

EDITORIAL
Guided Vision

JUST FOR KIDS
Stones of Remembrance

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gleaner

NORTHWEST ADVENTISTS IN ACTION

Light For The Mind



Cultivating Faithful
Thinkers That
Stand Apart

JAN/FEB

2026
VOL. 121, N° 1

*How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who
bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"*

Isaiah 52:7

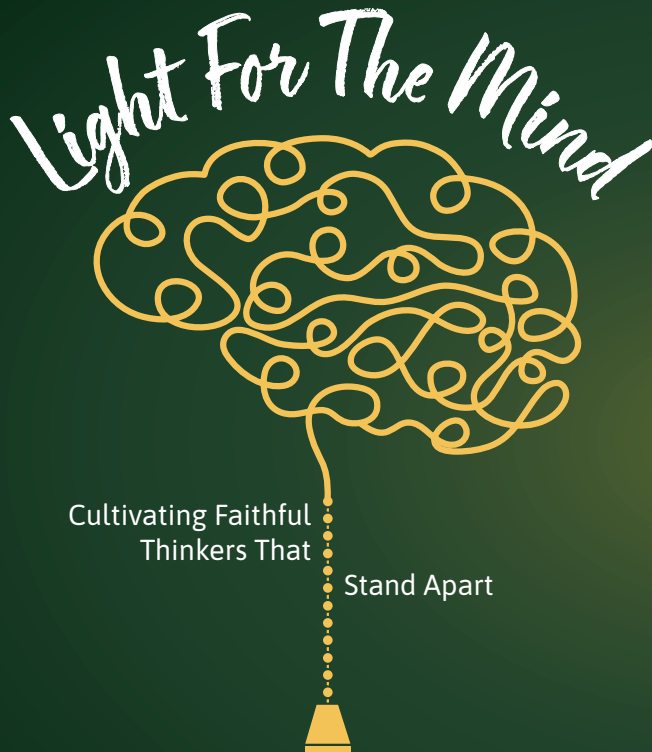
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GUIDED VISION

AS A FATHER, I REMEMBER ENJOYING WEEKEND PLAYTIME WITH MY THEN-YOUNG AND ACTIVE CHILDREN. OUR PLAY WOULD OFTEN INCLUDE GYMNASTIC ACTIVITIES. AS THEY GREW, A FAVORITE ACTIVITY WAS FRONT HANDSPRINGS. I WOULD SIT ON THE FLOOR WITH MY LEGS OUT IN FRONT OF ME, AND MY CHILDREN WOULD RUN TOWARD ME, PLACE THEIR HANDS ON MY LEGS AND SPRING OVER MY HEAD. WHAT GREAT FUN!



CHRIS DRAKE

KEITH HALLAM
*North Pacific Union vice
president for education*

As they grew, they learned other skills like back handsprings and flips. My children learned that a key to success with gymnastics was controlling their heads. As students in driver's education, they learned that where they looked was where they ended up going. This lesson continues in all aspects of their lives and mine too—"by beholding we become changed."

From the beginning of time to today, education has been recognized as foundational to an individual's success, as well as to a church's and a nation's success. The Adventist Church has fully embraced the truth that education impacts not only life on this earth, but also life for eternity.

We repeat the words found in Ellen G. White's book, *Education*, "The work of education and redemption are one" (p. 30). At our core, we know this to be true. We agree with Paul and his acknowledgment that "for no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11).

To be clear, this truth, while fully embraced within our school system, goes beyond the confines of any classroom. True education is for every aspect of our lives. As Adventists, our mission is to tell the world our salvation is insured and assured as we focus on Jesus for our restoration from sin and transformation into the image of our Creator. This is the redemption story.

From birth and all throughout life, we grow in our understanding and character. As adults, we are what we have experienced, lived and learned. Our future is still being formed and is an outcome of what we focus on.

Life has never been easy for humanity since sin entered the world. Distractions are trying to steal our focus away from Jesus. We must come to realize that God must be in every part of our lives. Our church ministries are provided to help us learn and stay focused on Jesus.

For our children and young adults, we have Sabbath School, Adventurer and Pathfinder clubs, day cares, elementary schools, academies and universities. Our church services, evangelism, mission service and outreach programs are additional ministries to help us in our education training, support and development.

We are so blessed to have support for every phase of our physical and spiritual journey to help us grow into healthy, vibrant disciples of Jesus.



From the beginning of time to today, education has been recognized as foundational to an individual's success, as well as to a church's and a nation's success. The Adventist Church has fully embraced the truth that education impacts not only life on this earth, but also life for eternity.

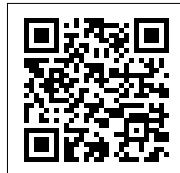
As we navigate life, I pray for each of us to commit to focusing on Jesus. May the words of Paul be true in our lives when he says, "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18).

Alex Bryan, Walla Walla University president, authored this issue's feature, inviting us to explore the heart of Adventist education through the lens of Daniel's story. I encourage you to take the time to read his reflections. We are fortunate to have WWU serving our young adults – a place devoted to engaging both minds and hearts in the pursuit of Jesus, where professors and administrators look to God as the university's founder and guiding leader.

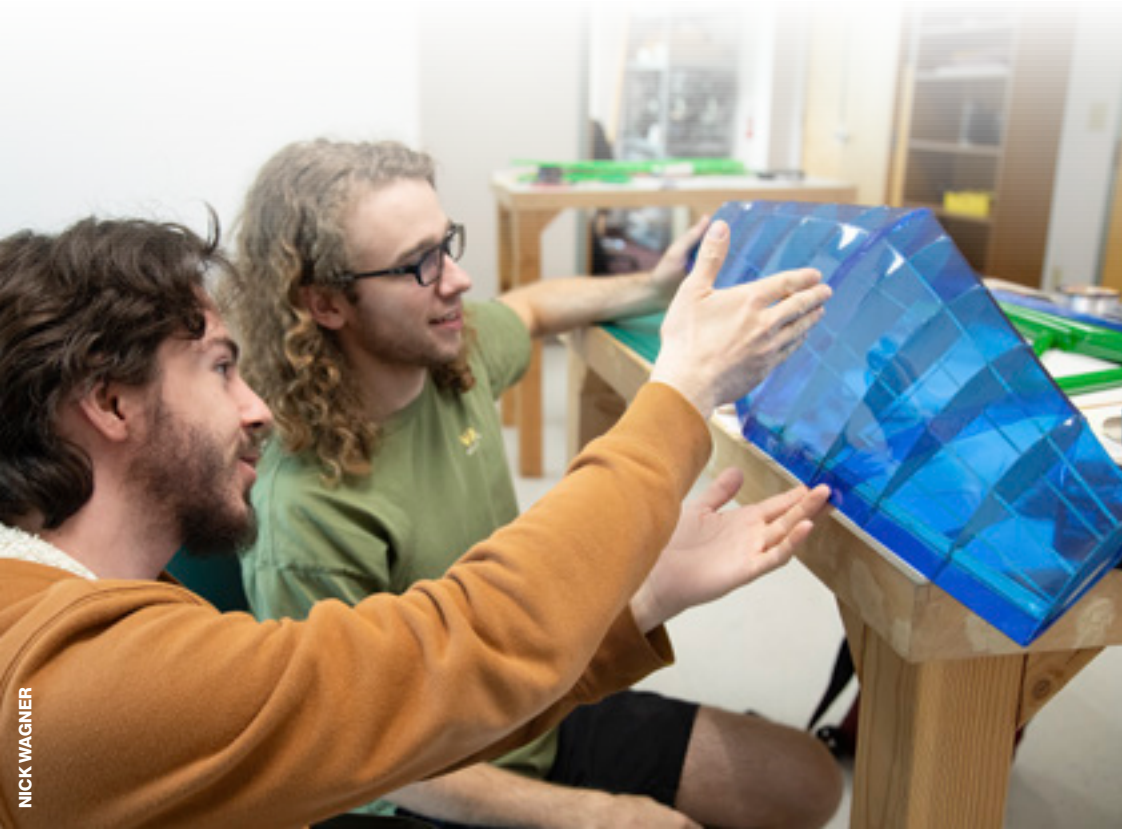
As a church family, let us continue to lift up in prayer our schools, universities, hospitals, publishing ministries, churches and outreach programs, so that we may be guided by the Great Teacher and share His redeeming love with everyone.

KEITH HALLAM

North Pacific Union vice president for education



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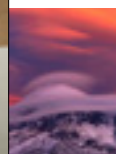
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"Mount Hood and Lenticular Clouds After Sunset," in Lolo Pass, Oregon, by Richard Duerksen, of Portland, Oregon.

Light For The Mind



Cultivating Faithful
Thinkers That

Stand Apart



One of the most important biblical stories for Adventist identity and mission is found in the first chapter of Daniel. Here we discover the very heart of Adventist education — its character, purpose and eternal significance.

The story begins this way: “In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem and besieged it” (Dan. 1:1).

I learned this story as a young boy. I remember being terrified by Babylon. This empire, filled with violence, hate and cruelty, embodied the worst impulses of our fallen planet.

I also learned, however, that Nebuchadnezzar, while evil, was a very smart man. He understood what the two most valuable resources on planet Earth are, and he took both from Jerusalem.

First, he stole articles from Israel’s temple, which symbolized the biblical theology and moral philosophy of Israel. He took sacred objects to demonstrate that he was subordinating them to his own way of thinking — his Babylonian political and religious doctrines.

Nebuchadnezzar knew that whoever controls the symbols and ideas of worship controls the worldview of a people. He recognized that ultimate ideas — the deepest and most important kinds of thinking and knowing — are essential for shaping both the present and the future.

Second, he kidnapped the next generation. He stole the young people — the best and brightest of the Hebrew community.

He took them both — the two most valuable resources on our planet. He captured ultimate ideas, and he captured young, impressionable human minds.

The combination is devastating. If you can reshape the convictions of a culture’s youth while redefining its sacred truths, you can redirect the destiny of nations. Nebuchadnezzar understood this principle all too well, and every generation since has seen its own version of Babylon attempt the same strategy — capturing hearts and minds through the classroom.

This is why the question of where and how we learn remains a deeply spiritual issue, not merely an academic one.

The Story Continues

Nebuchadnezzar enrolled Daniel and his friends in his University of Babylon. Soaking the hearts and minds of students in an education built on Babylon was his plan. Putting his god, Marduk, and the ways of idolatry in every classroom was his scheme. Teaching math and science, literature and religion — all of it — with values of violence and power, deceit and destruction was his agenda.

Daniel and his friends were well-trained in their earliest years, however. They saw the problem. They understood, even at a young age,



JACK DARROW





the dangers of having their promising minds damaged by years of undergraduate study drenched in immoral ends. So they protested.

They told Nebuchadnezzar and his educational leaders that the school was not for them. They took a huge risk. They would rather die than go to the wrong university. The stakes were just too high. Learning about the world from God's viewpoint mattered that much. Enrolling in God's college was worth every sacrifice—even their very lives.

Nebuchadnezzar granted them the opportunity. The book of Daniel doesn't give us many details. Different textbooks? Other teachers? Another campus? We don't know, but we learn this:

"To these four young men, God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds" (Dan. 1:17).

The Torah was their foundational textbook. God was their principal teacher. Jesus Christ—who would soon appear in the fiery furnace—was their campus.

Graduation arrived three years later. The brave young people stood before Nebuchadnezzar. His evaluation?

"The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them 10 times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom" (Dan. 1:19–20).

10 Times Better

Adventist Christian education's mandate is to be academically excellent. We are called to prepare students for jobs, the marketplace, medical school, graduate school and life—with superior skill.

Nebuchadnezzar, despite his evil intentions, recognized the higher quality of Daniel's alternative schooling. The world—outside the church—should recognize our

excellent product. "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord" (Col. 3:23).

Excellence, then, is not a marketing slogan; it's a testimony. To study, teach and create under the lordship of Christ is to proclaim to the watching world that faith and intellect belong together. True education refuses the false divide between mind and spirit. The classroom becomes a sanctuary of worship, where excellence itself gives glory to God.

This commitment is lived out tangibly here at home. Pacific Northwest brothers and sisters, Walla Walla University is your university.

WWU is the epicenter of engineering in the Adventist Church. The university is also recognized across the country and globally for producing high-quality engineers. They go to the best graduate schools and work in significant organizations around the world.

The same is true for the students WWU prepares to be physicians, dentists, entrepreneurs, nurses, therapists, teachers, pastors, communicators, aviators, attorneys, computer scientists, automotive technicians and more.

WWU prepares students exceptionally well—10 times better—by combining technical expertise with whole-person

Finding



CHRIS DRAKE

CHRIS DRAKE



education. WWU employs an Adventist philosophy of education that values spiritual, social, physical and mental training.

The marketplace covets emotional and social intelligence, critical thinking, teamwork and moral character. These are precisely the values and skills WWU teaches. These are the foundational principles articulated by Ellen G. White in her vision for Adventist education. WWU teaches them faithfully, and they put students in a very good position to succeed both in the eyes of God and in the eyes of the world. (See Luke 2:52.)

Daniel's Greatest Lesson

However, excellent preparation for work is not the greatest lesson in Daniel's story. Making a wise choice for a university education goes beyond career considerations.

The remaining chapters in the book of Daniel powerfully describe the significance:

- » A dream of God prevailing with the Rock of Jesus against all other kingdoms in the world (Dan. 2)
- » Young men who will not bow down to a politician's gold (Dan. 3)

- » Courageous words spoken against the arrogance and cruelty of the king (Dan. 4)
- » Clarity about the failure to honor God (Dan. 5)
- » A commitment to pray even when the law forbids it (Dan. 6)
- » God prevailing against the beasts of this world (Dan. 7)
- » Jesus active in the end times (Dan. 8)
- » Jesus active on the cross (Dan. 9)
- » Jesus prevailing in the end (Dan. 12)

The book of Daniel pulsates with divine energy. This prophecy, central to an Adventist understanding of history and the world, is ignited by the decision of young people to choose a better education.



Faith in the Classroom

For Kirt Onthank, Walla Walla University biology professor, faith and curiosity have always gone hand in hand. Growing up in Idaho, his family attended a Nazarene church but never joined, and his youth group crossed denominational lines freely.

"It was all about following Jesus together," Onthank said. That openness made him eager to understand what different Christians believed — and it was curiosity, not conversion, that first brought him to what was then Walla Walla College.

"I came here as a non-Adventist," he recalled, "but WWU introduced me to a kind of education I hadn't experienced before." He discovered professors who connected science, faith and daily life, inviting questions rather than prescribing answers. "I never felt pressure to think like my teachers. Instead, they taught me how to think deeply, faithfully and honestly."

Those years reshaped both his faith and his future. Now an Adventist himself, Onthank teaches biology at the university that changed him. "At an Adventist university," Onthank said, "we can give students context and community as they learn about the world. It's education that transforms the mind without losing the soul."

A university experience framed by biblical thinking produces a narrative of courage, truthfulness, character and hope. Without God's early action in the lives of these young people, it's hard to imagine the rest of the story. A godly education makes all the difference.

Today, there are some 4,000 colleges and universities in the U.S. Many of them, and perhaps most, can effectively prepare students for the workforce. And there are many Christians—and many Adventists—who attend these schools and do quite well.

There is no shame, and we must not lay guilt on those who choose for-profit or government schools. God is at work everywhere.

However, as Adventists, we must come to grips with our historic calling: Christian education. The first Sabbatarian school was in session in 1853, a decade before the church was formalized in 1863. White began writing as early as 1872 about the importance of an alternative educational philosophy.

White's book, *Education*, remains an essential, inspired text for Adventist commitments. Nearly 7,000 schools are operated by the Adventist Church around the globe. The story of Daniel, embraced by the church, is alive and well in the 21st century.

Yet, in our time, the need is sharper than ever. The modern world is awash in information but starving for wisdom. Our culture produces specialists but struggles to form saints.

Adventist education stands in this gap, insisting that the purpose of learning is not just to make a living, but also to make a life that honors God. In this way, our classrooms become mission fields—places where intellect, faith and service converge for eternity's sake.

The Role of Adventist Education

The opportunity for Adventist education in the U.S. has never been greater. Turmoil in American

education—and higher education—has created an important opportunity.

Government schools, at the behest of politicians, serve the state. For-profit schools, lining the pockets of private owners, recognize students as customers. Community colleges, dedicated to job preparation, produce employees for local economies.

These goals are worthy, but who will do the work of deep education in the way, truth and life of Jesus Christ? Who will build citizens, consumers and employees who understand these realities from the perspective of God?

Who will educate young brains in the final years of frontal-lobe wiring, when the malleable plasticity of the mind intersects with enough maturity to consider the weightiest truths and most profound questions? Who will teach and learn an Adventist worldview, where Jesus is at the center and circumference?

I want to make the case that the most important commitment Adventists can make is to invest in Adventist education. Until that great day when Jesus comes again, our most impactful commitment—the action that will determine the strength of our witness in the world—is growing the quality and quantity of our school systems.

We need to invest in the best teachers. We need to send as many young people as possible to Adventist schools. The power of our light and salt in the world will be generated by the light-and-salt factory: Christian education.

This is our moment. Donors, we need you to give. Let's continue to make an Adventist education—and Adventist higher education—affordable.



Teachers, we need you to teach with brilliance. Pastors, we need you to preach the importance of a faith-informed education. Grandparents and parents, we need you to encourage your precious children to be the next Daniels of the world.

