

**PERSPECTIVE**  
Whose Disciples Are We?

**JUST FOR KIDS**  
Always Enough to Share

**TABLE TALK**  
An Invitation, Not an Ending

# gleaner

NORTHWEST ADVENTISTS IN ACTION



## Old-School Wisdom for Modern Disciple-Making

The Importance of  
Sabbath School Connections

MAR/APR  
2026  
VOL. 121, N° 2



*Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.*

*1 Corinthians 15:58*

# CONTENT

MARCH/APRIL 2026

## CREATING A SUPPORTIVE SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY

**SABBATH SCHOOL** and small group Bible studies are critical for the church to fulfill its calling. In fact, I would go so far as to say the church does not really function or exist as God intended without small groups.

4

### Old-School Wisdom for Modern Disciple-Making

The Importance of Sabbath School Connections

6

**SABBATH SCHOOL**, a keystone institution within the Adventist Church, is experienced in many ways. It can be a place of engagement, connection and belonging — or a space marked by distance, discomfort or uncertainty. No matter your experience, there is insight to gain from old-school wisdom as we look ahead to modern disciple-making.

#### NORTHWEST ADVENTIST NEWS

16  
ACCIÓN

18  
MINISTRY

19  
ALASKA

22  
IDAHO

24  
MONTANA

26  
OREGON

32  
UPPER  
COLUMBIA

37  
WASHINGTON

44  
WALLA WALLA  
UNIVERSITY

46  
ADVENTIST  
HEALTH

58

### Whose Disciples Are We?

**HOW CAN A CHURCH** with thousands of people fall apart and end in people leaving their faith when one man or woman makes a terrible mistake? Could it be because they were following a man or woman and not Jesus?

#### IN EVERY ISSUE

- 48 : FAMILY
- 51 : ADVERTISEMENTS
- 54 : JUST FOR KIDS
- 56 : PERSPECTIVES
- 62 : TABLE TALK

# CREATING A SUPPORTIVE SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY

**RUTH WAS THE FAITHFUL, 50-SOMETHING TEACHER WHO RADIANTLY WELCOMED ME TO JUNIOR AND EARLITEEN SABBATH SCHOOL MANY YEARS AGO.**



ROB LANG  
*North Pacific Union youth and young adult director*

Her genuine care and interest in young people were powerful illustrations of what God's love is like. Her lessons were simple, understandable and biblical. Aside from my mom, she was the most influential layperson in my life.

Sabbath School and small group Bible studies are critical for the church to fulfill its calling. In fact, I would go so far as to say the church does not really function or exist as God intended without small groups.

In this increasingly disconnected world, they're more important now than ever, especially for young people.

Forming a small group fellowship or a weekly Sabbath School group is a meaningful way to nurture spiritual growth, foster deeper relationships and provide consistent support among believers of all ages. Could God be calling you to start a needed group from scratch or to revitalize an existing group?

Through my years of intergenerational ministry, I've learned a few principles that can help shape a dynamic, engaging environment – one where members of all ages learn, share and grow in Christ together.

## 1. DEFINE THE PURPOSE AND VISION

Every successful group begins with a clear purpose. Consider why you want to form a small group fellowship or Sabbath School class. Pray about it and articulate a vision statement that addresses the needs in your community. Share this vision with potential members to ensure everyone is on the same page. Strong groups include Bible study, prayer, fellowship and outreach.

## 2. GATHER A CORE TEAM

Identify a few committed individuals who share your vision. A core team of two to four people can help with planning, inviting others, organizing meetings and sharing leadership responsibilities. This team should be passionate, reliable and willing to invest time in the group's growth.

## 3. PLAN THE STRUCTURE AND SCHEDULE

Decide on the group's format: Will you meet in person, online or both? Choose a convenient time and location, such as a member's home, church or community center. A weekly meeting creates consistency and routine. Meetings typically last 60–90 minutes, allowing time for study, discussion, prayer and fellowship.



*Forming a small group fellowship or a weekly Sabbath School group is a meaningful way to nurture spiritual growth, foster deeper relationships and provide consistent support among believers of all ages.*

**4. SELECT STUDY MATERIALS**

Choose resources that match your group’s spiritual maturity and interests. Sabbath School classes often use quarterly guides provided by our denominational publishers, but you can also select Bible study guides, devotionals or topics relevant to your members. Encourage input from the group and rotate facilitator responsibilities to keep things fresh.

**5. FOSTER AN INCLUSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT**

Create ground rules ensuring everyone feels welcome and respected. Encourage open dialogue, active listening and confidentiality. Make it a practice to check in on each other, celebrate milestones and support members through challenges. The goal is to build trust and create a safe space for spiritual exploration and growth.

**6. INCORPORATE PRAYER AND FELLOWSHIP**

Dedicate time for prayer. Sharing prayer requests and praises strengthens bonds. Include time for informal fellowship—perhaps a simple meal or refreshments—before or after your meetings to deepen relationships beyond study.

**7. ENCOURAGE OUTREACH AND SERVICE**

A vibrant small group is not only inward-focused, but also outward-looking. Identify ways your group can serve the wider community, such as volunteering, supporting local missions or inviting guests to special events. Outreach strengthens group unity and fulfills the call to make a positive impact.

Building an impactful Sabbath School or small group takes intentional planning, commitment and prayerful leadership. These practices help cultivate a community marked by spiritual growth, mutual support and Christlike love.

As you turn the page and step into this Sabbath School-themed issue, we invite you to pause and reflect: What is the current health and vitality of your local Sabbath School? Where is God already at work—and what might the next step of growth look like?



ROB LANG  
*North Pacific Union youth and young adult director*

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-EDT-59](https://www.nwadventist.com/121-2-EDT-59)



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**IMAGES OF CREATION, P. 2**



“Smile,” in Two Rivers Park, Kennewick, Washington, by Paul Pantorilla, of Pasco, Washington.

# Sabbath School Pop Quiz

Where do you see yourself, and what might Sabbath School become?

1. When Sabbath School starts, I usually:

- Am already seated, greeting everyone.
- Arrive fashionably late.
- Sneak in quietly a few minutes later.
- Am not there – or it depends on the week.

2. Deciding to attend Sabbath School usually feels like:

- A natural part of my Sabbath rhythm.
- A meaningful choice I try to make.
- It depends on timing, energy or logistics.
- A challenge in this season.

3. My view toward the Bible study quarterly could be described as:

- Well-loved, highlighted and dog-eared.
- Read occasionally.
- Picked up on Sabbath morning – maybe.
- I don't really use the quarterly.

4. Sabbath School feels most engaging when it helps me:

- Understand scripture.
- Apply faith to everyday life.
- Learn from others' experiences.
- I'm still figuring this out.

5. Sabbath School encourages me to grow by:

- Challenging my understanding of scripture.
- Helping me listen to different perspectives.
- Shaping how I live my faith.
- I haven't experienced this yet.

6. During discussion time, I usually:

- Dive in enthusiastically.
- Listen more than I speak.
- Share occasionally.
- Prefer to observe.

7. If someone new walked into my class, I'd hope they experience:

- Warm conversation.
- Grace for where they are.
- A place to stay awhile.
- The freedom to observe without pressure.

We'd love to hear your thoughts!

How could Sabbath School be more meaningful, engaging or life-giving for you?  
Send your reflections to [talk@nwadventists.com](mailto:talk@nwadventists.com).

# Old-School Wisdom for Modern Disciple-Making

## The Importance of Sabbath School Connections

**Sabbath School, a keystone institution within the Adventist Church, is experienced in many ways. It can be a place of engagement, connection and belonging — or a space marked by distance, discomfort or uncertainty.**

**No matter your experience, there is insight to gain from old-school wisdom as we look ahead to modern disciple-making.**



At the 2025 General Conference Session in St. Louis, Missouri, leaders highlighted disciple-making and the role Sabbath Schools play in forming faithful, engaged disciples.

In the midst of the Church Manual updates, the GC Sabbath School and Personal Ministries department offered a week of disciple-making training during the session.

“I believe the greatest potential for the mission of the church lies in mobilizing members to make disciples,” said James Howard, then GC Sabbath School and Personal Ministries director. “Sabbath School is perfectly suited for that – it brings together Bible study and prayer, fellowship and mission.”

That emphasis reflects both a renewed calling and a historic reality. From its beginnings in the 1850s, Sabbath School was designed to foster spiritual growth through systematic Bible study and active participation. In North America, early Sabbath Schools were often so central to congregational life that attendance sometimes exceeded church membership.

Over time, Sabbath School developed a clear set of objectives – Bible study, fellowship, character development, evangelism, world mission and training for service – shaping generations of Adventists often described as “people of the book.” Each Sabbath morning, across continents and cultures, a shared curriculum continues to offer a powerful point of unity, with millions exploring the same passages at relatively the same time.

Yet for a program with such unifying and disciple-making potential, local experiences vary widely. During GC Session, a subtle but significant shift in the Church Manual signaled a renewed emphasis on disciple-making as an active calling, not a passive outcome.

That shift matters. As Howard noted, when Sabbath School loses its outward focus, it loses vitality. In North America, where Sabbath School and church attendance continue to wane, more leaders are beginning to ask a timely question: *How can Sabbath School become more meaningful, engaging and life-giving today?*

## Reality Check: Participation Trends

Sabbath School is fertile ground for Disciple-Making 101: friends sharing scripture, prayers and everyday life. Yet for many, the pews are emptier than they once were.

Globally, about 6 in 10 Adventists attend Sabbath School at least weekly, whether in person or remotely, according to the 2023 Global Church Membership Survey.

In North America, fewer attend regularly or not at all, signaling a shift in how members engage with this long-standing program.

In the Northwest, Sabbath School isn't tracked separately, but 2026 church attendance data – covering 86% of churches – shows roughly 3 in 10 members participating.

Numbers highlight the challenge but not the why. These trends need to be examined and reflected upon at the local church level, where leadership, culture and community dynamics shape participation.

## Shaping Disciples in the Northwest

In early December 2025, the *Gleaner* team asked readers to nominate the Pacific Northwest's most inspiring Sabbath School teachers for adults and children.

From the nominations, five graciously agreed to share their experiences: three adult Sabbath School teachers and two children's teachers.

What follows are not success stories in the traditional sense, but lived expressions of Sabbath School as a disciple-making space.



HEIDI BAUMGARTNER

make it as simple as possible to decode words in scripture and what they mean.”

“We are a diverse group of people seeking to understand more clearly what scripture is saying,” Starr said. “There is no wrong answer or thought. Dialogue allows people to really interact and hopefully grow spiritually.”

“I see the role of Sabbath School as a place where people can have spiritual nourishment,” he added. “If we don’t eat spiritually, we’re spiritually going to die. This prepares people to deal with the issues and the lives we live.”

If your Sabbath School experience is feeling a little dull, Starr’s advice is to try a new style of Bible study:

“Start at the beginning of a book and go through in contextual order. Study it verse by verse; don’t just hop around. Discover the direction the author is going and have some fun with it. I encourage my class members to be able to walk in the sandals of the author of the book.”

## Encourage Fresh Perspectives

Gene Starr spent a lifetime serving in a variety of professional roles – from chemical engineering to faith-based finances – yet he said the most important thing about him is that he is a sinner saved by grace.

That humility and his love of learning shine through his Sabbath School teaching at East Salem Church in Oregon, where he encourages 12–14 participants each week to think deeply, ask questions and explore scripture from new angles.

He favors an exegesis – or in-depth – approach and incorporates language, culture, history, geography and personal application.

“You don’t have to have an advanced degree to study scripture,” Starr said. “I like to

HEIDI BAUMGARTNER



## 2 Guide Growth Through Participation

In Molalla, Oregon, Ralph Piuser, a seed farmer and long-time Bible student, often teaches two weekly Sabbath School classes. He had a stint as a youth leader years ago and planned memorable afternoon hikes to continue the Sabbath School fellowship experience.

His early 8:30 a.m. class began in the 1980s as a prayer group and grew into studying various books of the Bible. Typically, the early class members continue with the more traditional lesson study at 9:30 a.m.

"I told 'em, 'As long as you want to have class, I'll teach, but I'm not here to lecture you,'" Piuser said. "I don't want Sabbath School to become a boring place to come. If you can get people involved, there will always be interest."

Piuser seeks to provide a safe place for spiritual growth, whether teaching youth or adults.

"I don't have a strict outline. I have certain ideas that I want to get across, but I give participants the lead," he said. "I try to apply the lesson practically; application makes a big difference."

Piuser encourages class participants to bring friends, welcoming newcomers. He also mentors participants who want to try teaching themselves, offering support and reassurance.

Piuser closed with this appeal: "Make the church your church. This is family. Be involved in it. You can be impersonal out there, but inside Sabbath School, this is your family. We're here to pray, study and learn together."



CONNIE J. RALEY



3

## Slow Down to Connect

Educator and environmental scientist David Wienecke's exposure to Sabbath School and the Adventist Church came when his girlfriend – who later became his wife – invited him to study the Bible. While he had grown up Catholic, this was the first time he had particularly read or studied the Bible.

"From the moment that I entered the church, I was asked to participate in church," he recalled.

That early invitation opened the door to more than 30 years of local church service, including teaching Sabbath School and serving as an elder in California, Oregon and Washington.

Today, he is one of a rotation of adult Sabbath School teachers in Enumclaw, Washington, and has come to appreciate the two-way communication Sabbath School naturally invites.

"One of the things I've learned about creating a welcoming Sabbath School is not rushing past people," he said. "Simple questions like, 'How's your week been?' or making space for prayer and praise can really open the door."

He admits slowing down hasn't always been easy. "I have a tendency to want to jump straight into the lesson," he said.

He recalled a moment when, as an Andrews University assistant professor, he had a student raise her hand: "She said, 'Mr. Wienecke, you forgot to pray.' That moment stayed with me. It showed me how important it is to slow down, be welcoming and bring everyone into the process."

Over the years, Wienecke has noticed shifts in Sabbath School dynamics, particularly in the past decade.

"Our political environment has really changed Sabbath School interactions," he said. "Culture wars and conspiracy theories have entered our Sabbath Schools, and I see anger and insecurity. It's alarming to me what has happened with our ability to get along."

In response, he focuses on Christ. "I do my best to present the Christ who changed my life, without touching hot-button topics. The simple truth is that the Lord loves you and wants you to come back to Him."

Ultimately, Wienecke sees Sabbath School as central to the life and mission of the church.

"We need each other," he said. "One of the reasons I put so much of myself into Sabbath School is because I think that's part of our relationship building. That's what mission and disciple-making is: relationship-building."





HEIDI BAUMGARTNER

4

## Connect With Families to Model Disciple-Making

Kathleen “Kathy” Michell, a 40-year veteran kindergarten, first- and second-grade teacher in the Orting, Washington, public school system, joined the Adventist Church later in life.

She accompanied a young family to Puyallup Church and helped the two little girls when their mom had to work Sabbaths as a nurse. Gradually, she found herself reading stories, helping with setup, leading crafts and more.

When an opening came to officially lead the beginner’s class 12 years ago, she was comfortable enough in that environment to lead.

Her Sabbath School classroom is cheerful and welcoming, with children’s work displayed and music playing from a CD player even before the lesson starts. Michell starts class on time, even if few children are present, to model consistency.

“I always greet every parent and every child,” she said. “If it’s a new child, I make sure to learn their name and let them know they’re welcome in Sabbath School.”

Even with a welcoming environment, attendance can be a challenge because of early start times, family schedules or seasonal factors.

To encourage attendance, Michell offers a toddler-friendly incentive: For every 10 Sabbaths a child attends, they earn a sticker toward special toy prizes and nature books. Birthdays are abundantly celebrated.

One of her goals is to talk with her pastor and church board about finding ways to connect more with their school community to invite children of all ages to participate in Sabbath School.

Whether using GraceLink materials or the new *Alive in Jesus* curriculum, Michell finds herself adapting the curriculum to the needs of babies, toddlers and young children – whoever shows up on a particular Sabbath.

“The quarterlies are wonderful, but I only use a fraction of them because it’s too much for 3-year-olds and under,” she said. “I adapt the crafts so the children can actually do them, not just the parents.”

Michell sees Sabbath School as part of the church’s mission to involve children early and emphasizes that Sabbath School is about community building, teaching children about God’s love and connecting with families.

“I ask parents to help with crafts, offerings and cleanup; the kids help too,” she said. “It gives everyone a sense of purpose and builds a real sense of community.”

As Sabbath School concludes each week, Michell has a special message she shares: “I always thank the parents for bringing their children and tell them, ‘Please invite your neighbors.’”



## 5 Provide Space for Curious Minds

Many years ago, Sandra Brewer sent away for a free Bible. When a woman arrived with the Bible and study lessons, Brewer – raised a Baptist alongside nine siblings – planned to give it to one of her brothers, but God had other plans.

The woman befriended Brewer and – knowing her love of children – invited her children to Sabbath School.

“She started me off in the lower division,” Brewer remembered. “I had two children of my own [at the time], and I wanted to see what was going on in there. So, I just stayed.”

That decision, made more than five decades ago, still shapes Brewer’s life today. She remains deeply involved in children’s Sabbath School at Sharon Church in Portland, Oregon.

One of her four children, Dywana, a Head Start teacher, now leads Sabbath School alongside her. Together, the mother-daughter duo has taught beginner, kindergarten and primary classes – sometimes simultaneously, depending on attendance.

A typical Sabbath School under Brewer’s care begins with movement and creativity with hands-on activity stations that meet children where they are.

She adapts constantly, responding to the energy and needs of the day. Bible games, acting out stories or interactive lessons often precede the quieter moments of the weekly Bible lesson.

“I want children and parents to feel comfortable and connected at Sabbath School,” Brewer said. “When they have a good time, they will want to come back.”

