might lessen his reverence for God, Enoch avoided constant association with them, and spent much time

in solitude, giving himself to meditation and prayer. Thus he waited before the Lord, seeking a clearer knowledge of His will, that he might perform it. To him prayer was as the breath of the soul; he lived in the very atmosphere of heaven.”<sup>5</sup>

What conflict and chaos can you expect as the Holy Spirit withdraws from the world? What calm and peace can you expect while breathing in heaven’s atmosphere, despite the worst conflict and chaos? Every Sabbath is weekly breathing practice. Breathe heaven’s atmosphere deep into the soul. ■

1 E.G. White, *The Signs of the Times*, Dec. 3, 1896.

2 E.G. White, “Steps to Christ,” p. 99

3 Hebrews 12 should be read weekly to remind the soul how to breathe with an untouchable joy.

4 E.G. White, “Steps to Christ,” p. 99

5 E.G. White, “Patriarchs and Prophets” p. 85

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



▲ DARREL LE ROUX



# Protecting Our Churches from Cyber Threats



▲ JENNIFER GRAY WOODS

*It seems like every day there is a new phishing scam, ransomware attack or data breach in the news. What can we do to protect our churches and ourselves from cyberattacks?*

For more information,  
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October is Cyber Security Awareness Month and each year millions of individuals are impacted by cyberattacks, including phishing scams and malware.

Unfortunately, churches aren't immune to cyber threats. In fact, they can be prime targets for cybercriminals because they often handle sensitive information such as the personal and financial data of church members.

A successful cyberattack can lead to significant data loss, financial damage, legal consequences, and a loss of trust with members and others in the community. This is why it's important to implement strong cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive information from bad actors.

Cyber threats are evolving daily, and defending against those threats is becoming more important than ever, especially considering what's at risk. Every ministry, no matter how big or small, is a target. Therefore, it's crucial that churches ensure they're doing everything they can to increase their ability to stay protected against cyberattacks.

Here are some steps individuals and churches can take to protect their information from a cyberattack:

- 1. Education.** Learn how to implement cybersecurity best practices.
- 2. Use strong passwords and multifactor authentication.** Complex passwords and multifactor authentication can prevent unauthorized access to computers, devices and networks.
- 3. Use encryption.** Encryption helps protect information from being lost, misused or accessed by bad actors.

#### **4. Be mindful of social media posts.**

Cybercriminals can use the information you post in social engineering scams to manipulate you into sharing personal information.

#### **5. Avoid using public wi-fi and charging stations.**

These can often be used to steal your private data or gain access.

#### **6. Make sure to update antivirus and anti-malware software.**

Antivirus and anti-malware protections are frequently updated to respond to new cyber threats. You should keep your security software, browsers and operating systems updated to make sure these new features are installed.

#### **7. Use mobile devices safely.**

- Never leave your device unattended in public.
- Lock your device with a PIN and/or password.
- Only install apps from trusted sources (such as Apple® App Store, Google Play, etc.).
- Enable loss and anti-theft tools that come with your device to help prevent a bad actor from being able to access your data if they have your device.

#### **8. Backup your data regularly.**

Also consider saving data in the Cloud so that it can be easily recovered.

Cybersecurity is not just a technical issue but a matter of stewardship and responsibility. Churches and individuals should prioritize cybersecurity to protect their digital assets. ■

**Jennifer Gray-Woods** is the Lake Union legal counsel, as well as its Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director.

EUROPE

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# Faith Sparks Small Beginnings

Last fall, a few Adventist students at the University of Wisconsin–Madison set up a table with a simple goal: make friends. It didn’t go well. At their first event, a spike-ball game, only two people came — and they were both part of the fledgling ministry team.

“It was very discouraging,” said Slava Cherempei, a sophomore chemistry major who had just returned energized from a summer discipleship program in South Dakota. He discussed their great disappointment with the Wisconsin Conference Public Campus Ministry Coordinator Joshua Guerrero, who advised them, “‘Be faithful, even if things don’t work out.’”

That tension — trying, failing and trying again — would define their first year of campus ministry.

made me realize I wanted to offer that kind of community back on campus.”

When he returned to Madison, Slava and freshman Sara Arihood registered Adventist Christian Fellowship (ACF) as an official student organization. A fellow Madison East Church member and professional IT developer Johan Jaeger readily agreed to join them in the campus outreach.

On Aug. 28, 2024, Slava and fellow ACF students set out supplies for a s’more’s night by the campus fire pit. He arrived early and was surprised to find students already sitting there.

*Maybe they’re waiting for us,* he thought. “Soon more people came — 10, then 20, then nearly 30. Students roasted marshmallows, talked and lingered. Slava remembers it as the first time their ministry felt real. Even their coordinator, Joshua, was taken aback. “He was very surprised ... very happy to see that something was happening — and that he’s not in charge of it,” Slava said with a laugh.

But the momentum faded. Game nights that began with dozens of attendees dwindled until one night only a single student showed up. “It was a little sad,” Slava admitted. “I was feeling very frustrated because we put so much effort in and nothing really came out of that.”

That disappointment forced a decision: keep hosting social events that felt shallow, or risk starting a Bible study. “I was hesitant,” he said. “I wasn’t sure if people really wanted it.”

But in November, the group set up a table on campus, offering pizza and conversation. To Slava’s surprise, four students came the next night

▼ Slava Cherempei

## A Small Start

Slava had arrived in Madison in 2023 by way of Ukraine and Germany, with the support of a scholarship for talented STEM students displaced by the war, funded by philanthropist Ken Griffin. Though he had grown up Adventist, Slava only began to claim faith as his own at 15, when he says God freed him from an addiction. His first year at UW–Madison was consumed with chemistry labs and research. Ministry wasn’t on his radar.

But something shifted after DiscipleTrek, a three-week small group retreat for college students in the Black Hills region of South Dakota. “The main thing for me was just talking to people who were very motivated,” he said. “Being around mentors who could answer hard questions





for Bible study — and stayed. One of them was Xavier Miller.

“I think he said something like, ‘What could be better than Bible study and pizza?’” Slava recalled.

Soon, Friday nights became routine: Bible study from six to eight, then long conversations that sometimes stretched to midnight. “Xavier was always one of the ones who stayed,” Slava said. “He had so many questions.”

Slava, Johan and Xavier began meeting one-on-one in discipleship sessions. By December, what had begun as a failing game night had turned into a small but committed group digging through the book of Ecclesiastes.

### The Surprise Decision

The turning point came this summer at the Adventist Christian Fellowship Institute (ACFi) in Seattle. Another student casually asked Xavier if he wanted to be baptized. Xavier said yes.

Slava was caught off guard. “I wasn’t expecting it at all,” he said. “I thought we still had more lessons to cover. But the pastors reminded me that if someone wants to give their life to Christ, you don’t hold them back.”

On Sabbath, Aug. 2, 2025, Xavier was baptized — surrounded by his mentors, including Slava. For Slava, the moment felt like the fulfillment of Psalm 126:5: “Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy.”

“It was very rough in the beginning,” he said. “I remember feeling desperate. But seeing Xavier give his life to Christ reminded me that all those little efforts mattered. God was working, even when we couldn’t see it.”

Today, Slava balances research in the chemistry lab with leading ACF, hopeful that more students will find in the group what Xavier did: friendship, faith and the chance to belong. ■

▲ Slava, back row, with some of the Adventist Christian Fellowship participants including Xavier Miller (back row glasses) and Josh Guerrero (left middle), in Seattle in August.

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Debbie Michel is editor of the Lake Union Herald.

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