When I was in third grade, we had a teacher we adored so much we simply called our teacher, "Teacher." One day, Teacher told us something strange. Teacher was going to be out of the classroom for a couple of hours, and two of our classmates—third-graders—would oversee the class. I'm confident this would never happen today.

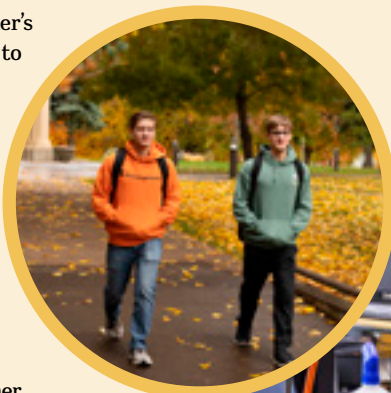
Teacher left and it was a mess. Frustration, crying and arguing—life in the classroom was terrible without Teacher. When Teacher finally came back, we were thrilled. We yelled, "Teacher!" and hugged Teacher's legs and told Teacher how glad we were to have Teacher back.

A couple of weeks later, Teacher told us that there were two days coming up when Teacher would be gone. Teacher told us we would have someone called a "substitute teacher." Those two days were so long. We missed Teacher so much.

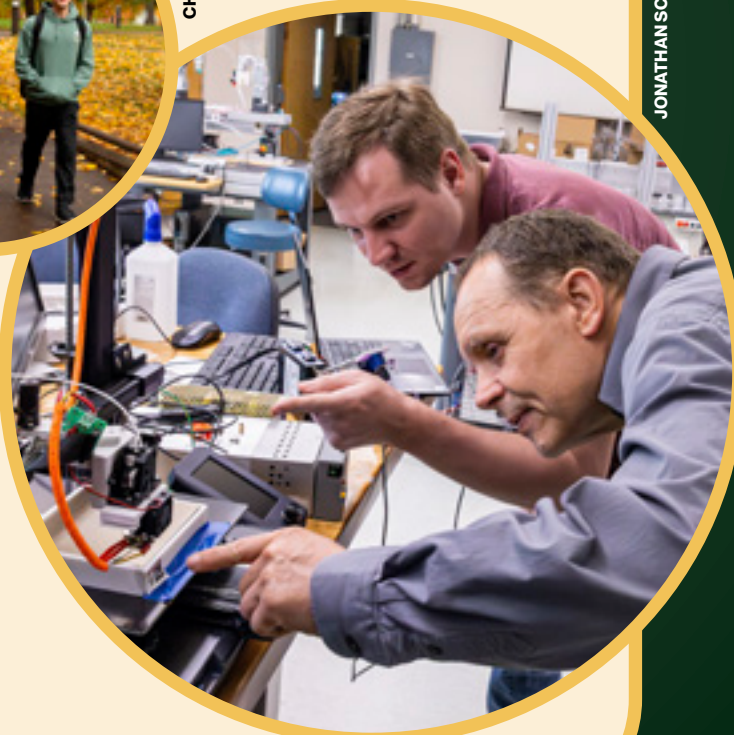
Finally, on the third day, Teacher came back. Again, we were so excited. "Teacher!" we cried, and we hugged Teacher and told Teacher how much Teacher had been missed.

And that's really the lesson, isn't it? There is only one Teacher, and there can be no substitutes.

"There is only
one Teacher,
and there can be
no substitutes."



CHRIS DRAKE



JONATHAN SCHAFFNER



ALEX BRYAN
Walla Walla University
president

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-FT-60

Youth Discipleship Summit Provides Pivotal Training

IN A SPECIAL ENDEAVOR, NORTH PACIFIC UNION YOUTH DISCIPLESHIP SUMMIT BROUGHT TOGETHER BIBLE TEACHERS, YOUTH PASTORS, EDUCATION LEADERS AND OTHERS INVOLVED IN CREATING YOUNG DISCIPLES. THE EVENT, HELD NOV. 4–6, 2025 IN SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, PROVIDED A COLLABORATIVE PLATFORM FOR LEADERS TO GATHER AND LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER.

“We’re on a journey in NPUC, and the journey is a conversation on intentional discipleship,” shared Rob Lang, NPUC youth and young adult ministries director. “This is our primary call. When Jesus left, He said, ‘Make disciples.’ How are we doing at that? We need to talk about it, because that’s our bullseye.”

Lang went on to share that discipleship is a collaborative mission that expands beyond youth and young adult ministries and includes the efforts of education as well as children’s, club, camp and public campus ministries.

Lang explained that there are three legs to the metaphorical “stool” of faith development. “One leg is the family – the home – and that’s the most important,” he said. “The other legs are what the church is doing: departmental activities – led by our lay people in the local setting – and education.”

“When all three work together, they bring out our best in outcomes,” Lang reflected. “So we’ve asked our educators, ‘Should we collaborate? Should we talk together about this shared calling? And – with God’s help and for His glory – could we become more intentional and could we have stronger outcomes?’”

ATTENDEE FEEDBACK

Tissiana Bowerman, Montana Conference superintendent for education, also works with all youth ministries programs within the conference. “For me, the takeaway [is asking] how do we really reprogram and refocus so that our attention is on Jesus?” said Bowerman.

“It [ranges] from how we’re interacting with our students all the way to how we’re measuring our success,” shared Bowerman. “Are we really looking at

that relationship – the simplicity of the relationship that we have with Jesus and that our children get to have with Jesus?”

Tyler Morrison, Pleasant Valley Church youth pastor, appreciated that the event inspired collaborative communication between professionals in various fields.

“I really appreciated that this conference actually modeled coming together and discussing the different pain points we have in our different contexts and trying to come up with solutions,” shared Morrison. “What can we build on? What are different people in their different contexts doing that’s working? What are some areas for collaboration?”

Meeting with like-minded people in ministry was particularly enlightening for Ruth Bradburn, Tualatin Valley Academy Bible teacher. “This has been the first time that I’ve really felt supported – like I have peers, people who I know I can reach out to. Just having everybody in one room is really impactful and powerful,” said Bradburn.

Bradburn felt a sense of camaraderie as she and fellow educators discussed the implementation of the *Encounter* Bible curriculum. “It was just so good to hear how everybody does it differently so we can learn from each other,” said Bradburn.

Representatives from ministries across NPUC come together during Youth Discipleship Summit to strengthen collaboration.





Rob Lang, NPUC youth and young adult ministries director, shares about the importance of rest in the spiritual growth process.



Attendees like Ron Jacaban, Oregon Conference vice president of education, participate in collaborative conversations.



Brian Harris, NPUC secondary education director, guides participants into small groups to gather feedback on strengthening collaboration.

THE IMPORTANCE OF REST

Morrison also noted that a key takeaway for him was the emphasis on the importance of true rest. “We need to be more intentional about rest, and not just on Saturday, but as a lifestyle,” reflected Morrison. “As people who are kept by Sabbath rest, if we want to be more like Jesus, it comes from time with Him, but it’s quiet time with Him.”

Bradburn echoed this sentiment as well, saying, “I’m coming away from this weekend just feeling like God is putting on my heart, ‘You can slow down. You have permission to do less.’ All He really wants from me is for me to walk *with* Him and not do things *for* Him, but to just *be* with Him. That’s really all that matters.”

The worship time was also impactful for the attendees. “The worshiping that we did together really felt like we were just being the church and not having to do anything for anybody else, which I know as a leader is rare,” remarked Bradburn.

MEASURED IMPACT

Andreas Beccai, Redlands Crosswalk Church pastor and featured speaker, recalled the impact of discipleship efforts on a young person he first encountered

during his time as a task force worker at Auburn Adventist Academy. “She was 14 at the time, came in fresh into one of our schools and I watched as she was working with campus ministries,” recounted Beccai.

From there, she went to Walla Walla University and served as spiritual vice president. She worked at summer camp and later was an intern at Volunteer Park Church in Seattle, where Beccai was serving at the time.

Beccai shared that all these experiences had an “incredibly profound impact on this young adult” – so much so that she ended up going into ministry. She has since returned to her alma mater to speak for weeks of prayer, was a featured speaker for a summer camp and pastored at an NPUC church.

“I’ve seen youth ministries succeed when we focus on young adults, empower them, give them leadership, give them mentorship and pray over them – that they then become disciples who produce other disciples,” said Beccai.

CONTINUED PARTNERSHIP

“There have been some really great conversations that we think are going to start changing our culture as we pray

together and as we continue this journey to incorporate New Testament church practices into our frenetic-paced culture,” said Lang.

“We’re excited to see what God is going to do,” Lang continued. “It’s a humbling task, and we know we can’t do it on our own, but if we pray together and if we converse together, the future’s going to be bright.”*

MAKENA HORTON

North Pacific Union assistant communication director and Gleaner managing editor

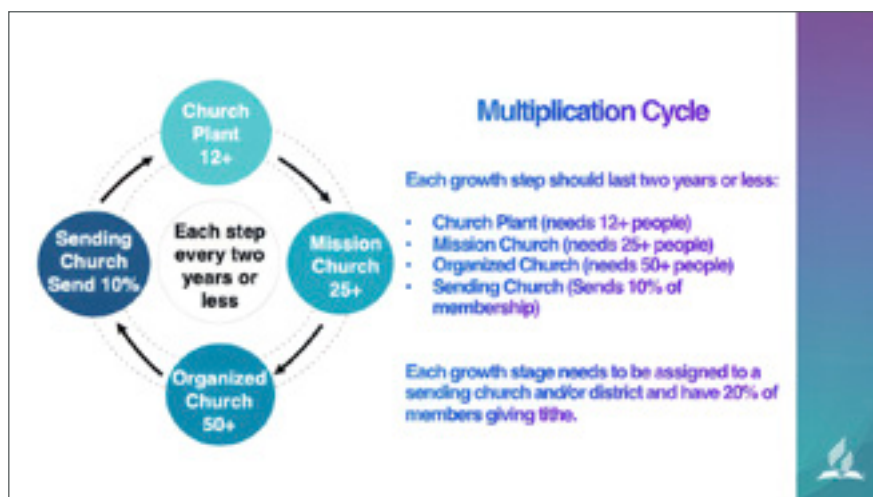
**José Segovia, North Pacific Union media coordinator, conducted the referenced interviews.*



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-NPUC-69

Church Planting Efforts Seek 50 More Sites

FOR YEARS, SEVERAL PEOPLE HAVE BEEN PRAYING FOR ADVENTIST WORK TO GROW IN THE AFFLUENT SUBURBS OF THE SEATTLE-TACOMA METRO AREA.



Recently, a core group from HopeCity South Hill, an Adventist church plant in South Hill, Washington, has been meeting every Friday evening to pray, plan and share updates on their efforts to start spiritual conversations with their colleagues and neighbors.

Mitch was a neighbor who, through their efforts, was invited to attend a “preview” worship service at Hope City South Hill.

“I’ve never been to church before. I didn’t know what to expect, but a friend invited me,” said Mitch after the service. “I’m glad I came. I think this is where I needed to be. Thank you for what you and the others are doing to provide this for us.”

HopeCity South Hill is one of 33 church planting projects currently underway in North Pacific Union. We are thankful for all of them, but we need 50 more church plants to reach the new and unreached communities in our territory.

Fifteen years ago, we had an Adventist presence in 546 communities to reach 13 million people. Today, we have an Adventist presence in 550 communities to reach 16 million people. We are clearly not keeping up with the population growth.

Most of that population growth is happening in our four biggest mission fields, where 8 million people live: Seattle-Tacoma, Portland-Vancouver, Boise-Treasure Valley and Spokane-Coeur d’Alene. This is where we must be very proactive.

How can we tell where to focus? Look wherever they are building a new Costco, Walmart, Target, public school, community or recreation center, because the experts already know where the population is growing.

We need “sending churches” to identify the territory, enlist a team and begin training so that we can move forward into these rapidly expanding

communities with the Adventist message of hope and wholeness in preparation for the soon return of Jesus.

Is Jesus speaking to your heart to go or to help support in sending others? Talk to your church or conference leaders about how to get involved, or email dan.serns@nw.npuc.org. As Matt. 24:14 and Luke 10:1–3 remind us, the harvest is great, the workers are few, so let’s get going!

DAN SERNS

North Pacific Union church planting, revitalization and lay training director



More online at NWADVENT.ST/121-1-NPUC-24

Hendrickson to Serve as Undertreasurer

THE NORTH PACIFIC UNION FINANCE TEAM HAS A NEW TEAM MEMBER, KODY HENDRICKSON, WHO WILL BE SERVING AS UNDERTREASURER.

NPUC's executive committee received a recommendation for his name at a regularly scheduled meeting on Nov. 12, 2025. The committee voted to extend the invitation, and Hendrickson accepted. He will start at NPUC in the new year.

"Hendrickson brings a breadth of knowledge to this role, and I look forward to working together to continue growing and strengthening our team," said Jeff Fogelquist, NPUC chief financial officer.

Hendrickson fills this opening after the departure of Brent Plubell, previous NPUC undertreasurer, who is now part of the North American Division treasury team.

NPUC's undertreasurer is responsible for overseeing all accounting functions to produce timely reports, monitor investment activities and provide support to local conferences.

This role serves as the "union point person" for conference-level financial team applications. The undertreasurer also serves as the office and facility manager.

Hendrickson is no stranger to the Pacific Northwest with deep roots in Battle Ground, Washington. He has served as an associate treasurer for seven years and as association treasurer for three years for Oregon Conference.

Through his career, he has developed strong nonprofit financial leadership skills, demonstrated resourcefulness and proactively found ways to modernize, automate or improve business processes. He has embraced emerging business needs and adapted to changing organizational goals while maintaining a big picture perspective.

"From my first days in Oregon supporting our local treasurers to managing our corporate entities, God has shaped my path and skills to the mission in ways I could never have foreseen," Hendrickson said. "I look forward to providing not only financial insight for the union, but also my passion for how we can grow the church in this chaotic world."

He is a graduate of Walla Walla University, where he obtained a bachelor's degree in business administration. He earned a Master of Business Administration degree with an emphasis in finance from Western Governors University. Recently, he completed trust certification to provide additional support to planned giving and trust services management.

Hendrickson and his wife, Stephanie, spend their free time exercising for better health, investing in their young nephews and building impressive LEGO sets.

In the spirit of transparency, NPUC wants to acknowledge that Hendrickson is related to a member of the education team.

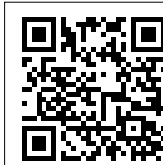
The NPUC finance team includes Fogelquist, CFO; Hendrickson, undertreasurer; Anne Vu, associate treasurer; and Penny Ford, account clerk. The NPUC association team, who works in parallel with the finance team, includes Jay Graham, association treasurer; Jim Brown, planned giving and trust services director; and Debbie Morauske, association assistant.

"We look forward to improving the collaboration between our organizations within NPUC by supporting and nurturing efficient and effective stewardship of the resources we have been blessed with," Fogelquist said.



Kody Hendrickson, incoming NPUC undertreasurer

GARY MCCLAIN



HEIDI BAUMGARTNER
North Pacific Union
communication director
and Gleaner editor

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-NPUC-09



Woodburn Spanish Church Harvests Souls for Christ

WOODBURN SPANISH CHURCH HOSTED A POWERFUL EVANGELISTIC EVENT TITLED "WOODBURN, JESUS LOVES YOU."

The event left a lasting impact on the community and in the hearts of those who participated. Led by Félix Toribio, Woodburn Hispanic district pastor, and Alejandro Bullón, world-renowned evangelist, the initiative showcased the dedication and commitment of the Oregon Conference church in Woodburn.

In February 2025, the Woodburn congregation began investing in their community's spiritual and social needs through Bible study, service and ongoing evangelism. Two months later, the fruits of their labor became evident when 17 individuals dedicated their lives to Jesus in an act of surrender and faith. This was just the beginning of a series of events that culminated in the evangelistic week.

People respond to Alejandro Bullón's emotional call to make a total commitment to Jesus while Junior Marchena, musician, sings.

La gente responde al emotivo llamado de Alejandro Bullón a comprometerse totalmente con Jesús mientras Junior Marchena, músico, canta.

From June 14-21, 2025, the church transformed into a center of hope and transformation. Toribio and Bullón delivered inspirational messages that touched the hearts of many, encouraging attendees to draw closer to God. Musical contributions were provided by Junior Kelly Marchena, Adventist musician whose talent and devotion added a special touch, elevating the spiritual experience of each meeting.

The evangelistic week concluded with an exciting baptism ceremony, during which 26 people committed their lives to Christ. Overall, 43 individuals chose to follow Jesus throughout the campaign, representing an actual spiritual harvest that reflects both God's faithfulness

and the efforts of the entire Woodburn Spanish Church.

The work of the church does not end here. The community continues to be prepared for the coming harvest, with renewed enthusiasm and a firm commitment to continue sowing in the heart of their community.

This evangelistic event not only strengthened the faith of the participants, but also reaffirmed the church's mission to share Jesus' love with everyone. Woodburn Spanish Church continues to advance with hope and confidence that God will continue to guide and bless their efforts.

FÉLIX TORIBIO

Woodburn Hispanic district pastor



Alejandro Bullón calls the congregation to action.

Alejandro Bullón llama a la congregación a la acción.

MISIÓN Y ALCANCE

Iglesia Hispanada de Woodburn Cosecha Almas Para Cristo

**IGLESIA HISPANA DE WOODBURN ORGANIZÓ UN PODEROSO EVENTO
 EVANGELÍSTICO TITULADO “WOODBURN, JESÚS TE AMA.”**

El evento dejó un impacto duradero en la comunidad y en los corazones de quienes participaron. Dirigida por Félix Toribio, pastor del distrito Hispano de Woodburn, y Alejandro Bullón, evangelista de renombre mundial, la iniciativa mostró la dedicación y el compromiso de la iglesia de la Conferencia de Oregón en Woodburn.