For Brewer, Sabbath School is more than routine – it’s a sacred space for curiosity.

“Children need Sabbath School; They need a place to ask questions,” she said. “They pretty much know the Bible as well as you do. They are open and seeking answers.”

Teaching methods have changed over the years, she noted. “You used to lecture more. Now, it needs to be hands-on. We have to bring in more things that engage little ones.”

Her advice to fellow leaders is simple and heartfelt: “Be excited about what you’re sharing. Keep helping little people grow in their faith. If you are not enthused about it, they won’t be either.”

To parents, Brewer offers an invitation: “Bring your children to Sabbath School so they can experience the whole program.”

Disciple-making rarely happens through polished programs alone. It happens through consistency, curiosity, hospitality and Christian love – week after week.

## An Invitation to Learn Together

This feature is meant to start a conversation. As churches continue adapting to their local contexts, learning from one another has never been more valuable.

Join us Tuesday, April 7, from 6–7:30 p.m. for a Zoom conversation where Sabbath School leaders and members share what’s working, what’s challenging and how they’re shaping Sabbath School to become more meaningful, relational and mission-focused.

Together, we can encourage one another and continue growing faith-filled and faithful disciples – one Sabbath School at a time.



HEIDI BAUMGARTNER  
*North Pacific Union communication  
director and Gleaner editor*

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-FT-51](https://www.nwadvent.org/st/121-2-ft-51)

# MISSION AND MILESTONES: CAMP EDITION



## SUMMER CAMPS MARK 100 YEARS OF MISSION

Adventist summer camps play a significant role in nurturing spiritual growth and fostering community among young people. This year marks the 100th anniversary of Adventist Camp Ministries — a milestone that reflects generations of discipleship, leadership development and evangelistic outreach.

Across the Pacific Northwest, camps including Alaska Camps, Big Lake Youth Camp, Camp Ida-Haven, Camp MiVoden, Camp Paxson and Sunset Lake Camp continue this legacy, offering sacred spaces where faith is strengthened amid the region's natural beauty.

### SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND DISCIPLESHIP

At the heart of church mission is the desire to lead individuals into a personal relationship with Christ. Summer camps provide a unique spiritual environment where youth, free from everyday distractions, can focus on faith, prayer and reflection.

Through engaging worship, daily devotions and Bible study sessions, campers are encouraged to explore their spiritual journey and discover God's purpose for their lives — on their own two feet. All the while, they are having the time of their life, learning important life skills and making unforgettable memories.

### OUTREACH AND EVANGELISM

Summer camps serve as powerful tools for outreach and evangelism. They provide welcoming environments for young people who may not be familiar with the Adventist Church or Christianity. Through inclusive activities and relational ministry, camps break down barriers and foster open dialogue about faith, leading many to baptism.

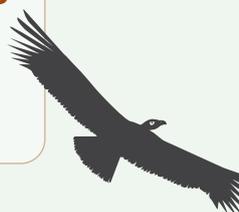
One lady, for example, pulled into Big Lake to drop off her grandson and asked the director about scheduling her grandson's baptism. After making arrangements, she shared how she had been a camper herself and though all her friends had been baptized, she had missed the opportunity. She asked if it was possible to prepare to be baptized, too. On a sunny day, a few weeks later, grandson and grandmother were baptized together.

Recently, in a local church, a mother approached Les Zollbrecht, Big Lake director. She shared how her son wanted to be baptized at camp. After developing a plan for his baptism and reflecting on how she hadn't been baptized, she asked, "Would you baptize me as well?" This mother-son baptism is planned for this coming summer.

Stories like these illustrate how God is working dynamically summer after summer. While each camp has its own context and community, the fruit of ministry is evident throughout the region as individuals and families are drawn into deeper relationships with Him.

#### 2025 NPUC Summer Camp Data

- » Young adult staff and volunteers: **539**
- » Youth campers: **2,981**
- » Family campers: **1,648**
- » Decisions for Christ: **1,735**
- » Baptisms: **161**





CAMP IDA-HAVEN



SUNSET LAKE CAMP



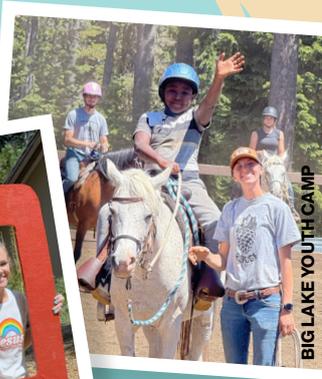
CAMP MIVODEN



CAMP MIVODEN



BIG LAKE YOUTH CAMP



BIG LAKE YOUTH CAMP



CAMP MIVODEN



CAMP IDA-HAVEN

## LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY

One of the core objectives of Adventist summer camps is to cultivate leadership among our young people. Staff are encouraged to develop responsibility, teamwork and initiative through a variety of ways, such as leading worship, organizing group activities and assisting with camp operations.

Staff training programs emphasize servant leadership – teaching young adults to lead by example, care for others and model Christ-like character. At camp, young adult staff learn to share their story, deliver a gospel presentation followed by an invitation to accept Jesus’ gift of salvation and to walk with Him. This skill alone helps the church move forward long after summer staff move on from their camp experience.

Many former campers become counselors, directors and leaders within their local churches, extending the influence of camp experiences far beyond the summer months. The sense of camaraderie and shared purpose fostered at camp strengthens the Adventist community, forging lifelong friendships and mentoring relationships that support spiritual and personal growth.

As we celebrate 100 years, consider the profound trajectory of impact. Multitudes of children accept Jesus for the first time and get baptized. Youth in their topsy-turvy adolescent years see positive collegiate Christian role models helping them stay the course with Jesus.

Young adult staff experience the blessings of service and missional living, causing many of them

to rethink their careers. At camp, God calls many of them to be teachers, pastors or to use their degrees in communication, accounting, business management, human resources and more to work for the church.

As we reflect on a century of camp ministries, the invitation is simple and timely: Be part of what God is continuing to do. Pray for our campers, staff and directors as they prepare for another summer of life-changing ministry. Consider sending a child or youth to camp, encouraging a young adult to serve on staff or supporting camp ministries financially through your local church or conference.

Together, we can ensure that these sacred spaces remain places where faith is awakened, leaders are formed and lives are changed for generations to come. Camp is moving the church forward.

ROB LANG  
*North Pacific Union youth and young adult director*



More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-FT-03](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-FT-03)



# Bozeman Hispanic Group Is an Answer to Prayers

**WHEN I ARRIVED IN MONTANA IN 2021 TO PASTOR, I REALIZED MANY PEOPLE COMING INTO BOZEMAN ONLY SPOKE SPANISH AND THERE WERE NO HISPANIC ADVENTIST CHURCHES THAT COULD MINISTER TO THEM. THAT'S WHEN THE THOUGHT OF STARTING A SPANISH-LANGUAGE MINISTRY CAME TO MY MIND.**

During my first few months of pastoring, I met Bertha Topp, a dedicated church member known for her warm hospitality and passion for outreach. She had prayed for a Spanish-language ministry in Montana and had already been connecting with Hispanic families in her community.

We met with others who had an interest in a Spanish-language ministry from Belgrade and Bozeman churches, and we formulated a plan. After a few weeks of planning, I received a call to pastor at Mount Ellis Academy Church, which was instrumental in opening the doors to having a Hispanic ministry there.

MEA Church leadership welcomed the idea and supported every stage of development of the Spanish-language ministry. They have provided the new ministry with financial support and a place to have worship services and weekly potlucks.

The Hispanic group launched with around six people, and it has continued to grow over time. Peter Simpson, North Pacific Union vice president for Hispanic ministries, has supported the group from the beginning and was invited to baptize Luis Terrero. The group has also celebrated the baptisms of Zein Gutierrez, Johanny Gonzalez and Angelanny Gonzalez.

The Hispanic group actively takes part in community outreach and enjoys doing social activities together that help bond them as brothers and sisters in Christ. Their presence and involvement have helped reenergize MEA Church.

Today, the Hispanic group stands as a testimony to what God can do when faithful members respond to His calling with vision, courage and love.

RENE MARQUEZ  
*Bozeman Hispanic group founder*



Rene Marquez, Bozeman Hispanic group founder, baptizes Zein Gutierrez.  
Rene Marquez, fundador del grupo Hispano de Bozeman, bautiza a Zein Gutierrez.



Peter Simpson, NPUC vice president for Hispanic ministries, baptizes Luis Terrero.  
Peter Simpson, vicepresidente de ministerios Hispanos de NPUC, bautiza a Luis Terrero.

IGLESIA

# Grupo Hispano Es una Respuesta a las Oraciones

**CUANDO LLEGUÉ A MONTANA EN 2021 PARA PASTOREAR, ME DI CUENTA DE QUE HABÍA UNA AFLUENCIA DE PERSONAS QUE LLEGABAN A BOZEMAN QUE SOLO HABLABAN ESPAÑOL, Y NO EXISTÍAN IGLESIAS ADVENTISTAS HISPANAS EN LA ZONA QUE PUDIERAN MINISTRARLES. ASÍ SURGIÓ LA IDEA DE INICIAR UN MINISTERIO EN ESPAÑOL.**

Durante mis primeros meses como pastor, conocí a Bertha Topp, una dedicada miembro de la iglesia conocida por su cálida hospitalidad y su compromiso con la obra misionera. Ella había orado mucho tiempo por un ministerio en Español en Montana y se había estado conectando con familias Hispánicas en su comunidad.

Nos reunimos con otros que tenían interés en un ministerio en Español de las iglesias de Belgrado y Bozeman, y comenzamos a elaborar un plan. Después de algunas semanas de planificación y reflexión, recibí un llamado para pastorear la Iglesia de Mount Ellis Academy. Esto fue fundamental para abrir las puertas a un ministerio Hispano en dicha iglesia.

La dirección de la Iglesia MEA acogió la idea y apoyó todas las etapas del desarrollo del ministerio en Español. Han proporcionado al nuevo ministerio apoyo financiero y un lugar para celebrar servicios de culto y comidas compartidas semanales.

El grupo Hispano comenzó con unas seis personas y ha seguido creciendo con el tiempo. Peter Simpson, vicepresidente de North Pacific Union para ministerios Hispánicos, ha apoyado al grupo desde el principio y fue invitado a bautizar a Luis Terrero. El grupo también ha celebrado los bautizos de Zein Gutierrez, Johanny Gonzalez y Angelanny Gonzalez.

El grupo Hispano participa activamente en actividades comunitarias

y disfruta haciendo actividades sociales juntos que les ayudan a unirse como hermanos y hermanas en Cristo. Su presencia y implicación han ayudado a revitalizar la Iglesia MEA.

Hoy, el grupo Hispano es un testimonio de lo que Dios puede hacer cuando los miembros fieles responden a su llamado con visión, valentía y amor.



RENE MARQUEZ  
Fundador del grupo  
Hispano de Bozeman

More online at  
[NWADVENT.ST/121-2-HSP-96](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-HSP-96)



Rene Marquez, Bozeman Hispanic group founder, baptizes Johanny Gonzalez.

Rene Marquez, fundador del grupo Hispano de Bozeman, bautiza a Johanny Gonzalez.



The Bozeman Hispanic group attends Montana Conference Camp Meeting.

El grupo Hispano de Bozeman asiste al Campamento de la Conferencia de Montana.



# Who's on Your Prayer List?

**“PASTOR, YOU’LL NEVER BELIEVE WHO CAME TO THE MEETING THIS EVENING!”**



**I**t was the opening night of an evangelistic series I was preaching at the newly opened community center in the town where I pastored. A member came up to me after the crowd had dispersed and began talking excitedly.

“There’s this woman who works on my team at the hospital and none of us can stand being around her. She belittles everyone and even cusses at us sometimes. She’s not a good worker. We’re all waiting for her to be fired any day now. And she came to the meeting tonight!”

“Aren’t you glad you invited her?” I replied with a smile.

The church member hung her head. “I didn’t invite her. She thinks I’m here because she invited me. She came to work on Thursday and held up the newspaper ad about the meetings and said, ‘I don’t know about the rest of you, but I’m going to these meetings and I think you ought to go, too!’”

She kept coming to the meetings, five evenings a week for three weeks. She was baptized and joined the church family.

Some of the ladies in our church who loved her and disciplined her found out her husband was an alcoholic and beat her every night when he came home drunk. That

explained why she would go to work and beat up everyone with her words the next day.

They helped her find a safe place to stay until things could be resolved, and Jesus kept changing her from the inside out to become more like Him.

Who is on your prayer list? Does it include people who seem completely unlikely to ever change? Do you take their names to the throne room of heaven and ask Jesus to change your heart to change their heart, too?

Why not take a few minutes right now to ask Jesus who to add to your prayer list? Why not pray that Jesus will perform a miracle in their hearts? Why not keep praying for them until the change comes? Why not thank Jesus for the change He is making in you toward them?

DAN SERNS

*North Pacific Union church planting, revitalization and lay training director*



More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-MIN-91](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-MIN-91)



CHURCH

# Faithful Seek God’s Direction

**“IF MY PEOPLE, WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME, WILL HUMBLE THEMSELVES AND PRAY AND SEEK MY FACE ... THEN I WILL HEAR FROM HEAVEN” (2 CHRON. 7:14).**



Members gather as one body, worshiping, praying and discerning God’s vision for His church in Alaska.



Voices are raised in worship as members seek higher ground.



Members pray together as part of a collaborative journey forward in mission.

In fall 2025, Alaska Conference entered a sacred season of prayer and discernment, seeking the Lord’s guidance for the mission of His church across Alaska.

From Sept. 7 to Oct. 16, 2025, congregations across the state united in Upward: 40 Days of Prayer, setting aside time each day to listen for God’s voice and align their hearts with His will.

Twice daily – at 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. – believers gathered on Zoom, an average of 50 in the mornings and 40 in the evenings, joining from Barrow to Bethel, Kodiak to Ketchikan, Tok to Togiak, and Anchorage to the Matanuska Valley.

Prayers and songs were lifted in English, Samoan, Spanish and Yupik, reflecting the beautiful diversity of Alaska’s Adventist family. Though separated by great distances, participants testified to a deep sense of unity, encouragement and spiritual renewal, reaffirming the conviction that prayer is the lifeline of the church.

This shared experience was so meaningful that, at the request of

members, conference prayer gatherings are continuing indefinitely on weekday mornings at 6 a.m.

This season of prayer culminated with Forward: Discovering God’s Vision, a visioning weekend held Oct. 17–19, 2025 at Korean Church in Anchorage. Representatives from more than 90% of the churches, along with the conference executive committee and administration, gathered for worship, testimony and prayerful conversation.

Participants were placed into six diverse discussion groups, intentionally representing urban, rural and bush communities. Guided by thoughtful questions, conversations focused on mission priorities, education, youth engagement, financial sustainability and strengthening unity across congregations. Many shared a renewed sense of calling, humility and gratitude as they reflected on God’s faithful leading through the unique challenges and opportunities of ministry in Alaska.

One of the key outcomes of the weekend was the formation of a

12-member “Dream Team,” tasked with carrying the vision forward. Meeting with conference administration the weekend of Nov. 22, 2025, the team began consolidating insights into a three-year strategic plan, including a mission statement, clear goals and objectives, and foundational pillars to support the work throughout the state.

This collaborative journey – members, leaders and administration seeking God together – reflects a shared desire to move forward as one body. As the Holy Spirit has guided each step thus far, we trust He will continue to lead, aligning the conference’s mission, ministries and resources with God’s divine purpose for His work in Alaska.



RODNEY MILLS  
*Alaska Conference president*

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-AK-44](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-AK-44)

# Health Training Empowers Alaskan Communities

**AMIDST THE TURMOIL AND DARKNESS OF THIS WORLD, GOD HAS CALLED US — HIS CHILDREN — TO SHARE HIS LOVE AND HIS LIGHT. ALASKA CONFERENCE EMPHASIZED ITS MISSION TO SHARE GOD'S LOVE THROUGH HEALTH MINISTRY.**



From left to right: Colette Reahl, Anchorage Community Church member; Joann Bennet-Brown and Irene Andrews, Anchorage Northside Church members; and Vecous and Loretta Waite, Kodiak AMA workers

In summer 2025, two training events equipped members to promote holistic wellness across Alaska. These initiatives were organized by Arctic Mission Adventure, local Adventist churches in Anchorage and Kodiak, and Ron and Carin Lynch, who are Lay Institute for Global Health Training—or LIGHT—trainers.

The first event, Holistic Remedies Training and Certification, held at Anchorage Community Church, introduced participants to the eight laws of health — nutrition, exercise, water, sunlight, temperance, air, rest and trust in God — principles rooted in scripture and Ellen G. White's book, *The Ministry of Healing*.

Practical instruction included hydrotherapy, natural remedies, plant-based cooking and massage. Over five days, 73 individuals attended, and 21 earned certification as Home Remedies Coaches.

Attendees represented Anchorage, Palmer and Wasilla churches, alongside non-Adventist guests. Post-training

surveys revealed strong interest in future sessions. One participant said, "Hydrotherapy healed my cold symptoms during training, and I plan to share these methods with others."

The second event, hosted at Kodiak Church in partnership with AMA, focused on mental health through natural remedies and lifestyle principles. This three-day program resembled a health retreat, attracting Kodiak members, AMA representatives and community guests.

Participants expressed enthusiasm for applying their knowledge within families and communities. One non-Adventist attendee expressed appreciation for learning such helpful information and even invited her Airbnb hosts, who attended the final day's breakfast session.

Interest in additional LIGHT training for Anchorage underscores the growing demand for health education.