En febrero de 2025, la congregación de Woodburn comenzó a invertir en las necesidades espirituales y sociales de su comunidad a través del estudio bíblico, el servicio y la evangelización continua. Dos meses después, los frutos de su labor se hicieron evidentes cuando 17 personas dedicaron sus vidas a Jesús en un acto de entrega y fe. Este fue solo el comienzo de una serie de eventos que culminaron en la semana evangelística.

Del 14 al 21 de junio de 2025, la iglesia se transformó en un centro de esperanza

y transformación. Toribio y Bullón compartieron mensajes inspiradores que conmovieron los corazones de muchos, animando a los asistentes a acercarse a Dios. Las contribuciones musicales fueron proporcionadas por Junior Kelly Marchena, músico adventista cuyo talento y devoción agregaron un toque especial, elevando la experiencia espiritual de cada reunión.

La semana evangelística concluyó con una emocionante ceremonia de bautismo, durante la cual 26 personas entregaron sus vidas a Cristo. En total, 43 personas decidieron seguir a Jesús durante la campaña, representando una verdadera cosecha espiritual que refleja tanto la fidelidad de Dios como los esfuerzos de toda la Iglesia Hispana de Woodburn.

La obra de la iglesia no termina aquí. La comunidad continúa preparándose

para la cosecha venidera, con renovado entusiasmo y el firme compromiso de seguir sembrando en el corazón de su comunidad.

Este evento evangelístico no solo fortaleció la fe de los participantes, sino que también reafirmó la misión de la iglesia de compartir el amor de Jesús con todos. Iglesia Hispana de Woodburn continúa avanzando con esperanza y confianza en que Dios seguirá guiando y bendiciendo sus esfuerzos.

FÉLIX TORIBIO

Pastor del distrito Hispano de Woodburn



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-HSP-80



Félix Toribio, Woodburn Hispanic district pastor, baptizes María Rodríguez and Rosa Rodríguez, mother and daughter.

Félix Toribio, pastor del distrito Hispano de Woodburn, bautiza a María Rodríguez y Rosa Rodríguez, madre e hija.



A group participates in the first baptism during the evangelism week.

Un grupo participa en el primer bautismo durante la semana de evangelismo.

AGA Worship Week Inspires Loving More

IN EARLY OCTOBER 2025, AMAZING GRACE ACADEMY PARTICIPATED IN A TRANSFORMATIVE WEEK OF WORSHIP AS PART OF THE PENTECOST 2025 INITIATIVE THROUGH NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION. THE INITIATIVE, WHICH EMPHASIZED REVIVAL AND COMMITMENT ACROSS ADVENTIST SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES, INVITED CAMPUSES TO FOCUS ON SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND CONNECTION WITH JESUS.

At AGA, students and staff gathered each morning for worship led by Les Zollbrecht, Big Lake Youth Camp director. With a mix of energy, humor and stories that kept the kids listening, Zollbrecht shared messages that centered around the theme of “Loving More.”

Throughout the week, Zollbrecht drew from his experiences in Nepal, his adventures in mountain climbing and powerful biblical stories to illustrate what it means to truly love as Jesus did. His storytelling connected with students of all ages, helping them see that loving more is both a calling and a daily practice.

Through his lessons, Zollbrecht invited students to consider what love looks like in action. “Loving More” means empowering

others, serving others and including others – not just the people who are easy to love, but everyone around us. His stories painted vivid pictures of teamwork, courage and compassion, helping students understand that God’s love grows when it’s given away.

“This week of prayer was really interesting,” shared one student. “I enjoyed how he used his outdoor experience to show us how to love others. If we listen to God, He will show us what needs to be done.”

Another student said, “I found week of prayer empowering. It helped show that even in times of need and struggle, God will provide.”

On Thursday, Zollbrecht invited students to make a commitment to follow Jesus or to express their interest in baptism.

Seventeen students indicated a desire to be baptized, while 58 students made a personal commitment to follow Jesus more closely in their daily lives.

AGA, located in Palmer, Alaska, serves students in preschool through 12th grade. While about 30% of the student body comes from Adventist families, the remaining 70% come from families within the local community who value the school’s Christian foundation.



KAREN CARLTON
*Amazing Grace
Academy principal*

More online at NWADVENT.ST/121-1-AK-77



AGA unites in faith after an unforgettable week of worship.



Ryan Rogers, Palmer Church pastor, leads praise music during AGA's week of worship.

MISSION AND OUTREACH

GYC Northwest Serves Remote Alaska

ELEVEN YOUNG ADULTS FROM GYC NORTHWEST LANDED IN TOGIAK, EAGER TO SERVE DURING A WEEK-LONG MISSION TRIP AT THE END OF AUGUST 2025. GYC NORTHWEST — THE REGIONAL CHAPTER OF GENERATION. YOUTH. CHRIST. — IS A MOVEMENT DEDICATED TO EQUIPPING AND INSPIRING YOUNG PEOPLE TO STUDY THE BIBLE, STRENGTHEN THEIR FAITH AND SHARE JESUS WITH OTHERS.



Community members enjoy a shared meal during the mission trip, fostering connection and fellowship.



VBS brings energy and learning as kids engage with Bible stories and activities.



The GYC Northwest team stands united on the beach in Togiak, leaving their mark in the sand.

The team originally chose Togiak, a remote village in western Alaska, because it rarely receives missionary groups. After prayerful consideration, they felt God calling them to this community. Upon arrival, they unloaded gear at the local church and met Vecous Waite, bi-vocational pastor, who had arrived the day before. Together, they prayed and prepared for a full schedule, including community meals, health programs, an evangelistic series for adults and evening Vacation Bible School for children. They also planned to repair the church's baptistry.

On Friday and Sabbath, the team went door to door, inviting residents to the events. This was GYC Northwest's second trip to Togiak, and reconnecting with old friends was a highlight. When one local called the evangelistic series an "adult Bible study," the name stuck.

Each day began with worship and united prayer, followed by preparations for

programs or work on the baptistry. Supplies for the repair were scarce, but the team witnessed God's timing. "I wasn't sure how to get concrete to Togiak affordably," said Erik Hunt, project leader, "but God worked out every detail from a pilot's unexpected route to Fairbanks, to the hardware store having exactly what we needed."

Community meals and health talks drew strong interest. Using the NEWSTART format, a missionary nurse shared principles of healthy living, followed by Bible studies from the New Beginnings program. Topics included prophecy, baptism and hope in Christ. One woman who came for health talks stayed for every Bible study and ultimately gave her heart to Jesus, quit smoking and drinking, and began reading *Steps to Christ*. Another attendee expressed a desire for baptism.

Evenings were filled with VBS activities using Truth 4 Youth materials — songs,

stories, crafts and games. Attendance averaged 45–50 children, and many responded to appeals to follow Jesus.

Before leaving, the team installed a weather-resistant sign for the church—a lasting gift for the community. "Seeing kids and adults so joyful was incredible," Hunt said. "And working alongside like-minded young adults was inspiring."

The missionaries left Togiak grateful for God's blessings and pray for the work He will continue to do in Alaska.



HANNAH EVERT
AYM Northwest
registration coordinator

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-AK-78

GSAA Starts the School Year With Prayer

AT GEM STATE ADVENTIST ACADEMY, THERE IS AN INTENTIONAL PLAN TO FORM A COHESIVE FAMILY RIGHT FROM DAY ONE — A FAMILY WITH GOD AT THE CENTER, COVERING THE CAMPUS WITH HIS PERFECT LOVE FOR EACH PERSON.



Kayden Tabor is baptized by Ever Perez, GSAA Bible teacher and chaplain.



Freshmen help make firewood on their campout.



Lizard Butte vespers is an annual event held on the first Friday evening of the school year.

Before 79 students arrived to begin the school year in August 2025, the school family and community were invited to a prayer walk on campus. Groups walked through the administration building, cafeteria and residence hall, stopping to pray in each classroom, office and space where students and staff live life during the school year. This annual event is a powerful way to dedicate the year to God and cover the school and all who enter in prayer.

At the end of the first week, students, staff and families enjoyed a delicious picnic meal on campus before traveling to nearby Lizard Butte for a long-standing, traditional first vespers. The worship team led in songs, and Jason Williams, Cloverdale Church member, gave the devotional message. From Lizard Butte

there is a beautiful view of the Snake River and the valley, and the cross at the top provides an excellent backdrop to worship God as the sun sets.

A few days later, the entire school went to Boise to help set up the Love Heals free medical clinic, with a number of students and church members choosing to go back Sabbath afternoon for further service opportunities. That same weekend, freshmen enjoyed a class campout, which ended with them meeting the rest of the school at Camp Ida-Haven for the annual, multi-day spiritual retreat.

At Camp Ida-Haven, ASB planned fun activities for students to interact and get to know one another. Everyone participated in service activities in and around camp, and a guest speaker gave spiritual messages related to the school year's theme, "To Show."

Kircio Mota, Collegedale Church youth pastor from Tennessee, spoke on the fruits of the Spirit. The retreat's blessings included the celebration of the baptism of Kayden Tabor, GSAA senior, who requested to be baptized while at camp.

All of this, along with the important matter of excellence in academics, makes for a busy beginning to a school year, but it is an important way to start. All of it fits with the school mission of engaging in service, training in leadership and preparing for eternity.



MARTA STONE
Gem State Adventist Academy teacher and campus communication assistant

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-ID-87

EDUCATION

Donated Van Blesses CAES

DURING THE 2024–2025 SCHOOL YEAR, CALDWELL ADVENTIST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SET OUT ON A BIG GOAL: RAISING MONEY FOR A SCHOOL VEHICLE.

Through the hard work and enthusiasm of students and families during a school-wide read-a-thon, the school community raised nearly \$3,000. While this amount wasn't enough to purchase a vehicle outright, school leaders knew they were moving in the right direction and trusted God to continue leading the way.

In summer 2025, God provided in a way no one could have imagined. A relative of a community family, who was selling their 12-passenger van, heard about the school's need. They decided to make a generous donation and gift the van to the school. Their kindness turned everyone's hopes into reality.

The blessings didn't stop there. After the donation, several church members and community supporters stepped forward to help transform the van into something truly special. Volunteers donated time, supplies and expertise to update the maintenance, clean and detail the inside, and put the school name and logo on the outside. The result is a van that not only runs beautifully, but also proudly represents the school wherever it goes.

The 2025–2026 school year theme is "The Battle Belongs to the Lord." CAES is truly experiencing that promise. God has been fighting battles for the school and providing miracles far greater than



CAES receives a new school van.

what they could have planned or afforded on their own. The story of this van is one of those miracles, a reminder that when people trust God, He provides in ways that exceed their imagination.

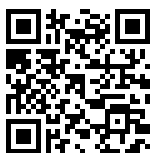
Looking ahead, school leaders will continue to raise funds for the transportation program. These donations will help cover fuel and maintenance so teachers don't have to dip into classroom budgets as much. As the school family

continues to grow, they are prayerfully hoping to one day add a second van to meet the needs of students.

CAES is excited about the many adventures ahead – now made possible with their very own school van.

HEATHER MCPHERSON

*Caldwell Adventist Elementary School
vice principal and sixth- through eighth-
grade teacher*



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-ID-88

NeXt Camp Makes Summer Camp Accessible to All

SUMMER CAMP IS A QUINTESSENTIAL CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE, BUT CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS OFTEN DON'T GET TO ATTEND DUE TO ACCESSIBILITY ISSUES. WHEN A PASSIONATE MOTHER ASKED WHERE HER SON AND OTHERS LIKE HIM COULD MAKE THEIR OWN CAMP MEMORIES, A NEW MINISTRY WAS BORN IN IDAHO.

Douglas and Darla Roe, Idaho Conference summer camp program leaders, were met with a list of questions 18 years ago: Where can kids who face challenges navigating a typical summer camp experience go? Don't children who are medically fragile, use wheelchairs, or live with autism or seizure disorders deserve to attend summer camp too? Where can they go to experience the joy and abundance of summer camp like other kids do?

The Roes contacted Milford Terrell, a supporter of Camp Ida-Haven, and they developed the concept of NeXt Camp—a camp for youth with special needs. Over several years, the summer camp experience evolved for kids who historically had

not been able to participate in the usual summer camp programs.

NeXt Camp provides a spiritual retreat and allows campers of all abilities to go on the ropes course, paddle boards and wave runners. Campers have access to the archery range and fishing excursions, all under the watchful eye of staff members who are trained for safe supervision of the range of activities. Over the weekend, campers share talents, help each other with crafts, play table games together, support each other with physical challenges and make new friends.

Parents attend NeXt Camp with their children, who range in age from preschool to adulthood. Over the course of several

camps, parents bond with each other, sharing the challenges of raising a child with special needs and opening up about the heartfelt frustrations, questions and concerns that come with the gift of a child with out-of-the-norm needs.

In 2025, families from diverse backgrounds and geographies met once again as one large family to enjoy spiritual retreat, physical opportunities offered by camp and camaraderie with other adults who understand the commitment of raising children with special needs.

The first morning, moose graced the parking lot and deer gallivanted through the grounds. There was a pond for fishing, a warm lodge for singing and worship and meals, trails for hiking and bike riding, tables for games and puzzles, soft chairs to sit and talk, and God's presence everywhere.

The youth enjoyed the opportunity to be “normal” for a weekend, as their parents let down their guard and didn't worry about them being too loud, too noisy or too different to fit in. At NeXt Camp, everybody fits in just fine and the weekend was a complete success.



LARRY ROGIE
NeXt Camp parent

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-ID-21

At NeXt Camp, campers and their families are all involved in worshipping God together.



FRAN ROGIE

ACTS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

After Jesus returned to heaven, His followers went everywhere sharing the good news about Him. This year, let's explore together Acts through Revelation in the Bible, alongside *Acts of the Apostles* from the *Conflict of the Ages* classic commentary.

JANUARY

Bible	Acts of the Apostles
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Survey Acts	Survey the book
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Acts 1	Preface & Chapter 1
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Acts 2	Chapters 2-3
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Acts 3	Chapters 4-5
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Acts 4	Chapter 6
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Acts 5	Chapters 7-8
<input type="checkbox"/> 7 Acts 6	Chapter 9
<input type="checkbox"/> 8 Acts 7	Chapter 10
<input type="checkbox"/> 9 Acts 8	Chapter 11
<input type="checkbox"/> 10 Acts 9	Chapters 12-13
<input type="checkbox"/> 11 Acts 10	Chapter 14 (a)
<input type="checkbox"/> 12 Acts 11	Chapter 14 (b)
<input type="checkbox"/> 13 Acts 12	Chapter 15
<input type="checkbox"/> 14 Acts 13	Chapters 16-7
<input type="checkbox"/> 15 Acts 14	Chapter 18
<input type="checkbox"/> 16 Acts 15	Chapters 19-20
<input type="checkbox"/> 17 Acts 16	Chapter 21
<input type="checkbox"/> 18 Acts 17	Chapters 22-23
<input type="checkbox"/> 19 Acts 18	Chapters 24-26
<input type="checkbox"/> 20 Acts 19	Chapters 27-28
<input type="checkbox"/> 21 Acts 20	Chapter 37
<input type="checkbox"/> 22 Acts 21	Chapter 38 (a)
<input type="checkbox"/> 23 Acts 22	Chapter 38 (b)
<input type="checkbox"/> 24 Acts 23	Chapter 38 (c)
<input type="checkbox"/> 25 Acts 24	Chapter 39
<input type="checkbox"/> 26 Acts 25	Chapter 40
<input type="checkbox"/> 27 Acts 26	Chapter 41
<input type="checkbox"/> 28 Acts 27	Chapter 42
<input type="checkbox"/> 29 Acts 28	Chapters 43-50
<input type="checkbox"/> 30 Review Acts	Chapters 43-50
<input type="checkbox"/> 31 Review Acts	Chapters 43-50

FEBRUARY

Bible	Acts of the Apostles
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Romans 1	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Romans 2	
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 Romans 3	
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Romans 4	
<input type="checkbox"/> 5 Romans 5	
<input type="checkbox"/> 6 Romans 6	
<input type="checkbox"/> 7 Review	Chapter 35 (a)
<input type="checkbox"/> 8 Review	
<input type="checkbox"/> 9 Romans 7	
<input type="checkbox"/> 10 Romans 8	
<input type="checkbox"/> 11 Romans 9	
<input type="checkbox"/> 12 Romans 10	
<input type="checkbox"/> 13 Romans 11	
<input type="checkbox"/> 14 Review	Chapter 35 (b)
<input type="checkbox"/> 15 Review	
<input type="checkbox"/> 16 Romans 12	
<input type="checkbox"/> 17 Romans 13	
<input type="checkbox"/> 18 Romans 14	
<input type="checkbox"/> 19 Romans 15	
<input type="checkbox"/> 20 Romans 16	
<input type="checkbox"/> 21 Review	Chapter 35 (c)
<input type="checkbox"/> 22 Review	
<input type="checkbox"/> 23 Galatians 1	
<input type="checkbox"/> 24 Galatians 2	
<input type="checkbox"/> 25 Galatians 3	
<input type="checkbox"/> 26 Galatians 4	
<input type="checkbox"/> 27 Galatians 5-6	
<input type="checkbox"/> 28 Review	Chapter 36

As you read, let P.R.A.I.S.E. guide you: » **Pray**, asking God for wisdom, » **Read** the Bible passage for the day, » **Apply** the Bible passage to your life, » **Interact** with a Bible study group, » **Share** something good with someone, » **Encourage** others to join the journey.



Young Adult Chooses God Over Party Life

GROWING UP IN A CHURCHGOING FAMILY, CORBAN, A 19-YEAR-OLD YOUNG ADULT FROM MONTANA, NEVER IMAGINED HIS LIFE WOULD DRIFT SO FAR FROM FAITH — OR THAT GOD WOULD DRAW HIM BACK THROUGH UNEXPECTED FRIENDSHIPS AND GRACE.

He recently shared how his life was transformed in an interview with Carla Lefebvre, Montana Conference communication coordinator.

Q: What was your life like before faith became real to you?

CORBAN: I grew up in an Adventist home, and we regularly went to church. I had the notion that since God loved me, I was saved regardless.

After asthma forced me to quit football my freshman year, I had too much free time and didn't know what to do with it. That summer, my friends and I decided to try some alcohol. Since it was "fun," we started partying more.

By mid-junior year, things weren't going too well. I had a growing conviction about my actions. Partying more and harder became my escape, and eventually I started smoking weed.

I grew more unsettled and unhappy. My conscience really bothered me. I hated everything about the way I looked, talked, breathed — everything. I was not at all happy.

Q: What changed in your junior year?

CORBAN: Some friends from the Christian Faith Club at school invited me to a meeting. I wanted to find new friends and hoped things would be different. The kids I met there were good examples of what a Christian should be.

At the next meeting, a guest speaker in his early 20s shared his conversion story. His history was so similar to mine, and that started to get me thinking.

A little later, my best friend left the state for a week. Alone and unhappy, I began to rethink everything.

I admired how the three friends who invited me to the Christian Faith Club didn't need to drink or smoke to be happy or enjoy their evenings. I saw I didn't need to be living the way I was. These friends were public about their faith, but didn't force it down my throat.

I thought about the speaker's story and asked myself, "Am I really happy?" I started thinking, "If nothing changes in a year, I'm done living."

So I decided to cut down on drinking. At one party, I suddenly didn't want to drink. I told my friends, "I think I want to be a Christian." They were shocked!



Q: You had a transformative trip to Idaho. What happened there?

CORBAN: I went with a friend to a lake in Idaho and took my Bible with me. It was a wonderful week reading the Bible and just hanging out with my friend's family—and there was no weed around!

After returning home, I realized I didn't crave alcohol anymore. I still wanted to smoke weed, but one day, when a friend offered me enough weed for a month, I instinctively declined.

That day, the desire just left me, even though I was still around friends who smoked.

Gradually, I lost interest in parties and stopped going because there was nothing there for me—I felt out of place. Although I still loved my friends, it just wasn't for me anymore.

I started feeling a lot happier, and I stopped hating myself so much. I made more Christian friends, studied the Bible, took notes, watched sermons and just spent time with God. I wanted to chase God and know what love was.

Q: How did your baptism come about?

CORBAN: Sabbath morning of this past Montana Camp Meeting, I heard Ron Halvorsen Jr. speak and felt very impressed. I had been doing Bible studies for about a year and had thought about being baptized. But I just felt that now was the time.

I texted Jim Jenkins, who had been my pastor in Bozeman, and asked to be baptized Sabbath afternoon. He made the arrangements and I did it!

Q: So what is your experience now, and do you have any plans for the future?

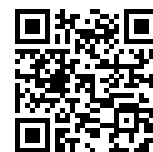
CORBAN: I'm glad God's love isn't what I thought it was. Even now, after changing so much, I still need His grace every day. It's not about my "good" days and "bad" days, as if some days I need more grace and others less.

On "good" days, God is working through me. The "bad" days are just what happens when *I'm* in charge. I am a "saint" because of what Christ has done for me, yet, at the same time, I'm still a sinner.

Now, I'm trying to respond to God's voice more and just do each moment what He calls me to do. Sometimes it's to go talk or pray with someone—which I don't always *feel* like doing—but it's always rewarding. I just want to live for Him day by day.

CARLA LEFEBRVE

Montana Conference communication coordinator



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-MT-30



Remote Ministry Reaches the World

WHO WOULD EVER THINK IT POSSIBLE TO TURN YELLOWSTONE TOURS INTO A REAL MINISTRY? ONE COUPLE DIDN'T, BUT GOD SAW IT AS QUITE POSSIBLE. HE JUST HAD TO CONVINCE THEM OF THAT, AND CONVINCE THEM HE DID! HERE IS THE MINISTRY STORY OF DAN AND CINDY BUELL, TOLD IN THEIR OWN WORDS:

With the closest church 50 minutes away, we found participating in church ministry difficult, especially in winter. Surrounded by evolutionary naturalists, any religious inroads in our little town of Gardiner, Montana, seemed nearly impossible. We mingled, explored receptive attitudes and analyzed options. Come to find out, God had something much bigger in mind than Gardiner.

We thought about handing out literature. In Yellowstone, it's easy: Pick up a First Amendment sign from the visitor center, be sure not to obstruct any visitors and hand out items. Great idea—but we felt drawn to deeper interaction.

We considered opening Tours From A Creation Perspective. But starting a business? That's scary! Our only transportation was a 350,000-mile, paint-peeling minivan, and we weren't about to go \$50,000 in debt to compete with local guides. We also lacked funds for the required permits and commercial insurance.

After pondering it too long, we put it before the Lord: "We'll commit to the labor if You overcome the logistics and provide the funds—in a timely manner." If it came to fruition, it would clearly be His will.

Meanwhile, we started a Voice of Prophecy Discover Bible School at Livingston Church, which opened many doors. Maybe this Bible school was to be our sole focus, we thought.

Then God sent us a Pathfinder club from Victoria, British Columbia. They stayed at our church on the way to the 2024 camporee. We marked up their map of the area, shared what to look for and wished them a Happy Sabbath. On the way home, our consciences were pricked—they'd miss so much! So back we went, offering to guide them through Yellowstone. The leader was elated enough to give me a huge hug.

We handed out walkie-talkies and caravanned through the park while Dan shared wildlife stories, favorite views and God's wonderful animal world. What a Sabbath!

While watching wolf pups, the Pathfinders applauded the experience, saying, "Anything we can do to help you start a ministry tour company, we'll do." Our service was valuable—even in a paint-peeling minivan with walkie-talkies? By caravanning instead of carrying passengers, we wouldn't need a new rig and could halve our insurance costs. Had the Lord just solved our two biggest barriers in one day?

So many miracles followed that there was no question Whose venture this was. Even the catchy name—Cheap and Cheesy Yellowstone Tours, Bring Your Own Cheese—was inspired. On Jan. 1, 2025, we officially opened for God's business.

We asked God to send just the right people. Our first clients were devout Jews. Their small children knew their Torah well. After a full day, we were all "family." We ended the tour by gifting *Steps to Christ* with a personal handwritten message inside the front cover, which all our guests receive. The devil tried to interfere when

PHOTOS BY CINDY BUELL





Cheap and Cheesy Yellowstone Tours serves as a ministry bridge, connecting with both Adventist and non-Adventist visitors through shared moments in nature.



The Buells' well-traveled van serves as the base for Cheap and Cheesy Yellowstone Tours.

the little girl's fingers were slammed in a car door, but God protected her. The girl's fingers hurt but were uninjured, and Mom dove into the book as soon as she had it in her hands.

Our second clients were non-practicing Muslims. They, too, became "family" and not only accepted *Steps to Christ*, but also expressed sincere appreciation of God's picture left in their hearts. We still keep in touch.

After one young lady returned home to Florida from a tour with her parents, she attended a Christian summer camp and was baptized. Her dad made it a point to show her grandpa — who shared the story with us — the *Steps to Christ* we gifted, and now both of her grandparents are scheduled to tour with us in June.

To our surprise, though we are "cheap and cheesy," most of our clients are wealthy professionals—a group we'd never meet outside of the park. Our reach on a personal, and literally global, level has gone beyond anything we could imagine—well

beyond standing next to a free speech sign. That being said, if anyone has an inkling to donate just one day to stand by a sign for God here in Yellowstone, contact us at cheapyellowstonetours.com. We are happy to help you set up for that. The Creator's seeds will sprout and eternal friendships will be made!

CINDY BUELL
Livingston Church member



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-MT-29



Visitors admire the landscape and look for wildlife on a guided creation-focused Yellowstone tour.

Robert Otis passes leadership to his daughter-in-law, Cara Otis.

YOUTH

Otis Honored for 56 Years of Pathfinder Service

ON OCT. 11, 2025, ROSEBURG CHURCH WAS FILLED WITH PRIDE, APPLAUSE AND A FEW JOYFUL TEARS AS THE CONGREGATION GATHERED TO HONOR ROBERT OTIS FOR AN ASTOUNDING 56 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE PATHFINDER PROGRAM.

The ceremony was a heartfelt tribute to a man whose dedication, kindness and quiet strength have left a lasting imprint on generations of young people. The sanctuary filled with the familiar sounds of Pathfinder tradition as the Roseburg Pathfinder Club marched down the aisle, led by Caleb Otis, boys' counselor and co-deputy director, and Tom Watson, Mount Mazama district coordinator.

Jeff Coleman, Roseburg Church pastor, called Otis forward and reflected on his leadership style. Coleman shared he'd experienced directors who led by yelling, but Otis was a breath of fresh air, leading with love, consistency and a calm smile.

In true Otis fashion, he took the microphone with humor, reminiscing about his own Pathfinder days and the way the program shaped his life.

Carolyn Otis, his devoted wife, was also honored during the ceremony. "Behind every successful director is a supportive spouse,"

Coleman noted. "And Carolyn has been just that – and more – for so many years."

Watson presented the coveted 56-year pin, recognizing the service milestone. "Otis was serving in Pathfinders 11 years before I was even born," Watson joked. "It's more than just a club. It's a place where kids know they are seen, valued and part of something meaningful."

Coleman introduced the next Pathfinder director. "While Otis remains active in the club, he has requested a transition in leadership," shared Coleman. "Earlier [in 2025], Otis nominated his daughter-in-law, Cara Otis, to step into the role of director for the Roseburg Pathfinder Club."

In 2020, the club had eight Pathfinders join. Today, there are 21 Pathfinders. Historically, there were 65 Pathfinders in the club back in the 1980s.

The growth of the Pathfinder club continues to receive ongoing support from

Roseburg Church through volunteers, financial donations and room supplies.

"Thank you for your donations – whether it is monetary, items or your time – because that's what makes this club go 'round," Cara said.

Although the torch of directorship has been passed, Otis made it clear: he's not done yet. He remains deeply involved as the club's drill instructor – mentoring, instructing and shaping the next generation of leaders.

As the program continues to grow under Cara's leadership, one thing is certain: The seeds Otis planted more than five decades ago continue to flourish today.



CARA OTIS
Roseburg Church member

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-OR-38



Roseburg Pathfinder Club is now officially under new leadership.



Carolyn and Robert Otis have led generations of Pathfinders.

PHOTOS BY ROSEBURG CHURCH

EDUCATION

Big Lake Hosts Snowy Outdoor School

BIG LAKE YOUTH CAMP HOSTED 47 SIXTH-GRADE STUDENTS FROM THREE OREGON CONFERENCE SCHOOLS FOR OUTDOOR SCHOOL. THEY ARRIVED TO FIND FRESH SNOW AWAITING THEM!

Students spent much of the week outdoors, studying subjects such as trees, earth, water and fire ecology. Sharon Cutz, Livingstone Adventist Academy teacher; Conan Lizzi, Portland Adventist Elementary School teacher; and Jennifer Youker, Tualatin Valley Academy teacher, joined Kim Cornette, Oregon Conference associate superintendent, in teaching four core classes.

Other activities included four-way kin-ball in the lodge, capture the flag, a salmon migration obstacle course, an astronomy unit and a field trip to nearby Scout Lake for the legendary “life and death in the forest” game.

Outdoor School is not just about STEM education. It’s about building leadership and communication skills in students as they get to know students from other schools. Most importantly, it’s about developing a deeper relationship with God. Jose Galvez, Molalla, Silverton and Stayton district pastor, led daily worship centered around being bold enough to stand up for what you believe in and to take care of those around you.

BLYC’s hope is that students leave with hands-on learning experiences in nature, new friends, skills and a better understanding of who God is.

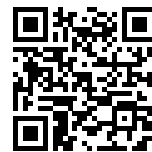
PHOTOS BY BIG LAKE YOUTH CAMP



Surprise snow welcomes students to Outdoor School.



Monday’s snow gives way to mountain sunshine as the beautiful fall weather returns.



LIESL SCHNIBBE
*Big Lake Youth Camp
associate director*

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-OR-91

EDUCATION

PAA Prepares Students for College Success

AT PORTLAND ADVENTIST ACADEMY, STUDENTS ARE NOT JUST PREPARING FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION; THEY’RE PREPARING FOR LIFE BEYOND IT.

One of the ways PAA equips students for success is through Advanced Placement and dual credit programs, designed to bridge the gap between high school and college learning.

The purpose isn’t simply to give students college credits before graduation; it’s to give them meaningful exposure to college-level thinking and expectations.

These courses provide an invaluable opportunity to develop habits, skills and confidence needed for higher education.

Currently, 49% of PAA’s student body is enrolled in AP or Dual Credit classes, reflecting both interest and accessibility.



U’LEE BROWN
*Portland Adventist
Academy communication
and development
director*

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-OR-00



PAA students prepare for a dissection.

PORTLAND ADVENTIST ACADEMY

The Dalles Church Pays Off Mortgage Early

THE DALLES CHURCH COMMUNITY CELEBRATED A LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENT IN FALL 2025: PAYING OFF THEIR CHURCH MORTGAGE.

THE DALLES CHURCH



The Dalles Church outside of The Dalles, Oregon, has beautiful mountain views.

The Dalles Church building came to fruition after a years-long, prayerful effort by local members. “The church building project was completed right around the time [the pandemic] began,” shared Nick Gosney, The Dalles Church pastor. “Really remarkably, they were able to get all their bids and necessary materials to construct the space just before prices spiked.”

“One of the notable features of this facility is its immaculate view of the eastern side of Mount Hood,” Gosney shared. “On a clear day, we can see Columbia River Gorge, the hills and the mountain. When I first arrived here as pastor, several church members told me not to worry if they were looking to the left toward the windows, it would just be so they could hear me better.”

“Between a collection of Maranatha workers and local church members, they were able to not only build this building, but also to pay it off in record time,” he continued.

On Sept. 13, 2025, the church came together to celebrate. “It was really exciting,” said Gosney, “almost like a family reunion. Our church treasurer gave us a snapshot of the project and shared some of the notable events that took place along the way.”

“It all concluded with her handing out a copy of one of the notes that exemplified the church mortgage, and everyone present had an opportunity to tear up that piece of the ‘loan,’” he recounted. “We wanted to recognize that it wasn’t just the treasurer or the pastor or even the board that paid this down. It was all of us. And I thought that was beautiful and symbolic of the road this church has been on together.”

Gosney shared a brief homily on God’s creative process, starting with the first three days of creation – when God made light, firmament and land – and continuing through the following days – when God filled those spaces with life and beauty. “As a church, we’ve formed



The church sanctuary’s big windows look out over the Columbia Gorge.

a beautiful space together,” said Gosney. “Now our job is to fill it.”

Eric Davis, Oregon Conference vice president for finance, participated in the event and shared that The Dalles Church paid off their loan far ahead of schedule, much of it due to the generosity of the members.

“Many gave extra time, extra effort and extra finances to make the building a reality,” said Davis. “I’m so pleased that they have set their sights on now filling the church with new believers in Christ, and I pray God will continue to bless their efforts.”



KALEB EISELE
*Oregon Conference
digital content specialist*

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-OR-96

CHURCH

Pastors Recognized at Annual Retreat

EVERY YEAR, OREGON CONFERENCE PASTORS AND CONFERENCE OFFICE LEADERSHIP SPEND 48 HOURS TOGETHER IN PRAYER, TRAINING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING AT TWIN ROCKS FRIENDS CAMP AND FAMILY CENTER IN ROCKAWAY BEACH, OREGON.

"As much as we also wanted to provide meaningful information and content, we really wanted this to be a time when pastors were heard," shared Nate Hellman, Oregon Conference pastoral ministries director. "We don't want to just be leading from our offices, thinking, 'What do our pastors need?' We want to hear, develop and build with our pastors."

During the 2025 retreat, an intentional time was held to recognize the prayerful, dedicated ministry labors of Oregon Conference pastors. "Our team worked together to produce a certificate of gratitude for every single pastor in our conference that honored their years of service in pastoral ministry," continued Hellman.

Pastors were categorized by years: those who have served 10 years or less, 11-20 years, 21-30 years and 31 years or more. "What was so neat was to see that the largest group of pastors here is the 10 years or less group," enthused Hellman. "This gave us the opportunity to affirm and recognize each of them. As we read off the names and handed out these certificates, the pastors really hyped each other up and affirmed each other."

"We took photos of each group and applauded them, but when we got to the group of those who had served more than 30 years, there was a standing ovation that went on for a while," continued Hellman.

"I was stifling emotion because it was so meaningful to see them acknowledged and thanked. It didn't cost much to produce a document like that, but now I have pastors sending me photos of them framed in their offices. I think it was much needed, given what we've all been through, and



Each year, pastors and their families gather in Rockaway Beach for a time of prayer, training and renewal.

it was great to see the rapport there between our pastors," said Hellman.