White's counsel remains relevant: "Medical missionary work is the right hand of the gospel" (*Counsels on Health*), and "Every member of the church should take hold of medical missionary work" (*Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 7).

These programs reflect a timely opportunity for Alaska churches to advance God's mission through practical health ministry, meeting physical and spiritual needs in a world longing for hope.



COLETTE REAHL  
Anchorage Community  
Church member

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-AK-47](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-AK-47)



Church and community members attend Holistic Remedies Training and Certification at Anchorage Community Church.



Ron Lynch, LIGHT trainer, teaches a class for Holistic Remedies Training and Certification at Anchorage Community Church.



Kodiak Church hosts the second health-based event.

# Arctic Church Hosts Blue Christmas Vigil

**THE TEMPERATURE WAS 26 DEGREES BELOW ZERO, YET DURING BLUE CHRISTMAS CANDLELIGHT VIGIL IN DECEMBER 2025, HEARTS TURNED TOWARD THOSE CARRYING A DEEPER CHILL — THE ACHE OF LOSING LOVED ONES TO SUICIDE, HOMICIDE OR ILLNESS; WORDS LEFT UNSAID; PROMISES NEVER KEPT AND MEMORIES THAT REST HEAVILY ON THEIR HEARTS AS THEY GRIEVE.**

Across Alaska, resilience is a way of life, but resilience comes at a cost. While all forms of loss are painful, suicide remains especially devastating—and tragically common—within these communities.

Arctic Church members were particularly blessed with the opportunity to gather in remembrance and healing. Blue Christmas Candlelight Vigil saw record-breaking attendance—so much so that organizers ran out of candles, a stark contrast to previous years when supplies were plentiful.

Frank James, Moravian Revival Church pastor, led the gathering in prayer, and participants spoke the names of their missing loved ones aloud in a moment of profound silence, breath visible in the frigid air, with participants lost in their own thoughts and memories.

Attendees surrounded a commissioned snow sculpture titled “Lifted by Generations,” depicting the traditional blanket toss. The artwork symbolized how elders and leaders

elevate younger generations, reinforcing the message that connection and support can prevent suicide.

The vigil, hosted in Utqiagvik, was also attended virtually through a watch party in Wainwright, with plans to expand to all North Slope villages at the request of the North Slope Borough government.

Prior to the vigil, James Wisland, Arctic Resource Center for Suicide Prevention pastor, led a grief seminar on Saturday afternoon that was well attended and deeply impactful. The discussion was open, raw and honest, centered on what it is like to lose a loved one to suicide and how to navigate a world forever changed by such tragedy. Talking circles were facilitated by counselors from the health department, providing a safe and supportive space for participants to share their experiences and emotions.

Each year, this event seeks to connect people with resources, support and one another. The goal is to change the dialogue around grief—to make it okay to

talk about it, name it and share it openly within our communities.

By bringing together faith-based organizations, healthcare providers, cultural leaders and community members, the community created a safety net for those who are most vulnerable. “When people feel connected, supported and valued, they do not die by suicide,” organizers emphasized.

Consider what you can do within your own community to open conversations around grief and loss and to support those who need it most. Doing so not only blesses others, but also strengthens community bonds and saves lives.



YVONNE BISWOKARMA  
*Utqiagvik Church  
head elder*

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-AK-72](https://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-AK-72)



Frank James, Moravian Revival Church pastor, opens the vigil with prayer.



Participants share a moment of silence, remembering loved ones lost to suicide.

# Church Leaders Train for Volunteer Lay Pastor Roles

**ABOUT 65 CHURCH LEADERS FROM AROUND IDAHO CONFERENCE MET AT GEM STATE ADVENTIST ACADEMY FOR ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ELDERS AND VOLUNTEER LAY PASTORS TRAINING RETREAT IN JANUARY.**

Dan Serns, North Pacific Union church planting, revitalization and lay training director, joined Idaho Conference staff to present the Volunteer Lay Pastor paradigm.

David Prest Jr., Idaho Conference president, began Friday evening with a review of baptism trends, noting growth opportunities and a shared mission. “This mission won’t be completed by pastors and conference staff alone,” Prest said.

Idaho Conference board of directors has officially embraced the VLP concept. Barry Curtis, Idaho Conference ministerial director and Kuna Church pastor, will coordinate the VLPs. They are needed to plant new groups and churches and to help grow current ones.

David Salazar, Idaho Conference vice president for administration and evangelism director, shared what growth has looked like in recent years, including more than 200 baptisms and professions of faith in 2025.

Mike Sánchez, Idaho Conference vice president for finance, invited participants to join together in the “same mind” and with the “same judgment.”

He went on to share who could be a VLP and what authority they would have. They must be an ordained elder in regular standing, working under a supervising pastor. A VLP can baptize with pastoral approval and conduct communion services, but they cannot provide counseling.

Peter Simpson, Idaho Falls district pastor, and Harold Peters, head elder, shared how elders are taking on administrative work in their district. This allows Simpson to plan evangelism in three eastern Idaho cities without Adventist churches. Inspiration for this model came from Shane Anderson, Pioneer Memorial Church pastor, and his *Church Works* series.

Spouses of elders participated in dedicated breakout sessions led by Lois Serns, NPUC trainer. These sessions

explored a range of ways spouses can actively support and participate in ministry alongside their families and local churches.

Topics included involvement in baptism preparation classes, launching new Sabbath School groups, engaging youth in worship and extending intentional, high-quality hospitality that helps visitors feel welcomed and connected.

When the groups reconvened, the Sernses shared practical insights for strengthening local churches, with a special emphasis on family worship. They offered personal stories of engaging their children in leading worship at home, including one as young as 4 years old.

They also encouraged families to view family worship as a natural starting point for home groups by inviting friends and relatives to participate. Building meaningful connections—with one another and with God—was highlighted as central to healthy church life.

At the end, several individuals filled out the application to become volunteer lay pastors. Curtis and conference administrators will be processing those applications soon. Beyond Pentecost 2025, exciting things are about to happen in Idaho Conference!



Surrounded by conference leaders, Barry Curtis, Idaho Conference ministerial director, leads in a prayer of dedication for the elders who have applied to be Volunteer Lay Pastors.



EVE RUSK  
Idaho Conference  
communication director

More online at  
[NWADVENT.ST/121-2-ID-04](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-ID-04)

# CAES Hosts First Annual Harvest Hustle

**THE VALUES OF HEALTHY LIVING AND EQUAL ACCESS TO CHRISTIAN EDUCATION WERE COMBINED IN THE VERY FIRST HARVEST HUSTLE EVENT FOR CALDWELL ADVENTIST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.**

While the desire and need for Christ-centered education in today's world is rising, its affordability remains a problem for many families.

Heather McPherson, CAES vice principal and sixth- through eighth-grade teacher, yearned to utilize her passion for running to help students attend CAES. Her efforts and organization, combined with the expertise and professionalism of Megan Lacy from Fleet Feet Treasure Valley, created an event of enthusiasm and energy that naturally turned into earnings for student tuition.

Runners, from both the community and CAES, registered and paid online before the event for either the 1-mile Kids Fun Run or the 5K Walk/Run.

As runners arrived for Harvest Hustle at West Park in Nampa on Sunday, Nov. 16, 2025, they immediately noticed the Fleet Feet flags and start gate. They were energized by fun music, fellow runners stretching in preparation to run and the digital clock counting down the minutes until the start of the first race.

Just before 10 a.m., children gathered at the start gate for their 1-mile race. After announcements and prayer, the children were off at the blow of an air horn. They ran hard and finished smiling. A community child won first place at 9:15.07, followed by two CAES students.

Soon after, a bigger group of runners gathered for the 5K race. After announcements and another prayer, participants were off once again at the sound of the air horn. Although most ran the race, others walked with just as much enthusiasm.

At 19:02.08, Mason Huffman, a community member, crossed the line in first place, followed shortly by Jakob Evenson,



Community members and CAES families run together to raise money.

CAES alumnus, in second and Austin Glubay, CAES alumnus, in third. Winners for each race received a ribbon and a Fleet Feet gift card for their incredible feat.

Many participants praised the event afterward. Emily Gatton said, "We had so much fun running in the inaugural Harvest Hustle race. My dad was the only entry for an 82-year-old blind man with a guide dog. Next year, we'll get Goldman [the dog] his own runner's bib!"

The event wouldn't have been possible without a large group of volunteers who manned water stations, provided first aid care, directed runners, ran errands with a four-wheeler, provided runners with snacks, registered late entries and much more.

Lacy was greatly appreciated for her valuable support in sponsoring and advertising this as a Fleet Feet running event. In the end, it earned more than \$1,800 for the CAES worthy student fund – an accomplishment for the school's first Harvest Hustle. The CAES community looks forward to what the future holds for this event again this year.



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY DAY AND DALE YOUNG

A participant crosses the line like a champion.



LAVONNA WATERHOUSE  
Caldwell Adventist  
Elementary School  
teaching principal

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-ID-70](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-ID-70)

# Teen Finds Identity Between Two Worlds

**AS THE PLANE TOUCHED DOWN IN NORTHERN INDIA, I PEERED OUT THE WINDOW; IT WAS EXCITING TO MEET NEW PEOPLE AND SEE NEW PLACES. HOWEVER, AS MY FAMILY AND I STEPPED OFF THE PLANE, I WAS NO LONGER EXCITED.**

**EDITORIAL NOTE:**

*We're grateful to share this story in the author's own words.*



Piles of trash littered the streets. The air felt humid, and sweat ran down my forehead. I plugged my nose as a terrible smell greeted me. Horns honked constantly, and a man shouted orders at another man in a language I didn't understand.

Soon we were riding in a small three-wheeled taxi called a rickshaw, dodging left and right around buses and people. I gripped the metal bar in front of me for fear I would fall out of the open sides as we were flung from side to side.

I'd been living in the northwest U.S. for my entire life, and now everything was unfamiliar to me. Who was I? "I would have to become like Indians in order to fit in," I told myself.

However, fitting in was not as easy as I thought when my family and I were the only foreigners for miles. I convinced my mom to get me some Indian clothes. It didn't take long for me to start picking up the language and begin making friends, but I was still a foreigner. We were there for a year, and in that time, God strengthened my identity in Him and taught me to be comfortable being "different."

When we had to return to the U.S. unexpectedly, I realized that the experiences I had while living in India

were ones my friends had not experienced. I wanted to share what I had experienced, but would they understand? They hadn't seen beggars, mangy street dogs or how much a little food could mean to a crippled boy. Again, I wanted to fit in, but what could I say? They wanted to talk about the latest fashion or the newest iPhone.

I was different when I went to India and different when I came back to the U.S. I realized that no matter where I went, I would be different. In order to change my world-based identity into a Christ-based identity, I must first die to self.

In 2023, I started struggling with my health. This forced me to stop doing many of the things I enjoyed and slow down. As the months went by, I found myself becoming more fearful, selfish and insecure than ever before. The doctor couldn't figure out why I was hurting. Everything became so much harder: horseback riding, hiking and all the other outdoor things I enjoyed. Again, I had lost my identity.

One day, my physical therapist recommended I get an MRI, just to see if there were any torn soft tissues. I was lying on the table about to go into the MRI machine when I heard a voice in my head say, "It's a tumor." I was shocked. Where had this voice come from? Throughout the



whole procedure, that thought kept coming back into my head.

When it was over, the doctor came in and said, “You have a tumor.” Soon the day of the surgery arrived, and I was so excited to have the tumor taken out. The doctor had warned me that if the tumor was cancerous, they would not be able to remove it that day.

Later after surgery, my mom said that the tumor looked too much like cancer, so they did not take it out. The doctor stated it would take two to four weeks to get the results from the biopsy.

My world seemed to be falling apart. A few days later, our pastor came to anoint me and I started to realize just how hopeless my situation was. Turning to God was the only thing I could do, so I told God if it was my time to die, I was ready. I was filled with peace like I had never felt before. A few hours later, we received a phone call from the doctor saying that the results of the biopsy showed I did not have cancer.

I decided to apply to Fountainview Academy and was accepted. The first few days there seemed easy, but as the days turned into weeks, I felt alone and asked God to show me why He had brought me to FVA. He showed me people who were struggling, and I was able to help.



PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA ELLINGSON

My anxiety and insecurities left and were replaced with confidence that could only come from God.

Through all these different situations, God has shown me not to base my identity on the people around me. As a child of God, my identity and value are based on my relationship with Him.



ABRIELLE ELLINGSON  
*Montana teenager*

More online at  
[NWADVENT.ST/121-2-MT-69](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-MT-69)

# Pastor and Illustrator Creates Children's Christmas Story Comic

**A FEW YEARS AGO, ALEXANDER SKIBELSKY, PASTOR AND ILLUSTRATOR, BEGAN DEVELOPING A BIBLICALLY-BASED, FUN-TO-READ WAY TO INTRODUCE CHILDREN TO THE STORIES OF JESUS' LIFE.**

"I started working on the project around 2021 when I still lived in Ukraine," shared Skibelsky. "But at the beginning of 2022, war had started and it was a very unstable, uncertain time. We left the country and lived in the Chicago area before I was hired by Oregon Conference."

"It was a very stressful time, and when you're overwhelmed like that and living in survival mode, you tend to lose your creativity. [In 2025] I set myself a deadline to finish the project before General Conference Session, and I officially finished the project in June 2025," said Skibelsky.

Skibelsky has worked as a professional illustrator for many years, with a special focus on children's materials. Besides his work in pastoral ministry, he has worked with several publishing houses illustrating books, articles and other projects.

"With time, I really started to have the desire to combine my pastoral and illustration backgrounds," said Skibelsky. "When I felt like my skills were sufficient and started feeling that desire to start something of my own, I started to pray about it. It was a new area and would take some courage to step into it, but little by little I was drawn to creating a comic that reflected our Adventist understanding of the Christmas story for children."

Skibelsky shared that media projects are an incredible way to reach more people than you might be able to

otherwise – a lesson he learned both as an illustrator and as a former host of a Ukrainian television show.

"Publishing material makes it easy to translate and share across languages and cultures. It really helps expand a circle of influence," he said. Skibelsky also shared that illustration fills a growing need with today's children and young people, who are changing how they learn.

"A lot of kids today have a challenging time reading big chunks of text – they're much more visual learners. My hope is that things like this can ease their access to biblical texts. While I had to use a little bit of imagination for this, much of the comic is directly from the Bible, including the text. I hope kids will find themselves engaging more with the scriptural narrative of Christ and His birth."

Skibelsky's finished project is now available in both comic book and coloring book form. Learn more about Skibelsky's *The Birth of Jesus* project by visiting [mybiblecomics.com](http://mybiblecomics.com).



KALEB EISELE  
Oregon Conference  
digital content specialist

More online at  
[NWADVENT.ST/121-2-OR-75](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-OR-75)

YOUTH



The *Birth of Jesus* comic book project comes in both a traditional comic book style and a coloring book.

PHOTOS BY ALEXANDER SKIBELSKY



The *Birth of Jesus* books were completed just in time to take them to the 2025 General Conference Session.

CHURCH

# Six Accepts Association Treasurer Role

**ANTHONY "TONY" SIX RECENTLY STEPPED INTO THE ROLE OF OREGON CONFERENCE ASSOCIATION TREASURER FOLLOWING THE DEPARTURE OF KODY HENDRICKSON FOR A ROLE AT NORTH PACIFIC UNION.**

Six first joined the treasury team in 2023 as an interim assistant treasurer. He brings two decades of experience across multiple industries as a business analyst and financial professional. He is also a graduate of Andrews University Theological Seminary.

"Tony comes to us with valuable financial management experience and a heart for ministry," shared Eric Davis, Oregon Conference vice president for finance. "His calm, wise and steady spirit

elevates all who have had the opportunity to work with him. He has previously worked with our treasury team as an interim assistant treasurer, and we are thrilled to work with him on a permanent basis."

Six looks forward to helping to continue to stabilize Oregon Conference finances. "Hendrickson definitely leaves behind a legacy of knowledge and experience," said Six. "He'll be missed here, but I'll be doing my best to pick up the torch and carry it forward."



KALEBEISELE

Anthony "Tony" Six, Oregon Conference association treasurer



KALEB EISELE  
Oregon Conference digital content specialist

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-OR-77](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-OR-77)

CHURCH

# Churches Celebrate Pastoral Ordinations

**IN FALL 2025, TWO OREGON CONFERENCE PASTORS CELEBRATED A MILESTONE MOMENT: ORDINATION.**

Pastoral ordination and commissioning represent years of service, leadership development and missional intentionality in local ministry. The celebration marks a pastor's readiness for expanded leadership and serves as an opportunity for congregations, family members, mentors and leaders to come together to recognize an individual's calling and service.

At Woodburn Spanish Church, Felix Toribio, pastor, stood before the congregation with his family, surrounded by loving mentors, ministry partners and conference leadership. John McVay, Oregon Conference president, shared, "The music was upbeat and prayers fervent as we gathered for the joyous, yet solemn ordination of Toribio, a seasoned evangelist and warmhearted pastor dedicated to servant leadership."

At Pleasant Valley Church in Happy Valley, Oregon, Billy Hungate, pastor, was also celebrated. "[Billy's] gripping story, call to ministry and dedication to creating alternatives to isolation and addiction are inspiring. We know that God is going to use him and his family in creative and powerful ways in the days ahead!" shared McVay.

As all our pastors across the Northwest reflect on their ministry journeys, go about their service in ministry and look toward the coming year's challenges, please keep them and their families in your prayers.



KALEB EISELE  
Oregon Conference digital content specialist

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-OR-78](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-OR-78)



DAVID PACZKA

Felix Toribio, pastor, stands before the congregation with his family, surrounded by loving mentors, ministry partners and conference leadership.