As the retreat ended and pastors returned to their local church ministries, one thing remained clear: When it comes to the ups and downs of ministry, a little bit of acknowledgment and gratitude can go a long way.

Although Pastor Appreciation Month is typically observed in October, don't wait for a special occasion to show your pastor gratitude. Even a brief, heartfelt message of thanks can remind your pastor that their ministry matters—any time of year.



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More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-OR-09

PHOTOS BY OREGON CONFERENCE
PASTORAL MINISTRIES



Oregon pastors are honored and recognized for their years of ministry at the annual pastors retreat.

MISSION AND OUTREACH

Albany Church Hosts Kenyan Mission Sabbath

OCT. 18, 2025 WAS A HIGH DAY OF WORSHIP, PRAYER AND MISSION STORIES AT ALBANY CHURCH. ANITA AND BARRY JEPSON, SPECIAL GUESTS FROM MARAVISION OUTREACH, A PROJECT FOR EVANGELISM IN KENYA, SHARED THEIR EXPERIENCES.

During the church service, Anita told of her first visit to Kenya in 2003, when she was part of a church mission trip. On that trip, her Maasai interpreter expressed interest in Bible study. Through that Bible study, he accepted Jesus and became the avenue for evangelism into the Maasai tribe. He has continued his training and commitment to Jesus, and is currently serving as one of MaraVision's 135 trained evangelists, teachers and pastors serving the northern tribes of Kenya.

Reading and writing are very important to the people of Kenya, and this has proved to be an open door for service. The MaraVision literacy program—learning to read and write in English—is now taught in government schools, with more than 20,000 students

using the Bible as the text for reading. Their teachers are dedicated and trained for evangelism through Amazing Facts Center for Evangelism.

War, conflicts, disease and personal danger are all part of the life of the MaraVision worker. Anita shared, "Life is hard. We're just made of dust, but you do what God calls you to do."

Deut. 1:21, the text shared during the church service, states: "See, the Lord your God has given you the land. Go up and take possession of it as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, told you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

Regarding Anita's experiences, Ray Babb, Albany Church member, exclaimed, "I was just blown away by her faith! We need faith like that!"

Anita encouraged the personal development of an active prayer life, Bible study, initiative and personal contact as tools to prepare oneself for God's service call. While we cannot work our own way into heaven, our work may be the instrument that brings another individual to heaven's gates. Above all, claim the promises in God's word; God will build you up gradually as you lean on Him.



JEANIE HOOPER REED
Albany Church secretary

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-OR-99



Barry and Anita Jepson share stories and answers to prayers in an interview by Andre Scalfani, pastor, (right).



MaraVision Outreach shares Jesus through pastors, teachers and literacy schools.

CHURCH

Bible Camp Draws Hundreds to Grow Spiritually

IN SEPTEMBER 2025, JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM ACROSS THE NORTHWEST MADE THEIR WAY TO ANTELOPE, OREGON, FOR BIBLE CAMP.

Both long weekends centered around the theme “Made for More.” Eph. 2:10 tells us “we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Youth attending Bible Camp found themselves surrounded by fun, face-to-face connections and, most importantly, powerful spiritual growth. Due to the event’s location, participants had the unique opportunity to separate from mobile devices and rediscover meaningful relationships with others and with God. One way of doing this was through dozens of peer-led life groups.

“Life groups happened each night after the meetings and they were huge!” shared Jana Lee, Oregon Conference church ministries director. “Student leaders were identified by our schools and two were recommended to lead each life group. They would do a time of application and some hands-on experiences, as well as discussions together.”

In designing each group, leaders attempted to connect students from a variety of areas and schools to encourage new friendships, more openness and more authenticity.

Feedback from the students has been incredibly positive. “This was my favorite event of the year,” shared Remy Lundquist, student participant. “The speaker was awesome, and our school loved the worship band. There were so many activities that let you connect with students from different schools. I left feeling closer to God and with more friends.”

Other students shared sentiments such as, “I was able to express myself in ways I never have before,” “It felt

easier to worship at Bible Camp,” “Normal friend group barriers were broken down,” and “Before I came to Bible Camp I wasn’t big on God, but after being there, I feel like I am.”

Perhaps the most powerful sign of Bible Camp’s impact is in the growing prominence of young returning leaders. Danny Ramos, who returned as worship staff for the second time, grew up going to Washington Family Ranch for Hispanic ministries youth retreats and with his school for Bible Camp.

“I’ve been here 10 times, if not more,” said Ramos. “When I started working with Jason Calvert, it was just evident that he wanted this to be something that would create a catalyst for students and something that they would look back on and say, ‘That was a moment where my life changed with Jesus.’”

“I see how it impacted the school body around me when I went, and that adds so much to being part of connecting students with Christ here now,” said Ramos. “It’s a place where I think I can just be really honest and vulnerable, where I’m free to worship God and express my praise. I think Bible Camp gives us a foreshadowing of what heaven and the new earth will look like.”



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More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-OR-92

BENJAMIN LUNDQUIST



Students enjoy praise music, devotionals, life groups and a prayer wall, all designed to connect them with Jesus.

ROGUE VALLEY ADVENTIST ACADEMY



Bible Camp activities include swimming, go-karts, a climbing gym, volleyball, basketball, zip line, giant swing and much more!

BENJAMIN LUNDQUIST



Hundreds of teens travel to Antelope, Oregon, for a time of spiritual and personal connection.

EDUCATION

PCA Breaks Ground on Early Learning Center

ON OCT. 30, 2025, A CROWD GATHERED AROUND AN EXCAVATOR ON THE PALISADES CHRISTIAN ACADEMY SOCCER FIELD TO CELEBRATE THE GROUNDBREAKING OF A NEW BUILDING FOR PALISADES CHRISTIAN LEARNING CENTER.

Children participated in the ceremony singing “This Little Light of Mine,” dedicating the new learning center to shine hope, love and learning into the surrounding community.

Eric Brown, Upper Columbia Conference vice president of administration, invited students, parents and teachers to close their eyes and imagine the building that would one day be where he stood.

“Even though we can’t see the building yet, and it might be hard to imagine, we know it is coming. Which is a lot like Jesus. We know about Him, we have the blueprints for His kingdom, but it can be hard to imagine,” said Brown. “Today, just as we imagine the moment when Jesus returns, we find ourselves waiting, hopefully and eagerly for what we know is coming.”

PCLC was first envisioned more than 10 years ago with the desire to provide young children with an opportunity to learn and know about Jesus.

“The early learning center was always in the plans when we were building the campus here at PCA, but we didn’t have the funds to complete it at the time,” said Tim Windemuth, PCA development director.

PCLC offers Christ-centered daycare services for children between 2 1/2-5 years of age in a positive Christian environment where they can learn and grow. Once operational, the new building will be

able to facilitate up to 80 children with four classrooms.

The building project is estimated to cost \$2.2 million.

“It may cost more or less; it’s hard to know for sure since we’re about a year away from completing the building,” said Windemuth. “But the Lord knows what we need, and He’s in charge.”

An anonymous donor has generously donated \$1.8 million toward the project. PCA will continue to raise additional funds for the remaining cost of the project.

“The amazing team at PCLC provides a safe, loving, nurturing and Christ-centered space for young minds to grow and develop,” said Adam Littell, UCC vice president for education. “I am thrilled that there’s going to be an expansion to this very important educational ministry in the Spokane area so even more students can get to know Jesus through the dedicated work of the teachers at PCLC.”

PCLC currently uses three classrooms in the main school building, which, with the construction of a dedicated space for early learning, will be made available to further expand PCA programs.

To learn more about the PCLC program, go to news.uccsda.org/pclcprogram.

ISAAC MEYTHALER

Upper Columbia Conference
communications coordinator



PCA and UCC leadership share the vision for the new early learning center.



Ruth Ramirez, PCLC director, cuts the groundbreaking ribbon with some help.



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-UC-15

CHURCH

Sayler Appointed Ministerial Director

DURING AN UPPER COLUMBIA CONFERENCE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, HELD THURSDAY, SEPT. 25, 2025, ERIC SAYLER WAS APPOINTED MINISTERIAL DIRECTOR.

Sayler is well acquainted with the inland northwest, with more than 15 years of ministry in UCC. He most recently served as Walla Walla Eastgate Church lead pastor in Walla Walla, Washington.

"Sayler is a very spiritual and capable young man who is wise beyond his years," said David Jamieson, UCC president. "We are delighted that he has accepted the role of being a pastor to the pastors."

In 2006, Sayler graduated with a major in theology from Walla Walla College along with a minor in history. After graduating, he spent a year as a

Bible worker at Walla Walla Eastgate Church from June 2006 to July 2007 and continued as a Bible worker at Pendleton Church the following year. As a Bible worker, he gained valuable experience mentoring and discipling others through Bible study, planned and co-taught several evangelistic series, and organized regular youth group activities.

In 2008, Sayler received his certificate in pastoral coaching from North American Division Evangelism Institute. He furthered his studies at Andrews University Theological Seminary, graduating with a master's degree in divinity in 2010.

Sayler began serving as lead pastor in 2010 for Pendleton Church and Pilot Rock Church in Oregon. There, Sayler developed a vibrant family ministries team, worked in tandem with the local Adventist school and oversaw significant church growth over the course of four years.

In 2014, Sayler accepted a position as Walla Walla Eastgate Church lead pastor, where he has served for 11 years. There, he had the opportunity to mentor theology students from Walla Walla University yearly and lead several evangelistic series. He has taken on numerous challenges during his pastoral leadership, including recovery following a fire in the church's kitchen/fellowship hall and raising \$260,000 in funds for physical plant renovations.

Walla Walla Eastgate Church has flourished during Sayler's pastorship, with average attendance increasing from 165 to more than 265 people. In response to church growth, Sayler oversaw the addition of a second worship service to accommodate kingdom growth, and he facilitated the formation of community engagement teams and the ongoing development of small group ministries.

Recently, Sayler became a certified pastoral field mentor through Center for Community Change at Andrews University. "What an honor to join this talented team at the conference office and beyond," said Sayler. "I'm looking forward to working alongside and supporting our UCC pastors and church leaders."

Sayler started his new role on Nov. 1, 2025. He, his wife, Stacie; son, Joshua; and daughter, Jillian, all enjoy a rural, country lifestyle. They ride horses and raise golden retrievers, dairy and pack goats. In addition to ministry and farming, Sayler spends time hiking with his goats in the mountains, fishing and reading.



DUSTIN R. JONES
*Upper Columbia
Conference
communications director*

More online at 
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-UC-23

• Eric Sayler, newly-appointed UCC ministerial director



God Saves Pathfinder Camporee

MONTHS OF CAREFUL PLANNING CAME DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO UNRAVELING IN A SINGLE MOMENT. TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE LONG-AWAITED UPPER COLUMBIA CONFERENCE PATHFINDER CAMPOREE 2025, DEVASTATING NEWS ARRIVED: THE CAMPGROUND HAD TO BE EVACUATED DUE TO A SUDDEN WILDFIRE IN THE AREA. SMOKE AND FLAMES SHUT DOWN THE VENUE, UNDOING MONTHS OF PLANNING AND NEARLY BURNING UP ALL HOPE.

When the news came, there were only 14 days until the camporee. “The odds of finding a suitable location on such short notice were slim,” said Josh Penhallurick, who helped organize the camporee. “We needed enough room for 23 clubs—roughly 490 people in total. It felt impossible.”

For many, Pathfinder camporees are more than just a weekend event; they are spiritual milestones and places where young people connect with nature, each other and God. Leaders, volunteers and Pathfinder club staff had been praying, preparing and investing time and energy into making this camporee a memorable, meaningful encounter.

The unexpected news of the campground closure hit hard, but what started as a setback became an invitation to pray harder and trust deeper.

Within 48 hours of the original campground closing, the UCC club ministries leadership team was already calling contacts, churches and camps, while praying without ceasing. That was when the first miracle happened.

After a string of dead ends, Lara Dowie, UCC club ministries administrative assistant, suggested contacting Palouse Empire Fairgrounds near Colfax, Washington.

“To our amazement, not only did the camp have that weekend available, but it also offered everything we needed—and more,” she said.

The fairgrounds included open fields for clubs to camp, buildings for teaching honors on Sabbath afternoon and a central gazebo large enough to hold meetings. It also had additional fields for drill and marching, as well as a big building for playing games on Sabbath evening.



Pathfinders gather at the gazebo to connect with God and each other.

The second miracle? A warm welcome with open arms. No red tape. No lengthy approval process. They heard what happened and were ready to help.

“In less than a week, our team pivoted everything,” said Ryan Whitehead, UCC club ministries director.

“We developed new transportation plans, adapted programs for the new location and communicated all the updates to our volunteers, Pathfinders and parents,” Whitehead recounted. “We watched in awe as everything fell perfectly into place—not just ‘good enough,’ but better than what we had originally planned!”

When the weekend arrived and the buses pulled in, the excitement was electric. Pathfinders raced to explore the new site, their laughter echoing through the pines. Staff stood amazed at how well everything worked out. Even the weather cooperated—clear skies, warm days and cool, starlit nights.

During the evenings, Alyssa and Mike Morauske, guest speakers, and the music team led worship on the camporee’s theme of “Heavenly Road Trip.” Alyssa spoke



Pathfinders play games on Sabbath evening.

about belonging, the love of God and how God wants us on His heavenly road trip.

“In that moment, we weren’t just campers on a weekend trip, we were witnesses to God’s faithfulness,” said Whitehead. “His provision came right on time—not early, not late but exactly when we needed it.”

Pathfinders say with confidence that God saved the camporee—not just by finding a new location, but through a reminder of His presence, timing and ability to do the impossible. He transformed what felt like a crisis into a testimony of His grace and power.

“Let this be a reminder: When the fires of life close one path, God has already cleared another,” said Penhallurick. “All we have to do is follow Him.”



ISAAC MEYTHALER
Upper Columbia
Conference
communications
coordinator

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-UC-14

ShineFest 2025 Gives God the Glory in Spokane

MORE THAN 6,000 PEOPLE GATHERED ON THE GRASS OF RIVERFRONT PARK IN SPOKANE, WASHINGTON, FOR A FREE CHRISTIAN CONCERT GIVING GOD THE GLORY AT SHINEFEST, HELD AUG. 1, 2025. SHINE 104.9 INVITED ARTISTS, INCLUDING HOPE DARST, RYAN STEVENSON AND MICAH TYLER, TO PERFORM ALONG THE SCENIC DOWNTOWN RIVER, ALONG WITH LOCAL CHRISTIAN MUSICIANS.

“Our foremost goal with ShineFest, and in everything else we do, is to lift up and glorify the name of Jesus,” said Darin Patzer, KEEH Shine 104.9 manager. “As an outreach ministry, we try to reach across all denominations to bring together followers of Christ and encourage their faith journey.”

August 2025 marked the third ShineFest, an event Shine 104.9 hopes to continue annually.

Stage setup began at 6 a.m. with volunteers arriving throughout the morning. Artists arrived at midday for a sound-check, and attendees started to line up at 3 p.m. for the concert, which ended after 9 p.m.

“We’ve had nothing but positive experiences with the Christian artists we’ve partnered with over the years,” said Patzer. “We’ve found them to be humble, patient, gracious and willing to serve and interact with their fans while understanding that Jesus is the real star of the show.”

Preparations for ShineFest began early in 2025, starting with contacting the venue, coordinating production and staging logistics, and finding artists that listeners were familiar with. The event cost more than \$50,000 between artist fees, staging/sound production and other rentals and licenses. The event’s costs are partially covered by sponsorships and donations at the door, but as a non-profit event, it’s also presented as a gift to the community.

“People seemed to really enjoy their time and have a positive worship experience, but that doesn’t happen without a team,” said Patzer. “I would like



Micah Tyler, Shine 104.9 listener favorite, performs at ShineFest 2025.

to extend our sincere gratitude to all our staff and volunteers who helped make ShineFest a smooth experience. We are grateful that God blessed us with beautiful weather each year.”

For more than 30 years, KEEH Shine 104.9 has provided the greater Spokane region with a message of hope and encouragement. As of 2025, Shine 104.9 is ranked number one overall in Spokane and North Idaho across all radio demographics (Copyright Nielsen Radio Ratings, Spring 2025).

“KEEH has built up tremendous awareness and bridges of friendship for the Adventist Church,” said Patzer. “We invite dozens of pastors and community leaders into our studio to share their hearts and become friends, and our chaplain, Tyler Kern, hosts weekly community service events—like park cleanups, food drives and group worships.”



Thousands gather at Spokane's Riverfront Park to hear uplifting Christian music.

The KEEH radio ministry is 100% community-funded and is owned by Upper Columbia Media Association.

“We are ever grateful for the vision and support of the leadership of UCMA and at Upper Columbia Conference, as well as the local Adventist members who care about this outreach ministry aimed at the community!” said Patzer.

For updates on concerts and events or to listen online or through Shine 104.9’s free radio app, visit shine1049.org.



ISAAC MEYTHALER
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More online at NWADVENT.ST/121-1-UC-97 +

Prayer Summit Makes a Vital Difference

VITAL PRAYER SUMMIT, HELD OCT. 3–5, 2025, MARKED UPPER COLUMBIA CONFERENCE'S THIRD PRAYER SUMMIT. IN THE BEAUTIFUL OUTDOORS AT CAMP MIVODEN, ATTENDEES EXPERIENCED A CHANGE IN THEIR SPIRITUAL LIVES WITH GOD BY LEARNING ABOUT AND PRACTICING PRAYER.

"I saw God move in powerful ways in my life and in others this weekend," said Kathy Marson, a volunteer who organized the event. "Praying together as a group led by the Holy Spirit makes a lasting impact on each individual and the world around us."

From the moment attendees set foot at Camp MiVoden, they were met with an offer of prayer. Two or three people prayed over each person as they came in and then gave them directions to registration.

Guest speakers for the weekend included Randy Maxwell, Washington Conference vice president for administration and prayer ministries director; Kevin Wilfley, recently-retired Upper Columbia Academy pastor; and David Jamieson, UCC president.

More than 120 gathered for the retreat, not counting all the prayer groups across UCC who prayed months in advance for the summit, as well as prayer leaders from all across North American Division.

God's presence was clearly felt by the event's organizers and those in attendance. At meetings, there was dedicated time for prayer groups to pray for God's Holy Spirit.

"When God's Holy Spirit is present, it's noticeable," said Marson. "We often found God leading our time; whenever something went off schedule, we could see that God was in the details, turning our problems into blessings."

Vital Prayer Summit was made possible by many volunteers. Local prayer leaders helped lead the early morning prayer "Power Hour." Members of the Prayer Action Committee and volunteers were busy helping with registration, praying with people, offering blessings and prayers at meetings, and hosting seminars. Many came early to help with setup and stayed late to help pack up.

Feedback forms from the weekend were received by event organizers and were very positive.

One attendee gave thanks, saying, "This was an immeasurable blessing. Everything was spot on perfect. All I have is incredible gratitude for all of the amazing effort put into this summit."

"This was a life-changing weekend for me; I will never be the same. Praise God!" said another participant.

The next annual prayer summit will be held Oct. 2–4, 2026. For the latest updates from UCC prayer ministries, see uccsda.org/prayer.



ISAAC MEYTHALER
Upper Columbia
Conference
communications
coordinator

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-UC-95



Participants practice prayer together.



Attendees are met with an offer of prayer as they arrive at Camp MiVoden.



Volunteers lead praise music at the summit.

PHOTOS BY KATHY MARSON

Home of Shalom Organizes Acts of Kindness

BE BOLD FOR JESUS CONFERENCE, A CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE IN SPOKANE, WASHINGTON, TOOK PLACE OCT. 3–5, 2025. TYLER KERN, SHINE 104.9 CHAPLAIN AND HOME OF SHALOM PASTOR, REPRESENTED SHINE 104.9 AS A GUEST SPEAKER AND ORGANIZER OF THE EVENT'S COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS.

Kern was given the opportunity to speak to an audience of youth and young adults during the event, sharing his testimony of his spiritual journey and finding purpose in Jesus. He spoke about his history of growing up in the church and how he left the church and pursued filmmaking until he felt called to ministry.

"We all have a story to tell," said Kern. "When someone asks you, 'How are you so sure that God exists?' You can say, 'I know because I have experienced His presence in my life.'"

For more than six years, KEEH Shine 104.9 has partnered with BB4J as a local sponsor, promoting the event and coordinating the final evening concert, which features a Christian artist.

At the end of 2024, event organizers reached out to Shine 104.9 to help plan 2025's event. With the news that the upcoming conference would only be held on Friday and Saturday, Kern saw an opportunity to practice bold faith in service of others.

Kern suggested holding a community service project as part of the conference, which was met with enthusiasm. He continued to coordinate and organize the events in collaboration with BB4J, and in exchange, Home of Shalom received a free sponsor booth at the event where people could sign up to participate in the service project.

On Sunday, almost 100 volunteers split into three groups focused on doing good through service in the Spokane community.

One group served at a local food pantry, sorting donations and stocking shelves. For every can and box sorted, a family was relieved of the burden of hunger. Another group rolled up their sleeves and cleaned up trash and debris in High Bridge Park. The final group walked through the heart of



A group of community service volunteers cleans up a local park in the Spokane area.

downtown Spokane, engaging in a prayer walk with homeless people.

A single mom with her two young children attended the prayer walk. Violet, at only 5 years old, was eager to reach out and pray with people, often holding the hands or touching the heads of the people. She prayed powerful, authentic prayers of healing.

"This wasn't just about praying for them," said Kern, "it was about being a non-judgmental, loving presence with them—reminding them they are seen and valued."

Kern reports that several people who signed up at the conference are now regular participants in service projects, continuing to serve their community in bold, impactful and faithful acts.

"These events were simple, but their impact is huge," said Kern. "They are a tangible reminder that we don't have to wait for a grand opportunity to show the love of God. We can do it right now, right where we are."

Learn more about Home of Shalom at homeofshalom.org and Shine 104.9 at shine1049.org.



Home of Shalom's booth at BB4J invites attendees to put their faith into action.



ISAAC MEYTHALER
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More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-UC-93

Journey to Wholeness Training Empowers Leaders

PASTORS, HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, CHAPLAINS AND CHURCH MEMBERS FROM ACROSS WESTERN WASHINGTON CAME TOGETHER FOR AN INTENSIVE JOURNEY TO WHOLENES FACILITATOR TRAINING — A TWO-DAY EVENT DESIGNED TO EQUIP LEADERS TO ADDRESS ADDICTION AND TRAUMA THROUGH CHRIST-CENTERED RECOVERY GROUPS.

The sessions, held Oct. 13–14, 2025 at the Washington Conference office, created a space for learning, reflection and transformation.

Led by David and Beverly Sedlacek, Adventist Recovery Ministries facilitators, in partnership with Washington Conference health ministries, the training explored how pain, trauma and brokenness often drive addiction and how the gospel offers lasting healing.

Participants learned that addiction is not merely a behavioral issue but a misdirected search for God's love. They discovered how building safe, grace-filled communities can help people move from shame and isolation toward freedom and wholeness.

"The moment you were hurt, God started your healing," shared Beverly, emphasizing God's compassion and ongoing work in the lives of those who have experienced trauma.

Sessions throughout the two days offered both practical tools and biblical insights for ministry. Topics included understanding the science of addiction, setting healthy boundaries, creating safe group environments, facilitating Christ-centered 12-step meetings and guiding participants through emotional healing and forgiveness.

Attendees represented a wide range of ministries and backgrounds — from a physician and a hospital chaplain to



Participants enjoy a panel discussion sharing creative ways to begin recovery ministries in their work and church context.

local church members and community volunteers — all united by a shared desire to bring hope and healing to those struggling with harmful habits. Some participants came seeking tools to serve others, while others came seeking healing for themselves and their families.

As one attendee reflected, the experience was "a powerful reminder that healing is a journey we walk together, not something we face alone."

Throughout the training, a key theme emerged: the power of community in the recovery journey. "God brings healing through relationships," presenters reminded the group, challenging churches to become places where people

feel safe to be honest about their struggles and to experience transformation together. Recovery, they said, is not only about stopping harmful behaviors, but also about discovering a new identity in Christ — one rooted in freedom, grace and purpose.

Organizers encouraged attendees to consider hosting a Journey to Wholeness group as part of their ministry to the community. By providing a safe, supportive environment grounded in biblical truth, local churches and centers of influence can become powerful agents of God's healing and grace.

Addiction and trauma touch every community and every congregation. Through initiatives like Journey to



Elida Jerez, Washington Conference health ministries director, (middle) is presented with a Journey to Wholeness kit.

Wholeness, Washington Conference health ministries is equipping leaders to respond with compassion, courage and the hope of Christ, who continues to "proclaim liberty to the captives" (Luke 4:18) and lead His people toward wholeness and restoration.

To learn more about Adventist Recovery Ministries, visit adventistrecoveryglobal.org.

ENOC GARCIA
Washington Conference
communication director



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-WA-67

YOUTH

Pathfinders Go 'All In for Jesus' at Camporee

EVERY PATHFINDER CAMPOREE IS UNIQUE AND FILLED WITH NEW EXPERIENCES THAT BECOME MEMORIES FOR A LIFETIME. WASHINGTON CONFERENCE PATHFINDER CAMPOREE, HELD SEPT. 26–28, 2025, BROUGHT TOGETHER MORE THAN 450 PATHFINDERS, STAFF AND LEADERS FROM ACROSS WESTERN WASHINGTON FOR A WEEKEND OF WORSHIP, SERVICE AND OUTDOOR ADVENTURE.

The theme, “All In for Jesus,” challenged everyone to live with full devotion, courage and joy in their faith.

Clallam County Fairgrounds, a well-known and historic site on the Olympic Peninsula, provided a scenic backdrop in Port Angeles for colorful tents, busy camp kitchens and evening worship. The cool autumn weather, paired with steady Friday rain, might have discouraged most campers—but not Pathfinders. As the rain fell softly, many clubs turned the moment into songs, laughter and prayer before drifting into restful sleep.

When Sabbath morning arrived, the clouds lifted to reveal a bright blue sky. Pathfinders took full advantage of the sunshine to explore nearby national and state parks, combining outdoor fun with community service.

Clubs distributed “warm fuzzy” encouragement cards, picked up litter along trails and participated in a creative treasure hunt that combined teamwork, problem-solving and lessons of faith. These activities reminded Pathfinders that serving others is not just an event, but also an ongoing way to live out discipleship.

Sabbath worship became the spiritual highlight of the weekend. Rob Lang, North Pacific Union youth and young adult ministries director, inspired everyone to follow Jesus wholeheartedly, both at Camporee and in everyday life. He invited Pathfinders to see their faith as an active commitment that shapes their friendships, studies and choices. Many clubs shared afterward that the message sparked heartfelt conversations about what it really means to be “all in” for Christ.

On Sunday morning, the fairgrounds echoed with cheerful voices as Pathfinders joined in friendly games, contests and group photos before breaking camp. True to Pathfinder tradition, every club worked together to clean the site thoroughly, leaving the area better than they found it.

The weekend offered more than camping. It was a celebration of faith, friendship and purpose. In an age of screens and distractions, Pathfinder Camporee continues to offer something timeless, providing hands-on experiences that build character, deepen relationships and strengthen the resolve to follow Jesus completely.

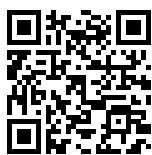
Washington Conference’s youth ministries team celebrates each leader, volunteer and Pathfinder who chose to be “All In for Jesus.”

NESTOR OSMAN

Washington Conference youth ministries director

ENOC GARCIA

Washington Conference communication director



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-WA-70

PHOTOS BY GRETEL DUPERTUIS



Team-building challenges strengthen cooperation and determination.



Friendship and laughter fill the fairgrounds as campers enjoy creative games and activities.



More than 450 Pathfinders gather at Clallam County Fairgrounds for a weekend of worship, service and adventure.

Elma Church Builds Bridges of Wellness and Faith

ELMA CHURCH OPENED ITS DOORS TO NEIGHBORS ACROSS GRAYS HARBOR COUNTY DURING ITS FIRST COMMUNITY HEALTH FAIR ON SEPT. 14, 2025, A DAY DEVOTED TO WELLNESS, DISCOVERY AND CONNECTION. WHAT BEGAN AS A BOLD IDEA BECAME A LIVED EXPRESSION OF ROM. 15:2: “LET EACH OF US PLEASE HIS NEIGHBOR FOR HIS GOOD, LEADING TO EDIFICATION.”

At the Community Health Fair, guests explored the Adventist NEWSTART lifestyle principles – nutrition, exercise, water, sunshine, temperance, air, rest and trust in God – while meeting local health care providers.

Families received practical guidance for healthier living, sampled plant-based foods and benefited from free screenings and wellness resources. Children enjoyed face painting, balloon art, bounce houses and prizes, while parents met staff from the local Adventist school, strengthening the bond between church, school and community.

The dream took shape months earlier during a church board meeting when one member proposed hosting a health fair. For a congregation of about 45 regular attendees, the scope felt daunting, but faith replaced hesitation with hope.

Momentum grew at Washington Conference Camp Meeting when Alvaro Correa, Elma Church pastor, and James Franklin, one of the event organizers, presented the concept at Young Adult Shark Tank. Their project earned first place and seed funding, turning aspiration into action and giving Elma Church a practical path forward.

As the date neared, JoDee Norton, newly-baptized Elma Church member, stepped forward to coordinate logistics. Her organization and enthusiasm energized the team, and more than 60 volunteers – members, family, friends and neighbors – joined the effort. A local radio interview spread the word and donations flowed in from area businesses eager to bless their community.

More than 70 guests came to the event. Interactions at screening tables



A group of joyful volunteers organizes their first Community Health Fair.

and children's stations opened doors to new friendships and faith conversations. “We made wonderful new connections and brought visibility to our small church,” shared Rob Norton, Elma Church member. “Great things are possible with God’s help.”

For Elma Church, the fair marked a beginning rather than a conclusion. Building on the momentum, members prepared for an Exploring Prophecy series with Jim Stevens in the weeks that followed. The same prayerful teamwork that brought the health fair to life carried into evangelism, as members invited guests and served together. The series averaged more than 40 attendees and resulted in five baptisms, a visible testimony of God’s blessing.

Looking ahead, members plan to keep serving neighbors through health education, prayer and relationship-centered follow-up groups, taking simple steps that continue turning compassion into connection.



Volunteers set up various stations for each of the NEWSTART lifestyle principles.

ROB NORTON

Elma Church member



ENOC GARCIA
*Washington Conference
communication director*

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-WA-66

EDUCATION

Healthy Heart Habits Lead to Surprise for Student

STUDENTS AT KIRKLAND SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST SCHOOL EXPERIENCED A TRULY MEMORABLE MORNING WHEN ALICIA ANDERSON, KSDA STUDENT, LEARNED SHE'D WON AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO SUPER BOWL 60. WHAT BEGAN AS A ROUTINE SCHOOL ASSEMBLY QUICKLY BECAME A CAMPUS-WIDE CELEBRATION AS CLASSMATES AND TEACHERS ERUPTED IN CHEERS AND APPLAUSE.

PHOTOS BY LAURIE YOSHIHARA



Students enjoy meeting Boom, a member of the Seattle Seahawks family.



Alicia, KSDA student, (right) is presented with tickets to Super Bowl 60.

Representatives from American Heart Association, two Seahawks dancers and Bryan Walters, Seahawks legend, visited the gym to deliver the news. While standing beside her mother, it was discovered that Anderson was one of only five students nationwide selected for this honor. Her name was drawn from participants in the American Heart Association's Kids Heart Challenge who completed Hands-Only CPR training during the previous school year.

The announcement, held on Sept. 5, 2025, underscored the value of heart-health education and the strength of community partnerships. The surprise event reflected AHAs

collaboration with the NFL and Seattle Seahawks to expand CPR education. The initiative supports an ambitious goal to double survival rates from cardiac emergencies by 2030 through broader awareness, school-based programs and practical skills training.

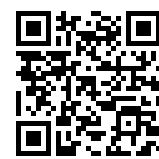
Through the Healthy Hearts program at KSDA, students learned about nutrition, exercise, hydration, rest and other daily habits that support whole-person wellness. They also practiced CPR and learned how to act calmly in emergencies. Even younger students gained confidence that they can play an important role in protecting the lives of family members, friends and neighbors.

This initiative aligns with the mission of Adventist education, which emphasizes caring for the whole person – body, mind and spirit. By participating in the Kids Heart Challenge, students gain practical knowledge while growing in compassion, empathy and readiness to serve. The experience reinforces KSDA's commitment to service-oriented learning and to equipping students with skills that translate to real-life help in their communities.

For Anderson and her classmates, the assembly became a vivid lesson that healthy choices and preparedness open unexpected doors. The excitement that filled the gym reflected the joy of seeing one student honored and the shared realization that simple skills can save lives. After the announcement, students and staff expressed renewed interest in pursuing additional training and inviting families to learn CPR together.

AHA encourages households, churches and community groups to learn CPR so they can respond when it matters most. Through partnerships like this, schools such as KSDA are helping raise a generation ready to live healthfully, serve faithfully and make a difference—one healthy heart at a time.

LAURIE YOSHIHARA
*Kirkland Seventh-day
Adventist School principal*



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-WA-69 

WISE Turns Classrooms Into Mission Fields

WHEN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ARRIVE AT AUBURN ADVENTIST ACADEMY EACH YEAR, THEY BRING MORE THAN SUITCASES AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES; THEY BRING THE WORLD.



MOLLY SANTANA

Students enjoy a Sunday outing to Seattle's Pike Place Market, part of their Pacific Northwest experience.



MOLLY SANTANA

Beyond academics and faith, WISE strengthens social connections through shared experiences like bowling night, helping students feel part of a caring community.



ENOC GARCIA

Students form meaningful connections with their advisors, who offer guidance that extends beyond academics.

Through Washington International Student Experience, young people from other countries are finding not only academic opportunities, but also a spiritual family in the Pacific Northwest.

Founded in 2011, WISE partners with AAA and several other Adventist schools to give international students a Christ-centered education and an authentic taste of American life. Today, about 10% of AAA's student body is made up of international students who call the campus home. Others attend sister schools such as Northwest Christian School and Buena Vista Seventh-day Adventist School.

"Many of our students arrive with little or no Christian background," said Molly Santana, WISE director. "Our goal isn't just academics – it's also helping them know Jesus through daily life and community."

That mission happens naturally in classrooms, dorms and homes. Students are paired with local host families who open their homes and hearts for the school year. "These students become part of our families," Santana shared. "They come back to visit long after they've graduated."

Lynda Kim, WISE student advisor, sees firsthand how transformation unfolds. "We don't sit them down for Bible studies," she said. "But as they experience love and service here, something changes. Seeds of faith take root." Several students have chosen baptism before graduation, while others return home curious about the God they met at AAA.