JEREMY BARBER

Billy Hungate, pastor, is affirmed in his ministry by a crowded sanctuary at Pleasant Valley Church.

CHURCH

# Medford Church Releases Second Worship Album

**MEDFORD CHURCH HAS RELEASED A SECOND PRAISE AND WORSHIP ALBUM. AFTER THE SUCCESS OF THEIR FIRST ALBUM, ALL VOICES, VOL. 2 FEATURES 15 NEW SONGS, INCLUDING FAVORITES SUCH AS “THIS WORLD IS NOT MY HOME,” “DAYS OF ELIJAH,” “JUST A CLOSER WALK WITH THEE” AND MORE.**

“After we released our first album, we realized it was being streamed in places we didn’t expect,” shared Tim Morse, Medford Church worship leader. “It was encouraging to see it reaching beyond our little community.”

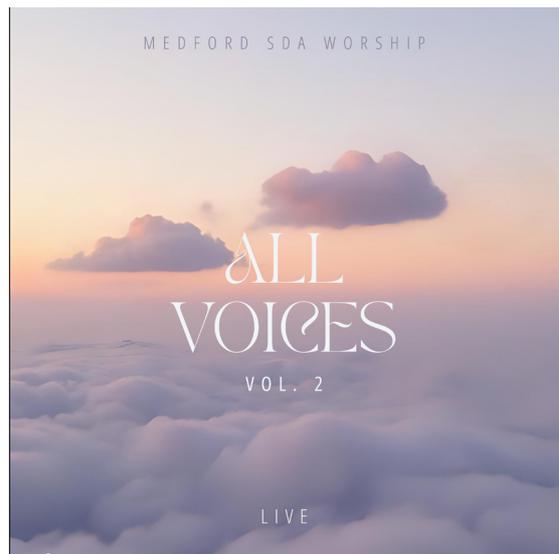
“We’ve had periods of uncertainty over the last year and have been without a senior pastor for a little while now,” continued Morse. “We wanted to do something that showed that our church is not dependent on a pastor to function. So, we moved forward with the project, recording praise services ... then doing some editing in the studio ... until it got to a place where it felt like a good representation of what praise and worship is like at Medford Church.”

“One thing I hope people take away from this is that you don’t have to be Elevation Worship or Hillsong to share the gifts and talents that God has given you,” Morse explained. “God isn’t calling you to sound like somebody else. He’s calling you to sound like yourself, to praise Him and to do that in a public way.”

“One of the key elements of worship is that it’s demonstrated publicly. We think about Daniel praying in his window. He could have easily closed his windows and shut himself off, but it was important enough for his worship that he didn’t hide it,” said Morse. “I think our worship is meant to be shared with other people. It doesn’t matter if it sounds like you think it should; just make it your best and share it with others.”

This second volume continues the spirit of inclusive worship and community connection. Whether you’re a Medford Church member or a listener from afar, this album is an invitation to join a chorus of worshippers lifting their voices to God.

*All Voices, Vol. 2* by Medford SDA Worship is available on YouTube, Spotify, Apple Music and nearly two dozen other platforms. All streaming and purchase revenue from the album goes back into funding the music ministry of Medford Church.



Medford Church's second album continues the spirit of inclusive worship and community connection.



KALEB EISELE  
Oregon Conference digital  
content specialist

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-OR-74](https://www.nwadvent.org/st/121-2-or-74)

YOUTH

# Big Lake Celebrates Recent Blessings

**IN SUMMER 2025, BIG LAKE YOUTH CAMP WAS DECLARED THE RECIPIENT OF AN AWARD FROM AMERICAN CAMP ASSOCIATION, THANKS TO THEIR HOSPITALITY TO HIKERS ON THE PACIFIC CREST TRAIL.**

“The Cedar Award for Program Excellence is given to camps that are making an impact in their community and dealing with a felt need,” shared Les Zollbrecht, Big Lake director. “We normally serve between 700 and 1,000 hikers each summer, providing laundry, postal services, meals, electricity for charging devices and offsite camping spaces. We often get comments that Big Lake was the highlight of the trail for people—the most welcoming space they encountered. So we were pretty excited to be recognized for that.”

The award wasn't the only good news Big Lake received in late 2025. The camp

also received a \$3,500 STEAM grant to help support their robotics camp activities, as well as a generous expansion to their newly updated backup generator system.

“This is a game changer for sure,” said Zollbrecht. “We will now have backup power not just for the lodge and kitchen, but for headquarters and the rest of camp as well. That’s something we’ve never had.”

This year, Big Lake is looking toward this summer’s camp season. Zollbrecht says that one of the biggest needs is financial aid assistance for campers. “We were able to grant more than \$80,000 worth of aid for campers in 2025! As we look forward,



KALEBEISELE

Big Lake receives the American Camp Association's Cedar Award for Program Excellence for its impact on the Pacific Crest Trail hiking community.

a big way to make a difference is to support those campership funds,” said Zollbrecht.

Learn more about Big Lake and its ministry at [biglake.org](http://biglake.org).



KALEB EISELE  
Oregon Conference  
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More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-OR-76](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-OR-76)

MISSION AND OUTREACH

# Grants Pass Adventurers Host Christmas-time Fundraiser

**“WHY ISN’T ANYONE COMING?” ASKED AN ADVENTURER. IT WAS 1:02 P.M., AND HE WAS FULL OF CHRISTMAS SPIRIT, EAGER TO SERVE HOT COCOA. HE’D BEEN ASSURED CUSTOMERS WOULD ARRIVE ANY MOMENT.**

Through the window, they could see people starting to arrive, carefully dropping off bags of kitchen knives to be sharpened by a volunteering church member. Once their knives had been deposited, they made their way into the warm glow of the hot cocoa stand, where small hands and bright smiles served the best cocoa in town.

For three hours, people brought donations to support the Rescue Campus mission project. However, they didn't just leave; they lingered and visited. The Christmas music, decorations and tables with chairs invited folks to catch up with

family and friends. It never got crowded, yet it never felt empty, creating an atmosphere of togetherness.

Through generous donations from hot cocoa sales and knife sharpening, \$3,000 was raised for the project. The money, which was sent to Child Impact, was earmarked to build housing for a child rescue campus in the Philippines—a campus designed to protect more than 100 vulnerable children from abuse, neglect and child marriage.

These little Adventurers got to see the difference they could make, despite their young age.



HEIDI NELSON

Adventurers sell hot cocoa to raise money for their Rescue Campus mission project.



HEIDI NELSON  
Whipple Creek  
Church member

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-OR-73](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-OR-73)

EDUCATION

# PAA Develops Worship Leaders

**NEARLY 30 YEARS AGO, PORTLAND ADVENTIST ACADEMY STAFF MEMBERS NOTICED THAT SOME STUDENTS FELT DISCONNECTED FROM THEIR LOCAL CHURCHES. WHILE PRESENT IN THE PEWS, MANY DIDN'T FEEL SEEN, NEEDED OR CONFIDENT THAT THEY HAD SOMETHING MEANINGFUL TO OFFER.**

PAA educators asked an important question: What if students didn't just attend church, but helped lead it?

That question sparked a vision—one rooted in helping students find a sense of belonging, relevance and ownership in their faith communities. Led by Tim Ellis, with the help of Bob Johnson, a music studio was built on campus.

For more than 20 years, Ellis taught students not only how to play guitar, but also how to perform, collaborate and lead worship with confidence and purpose. Students also learned the behind-the-scenes skills of sound, production and technical support—roles just as vital to worship as those on stage.

From the beginning, the goal was never simply growing musical skill. PAA wanted students to understand *why* they lead worship and *how* their gifts can point others to Christ. Learning an instrument

was the starting point; learning to serve was the heart of the program.

The results have been powerful. Over the years, countless students have discovered their place in church life—developing into skilled worship leaders, singing, playing instruments and serving on production teams in their local congregations. That early vision has become a legacy.

Following Ellis' passing 10 years ago, his former students stepped forward to continue mentoring and teaching another generation, modeling faithfulness, service and leadership.

Today, PAA has 10 student praise teams that rotate leading worship during chapels and vespers. Each service is an opportunity for students to grow musically, spiritually and personally. Walk into a Portland area church on Sabbath, and chances are you'll find a PAA student or

alumnus singing, playing, running sound or serving faithfully behind the scenes.

At PAA, education goes beyond academics. The mission includes helping students discover their gifts, deepen their faith and actively engage in their churches—both now and long after graduation. By empowering students to lead worship, PAA is partnering with churches to help shape confident young leaders who know they belong, have something to contribute and are ready to serve wherever God calls them.



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

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-OR-71](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-OR-71)



PAA students regularly help lead church services in the Portland area.



Students learn how their gifts can point others to Christ.

# 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.

## MARCH

	<b>Bible</b>	<b>Acts of the Apostles</b>
□ 1	1 Corinthians 1	
□ 2	1 Corinthians 2	
□ 3	1 Corinthians 3	
□ 4	1 Corinthians 4	
□ 5	1 Corinthians 5	
□ 6	Review	Chapter 29
□ 7	Review	
□ 8	1 Corinthians 6	
□ 9	1 Corinthians 7	
□ 10	1 Corinthians 8	
□ 11	1 Corinthians 9	
□ 12	1 Corinthians 10	
□ 13	Review	Chapter 30
□ 14	Review	
□ 15	1 Corinthians 11	
□ 16	1 Corinthians 12	
□ 17	1 Corinthians 13	
□ 18	1 Corinthians 14	
□ 19	1 Corinthians 15-16	
□ 20	Review	Chapter 31
□ 21	Review	
□ 22	2 Corinthians 1-2	
□ 23	2 Corinthians 3-4	
□ 24	2 Corinthians 5-6	
□ 25	2 Corinthians 7-8	
□ 26	2 Corinthians 9-10	
□ 27	Review	Chapter 32
□ 28	Review	
□ 29	2 Corinthians 11	
□ 30	2 Corinthians 12	
□ 31	2 Corinthians 13	

## APRIL

	<b>Bible</b>	<b>Acts of the Apostles</b>
□ 1	Ephesians 1	
□ 2	Ephesians 2	
□ 3	Review	Chapter 27 (a)
□ 4	Review	
□ 5	Ephesians 3	
□ 6	Ephesians 4	
□ 7	Ephesians 5	
□ 8	Ephesians 6	
□ 9	Ephesians 6	
□ 10	Review	Chapter 27 (b)
□ 11	Review	
□ 12	Philippians 1	
□ 13	Philippians 2	
□ 14	Philippians 3	
□ 15	Philippians 4	
□ 16	Philippians 4	
□ 17	Review	Chapter 45 (a)
□ 18	Review	
□ 19	Colossians 1	
□ 20	Colossians 2	
□ 21	Colossians 3	
□ 22	Colossians 4 (a)	
□ 23	Colossians 4 (b)	
□ 24	Review	Chapter 45 (b)
□ 25	Review	
□ 26	1 Thessalonians 1	
□ 27	1 Thessalonians 2	
□ 28	1 Thessalonians 3	
□ 29	1 Thessalonians 4	
□ 30	1 Thessalonians 5	

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.



CHURCH

## Lenz Retires After More Than 45 Years of Service

**FOR ART LENZ, A SIX-WEEK-LONG JOB TURNED INTO A CAREER OF MORE THAN 45 YEARS. LENZ BEGAN HIS CAREER ON AUG. 4, 1980, WORKING TO CONVERT AND WRITE PROGRAMS FOR UPPER COLUMBIA CONFERENCE'S COMPUTER. THE WORK HE BEGAN TOOK LONGER THAN SIX WEEKS, AND SOON HE WAS OFFERED A FULL-TIME POSITION TO CONTINUE HIS WORK.**

Lenz has helped UCC through numerous transitions in technology, continually adapting to find ways to support the conference's mission to spread the gospel. Shortly after his arrival, he saw a need for an additional hard drive to run the conference computer.

Installing the 75MB hard drive cost \$22,500 at the time, and the machine itself was roughly the size of a washing machine.

A few months later, Lenz felt a sudden need to back up the new hard drive – no small task at the time – working late into the night on a Thursday. The following Monday, he went into work to find out that the computer was no longer working. The data on the computer was lost entirely, but thanks to the recent backup, it could be recovered.

“Working at the conference has given me leadership experience,” said Lenz, “which I have been happy to use to help my community.”

Outside his professional life, he and his wife, Ruth, have been active members of Spokane Central Church and played a significant part in the planning and construction of Palisades Christian Academy in Spokane.

A career highlight for Lenz was creating the Upper Columbia Accounting Navigator payroll and ledger system. In collaboration with Joy Rogers, UCC associate treasurer, Lenz spent more than a year in 1999

developing the software, which remained in effective use for many years following and remains the only fully interactive payroll system in the world church.

“The project started when Jon Corder [former treasurer] asked me, ‘Why can't our system show us taxes and net check as we enter data?’ and I started to theorize a solution,” said Lenz. “Then I started working with Joy and we got support to create a new system for the conference.”

Lenz also supported camp meeting PA and video production. Early video recordings of camp meetings were taken on Sony U-Matic tapes before VHS cassettes.

In retirement, Lenz plans to continue serving his community in Spokane in a new capacity alongside his wife. He also looks forward to spending more time with his family, including his kids and grandkids.

As for hobbies, Lenz plans to retrofit a MIDI interface to the Spokane Central Church's pipe organ and restore his dad's 1950 Ford F1.



ISAAC MEYTHALER  
Upper Columbia  
Conference  
communications  
coordinator

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-UC-52](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-UC-52)



Art Lenz



David Jamieson, UCC president, shares a few comments at Lenz's retirement celebration.



David Jamieson, UCC president, (left) presents a plaque to Art Lenz (right) commemorating his 45 years of service with UCC.

## MISSION AND OUTREACH

# Serve One More Inspires Community Partnerships

**JOSÉ GUEL, AIR FORCE VETERAN, AND HIS WIFE, CARMELITA, HAD BEEN TRYING TO GET THEIR LEAKING ROOF REPAIRED FOR SEVERAL YEARS. AFTER UNAFFORDABLE ROOFING BIDS AND REPEATED FAILED ATTEMPTS TO GET A LOAN, THE GUELS HAD RESIGNED THEMSELVES TO PATCHING THE ROOF ON THEIR OWN AND USING TARPS TO TRY TO KEEP RAIN OUT.**

When it rained, water dripped into their living room and bedroom. The ceiling warped and began to mold. The home that served as a gathering place for their family and the children of their neighborhood seemed less like a place of shelter.

Meanwhile, Paul Rasmussen, a SonBridge Center for Better Living founder and longtime volunteer, and Dan Elsom, from SonBridge community partner Elsom Roofing, had just finished a roofing project for a veteran's family and discussed how much they would like to continue helping veterans in need of new roofs. Mere hours later, they received a call letting them know about the Guels and their leaking roof.

SonBridge began planning the project with Elsom Roofing, who, with support from Upper Columbia Conference's Serve One More initiative, provided funding for the project. Once the funding was in place, Rasmussen informed the Guels that they would receive more than just patches for their leaking roof. They were being given an entirely new roof.

SonBridge and Elsom Roofing were initially hoping to involve volunteers, but the roof was in such bad shape that it was deemed too dangerous for volunteers to work on.

Instead, a dedicated Elsom Roofing crew removed all the old, water-damaged wood and added new trusses, plywood sheathing, insulation, shingles and even ventilation where it hadn't existed before.



The Guel's living room ceiling suffered extensive water damage from their leaking roof.

Everyone involved in the project was touched by the Guels' kindness.

"They are a real pillar in their community," said Rasmussen. "They look after tons of kids after school. I've been to their home many times now and they're always full and busy with kids running around. They are a huge hub of support for neighbors and family."

After the roof was completed, José sent Rasmussen a heartfelt text. "You don't know just how grateful we are to you and everyone involved who made this miracle happen. Words just can't explain how you lifted a harrowing burden off my wife and me."

"This story belongs to all of us," said Richie Brower, UCC Serve One More associate director. "The generosity of our



A crew from Elsom Roofing replaces the old, leaking roof with new, water-tight materials.

constituents and donors, in conjunction with great partners like the team at SonBridge, make extreme generosity like this possible."

For more stories of extreme generosity, see [serveonemore.org](http://serveonemore.org). See how SonBridge is bringing hope and wholeness to its community at [sonbridge.org](http://sonbridge.org).



KIMBERLEY KUZMA  
SonBridge strategic  
communications  
manager

More online at  
[NWADVENT.ST/121-2-UC-58](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-UC-58)

# Shine 104.9 Chaplain Serves One More in Spokane

**TYLER KERN, SHINE 104.9 CHAPLAIN AND HOME OF SHALOM PASTOR, FIRST MOVED TO SPOKANE ON APRIL 1, 2024. SHORTLY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL, HE BEGAN VOLUNTEERING AND MAKING CONNECTIONS WITH ORGANIZATIONS SERVING THE COMMUNITY. HOME OF SHALOM IS A SPOKANE-BASED MINISTRY OF UPPER COLUMBIA CONFERENCE.**



Tyler Kern, Shine 104.9 chaplain, plans SAKE projects around the Spokane area.



Many SAKE projects include cleaning up local parks.



Kern and his family serve neighbors by shoveling snow.

“When I first moved here, I didn’t know anyone,” Kern said. “I couldn’t just start a new church with a church service. Nobody knew who I was. Who would come? So, I started by finding how I could serve the community and where other people were already serving.”

Kern quickly connected with food pantries, local parks and other non-profits aimed at community service. Through volunteering to clean up trash with the Spokane Riverkeeper program, Kern got in contact with local park officials eager to help Kern organize additional park clean-up days.