In fall 2025, WISE launched its new Pre-Health Pathway, designed to prepare students for future studies in medicine, nursing and allied health. The initiative connects AAA's strong science and dual-credit programs with Adventist universities such as Walla Walla University, Andrews University and Southern Adventist University, giving students academic momentum and a sense of mission through hands-on service and short-term mission trips.

"The pathway shows students that faith and service go hand in hand," Santana explained. "When they serve others, they begin to see Jesus more clearly."

As WISE continues to grow, its leaders are praying for strong communication with partner schools, emotional resilience

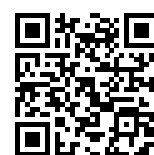
for students adjusting to life far from home and ongoing financial support. The program is self-funded, and scholarships or sponsorships help make it possible for students with limited means to attend.

"Sometimes a student has the heart to come but not the resources," Kim said. "When someone sponsors them, it's life-changing – not just for that student, but for their entire family back home."

What began as an educational initiative has become a living mission field – one that reaches around the world without leaving campus. "We always talk about sending missionaries," Santana reflected. "But in this case, the world has come to us."

To learn more about how you can partner with WISE, contact info@wisexperience.org.

ENOC GARCIA
Washington Conference
communication director



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-WA-75

Come Celebrate *The Ties That Bind Us* during
HOMECOMING WEEKEND



Save the date
2026: April 24 to 26

We extend a special invitation to members of our honor classes:

Vanguards (pre-1966), 1966, 1971, 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021

Save the date and plan to register in February 2026!

- ▶ Submit a class member profile to share with your class at homecoming, wallawalla.edu/alumnotes.
- ▶ Nominate a fellow alum for an award at wallawalla.edu/nominate-alumni.
- ▶ Find more information and register for homecoming at wallawalla.edu/homecoming or contact Advancement and Alumni Engagement at (800) 377-2586.

Rosario Beach Laboratory Hosts ASDAH Conference

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1998, WALLA WALLA UNIVERSITY HOSTED THE 2025 TRIENNIAL ASSOCIATION OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST HISTORIANS CONFERENCE, GATHERING MORE THAN 60 ADVENTIST HISTORIANS AT ROSARIO BEACH MARINE LABORATORY.



WWU hosts the triennial ASDAH Conference, gathering more than 60 Adventist historians at Rosario Beach Marine Laboratory.

The conference, held in early September 2025, followed the theme “Tides and Transformations.” It supported five days of sharing historical research, discussing pedagogical questions and enjoying community with fellow historians, all while surrounded by the outstanding natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest.

The first few days were filled with paper presentations and roundtable discussions. On Saturday, everyone gathered on Rosario Beach for worship led by Alex Bryan, WWU president. For the rest of the day, attendants enjoyed a hike up Mount Baker, whale watching, visiting the area’s natural history exhibits and exploring Rosario Beach.

ASDAH was founded in 1973 and held its first conference in 1995, establishing the conference as a series of triennial meetings at different Adventist universities and colleges. Now, ASDAH has become an open community of scholars and laypersons who share the same common interests in fostering research not only on Adventist history, but all aspects of history.

Greg Dodds, WWU history professor and department chair, has attended every conference since 1998. At this conference, he was selected as the new ASDAH president. Looking to the future, Dodds hopes to continue to support and expand the ASDAH Conference – improving

the mailing list system and potentially hosting online meetings during off years.

More than professors and professionals, this conference is a special opportunity for current and graduate college students to network with faculty who work for organizations students may want to join someday.

Audrey Bryan, WWU sophomore history major, attended the conference to assist Tonia Jeffery, WWU history department administrative assistant. She helped ensure each event ran smoothly throughout the trip and enjoyed the opportunity to learn from such a variety of professional historians.

Bryan said, “It made me even more sure of my major

and future career choices, too. The whole trip allowed me to make connections with adults who have already researched and studied historical events. It was so fun!”

Dodds believes this event is an important opportunity for both intellectual growth and keeping history education strong throughout Adventist universities and colleges. “In addition to all of this, it’s also fun to reconnect with old friends and make new ones as we work and worship together,” said Dodds.

Are you looking to host your own conference or retreat at the WWU Rosario Beach Marine Laboratory? Learn more about renting Rosario facilities at wallawalla.edu/rosario. For more about the WWU department of history and philosophy, visit wallawalla.edu/history.

HAILEY WERNER
*WWU university relations
student writer*



More online at NWADVENT.ST/121-1-WWU-94 +

EDUCATION

Affordable Transportation Provided for Students

THANKS TO A NEW ELECTRIC VEHICLE CAR-SHARE PROGRAM, WALLA WALLA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS NOW HAVE CONVENIENT ACCESS TO CLEAN, AFFORDABLE ELECTRIC CARS WHEN THEY NEED THEM.

Drivers can join the car-share community by completing an online profile, providing a valid driver's license and authorizing the release of their driving record for review. A convenient app provides a way to enter payment details and track invoices for the program. Rates are \$8 per hour for community members and just \$5 per hour for current WWU students, faculty and staff, not including a small usage fee and taxes.

Jaime Garcia, WWU junior computer science major, has used the service several times, and he is thankful for the freedom it provides him. "I don't have a car here at the university, so I had to ask friends to drive me or let me borrow their cars," he said. "With this program, a car is one click

away. Now I can get groceries, run errands or go different places without bothering my friends."

"I've driven the Mach-E and the Tesla, and they were really nice," he added. He noted that for some of his friends, reserving an EV costs less than it would cost them to bring their own cars to school. Currently, four cars can be reserved — two Ford Mustang Mach-E vehicles and two Tesla Model 3 vehicles.

The car-share program was developed by Women of Wisdom Tri-Cities as part of their focus on empowering individuals and communities while fostering environmental sustainability. The program is available in Yakima, Richland, Kennewick, Pasco and now College Place.

"We're excited to partner with the City of College Place and WOW to offer this convenient and affordable service to our students," said Darren Wilkins, WWU vice president for student life. "Whether they use the car for getting groceries, going to the doctor or a dinner date, this option allows our students the flexibility to go where they need to go at a relatively low cost."



JODI WAGNER
WWU vice president for
university relations and
advancement

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-WWU-12

CAEDEN ROGERS

WOW car-sharing gives WWU students access to vehicles at an affordable cost.



Food Trends With Staying Power

THE RIGHT FOODS CAN BE AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO HELP PREVENT AND MANAGE DISEASE, BUT, LIKE FAST FASHION, FOOD CAN FEEL TRENDY.



With new studies regularly adding to the list of superfoods, it can be challenging to keep up with what belongs on your grocery list. Here are some top choices that are delicious and can significantly impact your long-term health.

FOODS TO BOOST IMMUNITY

During cold and flu season, eating immune-boosting foods can help protect you from illness. Instead of relying on supplements, aim to get nutrients from food.

What to eat: Fresh fruits and vegetables provide vitamins and fiber that strengthen your immune system. Try sweet potatoes, spinach and carrots, which are high in illness-fighting beta-carotene. Get zinc from beans and tofu.

Tasty tip: Enjoy a flu-fighting stir-fry made with seasonal vegetables and your choice of protein.

FOODS TO HELP YOU RECOVER FASTER

If you do get sick, the right foods can help you bounce back quicker, thanks to vitamins and other compounds that fight illness and infection.

What to eat: Probiotic-rich yogurt contains “good” bacteria that may shorten the duration of colds and flu. Dark leafy greens, citrus fruits and red or green peppers are excellent sources of vitamin C. Garlic can reduce the severity of symptoms, while ginger and turmeric fight inflammation and congestion. Staying hydrated is essential. Try hot water with lemon and honey to soothe a sore throat.

Tasty tip: Blend fresh orange juice with spinach, ginger, turmeric and honey for an immune-boosting, inflammation-fighting smoothie.

FOODS TO HELP YOUR GUT WORK AT ITS BEST

One of the best things you can do for gut health is avoid processed, high-sugar foods, which encourage unhealthy bacteria to grow. Instead, focus on fresh whole foods.

What to eat: Collagen-rich foods, such as salmon, provide amino acids — nutrients that support the gut lining and aid digestion. Soy is rich in dietary fiber that feeds beneficial gut bacteria.

Tasty tip: Add raw cacao powder or nibs — not sugary chocolate — to foods for rich flavor, supporting gut health with prebiotic fiber and inflammation-fighting polyphenols.

FOODS TO SUPPORT HEART HEALTH

Making small changes to your diet can have a big impact on your heart.

What to eat: Cauliflower has become popular for good reason — it’s naturally low in saturated fat and calories, high in cholesterol-lowering fiber and packed with antioxidants that reduce inflammation and support healthy blood pressure. It’s a smart swap for refined-carb pizza crusts.

Tasty tip: On salads, skip heavy dressings, croutons and piles of cheese. Instead, load up on a rainbow of fresh veggies. Toss in berries for heart-healthy antioxidants.

FOODS TO HELP PREVENT CANCER

Your diet can influence your cancer risk. While no single food prevents cancer, eating a variety of nutrient-rich foods can create an anti-inflammatory, antioxidant-rich environment in the body.

What to eat: Two to three servings of cooked tomatoes each week may lower prostate cancer risk by nearly 30% and can also help reduce breast cancer risk. Leafy greens, such as spinach and Swiss chard, deliver fiber, folate and carotenoids that protect cells from DNA damage. Fiber-rich whole grains, such as brown rice, oats and quinoa, help regulate insulin and lower colorectal cancer risk.

Tasty tip: Make a smoothie with berries, yogurt, leafy greens and soy or almond milk. Add flaxseed and chia for omega-3s that may protect against hormone-related cancers.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Adopting the mindset of adding healthy foods rather than focusing only on what foods to avoid can make good habits stick. By prioritizing fresh, nutrient-dense options, you'll naturally crowd out ultra-processed foods – and reap the benefits for years to come.



C.J. ANDERSON
Adventist Health
Portland
communications manager

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-AH-05



Pad Thai Noodle Salad

Salad

- » 1/2 package pad thai brown rice noodles
- » Toasted sesame seed oil
- » 1 cup purple cabbage, finely shredded
- » 1 cup green cabbage, finely shredded
- » 1/2 cup carrots, shredded
- » 1/2 cup yellow bell peppers, julienned
- » 1/2 cup red bell peppers, julienned
- » 1/2 cup scallions, thinly sliced
- » 1 Granny Smith green apple, cored and julienned
- » 2 cups spinach leaves

Follow the cooking instructions on the package of the pad thai noodles, then drain and place in a large bowl. Add a dash of toasted sesame seed oil and toss. Set aside to cool. Prepare the veggies and apple. Toss the cabbage, carrots, bell peppers, scallions and apple with the cooled noodles. Leave the spinach for later.

Sweet Chili Almond Dressing

- » 3/4 cup almond butter
- » 1/4 cup water
- » 1/4 rice vinegar
- » 1 Thai chili
- » 2 Tbsp lemon juice, freshly squeezed
- » 2 Tbsp coconut nectar
- » 2 Tbsp coconut aminos
- » 1 Tbsp tamarind paste
- » 1 Tbsp peeled ginger, minced
- » 2 cloves garlic

Add all ingredients to a blender and blend until smooth. Add sea salt to taste.

Garnishes

- » 1 avocado, sliced
- » 1 cup bean sprouts
- » 1/2 cup cilantro
- » 1/8 cup toasted sesame seeds
- » 2 limes, cut into quarters

When you are ready to serve, drizzle the sweet chili almond dressing over the salad and toss until all vegetables are evenly coated. Add the spinach leaves and toss lightly. Divide the salad onto plates or salad bowls. Place avocado slices on top and garnish with bean sprouts, cilantro, toasted sesame seeds and a wedge of lime.



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NORTH PACIFIC UNION

Offerings

- Jan. 3—Local Church Budget
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- Jan. 17—Local Church Budget
- Jan. 24—Local Conference Advance
- Jan. 31—Local Church Budget
- Feb. 7—Local Church Budget
- Feb. 14—Adventist Television Ministries Evangelism (NAD)
- Feb. 21—Local Church Budget
- Feb. 28—Local Conference Advance

OREGON CONFERENCE

PAA Student Scholarship Auction Rescheduled

Portland Adventist Academy Student Scholarship Auction has been rescheduled. Originally planned for Nov. 2, 2025, the dinner and auction will now take place on Sunday, March 8, 2026. Mark your calendars and plan to join us—in person or online—as we come together to support PAA students through scholarships. Your generosity makes a lasting difference and we are so grateful for your continued support.

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Sun 11 a.m.–3 p.m.



Sunset times:
nwadventists.com/sunset

BLEHM—Robert Lloyd, 61; born July 12, 1964, St. Helens, Oregon; died Aug. 10, 2025, Red Bluff, California. Surviving: spouse, Margo Westmoreland Blehm; daughters, Jessica Lindbeck and Ashlee Blehm-Forshee; mother, Marilyn June (Thygeson) Blehm; brother, Michael; sister, Karen Blehm Land; 3 grandchildren.

BLEHM—Wesley Lloyd, 85; born March 6, 1940, Portland, Oregon; died Sept. 4, 2025, Lincoln, Nebraska. Surviving: spouse, Marilyn June (Thygeson); son, Michael; daughter, Karen Blehm Land; sister, Helen Muyrlene (Blehm) Morris; 6 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

CLAYTON—Etta Janice (Turner), previously Etta Schmidt, 88; born Sept. 30, 1937, New York, New York; died Oct. 15, 2025, Vancouver, Washington. Surviving: sons, Robert and Kevin; daughter, Cynthia Armour; 3 grandchildren.

DICKINSON—Florence Ione (McDougal), 99; born April 22, 1926, Plymouth, Ohio; died Oct. 25, 2025, Eugene, Oregon. Surviving: daughter, Andrea (Dickinson) Johnson; sister, Alice (McDougal) Grove; 5 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

DUNCAN—R. Scott, 82; born May 8, 1942, Santa Monica, California; died Dec. 18, 2024, Kennewick, Washington. Surviving: spouse, Betty (Fritz); daughters, Rebecca Connell and Pamela Rodman; brother, James; 4 grandchildren.

FRITZ—Timothy Allen, 81; born March 18, 1944, Billings, Montana; died April 6, 2025, Billings, Montana. Surviving: brother, H. Lyman Fritz; sister, Betty Duncan.

HOMANN—Charles Edwin Jr., 95; born Aug. 1, 1930, Portland, Oregon; died Oct. 24, 2025, Forest Grove, Oregon. Surviving: daughter, Linda (Homann) Cowles; 2 grandchildren.

HUMBLE—Joe Clair, 90; born Dec. 11, 1934, Hamilton, Montana; died March 22, 2025, Walla Walla, Washington. Surviving: spouse, Patricia (Pearson) Johnston; step-son, Marty Johnston; step-daughter, Linda Johnston; 3 grandchildren and 2 step-grandchildren.

ISEMINGER—Theresa Fay (Merritt), 69; born Jan. 30, 1956, Fort Carson, Colorado; died Aug. 1, 2025, Cashmere, Washington. Surviving: spouse, Mel; sons, Brian and Dustin; 2 grandchildren.

MACDONALD—Elaine Carol, 79; born Aug. 24, 1946, Sacramento, California; died Aug. 31, 2025, Seattle, Washington.

MARTIN—LaVerle Jean (Burden), 76; born Nov. 18, 1948, Fortuna, California; died Sept. 9, 2025, Spokane, Washington. Surviving: spouse, Richard Sr.; son, Rick Jr.; daughter, Larissa Martin-Fors; sisters, Donna Haynes and Patti Miller; 4 grandchildren.

MICHEL—James “Jim” Ira Jr., 94; born Sept. 24, 1931, San Francisco, California; died Sept. 24, 2025, Pendleton, Oregon. Surviving: sons, Gary, Lonnie, Larry and Kevin; 10 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren.

OLSON—J.W., 79; born July 16, 1946, Williston, North Dakota; died Oct. 11, 2025, Walla Walla, Washington. Surviving: spouse, Hazel Olson; sons, Jerry Perkin, Harvey Olson and Nicholes Olson; daughter, Desiree (Olson) Weber; brothers, David and Rick; sisters, Jean (Olson) Base, Lyane (Olson) Martin and Debra (Olson) Fahey; 14 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

RUDOLF—LaVerne Mae (Rieley), 94; born Aug. 27, 1930, Medina, North Dakota; died March 21, 2025, Chino, California. Surviving: sons, Ken and Jim; brother, LeRoy Rieley; 3 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.

SCHAFER—Madalynn (Skeels), 100; born Sept. 19, 1924, Fruita, Colorado; died July 18, 2025, Milton-Freewater, Oregon. Surviving: son-in-law, Larry Blue. *(This is a reprint with corrected information from November/December 2025.)*

All family announcements are published online at nwadventists.com/family. To submit family announcements, go to nwadventists.com/contribute. To publish an expanded obituary with a short bio and photo, contact info@nwadventists.com or call 360-857-7200 for submission and cost information.

The North Pacific Union Gleaner accepts family listings as a service to members of Adventist churches in the Northwest. This information is not intended as an endorsement of any facts or relationships represented.

A Promise to Hold

Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

JOHN 14:27

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6 part Seminar starts Friday at 6:30p,
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STONES OF REMEMBRANCE



God's people stood by the Jordan River. They were ready to go into Canaan. God had freed them from being slaves in Egypt.

God gave His people the Ten Commandments — promises that He would help them live a better life and please Him. He asked them to build a big tent for Him to live with them. It was called the Tabernacle. It showed His plan to save everyone.

Forty years before, the people had been in this same spot, but they were too afraid to go into Canaan. God did not stop loving them. He forgave them and cared for them. He led them through the hot desert. He gave them food called manna and water to drink. Their clothes and sandals never wore out!

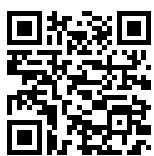
Now they were back. The land God promised was just across the water. The priests carried the special box called the Ark of the Covenant toward the raging river.

When their feet touched the water, something amazing happened: the water stopped!

The priests stood in the middle of the dry riverbed. All the people and their animals walked safely to the other side. Then Joshua told 12 men, one from each tribe, to each pick up one stone from the middle of the river and carry it to their new camp. When everyone came out of the river, the water came crashing downstream.

Joshua set up the 12 stones as a reminder. When the children later asked, "What do these stones mean?" their parents could tell them how God helped His people and took care of them.

You can read Joshua 4:1–7, 21–24 for family worship.



PAULA WART
Just for Kids columnist

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-1-KIDS-03](https://www.nwadvent.org/121-1-KIDS-03)

MAKE MEMORY STONES

You can make your own memory stones to help you remember the ways God has cared for you — just like He cared for His people, Israel.



You'll need:

- » Gray, tan or brown paper
- » Scissors
- » Markers or crayons
- » Poster paper and glue (optional)
- » Tape (optional)



PAULA WART
Just for Kids
columnist

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-KIDS-04

Read or tell the story of Israel crossing the Jordan River and collecting stones of remembrance in Joshua 4:1–7.

Then, talk with your family about how God has helped you in the last year. Did He help you make a new friend? Did He give you courage when you were afraid? Has He given you food, clothes or a warm bed? These are things to thank Him for!

Cut out 12 stones from paper. On each stone, draw a picture or write a short sentence about something God has done for you. Here are some ideas:

- » God loves me.
- » Jesus died for me.
- » He is always with me.
- » I prayed, and God answered!
- » God gave me my pet.
- » He kept us safe in a storm.
- » God gave us what we needed.
- » He helped us when we were lost.

When you're done, glue your 12 stones to a poster, tape them to a window or stick them on the fridge with magnets.

Each stone reminds you that God is strong, loving and always with you.



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY PAULA WART



Back to the Beginning

One evening a few months ago, my son and I stood outside waiting for the moon to appear.

It was a supermoon, as it was the closest it gets all year, and a full moon, so we knew it was going to be extra bright and beautiful.

As we stood there waiting, clouds began to roll in. I knew the moon would be covered by clouds for a bit before it would burst through and show us its wonder. I was holding my son in my arms and all of a sudden the brightness of the moon shone out from behind the clouds.

The clouds appeared to be on fire; it was amazing! In that moment, my son looked so excited and turned to me and said, “Mommy, is that Jesus coming back?! It’s so bright! Is it Him?”

I felt my heart sink as I responded that it wasn’t Jesus; it was just the supermoon coming up. My son was visibly saddened by my response, and I tried to bring joy back while talking about the moon. However, the experience impacted me.

Almost weekly, my son will ask if some light in the sky or cloud is Jesus returning. At first, I would just answer quickly with a no. But the more he asks, and the longer time

goes on, I have found myself

having the same excitement he does when wondering if it could actually be Jesus coming back. Seeing things through my young son’s eyes has opened mine and reminded me of the joy and

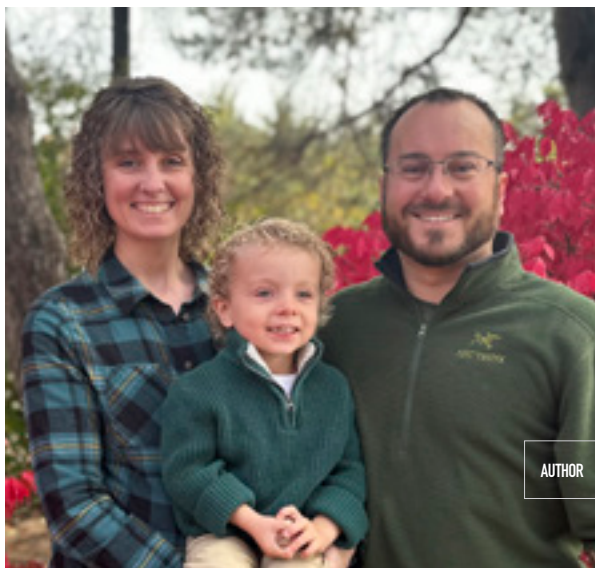
excitement I used to feel as a younger follower of Jesus.

Age isn’t a factor here. Whether you are 4, 40 or 80, excitement about Jesus is possible. The Bible teaches that we are to be like little children in response to His call in our lives. That doesn’t mean we are to be immature, ignorant or infantile in how we relate to Him. Rather, it means we are to have a joyful and peace-filled excitement in response to His call to follow Him and be ready for His soon return. Childlike faith is trust that is not blind, but rather built on a loving relationship.

My son knows that when I say something, I will absolutely do it because the relationship we have has proved that I love him and am trustworthy. The same is true of Jesus, and this is the kind of childlike faith we are to have in Him—one that is built on a relationship, one that is founded in knowing that Jesus loves us and has promised to return to take us to be with Him.

Jesus promises us that He will return. John 14:1-3 says, “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also.”

The Bible is filled with promises and reminders that Jesus will return and that it will be soon. Rev. 22:7 says, “And behold, I



AUTHOR

Natashia McVay



PERSPECTIVE

Seeing things through my young son's eyes has opened mine and reminded me of the joy and excitement I used to feel as a younger follower of Jesus.

am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

My hope is that, as you begin 2026, you will recapture your excitement in awaiting Jesus' return. Whether you were a child or an adult when you accepted Jesus into your life, remember how you felt when you gave your life to Him. Remember the joy, the peace and the excitement of following Jesus. God has not changed, His promises remain the same and our joy should remain as well.

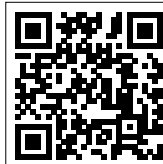
Now, every time my son asks me if that “thing” he sees could be

Jesus coming back, I say, “You know, son, that could be Jesus coming back, because He promised that one day He will return. Our job as His followers is to remain faithful to Him until He comes again!”

Jesus is coming back soon, and that is truer today than it was yesterday.

May we all start this new year with joy and excitement as we look forward to beginning eternity walking with Jesus hand in hand.

NATASHIA MCVAY
*Pacific Northwest
pastoral columnist*



More online at 
[NWADVENT.ST/121-1-POV-08](https://nwadvent.st/121-1-POV-08)





Where God Meets Us

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Please join us in welcoming Ryan Wilson, Auburn Adventist Academy chaplain and pastor, as our new Bible history columnist. He'll be exploring how insights from scripture and archaeology speak into our lives today.

MARTIN WALLACE



AUTHOR



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-POV-83

The day started in the picturesque, remote town of Sharm El-Sheikh on Egypt's Sinai Peninsula.

I was part of a Holy Land tour with my church and, on that day, we ventured into the desolate wilderness to Mount Sinai itself.

Mount Sinai is also known as Mount Horeb. Horeb literally means "desert" or "desolation" and certainly lives up to its name.

The two-hour bus ride from Sharm El-Sheikh to Mount Sinai was through the most barren, inhospitable, isolated, mountainous desert terrain I had ever experienced. We rarely encountered another vehicle.

Even though I was on a bus with many friends, including my own son, I still felt lonely and keenly aware of how small I really am in this world.

Arriving at Saint Catherine's Monastery at the mountain base offered little solace. Except for a few attempts at more modern accommodation up the road, we were truly in the middle of nowhere.

In a few hours, we had gone from the luxury modern society offers to palpable isolation.

A short while later, nearly everyone in our group was making the ascent up to Mount Sinai. I could hardly believe I was in the region where Moses met with God.

The hike up the mountain took nearly two hours. As I hiked, there was no discernible breeze, no ambient noise, just a profound silence. The setting was perfect for reflection.

My own journey from the comforts of society to the isolation of the wilderness was vaguely like Moses' experience when he left Egypt.

Moses, a Hebrew by birth, had been raised as Egyptian royalty. He received the best education in the world. He lived a life of luxury. He was surrounded by the best the world had to offer.

Yet, it seems as if he never felt true belonging, knowing deep down he was a Hebrew. It also seems that he had a warped sense of identity and purpose.

Exod. 2:11 tells us, "One day, when Moses had grown up, he went out to *his people* and looked on their burdens, and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of *his people*." The text goes on to say that Moses killed the Egyptian and hid his body.

It's impossible to know what was going through Moses' mind when he decided to kill the Egyptian, but it seems that he likely fancied himself as some kind of savior.

It seems like he expected his Hebrew brothers to welcome him with open arms and be willing to keep his secret. When they did not, Moses realized he was in great danger and fled for his life.

Moses ended up in Midian with Jethro, a priest and shepherd. Over the next 40 years, Moses made many journeys into the wilderness while tending sheep—a vastly different experience from the palaces of Egypt.

His time in the wilderness and his communion there with God had an effect on him. Ellen G. White tells us that Moses' "pride



“

Like Moses, we all need seasons in the wilderness – moments when God draws us away from the noise so we can hear His voice more clearly.

and self-sufficiency were swept away” and that he “became patient, reverent and humble” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 248.3).

He no longer trusted himself or the greatness of the world. He learned the greatness of God and his own relative insignificance. He was ready for God to use him.

One day on Mount Horeb, God appeared to Moses in a burning bush – see Exod. 3 – with instructions to return to Egypt and lead the Israelites out of slavery. God promised that He would deliver the Israelites from Egypt with a mighty

hand and that they would worship on that same mountain. Moses returned to Egypt as instructed, and the rest is history.

As I was hiking there on Mount Sinai, I couldn’t help but wonder at the incredible transformation of Moses in that desolate place. Sinai is desolate in the world’s understanding, but it was there that God met Moses.

In that place, God again impressed me with the importance of retreating from the world to a place where we can hear His voice and commune with Him – a place where God’s greatest work in us is done.

Like Moses, we all need seasons in the wilderness – moments when God draws us away from the noise so we can hear His voice more clearly.

The wilderness isn’t a place of abandonment; it’s where God does His deepest work in us, shaping our hearts for what comes next.

When life feels barren or uncertain, may you find perspective that this may be the very ground where God is preparing you for His purpose.

RYAN WILSON

Bible history columnist





Beyond Tithe: What If It's Not About the Money?

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Please join us in welcoming Oscar “Mike” Sánchez as our new columnist. A pastor and pastor’s son, he serves as Idaho Conference vice president for finance and stewardship director. Mike and his wife, Melissa, live in Caldwell, Idaho. He has three adult children. “Counting What Counts” reflects his heart for helping readers focus on what matters most and build their lives around lasting priorities.

MELISSA SÁNCHEZ



W

hat if God cared less about the percentage in your envelope and more about the percentage of your heart?

Growing up, I watched my father do something that puzzled my childhood logic. As a pastor with a modest salary, he regularly gave away significant portions of his income to families in greater need than ours.

When I complained about not having the toys or restaurant meals I wanted, my mother would gently correct my perspective: “We’ve never lacked anything because God’s providence allows it.”

Years later, I understood. My father hadn’t mastered a stewardship technique; he had cultivated a stewardship relationship. There’s a world of difference.

WHEN GOD ASKS FOR EVERYTHING

Most of us have been there: tithe check written, offering envelope sealed, spiritual duty completed. We’ve reduced

AUTHOR

Oscar “Mike” Sánchez

stewardship to a

transaction. However, faithful stewardship actually begins where tithing ends.

In 1 Chron. 29:14, David prayed, “Everything comes from You, and we have given You only what comes from Your hand.” Notice that word: everything. David’s acknowledging that stewardship encompasses every dimension of our existence.

In Matt. 6:21, Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” He doesn’t say,

“Where your tithe is.” How we manage all our resources reveals the true condition of our hearts.

Paul expanded this in Rom. 12:1: “Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.” Stewardship isn’t a category of Christian life; it’s Christian life expressed through every choice.

THE CONVERSATION MY FATHER HAD

Let me tell you more about how this looked in practice.

My father’s generosity flowed from continuous dialogue with God. He didn’t just pray about his tithe; he prayed about his time, his professional decisions, his health and his relationships. Every aspect of life became an opportunity to ask, “God, what would You have me do with this?”

When we limit stewardship to financial giving, we miss countless opportunities for God to guide us—how we invest our time, care for our bodies, develop our talents, build community.

Biblical stewardship isn’t about God needing our resources—He owns everything already. It’s about us needing the transformation that comes from surrendering everything to His guidance. When we engage in daily dialogue with Him, our hearts start aligning with God’s heart, and our priorities naturally shift from accumulation to kingdom investment.



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/121-1-POV-85





PERSPECTIVE

Biblical stewardship isn't about God needing our resources ... It's about us needing the transformation that comes from surrendering everything to His guidance.

FAITH AND PLANNING TOGETHER

Now, you might think my mother's approach contradicted my father's generosity, but here's where it gets interesting.

Mal. 3:10 invites us to "bring the whole tithe into the storehouse" with a promise of blessing. This passage remains foundational. Tithing demonstrates our trust in God's provision and supports gospel ministry. But notice that even here, God says, "Test Me in this." He's inviting us into experiential faith, not just religious obligation.

My mother understood this. She had a folder with white envelopes labeled for specific purposes: food, clothing, car maintenance and education. When my father's salary arrived, she carefully divided it among these envelopes. "An empty envelope means no more money for that activity until it's replenished," she would explain.

I remember those worn envelopes and her handwriting on each one. This wasn't faithlessness – it was faithful stewardship in action. She demonstrated that honoring God requires trust and planning working together, surrender and wisdom, generosity and careful management.

Both my parents taught me the same truth from different angles.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE FOR ME

I'm still learning this myself. In the morning, I try to ask God how He wants me to invest my time and energy that day. When facing significant purchases or commitments, I pause and ask, "Does this align with God's purposes for the resources He's entrusted to me?" In the evening – when I remember – I review my day: Where did I steward well? Where did I just default to my preferences?

I don't always get this right, but I'm learning that faithful stewardship isn't about achieving perfect financial management. It's about cultivating a relationship with God where every resource becomes an opportunity for conversation with Him.

My father understood something transformative: God doesn't want our tithe as much as He wants our trust. He doesn't need our offerings as much as He desires our ongoing conversation with Him. When we steward our resources in continuous communion with Him, generosity isn't a sacrifice – it's a joy.

That's the journey I'm inviting us to consider together. Every day can be wonderful when we're walking in conversation with God about everything – including our money.

OSCAR "MIKE" SÁNCHEZ

Counting What Counts columnist





Sacred Hellos

A SIMPLE GREETING IS MORE THAN SMALL TALK — IT'S A STEP TOWARD COMMUNITY.

Have you ever noticed how often Paul paused to greet people *by name* in his letters? Romans 16 is a prime example. I recently learned that those simple greetings reveal something profound about community in Christ.

In English translations, a form of the word “greet” appears 96 times – 12 in the Old Testament and 84 in the New Testament. Paul alone uses it 17 times in Romans and 48 times across his letters.

In Greek, the word is *aspazomai* (as-PAH-zom-ah-ee), a verb meaning to enfold in the arms, salute, greet, receive joyfully and welcome.

According to the biblehub.com commentary, *aspazomai* appears 60 times in the Greek New Testament and moves beyond social etiquette to become an intentional ministry of peace, fellowship and shared life in Christ.

Through his greetings, Paul affirmed his co-laborers, essentially saying, “I see you; you matter in God’s kingdom.”

He modeled how the communion of saints should look in the organic growth of a community of faith. These Christian greetings were intended to break down barriers and create common ground for reconciliation – both then and today as we wrestle with our own social, cultural and even religious differences.

This wasn’t easy, as believers from different social classes, including slaves and immigrants, came together into a new family of faith reflecting the risen Lord’s grace.

Paul wrapped an intentional pastoral care element into his letters, making theology touchable. Paul’s greetings weren’t filler lines; they were small acts of ministry offered in the name of the Lord.

Today, it’s easy to scroll past one another’s lives and grow increasingly divided, distant or disconnected, forgetting the power of a simple greeting.

Yet Paul’s example reminds us that these moments of connection deeply matter – something I’ve noticed in my own greetings too. Sometimes my eagerness to acknowledge people leads to a *quantity* of interactions – say, after church – rather than *quality* conversations.

Studying the concept of *aspazomai* has become a personal call to slow down – to make space for the Holy Spirit to move in conversations and to allow for the ordinary to become holy ground.

It’s important to rely on the Holy Spirit’s guidance in discerning when and how to greet someone.

For example, not every greeting needs a “holy kiss” – or even a hug. If you aren’t sure, ask. What may feel natural to one person may be uncomfortable to another. Having cultural awareness and respect for preferences helps shape the ministry of hospitality.

The concept of *aspazomai* reminds us to see others with warmth, recognizing their worth and extending Christ’s peace with both sincerity and sensitivity – especially when we don’t agree. That kind of greeting, in our divided world, becomes a quiet yet powerful act of healing and reconciliation.

HEIDI BAUMGARTNER
North Pacific Union communication
director and Gleaner editor

TABLE TALK PROMPT

What has God taught you recently about biblical hospitality?

Let’s keep the conversation going. Share highlights of your table talk stories and reflections by emailing talk@nwadventists.com.



REMSCAPE

AUTHOR Heidi Baumgartner



More online at
[NWADVENT.ST/121-1-TT-29](https://nwadvent.st/121-1-TT-29)

CHRIS DRAKE



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