On June 9, 2024, Kern launched his first Simple Act of Kindness Event, inviting Shine 104.9 listeners to help paint over graffiti at a tennis court in Minnehaha Park in east Spokane. Several community members passing by expressed gratitude for the work.

After hours of work, while most other volunteers had already left, Kern’s family and a small group of volunteers carried on until the job was finally done.

“The donated paint was exactly the right amount,” Kern said. “After my kids scraped the bottom of the paint buckets to get the last drops, it covered the entire court.”

Following their first SAKE project, Kern continued to invite people to service projects, including writing letters to first responders, volunteering with food banks, cleaning parks, praying with the homeless and shoveling snow.

At the end of 2025, Kern estimated nearly 100 SAKE projects, contributing at

least 800 total volunteer hours, with 220 of those hours spent cleaning up trash at local parks.

Kern frequently includes his children in SAKE projects. However, that isn’t the only time his family serves their community.

“Something we’ve done on our own as a family is adopting some of our neighbors’ houses that need someone to shovel snow off their driveway for them,” said Kern. “It’s something that doesn’t seem that big to us, but for our neighbors it can determine whether or not they make it to an important doctor appointment they’ve waited months for.”

Beginning in February 2025, Kern developed the Home of Shalom church plant. Home of Shalom currently has no permanent location, instead gathering regularly in local public spaces. Most members participate in regular SAKE events.

This January, Shine 104.9 and Home of Shalom kicked off the new year by hosting biweekly worship events featuring local Christian musicians in Spokane’s Northtown Mall food court. The concerts began in January and will continue every second and fourth Saturday through April 11.

For more information on SAKE, see [shine1049.org/events](http://shine1049.org/events).



ISAAC MEYTHALER  
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More online at  
[NWADVENT.ST/121-2-UC-84](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-UC-84)

CHURCH

# Serve Café Shares Inspiring Monthly Stories

**SOMETHING EXCITING IS HAPPENING ACROSS UPPER COLUMBIA CONFERENCE THROUGH THE SERVE ONE MORE INITIATIVE. STORIES OF CHURCHES, SCHOOLS AND SMALL GROUPS TAKING BOLD LEAPS OF FAITH ARE TRULY AMAZING. WHILE THESE STORIES ARE INCREDIBLE, THEY ARE ALSO BECOMING MORE COMMON AS THE MOVEMENT GROWS.**

serve  
CAFÉ



ISAAC MEYTHALER

Ryan Whitehead, UCC associate director of club ministries, takes part in a service project in Spokane.

God is growing a spirit of extreme generosity in UCC. We are eager for you to hear more about how God is working. That's why we're thrilled to announce something new: a fresh Serve Café story every month, highlighting faith in action from throughout the inland northwest.

These stories are designed to be easy to share through short video format – whether during a Sabbath service, on social media, in your church newsletter, classroom worship or on your website. Wherever they're shared, they'll show that God is alive and touching lives through His people.

Serve Café isn't a new idea – it's a continuation of something beautiful that began in 2025. Last year, we celebrated incredible moments of service: HOPE for Tekoa, where Upper Columbia Academy's HOPE Taskforce blessed a small town; an Orofino home makeover just in time

for the winter; a Fairfield seed-starting workshop that planted more than just vegetables; an Ellensburg oil change event that showed practical love in action; and a Pathfinder trail clean-up that restored beauty to the outdoors.

This year, we're taking that momentum and making it even more accessible. Every month, you'll find a new episode at [serveonemore.org/stories](https://serveonemore.org/stories). These videos are short, heartfelt and perfect for sharing with your congregation or friends online. Our hope is that these stories will celebrate what God is accomplishing through His people and inspire others to step out and serve in their own communities.

These stories matter because serving changes not only our surroundings, but also us.

Imagine the ripple effect: One story shared in a church service sparks a

conversation, which leads to an idea, which becomes an act of kindness expanding God's kingdom. That's the vision behind Serve Café's monthly stories – creating a culture of service that grows stronger with every episode.

So, mark your calendars, bookmark the link and join us in spreading these stories far and wide. Together, we can encourage, equip and inspire others to serve one more person – because every act of love matters.

See more and share at [serveonemore.org/stories](https://serveonemore.org/stories).



RICHIE BROWER  
Upper Columbia  
Conference Serve One  
More associate director

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-WA-81](https://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-WA-81) +

# Family Ministries Reorganized

**UPPER COLUMBIA CONFERENCE IS REORGANIZING ITS APPROACH TO FAMILY MINISTRIES — INCORPORATING MEN'S, WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES UNDER THE YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT LEADERSHIP TEAM.**

"After much prayer and deliberation, it was decided that combining our ministry efforts was the best path forward," said Jeffery Wines, UCC youth, young adult and family ministries director.

Recent financial challenges brought several discussions on how best to serve the conference as a resource center. Following the retirement of Patty Marsh, former UCC director for women's ministries, children's ministries, urban ministries, disaster relief and Adventist Community Services, the executive committee decided not to rehire her position as part of cost reduction measures.

"Given limited financial resources and limited personnel, we really needed to take a closer look at how best to organize our ministries in a way that can help facilitate volunteers while maintaining our service as a resource center to the entire conference.

Moving our family ministries together under one roof made a lot of logical sense, and we pray that God continues to bless these ministries," said Eric Brown, UCC vice president for administration.

Departmental directors submitted reports on their current operations and capacities to the administrative committee and the executive committee. In this process, the youth and young adult department team saw several ministry areas that fit closely with its current ministry focus. After discussion, the administrative committee decided to merge youth and young adult ministries with family ministries.

"Our primary concern was maintaining and supporting the vitality of our ongoing ministries, while facing the reality of less office staff," said Wines.

While time has been needed to adjust to the new integration, some areas have already shown promise. Planning events has remained a strength for the department. For example, since several ministry events take place at Camp MiVoden, communication and planning require fewer steps than before.

"There is a good amount of overlap," said Ryan Whitehead, UCC youth, young adult and family ministries associate director. "Our team is well-suited for event planning and coordinating volunteers, skills that all these ministries rely on."

Wendy Urbin, who has served for several years as UCC administrative assistant for women's, children's and urban ministries, along with Adventist Community Services, will be continuing her role in these various ministries and coordinating the many events and resources available.

Youth, young adult and family ministries has a unified goal: growing and nurturing church families, bringing men, women, children, youth and young adults into connection with Christ.

For more information on these ministries, see [uccsda.org/youth](https://uccsda.org/youth) and [uccsda.org/familyministries](https://uccsda.org/familyministries).

ISAAC MEYTHALER

*Upper Columbia Conference  
communications coordinator*



More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-UC-02](https://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-UC-02)



CHURCH

# Seeds Vision Strengthens Church Multiplication Culture

**A RENEWED SPIRIT OF MISSION FILLED KIRKLAND CHURCH AS MORE THAN 275 PASTORS, MEMBERS AND MINISTRY LEADERS GATHERED FOR SEEDS VISION CONFERENCE – THE LARGEST SEEDS GATHERING YET IN WASHINGTON CONFERENCE.**

Held Nov. 7–8, 2025 in partnership with North American Division Evangelism Institute, the event brought together a diverse group of believers united by a shared conviction: God is calling His church to multiply disciples and plant new congregations across western Washington.

While most attendees came from across Washington, participants also traveled from several states beyond the conference, reflecting the growing interest in a sending movement rooted in the Pacific Northwest.

Tim Madding, NADEI director and keynote speaker, reminded attendees that sending is woven throughout the story of redemption. “God sent Jesus. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit. And now the Holy Spirit sends us,” Madding said, pointing to Luke 10:2 and emphasizing that the greatest need in the harvest is not opportunity, but workers willing to go. Throughout the weekend, participants were challenged to move beyond “church as usual” and embrace a Christ-centered, disciple-making way of life.

Dustin Serns, Washington Conference church planting coordinator, shared both the challenges and opportunities of mission in the Pacific Northwest. With more than 5 million residents and 120 churches across the conference, the long-term vision is to ensure every person receives a meaningful invitation to know Christ. Serns noted that new churches are especially effective in reaching new residents, emerging generations and unreached people groups.

“We are mobilizing a multiplying movement in Washington and beyond,” Serns said. “Every member makes disciples, and every leader multiplies leaders.”

The weekend included worship, prayer, testimonies from church planters and practical training on topics such as vocational ministry, relational evangelism and multiplying small groups. Participants reflected on how church planting not only grows congregations, but also deepens the faith of those who step out in mission. One testimony captured the sentiment simply: “Church planting didn’t just grow a church. It grew me.”

A particularly meaningful moment came during a time of dedication and blessing for emerging church plant leaders and their sending congregations. Surrounded by fellow believers and mentors, these leaders committed to launching new missional communities in the coming year, responding to God’s call with the words of Isa. 6:8: “Here am I. Send me!”

Seeds Vision Conference concluded with a refreshed sense of purpose and confidence in the Holy Spirit’s leading. As churches across the conference continue to pray, equip leaders and embrace a sending mindset, the movement of multiplication is growing—one disciple, one group and one new church at a time.

ENOC GARCIA  
*Washington Conference  
communication director*



More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-WA-61](https://nwadvent.st/121-2-wa-61)



More than 275 participants fill Kirkland Church for Seeds Vision Conference.



Small groups gather for breakout workshops led by church planters.



Attendees share ideas and connect with others during small-group discussions.

# Instrumental Music Festival Celebrates Joy, Unity and Worship

**MUSICIANS AND CONGREGATIONS GATHERED DEC. 6, 2025 FOR A VIBRANT INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC FESTIVAL THAT FILLED THE SANCTUARY WITH WARMTH, ENERGY AND HEARTFELT PRAISE TO GOD. INSPIRED BY CHORAL MUSIC FESTIVAL HELD EARLIER IN THE YEAR, THE EVENT CELEBRATED INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AS A POWERFUL EXPRESSION OF WORSHIP, FELLOWSHIP AND UNITY.**

The vision for the festival was proposed by Vladimir Kolbach, Tacoma Church instrumental band director. Building on the success of the spring choral festival, organizers intentionally expanded the format by inviting musicians from the broader Christian community.

Kolbach carried a significant organizational role, gathering musicians from multiple congregations and conducting a combined band. His leadership, along with the strong support of Vitali Glavatski, Tacoma Church pastor, helped shape a well-coordinated and uplifting program.

The festival received conference-level support and coordination from Vitali Oliinik, Washington Conference Russian-Ukrainian ministries coordinator. Doug Bing, Washington Conference president, welcomed those in attendance, shared a brief homily and offered a prayer of blessing, emphasizing that music is a God-given gift that draws believers closer to God and to one another.

A special highlight of the program was the participation of Pavel Semanivsky, University of Montemorelos School of Music professor and guest speaker. He conducted a combined symphonic orchestra, bringing together musicians of different ages,



Young musicians play alongside adult performers, reflecting intentional intergenerational participation.

cultures and experience in a unified expression of praise.

The service concluded joyfully under the direction of Lev Vertylo, East Dnieper Conference president, professional musician and pastor. He led a joint band and *Adventus*, a vocal group, for the closing congregational hymn, "When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder."

Instrumental groups from Tacoma Church, Center for Spiritual Enrichment of Adventists in Bellevue and Grace Russian Church in Portland, along with the Orchard instrumental group from Vancouver and Portland, presented music during the

program. Musicians from Steps to Christ Church in Federal Way, Ukrainian Church of Washington State in Auburn and Adventist churches in Spokane also joined other ensembles and the combined orchestra.

As part of the organizers' vision to broaden fellowship through music, musicians from Cornerstone Gospel Church, which is a Pentecostal church in Auburn, and Church of Blessing, which is a Christian church in Federal Way, were also invited to participate. Their involvement reflected a thoughtful effort to build bridges through worship and to glorify God together through instrumental music.



PHOTOS BY SERGEY LUGUVOY

Vladimir Kolbach, whose vision helped bring the instrumental music festival together, conducts a combined band.

The weekend continued Sunday, Dec. 7, 2025 with a seminar on instrumental music ministry at Steps to Christ Church, led by Semanivsky and Vertylo. Together, the festival and seminar offered a meaningful testimony to the unifying power of music and the shared desire of believers to honor God through excellence in worship.



ANDREI MELNICIUC  
Tacoma Church member

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-WA-67](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-WA-67)

# Lacey Church Supports Healing and Hope in Mostar

**LACEY CHURCH MEMBERS PARTICIPATED IN A MISSION TRIP TO MOSTAR, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, IN OCTOBER 2025, SUPPORTING MINISTRY EFFORTS IN A CITY STILL SHAPED BY THE LASTING EFFECTS OF WAR.**

Located about two hours south of Sarajevo, Mostar is divided by the Neretva River—a boundary that historically marked the edge of the Ottoman Empire and today separates predominantly Christian neighborhoods on the west from Muslim communities on the east. While tourism now drives the local economy, many residents continue to carry emotional and spiritual wounds from the conflict that ended more than 30 years ago.

Prior to the war, the Adventist church in Mostar was a thriving congregation. Today, the church is represented by two members, Goran and Natalie Soldat, who returned to Bosnia after years in Australia in response to God's call to serve. Natalie, an art therapist, and Goran, a builder, are leading a threefold mission focused on community engagement, church restoration and public outreach.

As part of this vision, Natalie has established a children's center of influence in the Muslim part of the city, offering English-language classes that build trust and relationships.

From Oct. 5-17, 2025, a team of three members from Lacey Church helped prepare the space by purchasing supplies and decorations. The center now serves 10 children twice a week, with plans to expand into art and health education.

Goran has been overseeing the restoration of the church property. From Oct. 5-31, 2025, a team of 15 volunteers from Lacey Church assisted with demolition, plumbing and electrical installation, site access improvements and excavation for a new structure that will eventually house a sanctuary, offices and apartments. Just days before the team arrived, long-delayed permits and neighboring approvals were granted, allowing the project to move forward.



The Neretva River separates Mostar's predominantly Christian neighborhoods on the west from Muslim communities on the east.

In addition to the construction work, the mission included public meetings focused on trauma and healing, held in the Christian part of the city. Over eight evenings, Lynette Frantzen, mental health counselor, addressed mental health aspects of trauma, while Sven Frantzen, Lacey Church pastor, presented biblical perspectives on suffering and restoration.

Ten community members attended at least one presentation, including two young men who participated every evening and expressed strong interest in learning more about the Bible and Jesus. Both were connected with local church leadership for continued follow-up.

Beyond the visible ministry outcomes, the mission deeply impacted the volunteers, strengthening faith, renewing commitment to service and reinforcing the urgency of sharing the hope found in Christ—a hope that rebuilds communities and heals hearts in postwar contexts.

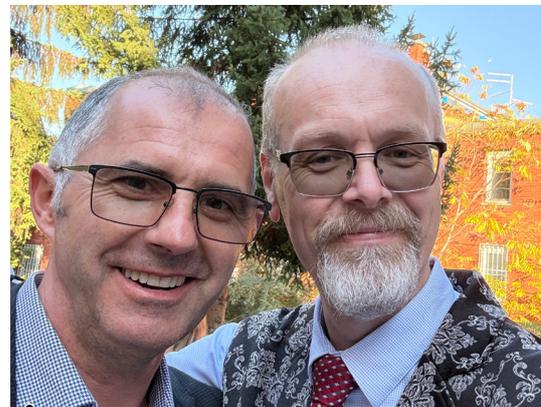


SVEN FRANTZEN  
Lacey Church pastor

More online at  
[NWADVENT.ST/121-2-WA-64](https://www.nwadventist.org/st/121-2-wa-64)



Volunteers gather for a morning devotional.



Sven Frantzen, Lacey Church pastor, (right) smiles with Goran Soldat, one of two Adventists in Mostar.

# HopeCity South Hill Launches Inaugural Service

**HOPECITY SOUTH HILL LAUNCHED ITS INAUGURAL SABBATH WORSHIP SERVICE ON NOV. 15, 2025, MARKING THE BEGINNING OF A NEW CHURCH PLANT FOCUSED ON HELPING PEOPLE ENCOUNTER JESUS AND GROW AS DISCIPLES. THE LAUNCH REFLECTED MONTHS OF PRAYER, SMALL-GROUP MINISTRY AND RELATIONAL OUTREACH THAT HAVE BEEN TAKING SHAPE IN SOUTH HILL, WASHINGTON.**



Members and guests fill the worship space during HopeCity South Hill's launch Sabbath.



Baptism coaches assist in baptizing those they have mentored, reflecting the church's focus on multiplying leaders.



PHOTOS BY ENOC GARCIA

Children participate in family worship by leading out in scripture reading and singing.

From the opening moments, the service set a joyful, worshipful tone with a strong focus on relationships, participation and shared spiritual life. Children helped lead family worship by reading scripture and offering prayer, modeling the intergenerational spirit that shapes the congregation's identity.

"You've found a safe place where you can share hope," worship leaders affirmed as members and guests gathered to celebrate what God has been doing through small groups, Bible study and relational ministry in the South Hill community.

HopeCity South Hill embraces seven core values that guide its mission: reflecting Jesus, belonging, gospel centrality, truth seeking, authenticity, other-centered living and being anchored with hope. On launch Sabbath, Jacob Serns, pastor, introduced part one of a seven-part sermon series exploring each value through the life and teachings of Jesus.

Preaching on the theme "Reflecting Jesus," Serns reminded the congregation that Jesus is the source of light and that believers are called to reflect His character. Drawing from the gospels, Serns emphasized that Christ's method of ministry remains the model for mission today: mingling with people, showing sympathy, ministering to needs and building trust through genuine relationships.

"Jesus said, 'Go and make disciples, baptizing them,'" Serns shared. "You can't orchestrate this on your own, but God can."

That conviction was evident during one of the most meaningful moments of the day, as several individuals were baptized as

part of their ongoing discipleship journey. At HopeCity South Hill, baptism coaches walk alongside people through Bible study, prayer and spiritual mentoring. On opening Sabbath, some assisted in baptizing those they had been discipling.

Small groups and Bible study pathways are central to HopeCity South Hill's church culture, offering spaces to "Belong, Believe and Become." Sabbath morning classes include Bible Basics for those new to faith, Beliefs for practical Christian living, and Wisdom, a deeper study option connected to the worldwide Sabbath School program. Throughout the week, additional small groups provide opportunities for connection and spiritual growth.

In a symbolic act of mission alignment, 50% of the offering collected on launch Sabbath was designated to support future church plants, signaling HopeCity South Hill's desire not only to grow locally, but also to help multiply new congregations across the conference.

As HopeCity South Hill begins this new chapter, the congregation remains committed to reaching its community with compassion, authenticity and hope, reflecting Jesus in everyday life and inviting others to experience His transforming grace.



ENOC GARCIA  
Washington Conference  
communication director

More online at  
[NWADVENT.ST/121-2-WA-62](https://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-WA-62)

HEALTH

# North Cascade Cares Provides Free Vision Care

**NORTH CASCADE CARES, A MINISTRY OF NORTH CASCADE CHURCH IN BURLINGTON, WASHINGTON, HOSTED A FREE VISION CLINIC ON NOV. 7 AND 9, 2025 TO PROVIDE CARE TO UNDERSERVED AND UNDERINSURED RESIDENTS IN SKAGIT COUNTY AND BEYOND. TWO HUNDRED PEOPLE RECEIVED SERVICES, BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PATIENTS SERVED THROUGH NORTH CASCADE CARES TO 959 OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS.**



PHOTOS BY VICKI JACOBS

North Cascade Cares has provided care to nearly a thousand people over the last four years.



Carlindo Pereira, doctor, talks to a patient during the free vision clinic.

Carlindo Pereira, doctor and North Cascade Church member, coordinated the professional volunteers through Cascadia Eye and Cascadia Eyewear. Church and community members, along with students from Skagit Adventist Academy, served in various roles throughout the clinic.

The church foyer was transformed into the clinic registration and waiting room, with snacks provided for guests. The fellowship hall became the examination area and optical department, offering a wide selection of eyewear.

Word of the event was spread throughout the community through food banks, homeless shelters and low-income service organizations.

The purpose of North Cascade Cares is to reveal the loving character of God by meeting unmet physical needs.

Fifty-nine volunteers from the church, community and school joined forces to meet this critical need. SAA students assisted by interpreting, greeting guests in the parking lot and church, sharing their musical talents and serving lunch to volunteers.

Juan Cancino, North Cascade Spanish Church pastor, played a critical role, as approximately 95% of guests were Spanish-speaking. Each guest was greeted by a pastor and offered Christian literature, health resources and the opportunity for prayer. As a result of previous clinics, the Spanish church has provided Bible studies that have led to baptisms and ongoing spiritual growth.

“There is a meaningful story about a couple who came to North Cascade Church for care,” Cancino said. “They received services, gave their lives to Jesus and were later married. The work of North Cascade Cares is making a difference in people’s lives.”

North Cascade Church has become known locally for providing much-needed care. The annual fall vision clinic and the corresponding spring dental clinic continue to serve as opportunities to plant seeds for kingdom growth and to reflect Christ’s love in practical ways.

The next North Cascade Cares event will be a free dental clinic on March 27 and 29 at SAA. The greatest need is for dental professionals and interpreter volunteers. More information is available at [northcascadecares.org](http://northcascadecares.org).



VICKI JACOBS  
North Cascade  
Church member

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-WA-66](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-WA-66) +

# SAGE Builders Carry on Legacy in Queets

**SENIORS IN ACTION FOR GOD WITH EXCELLENCE BEGAN IN WASHINGTON CONFERENCE IN 1994. ONE OF THE COUPLES ACTIVE IN EARLY SAGE PROJECTS WAS SCHULER AND ESTHER LUCE. ALTHOUGH SCHULER PASSED AWAY NEARLY 20 YEARS AGO, THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF HIS PARTICIPATION IN SAGE STILL RESONATES WITH HIS CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN.**



SAGE volunteers reroof a church parsonage in Queets, Washington.

Rick Luce and Dan Luce, two of Schuler's sons, as well as Dan's son Brad Luce, said their memories of their father and grandfather being part of SAGE have inspired them to carry on his legacy.

In fall 2025, Steve Huey, North Pacific Union Native ministries director, contacted SAGE to help reroof a church parsonage in Queets, Washington, on the Quinault Indian Reservation.

Twenty years ago, an Adventist church leased a church building and a parsonage from the tribe at an attractive rate.

A small group of members worshipped there for years. However, they haven't had a pastor for a few years, and

several of the church members have passed away. There's been a desire to recruit a new lay pastor to build up the congregation, but first, the parsonage roof needed repairing.

SAGE usually schedules projects at least six months in advance to recruit volunteers. However, with fall rain coming, the roof needed to be repaired quickly.

Rick, SAGE board member, contacted Dan and Brad, who are professional roofers, to help with the project. They were happy to help.

Ivan Cowles, who worked with the church in Queets often through the years, said he could help as well. Rick Serns, SAGE director, brought the crew up to four.

From Oct. 13–17, 2025, Queets had perfect weather. This proved essential because when old shingles were removed, the team quickly discovered that most of the plywood sheathing underneath needed to be replaced. This significantly impacted the time and effort needed to finish the job.

A further problem was that approximately 40 85-pound bundles of shingles needed to be carried to the top

of a rather high and steep roof by hand.

The village members watching the project were supportive and said a crew installing fiber optic cables in the village might be able to help.

The crew had a bucket truck, which extends very high and articulates in every direction. They came over and lifted all the bundles of shingles onto the roof in about 30 minutes.

Through many answered prayers and the skill and knowledge of the Luces and volunteers, the entire project was completed by the end of the day on Friday. On Sunday, the area got more than an inch of rain.

Pray that the church will be able to quickly find a lay pastor to serve this wonderful community and build up membership and attendance once again.



RICK SERNS  
SAGE director

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-WA-15](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-WA-15)

# You were made to dream big

Have you been called to serve others through healthcare? A career with Adventist Health is a great opportunity to make a difference, whether you're a recent Walla Walla University grad or a seasoned professional looking for a new challenge. As a faith-based health system founded on Seventh-day Adventist heritage and values, we know how important it is to put your mission first. Throughout California, Oregon, and Hawaii, Adventist Health's 38,000 professionals work together to transform health and inspire hope.

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# 'The Good Word' Podcast Shares Biblical Discussions

**WALLA WALLA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY'S THE GOOD WORD PODCAST IS A LONG-STANDING PROJECT HOSTED BY DEPARTMENT FACULTY.**

Each weekly episode features a 13-minute discussion exploring biblical and theological topics that are Bible-based, Christ-centered and faith-strengthening.

The podcast extends the School of Theology's reach beyond the classroom, providing thoughtful reflection on Adventist adult Bible study guides to listeners around the world. Carl Cosaert, WWU School of Theology dean and professor of biblical studies, described it as a "meaningful way we contribute to the spiritual and theological conversation within and beyond our local community."

Episodes frequently feature guest speakers who are chosen for their background

and perspective to enrich discussion and bring a variety of insights to each topic.

James Ash, Stateline Church pastor, joined a series hosted by Brant Berglin, WWU associate professor of biblical studies. Berglin said he invited Ash because he provides "sound and enthusiastic biblical conversation," particularly on prophetic material.

Guests have also included Albert Handal, Alex Bryan, Andreas Beccai and other WWU faculty, highlighting the university's faith-based educators. Archived episodes date back to 1999. More information is available at [www.goodword.com](http://www.goodword.com).



CARL COSAERT



HAILEY WERNER  
*WWU university relations student writer*

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-WWU-86](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-WWU-86)

# New Three-Year Bachelor's Degree Unveiled

**WALLA WALLA UNIVERSITY HAS RECEIVED APPROVAL FROM NORTHWEST COMMISSION ON COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TO LAUNCH ITS FIRST THREE-YEAR BACHELOR'S DEGREE, BACHELOR OF APPLIED SCIENCE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE.**

The 144-quarter credit program allows students to enter the workforce sooner in a field where demand for skilled computer science professionals continues to grow.

"This degree is a thoughtful response to the rapidly changing landscape of computer science," said Howard Munson, WWU associate vice president for student affairs and academic administration. "It's a pilot program, launched with careful consideration and a strong commitment to maintaining the high academic standards that define WWU."

The university will collect at least two years of program performance data before

considering expansion of the three-year format to additional majors. Jonathan Duncan, WWU associate vice president for academic planning and innovation, said the program balances innovation with integrity while opening new pathways for students.

Computer science students may still choose traditional four-year course plans for Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts degrees, which offer greater flexibility for double majors or minors.

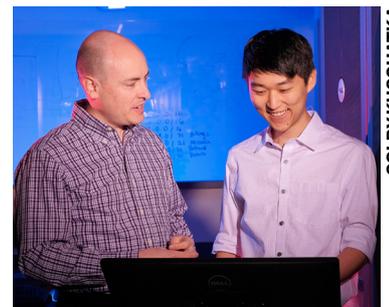
WWU Department of Computer Science also offers Bachelor of Science degrees in cybersecurity, game development and information systems,

as well as minors in computer science and cybersecurity. More information about the department and the new degree is available at [wallawalla.edu/cs](http://wallawalla.edu/cs).

CAEDEN ROGERS  
*WWU university relations supervisor*



More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-WWU-85](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-WWU-85)



COLBY KUSCHATKA

## EDUCATION

# Small Groups Unite University Students

**THIS YEAR, WALLA WALLA UNIVERSITY IS SEEING A STUDENT-LED RESURGENCE IN ITS SMALL-GROUP PROGRAM.**



Small groups are the core of student life at WWU.

Andrea Keele, WWU associate chaplain for missions, said, “Small groups are a place where students can get to know each other more casually. Spiritual growth happens in relationship, and that happens through regular time coming together.”

Small groups on campus are centered around student leadership. Any student can start a group by filling out a short questionnaire on the university’s website. Groups that meet certain requirements can earn worship credits.

Students can choose from six categories when creating a small group: music, support, recreation (such as hiking or board games), Bible study, prayer and an open

“other” category – making the possibilities nearly limitless.

The resurgence of small groups began with the help of Ellie Harris and Makena VonBergen, small group coordinators. Keele said the combination of VonBergen’s small group experience from Southern Adventist University and Harris’ understanding of WWU culture makes them a powerful team.

Keele added, “It’s been going really well. Harris and VonBergen have been getting the word out ... and it seems like people were ready for it.”

In addition to helping students form friendships, small groups also help students feel more connected on a busy campus. With a large student

body and full schedules, it can be easy for students to feel overlooked without intentional community.

“When you’re on a campus with a lot of students, it can be really easy to get lost,” Keele said. She added that small groups provide a purposeful way for students to create healthy community outside of larger campus events.

While large gatherings like vespers remain an important part of campus worship life, Keele noted that small groups offer a different environment. Through smaller settings and regular interaction, students are able to feel seen, known and supported.

One student Keele spoke with found that small groups

were also a valuable way to connect with students of different majors and class standings. The student shared, “In our classes, we’re grouped together by certain ages, but small groups are something that really can bring different majors together.”

GARRETT CHRISTENSEN  
*WWU university relations student writer*



More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-WWU-83](https://www.nwadvent.org/st/121-2-wwu-83) 



# How to Comfort Someone in the Hospital

**WHEN A LOVED ONE IS IN THE HOSPITAL, YOU WANT TO ENCOURAGE THEM AND MAKE THEIR EXPERIENCE MORE PLEASANT, BUT WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

Research suggests that a comfortable environment can affect a patient's sense of well-being. Even small touches can make a big difference, like a comfy eye mask, unscented hand cream, lip balm and photos of pets. Just be sure to run any big plans by your loved one's care team.

Adventist Health chaplains are trained to care for the spiritual and emotional needs of patients in varied situations. Wes Welch, Adventist Health Columbia Gorge staff chaplain, and J. Murdock, Adventist Health Clear Lake senior chaplain, offer these tips for providing comfort in just the right dose.

## LET YOUR HONEST CURIOSITY LEAD.

"A carefully chosen, genuine, open-ended question will be more effective than a comment such as, 'You must be feeling really sad right now,'" said Murdock. Instead, try asking questions such as,

"How are you feeling right now?" This shows you care and leaves space for an honest response.

"Having a better understanding of what your loved one is feeling can help you determine how best to provide care moving forward," said Murdock.

## WHEN IN DOUBT, SAY LESS.

"Go and just be," said Welch. "In the book of Job, his friends started off doing very well. They showed up and were just with him. It was when they started talking and giving all their opinions on the matter that they went terribly astray." Just sitting with your friend in silence can be the best approach.

Not every thought, feeling or comment calls for a response. "You might be just the right person to let your loved one think aloud, judgment-free, and get their feelings out," said Murdock. "Say less and listen more."

## DON'T FALL BACK ON CLICHES.

"When we don't know what to say in hospitals or in bad situations, we sometimes fall back on things like, 'It's all in God's plans,'" said Welch. "While the message is meant to be one of hope that God has control, it can put causality on God when often, in a world of sin, it doesn't belong."

## PUT YOUR OXYGEN MASK ON FIRST.

Just like the rules for an airplane emergency, make sure you are secure in your own emotions before trying to help others with theirs.

"People going through medical emergencies can be angry, sad, distraught or any combination of big emotions. They may act completely out of character. Do your best not to take something they say personally and give them space to express what might be hard to hear," said Welch. If you're overwhelmed by their emotions, you may need to ask someone more equipped to lend an ear.

KIM STROBEL

*Adventist Health  
program manager for  
religion, faith and mission*



More online at  
[NWADVENT.ST/121-2-AH-93](https://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-AH-93)



HEALTH

# Adventist Health Tillamook Transforms Access to Rural Healthcare

**ADVENTIST HEALTH TILLAMOOK HAS BEEN HONORED WITH THE 2025 OREGON RURAL HEALTH EXCELLENCE AWARD BY OREGON OFFICE OF RURAL HEALTH, RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING INNOVATION AND COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING ACCESS TO CARE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES.**



From left to right: Julie Brainerd, Megan Swenson, Gina Seufert and Allison Miller, community-based nurses, celebrate receiving the 2025 Oregon Rural Health Excellence Award for innovation in rural care delivery.

The award celebrates Adventist Health Tillamook's Community-Based Nursing Services program, an innovative nurse-led model that brings healthcare directly to underserved and high-risk patients across Tillamook and Columbia counties.

The program redefines rural health delivery by providing care wherever patients are – whether at home, in temporary housing or on the streets. Registered nurses serve as health coaches, trust builders and care navigators, helping patients manage chronic illnesses, access medications and connect with essential community resources.

Supported by a \$1.3 million grant from American Nurses Foundation's Reimagining Nursing Initiative and developed in collaboration with Oregon Health and Science University School of Nursing, the program demonstrates statistically

significant improvements in medication adherence, chronic disease outcomes and patient engagement.

Since launching its pilot phase in December 2023, the program has served more than 100 patients and is active in six rural clinics, supported by a toolkit in development to promote statewide adoption.

Eric Swanson, Adventist Health Tillamook president, expressed his gratitude for the teams making this achievement possible. "This recognition truly belongs to our community-based nurses, whose compassion and dedication have reimagined what rural care can look like," Swanson said.

"We are deeply grateful to our recently retired executive, Gina Seufert, who led this work with vision and heart, our academic partners at OHSU and American Nurses Foundation, whose grant

made this innovation possible," continued Swanson. "When we combine innovation with state support and community collaboration, we break down barriers of care, giving us real hope for the future of rural healthcare."

Adventist Health Tillamook's CBNS program is now seen as a replicable and sustainable model for rural healthcare delivery, supported by new state legislation (HB 2789) passed into law last May that enables reimbursement for nurse-led community care.

The Oregon Rural Health Excellence Award recognizes hospitals, clinics, EMS agencies and community-based organizations demonstrating exceptional creativity, teamwork and resourcefulness in improving health outcomes across rural Oregon. The 2025 awardees were honored on Oct. 2, 2025 at the 42nd Oregon Rural Health Conference in Bend.



JOHN HAY  
Adventist Health  
Tillamook marketing and  
communication manager

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-AH-79](https://www.nwadventist.org/st/121-2-AH-79) 

**ANDERSON** – Glen “Chuck” Charles, 81; born Aug. 2, 1943, Tacoma, Washington; died Aug. 22, 2024, Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. Surviving: spouse, Susan; daughters, Kelly (Anderson) Sailas and Kristin (Anderson) Edwards; 3 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

**BOHLMAN** – Carolyn Joyce (Owen), 87; born Feb. 22, 1937, Cottage Grove, Oregon; died Nov. 29, 2025, College Place, Washington. Surviving: son, Brock; daughter, Lori (Bohlman) Marcoff; 6 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.

**CHAMBERLAIN** – Charles Berkley, 87; born July 22, 1936, Greybull, Wyoming; died Sept. 1, 2023, Walla Walla, Washington. Surviving: son, Randy; daughter, Gayle Chamberlain; stepsons, Blair Crumpacker and Mike Crumpacker; stepdaughter, Marilen Crumpacker; sisters, Jean (Chamberlain) Cates, Gleora (Conner) Martin and Rosa (Conner) Gilham; brothers, Bill Chamberlain and Fred Conner; 16 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

**CUMBO** – Roger W., 82; born June 29, 1943, Mason City, Washington; died Sept. 18, 2025, Coeur d’Alene, Idaho. Surviving: spouse, Sheila (Wilson); daughters, Corby (Cumbo) Hutton, Caren Cumbo and Camela (Cumbo) Vilendre; sister, Linda (Cumbo) Ravassipour; 1 grandchild.

**DUNKS** – Wallace Lee, 99; born June 22, 1924, Elgin, Texas; died Sept. 2, 2023, Springfield, Oregon. Surviving: sons, Joel Jocussaud and Michael Dunks; daughters, Kathy (Jocussaud) Cosey and Dixie (Dunks) Wurscher; 4 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

**DAVIS** – Nellie Bell (Soule), 89; born March 12, 1933, Memphis, Tennessee; died Aug. 4, 2023, Milton-Freewater, Oregon. Surviving: sons, Scott Davis and Timothy Metler; daughters, Michelle (Davis) Dale and Debbie (Davis) Berglund; 6 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

**DODD** – Shirley Mae (Armstead), 96; born May 11, 1926, Seattle, Washington; died Aug. 28, 2022, Kennewick, Washington. Surviving: son, Rodney; daughter, Darlene (Dodd) Winter; 2 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

**GILLILAND** – Paul Eugene, 83; born July 3, 1942, Bismarck, North Dakota; died Nov. 16, 2025, Portland, Oregon. Surviving: spouse, Janet (Jeske); daughters, Shawna Gilliland and Shelly Gilliland; 3 grandchildren.

**GLATT** – Norma Marie (Grovet), 100; born 1924, Galahad, Alberta, Canada; died Feb. 21, 2024, La Combe, Alberta, Canada. Surviving: sons, Gary and Greg; brother, Earling Grovet; 1 grandchild.

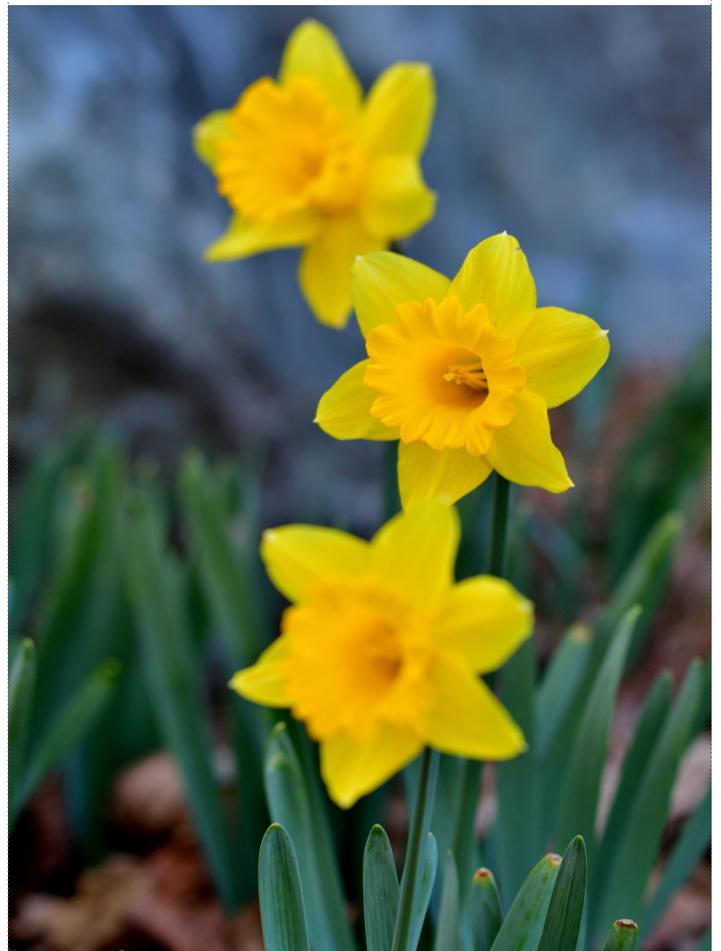
**GRUSSLING** – Peter, 88; born March 18, 1937, Babina, Gora, Croatia; died Dec. 5, 2025, Walla Walla, Washington. Surviving: spouse, Agapita; sons, Jay, Kevin, Rovin, Rodney and Tory; 9 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

**HAWK** – Paul D., 90; born May 9, 1935, Hamilton, Ohio; died Sept. 23, 2025, Springfield, Oregon. Surviving: spouse, Vicki (Harvey); sons, Maurice and Anthony; 3 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

**HALL** – Anna Lou (Denison), 84; born Oct. 26, 1938, Memphis, Tennessee; died Oct. 14, 2023, Milton-Freewater, Oregon. Surviving: sons, Karl and Kurt; brother, Jesse Denison.

**HOLCK** – Jacqueline Mae (Peterson), previously Jacqueline Sperl, Jacqueline Schwieler, 87; born Nov. 14, 1935, Los Angeles, California; died June 29, 2023, Portland, Oregon. Surviving: son, Phillip Sperl.

**HOUSE GIBSON** – Marilyn Elaine, 81; born Feb. 4, 1942, Hillsboro, Oregon; died April 8, 2023, Carlton, Washington. Surviving: daughter, Emily Gibson; stepsons, Eric Gibson, Christopher Gibson and Michael Gibson; sister, Rosalyn House Meyer; 1 grandchild.



**HUMPHREY** – Gil Alan, 72; born July 15, 1950, Eugene, Oregon; died Sept. 30, 2023, Springfield, Oregon. Surviving: spouse, Jeri (Moore); sons, Brendan, Kyle and Garth; daughters, Siri Humphrey, Tiara (Humphrey) Scribner and Corallyn (Humphrey) Flory; brother, Brent; sisters, Alana (Humphrey) Feldman and Trudy (Humphrey) Milton; 8 grandchildren.

**HUNT** – Darrell Lee, 69; born Aug. 19, 1956, Moscow, Idaho; died Nov. 2, 2025, Troy, Idaho. Surviving: spouse, Dixie Dorner Hunt; son, Devin; daughter, Denae' Hunt Kramer; brother, Marvin; sisters, Yvonne Nelson, Evelyn Laws, Wanda Douglas, Velda Grubbs and Brenda Hunt; 1 grandchild.

**HUTSON** – Yvonne Janette (Hutson), previously Yvonne Nobriga, 70; born Sept. 24, 1953, Korea; died Dec. 1, 2023, College Place, Washington. Surviving: sons, Jason Nobriga and Urancha Nobriga; daughter, Lotus Nobriga; sisters, Carolyn (Hutson) Harris, Marilyn (Hutson) Olson, Reitha (Hutson) Parks and Robbie (Hutson) Schwarz; 10 grandchildren.

**IM** – Sung Min, 87; born Oct. 8, 1938, South Korea; died Nov. 30, 2025, Sacramento, California. Surviving: spouse, Peggy; son, Ray; daughter, Jenny Im; 2 grandchildren.

**KHRAPOV** – Alexey Alexeevich, 86; born May 26, 1937, Gissar, Tajikistan; died Nov. 9, 2023, Walla Walla, Washington. Surviving: spouse, Nina Khrapova; sons, Alexey, Vassilli and Pavel; daughters, Liubov (Khrapova) Brunton, Vera (Khrapova) Shevtsova, Elena (Khrapova) Mann and Marina (Khrapova) Johns; brother, Boris; 14 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

**LEAVELLE** – Sandra Lee (Sayles), 84; born Jan. 7, 1941, Portland, Oregon; died Oct. 11, 2025, Rochester, Minnesota. Surviving: spouse, Dennis; sons, Brad; daughters, Becky Rice and Brenda Leavelle; 4 grandchildren.

**LOPEZ** – Harvey Dale, 66; born Jan. 20, 1959, Everett, Washington; died Oct. 2, 2025, Kent, Washington. Surviving: sisters, Rita McGinnis and Geneva Martin.

**LOPEZ-MONTOYA** – Verita Lee, 78; born May 31, 1947, Santa Barbara, California; died Sept. 10, 2025, Medford, Oregon. Surviving: father, Manuel Lopez; sons, John Montoya Jr., Phillip Montoya and Steven Montoya; sister, Doris Lopez; 4 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

**MATSON** – Ruth Olive (Weckhorst), 85; born Sept. 20, 1938, Shelton, Washington; died Sept. 26, 2023, Bonney Lake, Washington. Surviving: spouse, Vic; sons, Greg and Jeff; daughter, Lora; 3 grandchildren.

1940–2025

## BETTY LOUISE (BREDELL) STONE

Betty Louise (Bredell) Stone passed away peacefully at home in Milwaukie, Oregon, surrounded by her family, on Feb. 15, 2025 at the age of 84. She was born on Nov. 29, 1940 in Portland, Oregon, and lived a life filled with love, warmth and creativity.

She is survived by her loving husband, Bob Stone; children, Peter Blank and LeAnne Nine; daughter-in-law, Brenda Blank; son-in-law, Derek; and grandson, Mason Blank. She is also survived by her stepdaughter, Tanya; step-granddaughter, Ayla; and her step-grandson, Max. Stone was preceded in death by her father, mother, brother and sister.

Stone graduated from Walla Walla College in the class of 1963, with a home economics major and a religion minor.

Stone had a lifelong passion for quilting, and she poured her heart into every piece she created. Her quilts were more than fabric and thread – they were lasting gifts of love and care for her family and friends.

She was a light in the lives of all who knew her, and her memory will live on in the many lives she touched with her warmth, generosity and gentle spirit.



**NIDEROST** – Ethel “Lou” Sadie (Naught), 96; born Oct. 12, 1928, Medford, Oregon; died Oct. 16, 2025, Walla Walla, Washington. Surviving: daughters, Janette (Niderost) Anderson and Cherie (Niderost) Conger; 5 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren and 1 great-great-grandchild.

**NOEL** – Idana Elizabeth (White), 100; born July 3, 1925, Reedsburg, Wisconsin; died Nov. 5, 2025, College Place, Washington. Surviving: son, David; daughters, Diane (Noel) Rannow and Debbie (Noel) Brown; 3 grandchildren.

**OLSON** – Koko Karol, 71; born July 21, 1953, Williston, North Dakota; died June 10, 2025, Jasper, Tennessee. Surviving: spouse, Billy Campbell; sons, Austin Campbell, Alec Campbell and Joshua Campbell; brothers, J.W. Olson, Rick Olson and David Olson; sisters, Debra (Olson) Fahey, Jean (Olson) Base and Lynae (Olson) Martin; 12 grandchildren.

**PERRIGOUÉ**—Lawrence R., 100; born Feb. 10, 1924, Monroe, Washington; died June 25, 2024, Eugene, Oregon. Surviving: son, William; daughters, Mary (Perrigoué) Doll, Tina (Perrigoué) Gazaway and Sheila Johnson; 16 grandchildren.

**PECKHAM**—Norman Harold, 88; born April 30, 1936, Portland, Oregon; died Jan. 10, 2025, Bonney Lake, Washington. Surviving: spouse, Bonnie (Hamren); sons, Lon and Robyn; daughter, Kelly Ann; brother, Louis; 4 grandchildren, 2 step-grandchildren and 5 step-great-grandchildren.

**REISWIG**—Bettigene Delores (Frach), previously Bettigene Ford, Bettigene Pate, 97; born Oct. 6, 1928, Portland, Oregon; died Nov. 30, 2025, Gresham, Oregon. Surviving: sons, Lawrence Ford and Donald Pate; daughter, Farrell Ford; 5 grandchildren.

**SHARLEEN**—Kaye (Barnhart), previously Kaye Cooper, 84; born April 20, 1940, Sykeston, North Dakota; died July 31, 2024, Grants Pass, Oregon. Surviving: daughter, Sheree Boyer.

**SHARON**—Nancy Joyce (Monteith), 79; born Aug. 19, 1944, Eugene, Oregon; died Nov. 2, 2023, Milton-Freewater, Oregon. Surviving: spouse, Larry; son, Jim; daughter, Tammy Sharon; brothers, Monte Monteith and Mike Monteith; 1 grandchild.

**SIEGER**—Eunice Thelma, previously Eunice Knauff, 78; born Nov. 11, 1945, Mission, Texas; died Nov. 11, 2023, Seattle, Washington. Surviving: sons, Ted Knauff, Sam Knauff and Tom Knauff; daughter, Holly Knauff; brothers, Edward, Philip and Robert; sisters, Pat Sieger, Barbara (Sieger) Rath and Phylis (Sieger) Ferrier; 7 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild.

**STURGIS**—Leslie “Les” Paul, 72; born Dec. 10, 1951, Jacksonville, Florida; died Oct. 3, 2024, Forest Grove, Oregon. Surviving: spouse, Cheryl (McCune); son, Matthew; daughter, Melissa Sturgis; brothers, Rex and Peter.

**VAN FOSSEN**—Donna Marian (Steinfort), previously Donna Kohler, 87; born Nov. 18, 1937, Holland, Michigan; died Aug. 13, 2024, Seattle, Washington. Surviving: daughters, Becky Hansen, Bonnie Parle and Julie Pangilian; 3 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

**VAN FOSSEN**—Kenneth Willard, 87; born Nov. 9, 1938, Holly, Michigan; died Nov. 6, 2025, Seattle, Washington. Surviving: daughters, Becky Hansen, Bonnie Parle and Julie Pangilian; sister, Betty Bell; 3 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren and 1 great-great-grandchild.

**WAGONER**—Edna M. (Wood), previously Edna Sanders, 89; born July 10, 1934, Hill City, South Dakota; died Dec. 27, 2023, Hood River, Oregon. Surviving: sons, Joey Sanders and Dean Wagoner; daughter Nancy (Wagoner) Aukland; brother, Clarence Wood; sisters, Teresa (Wood) Glasgow, Wanda (Wood) Foss and Betty Wood; 6 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren and 4 great-great-grandchildren.

**WALDAL**—Barbara Jean (Rouse), previously Barbara Opp, 84; born Feb. 9, 1938, Helena, Montana; died Sept. 3, 2022, Altamonte Springs, Florida. Surviving: sons, Randy Opp and Shaun Opp; daughters, Krystal (Opp) Tavasci and Diane Opp; 9 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

**WHITE**—Julie Renee, 51; born March 9, 1974, Klamath Falls, Oregon; died Oct. 2, 2025, Salem, Oregon. Surviving: father, Glenn White; mother, Sandy (Haughey) White; daughter, Olivia Lyon; brother, Scott White; sister, Teresa (White) Price.

*All family announcements are published online at [nwadventists.com/family](http://nwadventists.com/family). To submit family announcements, go to [nwadventists.com/contribute](http://nwadventists.com/contribute). To publish an expanded obituary with a short bio and photo, contact [info@nwadventists.com](mailto: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

*The Lord is close to the  
brokenhearted and saves those  
who are crushed in spirit.*

PSALM 34:18

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907-346-1004 • [alaskaconference.org](http://alaskaconference.org)  
Rodney Mills, president; Ashwin Somasundram, v.p. administration; Garrett Holmes, v.p. finance

### IDAHO CONFERENCE

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## NORTH PACIFIC UNION

### Offering

- March 7—Local Church Budget
- March 14—Adventist World Radio (GC)
- March 21—Local Church Budget
- March 28—Local Conference Advance
- April 4—Local Church Budget
- April 11—Hope Channel International (GC)
- April 18—Local Church Budget
- April 25—Local Conference Advance

### Official Notice: NPUC and WWU Constituency Sessions

Official notice is hereby given that the 30th regular constituency meeting of the North Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and Walla Walla University will be held at Walla Walla University Church, 212 SW 4th Street, College Place, Washington, on Aug. 23, 2026, at 9 a.m. The purpose of the constituency meeting is to present reports covering the previous session period ending Dec. 31, 2025; to elect executive officers and other vice presidents, and the executive committee for the ensuing quinquennial period; to consider and act upon recommended changes to the bylaws; and to transact such other business as may properly come before the delegates.

The present bylaws provide that the delegates to this meeting shall be duly appointed delegates from the local conferences within the union and certain ex officio and other delegates. Registration of delegates is scheduled to take place at Walla Walla University Church from 8–9 a.m., Aug. 23, 2026. All duly appointed delegates are urged to attend this constituency session.

*John Freedman, NPUC president and WWU board chair*

*Bill McClendon, NPUC vice president for administration*

## MONTANA CONFERENCE

### Montana Conference Constituency Session Legal Notice

Notice is hereby given that the 64th Regular Session (quadrennium) of the Montana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Inc., under the laws of the state of Montana, will be held in the gymnasium/auditorium on the campus of Mount Ellis Academy, Bozeman, Montana, July 19, 2026, beginning at 9 a.m. This session is called for the purpose of electing officers and departmental staff for the ensuing term, to elect a Board of Directors, to elect an Articles and By-laws Committee, to consider amendments to the by-laws, and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the session. Each church in the conference is entitled to one delegate plus one delegate for each 17 members or major fraction thereof.

*Jim Jenkins, Montana Conference president*

## OREGON CONFERENCE

### Columbia Adventist Academy Alumni Reunion

CAA Alumni! We are anxious to see you at our upcoming Alumni Homecoming April 10–11. We are excited to have you back on campus and taking part in all the weekend activities, beginning Friday evening in the forum with the Class of '16 and continuing Saturday morning with a special feature in the church sanctuary with the Class of '06. Tours of the campus will be available, and we hope to see all of you there for a great reunion time of stories and laughter. For more information, visit [caaschool.org/alumni/](https://caaschool.org/alumni/).

*"For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground;  
I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.  
They shall spring up among the grass like willows by flowing streams."*

Isaiah 44:3-4



IT'S BEGINNING TO  
**RAIN**

College Place, Washington

Ministerial Convention | Aug. 19-22  
NPUC-wide Church Livestream | Aug. 22  
NPUC & WWU Constituency Session | Aug. 23





# ALWAYS ENOUGH TO SHARE



People hurried along city streets and country roads to see Jesus.

They gathered close to hear His gentle words. They watched Him heal sick people who came to Him.

The crowd stayed with Jesus all day. They did not notice the cool breeze coming from the mountains as the sun went down. They forgot they had not eaten since breakfast. Imagine that!

Jesus' special friends, the 12 disciples, were tired and hungry. "Please," they said. "Send the people away so they can get food."

But Jesus said to Philip, "Let's give them food. Where can we buy it?"

Philip looked at the huge crowd. There were thousands of people! He knew they did not have enough money to buy food for everyone.

Andrew, another disciple, spoke up. "Here is a boy with five loaves of barley bread and two little fish. But that is not enough for so many people" (John 6:9).

What Jesus did next impressed the disciples so much that the story appears in all four gospels. He asked everyone to sit down on the grass. Next, He thanked God for the bread. He gave the bread to the disciples to share. Then, He thanked God for the fish and shared it too.

The food did not run out! Everyone ate until they were full. When they were done, the disciples picked up the leftovers. There were 12 baskets full of food.

Jesus taught His friends that God gives us what we need to help others.

We are Jesus' friends too! He gives to us so we can share with others. We can share a smile and some kind words. We can tell a Bible story or talk about how Jesus helps us feel happy. We can share food, like a loaf of bread or a sandwich!

When we share, we always have more to share. God's goodness never runs out. There has always been more than enough for everyone.

*You can read Matt. 14:13–21 for family worship. Compare it with Mark 6:30–44, Luke 9:10–17 and John 6:1–14.*



PAULA WART  
*Just for Kids columnist*

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/121-2-KIDS-88](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-KIDS-88)

# MULTIPLYING FISH

God can take a little and turn it into plenty. This craft reminds us that God's blessings never run out!



## You'll need:

- » Construction paper (as many colors as you want)
- » Pencil or pen
- » Scissors
- » Crayons or markers (optional)
- » Tape or stapler

## Make a Basket for Fish

- » Fold a piece of paper in half across the middle so the short sides touch. The paper should be like a burger bun, not a hot dog bun.
- » Tape or staple the sides together to make a simple basket.
- » Decorate your basket. You can write a special message that reminds you of when Jesus multiplied the five loaves and two fish.

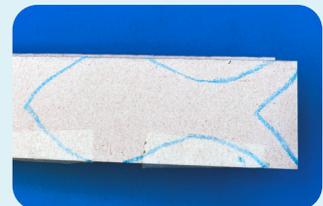
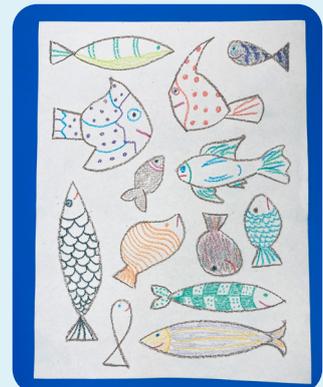
**Level up:** Weave a paper basket. Cut 1-inch paper strips and weave a paper basket. Tape or staple the ends together so your woven basket can hold your fish.

## Fill the Basket With Fish

- » On a piece of paper, draw fish of all shapes and sizes. You can draw mouths and scales on them if you would like.
- » Cut out the fish.
- » Add them to the basket.

**Level up:** Create a fish chain. Fold a 3-inch wide paper strip back and forth in a zigzag fashion. On the top fold, draw the shape of a fish. The sides of the fish should touch both folded edges. The head and fin should touch each of the cut ends. Cut out the fish shape and open up your chain to see the connected fish. You can tape fish chains together to have a never-ending supply of fish!

**God does not just give enough —  
He gives more than enough!**



PAULA WART  
*Just for Kids*  
columnist

More online at  
[NWADVENT.ST/121-2-KIDS-89](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-KIDS-89)

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY PAULA WART



# A Vision of God's Heart



There are times in our lives when we need the gentle nudge of a friend to get us to participate in something

beneficial to us. That was the case for me and my first trip to the Holy Land, except I didn't require a nudge; I required a push.

About 10 years ago, Washington Conference sponsored a spiritual enrichment series of Holy Land trips for pastors. My ministerial director was relentlessly encouraging me to go, and I was resisting him.

Finally, he told me this was the last trip and if I didn't go, I'd lose the opportunity. He strongly emphasized how important it was for me to go. I signed up in fall 2019.

Then came the pandemic, which postponed our trip. Finally, in 2022, I found myself on a plane with a group of colleagues traveling to Jordan and Israel.

Prior to going on the Holy Land trip, the only site I had more than a superficial interest in visiting was Mount Nebo, the place where Moses died. I was intrigued to see Mount Nebo because one of my seminary professors mentioned that before

Moses died, God showed him in vision far more than can be seen from the mountaintop – see Deut. 34:1-5.

From the top of Mount Nebo, you can see the Jordan River Valley and the Jordan River itself, where it flows into the Dead Sea. You can see the northern half of the Dead Sea and the Judean hills that line the western side of the valley. You can see Jericho and Qumran – where the

Dead Sea Scrolls were composed and preserved for nearly 2000 years. On a clear day, you can see Jerusalem in the distance.

Deut. 34:2 mentions several regions that cannot be seen from Mount Nebo. For instance, it says that God showed Moses the land Naphtali, north and west of Mount Nebo; Ephraim, west beyond the hills opposite Mount Nebo; Manasseh, north of Mount Nebo; and Judah, west of Mount Nebo, as far as the western sea, which is understood to be the Mediterranean Sea. Moses saw the Promised Land, even though he could not experience it.

Moses labored 40 years as the leader of the Israelites. He was provoked many times by the people. During one such trial, he disobeyed the command of God and was disqualified from entering the Promised Land.

Moses was allowed to lead the Israelites to the border of the Promised Land, but he was not allowed to enter. God did, however, give Moses a glimpse of the place that he had labored so long to enter. Ellen G. White adds in *Patriarchs and Prophets* pages 472-477 that Moses was allowed to peek into the ages to come and see the Israelites in possession of the land, the Savior himself and finally the earth restored.

And then Moses died. We know that God resurrected Moses and took him to heaven. Moses entered the true Promised Land, which surpasses the earthly Promised Land in every way.

MARTIN WALLACE



AUTHOR

Ryan Wilson

Moses died, God showed him in



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*... God does not simply desire to give us an earthly inheritance, but to bring us home.*

After a very long flight and a short night's sleep, I found myself standing on Mount Nebo looking out over the Jordan River Valley. As I considered what I was able to see, what I could not see that God had shown Moses and the reward Moses received after his death, I began to cry. I realized in that moment that this was not just a trip; this was a pilgrimage.

I was standing very near the place where God had given Moses that incredible vision. The whole story seemed so much more real and much more powerful. God

was calling me into a deeper comprehension of His heart. God was whispering to my heart how He longs to be reunited with us.

I clearly saw in that moment that God does not simply desire to give us an earthly inheritance, but to bring us home. My vision had been too short-sighted. I needed to look beyond the horizon to what is not seen. I needed God to enhance my vision to see how His heart yearns for us, just as a father should care for his children. I needed to set my hopes beyond the things of this earth and onto God himself.

Friend, how's your vision? Are you stuck on the immediate things you see? As you consider the story of Moses' final moments and how God honored and rewarded his life of faithful service, what is God telling you about Himself? What is His invitation to greater vision? What is your response?

RYAN WILSON

*Bible history columnist*



# Whose Disciples Are We?

M

y husband, Marshall, has a saying and I believe it to be true: “What we win people with, we win people to.”

All too often, we hear sad news of some mega church pastor who had a major moral failing and how their church completely fell apart, leaving most people grappling with whether they still believe in God or not.

How can a church with thousands of people fall apart and end in people leaving their faith when one man or woman makes a terrible mistake? Could it be because they were following a man or woman and not Jesus?

If the exciting pastor, fancy building, delicious food, hot coffee, amazingly friendly people, etc., are what fill a church, it’s only a matter of time before the whole thing falls apart.

When the mission of the church or believers is to first convert people to Sabbath keeping, vegetarianism or preparation for the end of time, we only win people to those ideas.

Each of those beliefs is important and good, but remember: What we win people with, we win people to. Just keeping the seventh-day Sabbath or choosing a vegan lifestyle are

not enough to save you. If they were, a large portion of the world today would be saved just because of their diet.

If worrying enough about what will take place right before Jesus’ return was capable of saving

people, it would mean we could, in essence, save ourselves rather than relying on Jesus to save us.

Jesus’ words should be our guide when working to be disciple makers. Matt. 28:18–20 says, “And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”

What can we learn from these verses in relation to disciple-making?

First, all authority has been given to Jesus. He is God; He is the one we are to lead people to, not ourselves. We only have some authority because Jesus gives us His Spirit; it is not something we have in ourselves. We are told to make disciples because Jesus is with us and because we are discipling people to Him, not ourselves. This isn’t about us; it is about Jesus.

Second, we are to teach people what Jesus has commanded us. So, what do we teach people first? Rules, do’s and don’ts, fears and stress? No! We start with Jesus!

When someone has had a personal encounter with Jesus, when they have had their life transformed because of His dwelling in them, they are truly changed. Their life is never the same. They have been made new and this change will last.

If they only change because we told them they have to, come



AUTHOR

Natashia McVay



## PERSPECTIVE

*If you believe in Jesus and have accepted Him into your life, you are called by Him to make disciples – fellow followers of Jesus.*

hardship or disaster within the church, they will quickly fall away.

The only way to weather the storms of this life is to have a belief in Jesus that is rooted in a personal relationship with Him. Our job as followers of Jesus is to instill the necessity of a personal relationship with Him.

We are to point people to Jesus, that their focus may be fixed upon Him. Then, no matter the failings of people inside or outside the church, their trust in God will not be shaken because they are first focused on Jesus.

If you believe in Jesus and have accepted Him into your life, you are called by Him to make disciples – fellow followers of Jesus.

What disciples do you desire to make? Are you leading others to follow you or the all-loving God of the universe?

Will you help lead people to Jesus and then step back a bit and let their gaze and attention rest more on Him than on yourself? I challenge you as you interact and study with people to remember that it's Jesus we are to draw people toward. All our earthly

effort is to be God's hands and feet in drawing people toward Him, not ourselves.

We are to work for God to help shepherd people toward Him!

May people see Jesus through us and be ever drawn to Him as we strive to disciple people toward Him.



NATASHIA MCVAY  
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# When Your Paycheck Disappears: WHY 'ENOUGH' IS NEVER 'ENOUGH'

**T**

he money hits your account on Friday. By Wednesday, you're wondering where it went.

In January, I shared my parents' approach to stewardship—my father's radical generosity and my mother's practical envelope system. Today, I'm writing about why adequate income somehow "never" stretches to the next payday.

The refrigerator breaks. The car needs tires. School expenses arise. Before you know it, you're juggling bills and praying for financial miracles.

Here's the uncomfortable truth I've had to face: The problem often isn't the size of our paycheck; it's our relationship with money and how we manage what God has already provided.

## WHAT YOUR BUDGET REVEALS

Jesus taught something radical in Matt. 6:31-33: "Do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

God already knows what we need. He promises provision for those who prioritize His kingdom. However, provision doesn't mean God will magically make money appear. Rather, He gives us the capacity to earn, the wisdom to

manage and the discipline to multiply what He provides.

Our budget—how we spend our money—reveals what we truly believe about God's provision. We may say we trust God, but our purchasing patterns tell the real story.

## WHAT WORKS AGAINST US

Why does enough rarely feel like enough? Several forces work against our fixed income. Lifestyle inflation means that as income grows, spending grows faster. Social media shows us what others have, creating artificial "needs." Small unconsidered purchases drain hundreds monthly. Many of us weren't taught how money actually works.

Each of these works against the financial margin we need for generous, joyful stewardship.

## MY MOTHER'S SYSTEM

Remember my mother's envelope system from January? Let me show you how it worked.

When my father's modest pastoral salary arrived, my mother had already planned its deployment. She used a simple folder with labeled envelopes: tithe, offerings, food, clothing, transportation, education, utilities and, importantly, savings. Each envelope received its predetermined amount. "An empty envelope means no more

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More online at  
[NWADVENT.ST/121-2-POV-86](http://NWADVENT.ST/121-2-POV-86)



## PERSPECTIVE

*God provides the capacity to earn. We're called to manage what He provides with wisdom that honors His kingdom. When we do, we discover that enough really is enough.*

money for that activity until it's replenished," she would explain.

This wasn't punishment; it was wisdom. It taught us to live within God's provision rather than beyond it.

What made her system brilliant was that she included a savings envelope that received money first, not last. She understood something profound: If we wait to save what's "left over," there rarely is any left over.

### THE 1/12 PRINCIPLE I'M LEARNING

I want to share something practical that's been changing my financial reality: the 1/12 principle.

Save 1/12 – about 8.3% – of your monthly income consistently. This creates a 13th "month" of income within 12 months. Initially, this fund serves as your emergency cushion – the buffer that prevents small crises from becoming financial catastrophes. Later, once you've built adequate reserves, that same discipline

becomes your investment fund for future kingdom opportunities.

This isn't about accumulating wealth for its own sake. It's about wise stewardship that creates financial margin for generous living.

Simultaneously, calculate your annual irregular expenses – insurance, vehicle maintenance, holiday giving – and divide by 12. Set aside that monthly amount so you're prepared when these "unexpected" but predictable expenses arrive.

I'll be honest, I'm not perfect at this, but I'm learning.

### CREATING MARGIN FOR MINISTRY

Financial discipline isn't the goal – it's the pathway. When we manage money wisely, we create margin. That margin provides freedom to respond to the Holy Spirit's promptings for generosity, capacity to serve without stress and resources for kingdom opportunities.

This connects to our personal relationship and dialogue with God. When we ask, "God, what would You have me do with this?" we need margin to actually respond.

### WHERE TO BEGIN

This month, maybe start your 1/12 savings habit, even with just \$50 monthly, or track one week of spending without judgment – just awareness. Have an honest conversation with God about the difference between your needs and wants.

God provides the capacity to earn. We're called to manage what He provides with wisdom that honors His kingdom. When we do, we discover that enough really is enough.

Every day can be wonderful when we're walking in God's provision with open hands and faithful hearts.

OSCAR "MIKE" SÁNCHEZ

*Counting What Counts* columnist



# An Invitation, Not an Ending

**WHAT HAPPENS WHEN GENERATIONS COME TOGETHER – WHEN WISDOM EARNED OVER DECADES MEETS FRESH ENERGY AND NEW IDEAS?**

For this Sabbath School-themed issue, I was grateful for the opportunity to listen and learn from several Northwest teachers recommended by *Gleaner* readers.

Just after the cover feature deadline, I spoke with Joan Smith from North Cascade Church in Burlington, Washington. After 51 years of teaching little ones that Jesus loves them, she recognizes it's time to make room for the next generation—a group she has been mentoring through various volunteer roles.

Where some churches wrestle with the question—*Where is the next generation?*—Smith's experience offers a hopeful answer. They are already among us, growing through invitation, mentorship and trust.

Take, for example, Darla Morgan, a product of southwest Washington and a pediatric occupational therapist, who was invited nearly four years ago to blend developmental knowledge, childhood routines and disciple-making at Whipple Creek Church in Ridgefield, Washington.

Each week, Morgan creatively invites little ones to engage through simple classroom “task cards,” independently or with parental help, as a way of reinforcing participation, shared worship and belonging. Whether in prayer, activities, songs, Bible stories or even small classroom responsibilities, each child is reminded that they are a valued part of the church community.

Through thoughtful, age-appropriate engagement, Darla Morgan, Sabbath School teacher, is helping children discover early that they belong—and that leadership begins with participation.

“We try to meet everyone where they are and show that they have value in God’s church, no matter their age,” Morgan said. “We are training our future leaders.”

Across these conversations, I was struck by the intentionality Sabbath School teachers bring to disciple-making.

Each one interprets shared resources through the lens of their calling, community and season of life. Faithfulness, it turns out, doesn't always look the same from one generation to the next.

Perhaps the invitation before us is one of grace—to honor what has come before and to allow room for what is still taking shape.

Seasoned leaders carry wisdom that cannot be replaced; emerging leaders bring curiosity, creativity and a willingness to try something new. Both are gifts to the church.

Each generation, in their own way, is making an eternal investment.

When we make space for one another—to grow, experiment, discover and sometimes let go—we reflect a church that trusts God not only with its past, but also with its future.

Whether methods feel familiar or freshly imagined, the heart of Sabbath School remains the same—meeting people where they are, helping them understand their value in God’s church and preparing them, at every stage, for lives of faith, discipleship and leadership.

HEIDI BAUMGARTNER  
*North Pacific Union communication director and Gleaner editor*



REMSCAPE

AUTHOR Heidi Baumgartner



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## TABLE TALK PROMPT

What has shaped your view of Sabbath School—whether through positive experiences or challenges—and what insights or hopes do you carry forward?

*Let's keep the conversation going. Share highlights of your table talk stories and reflections by emailing [talk@nwadventists.com](mailto:talk@nwadventists.com).*

HEIDI BAUMGARTNER



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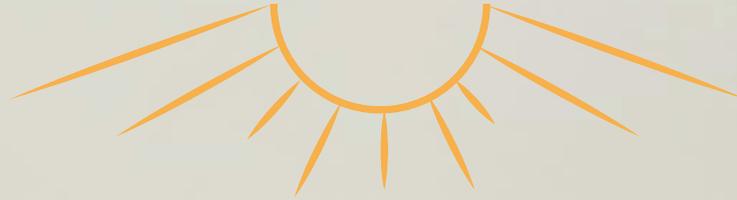
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