

EDITORIAL
A Gift to Live By

PERSPECTIVE
Leaving the World Behind

TABLE TALK
Listening Again

gleaner

NORTHWEST ADVENTISTS IN ACTION




The Village of Faith

How Connecting Generations
Strengthens Our Spiritual Community



NOV/DEC
2024
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*And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.
Genesis 17:7*

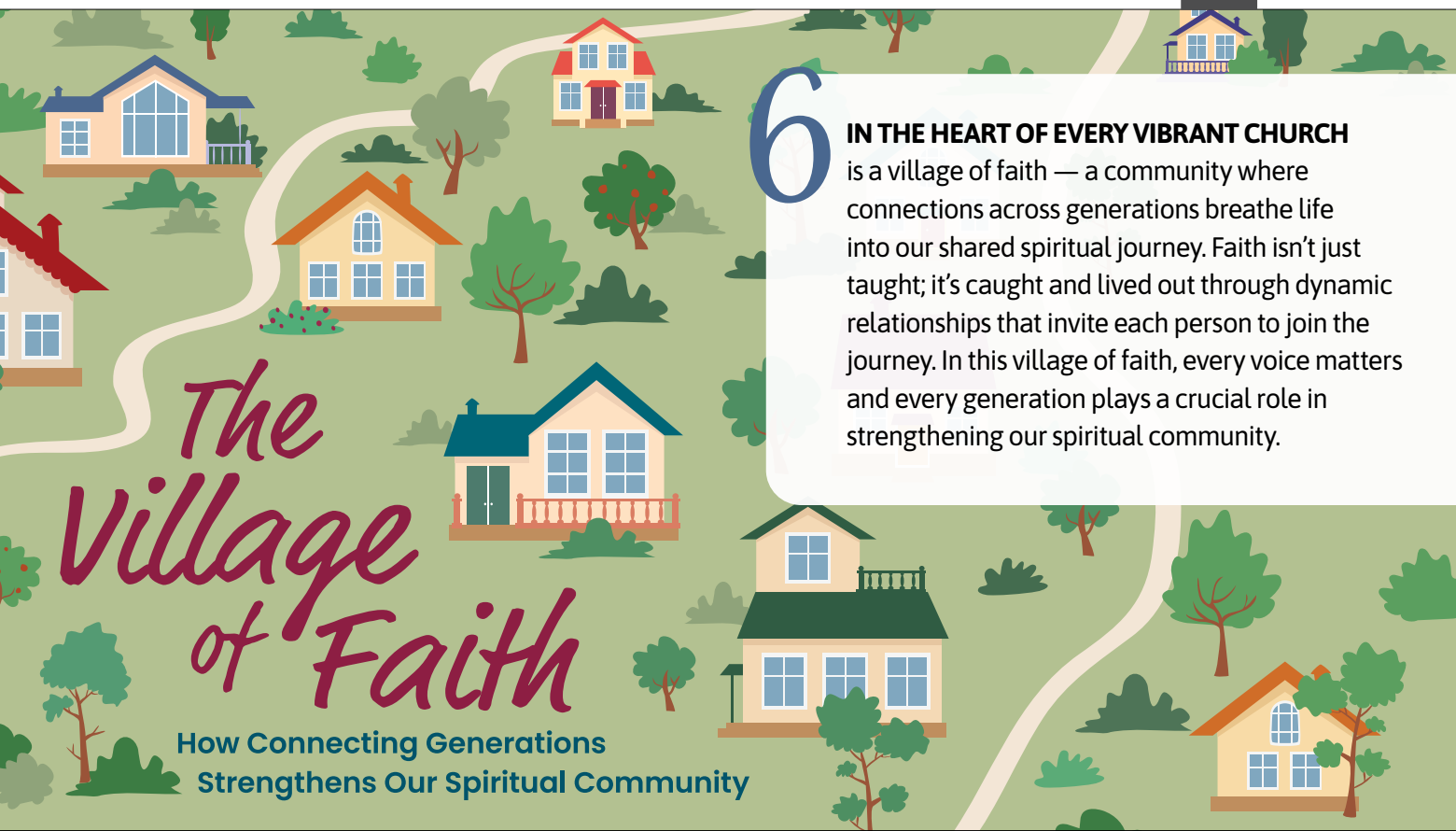
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Leaving the World Behind

THE EXCITEMENT OF SPACE TRAVEL has captivated the known world for millennia. Why does leaving this planet excite us so much as human beings? Shouldn't we be happy here on this planet? How do we as Adventist Christians answer this question today?

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A GIFT TO LIVE BY

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST IS A SOLID BIBLICAL TEACHING — ONE OF OUR CORE FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS — THAT FORMS A MAJOR PART OF OUR IDENTITY AS ADVENTISTS.



JOHN FREEDMAN
North Pacific Union president

In Matt. 24, Jesus describes the signs which reveal the time of His Second Coming is near, however, He told us the “day and the hour no one knows ... but the Father only.”

He reveals what the Second Coming will look like, so we are not deceived by false teachings. Jesus tells us plainly that there will be a “delay” in His return. There will be “wars and rumors of wars ... nation will rise against nation ... famines, pestilences, earthquakes ... tribulation ... persecution ... false prophets.” Because of lawlessness, “the love of many will grow cold” (Matt. 24:6-12).

Jesus clearly and honestly reveals that the world will be a dangerous place until He returns. This is not good news for us now. But does this mean our only hope lies in waiting for His Second Coming?

The good news for us now is Jesus Christ! His death for our sins, His burial and His resurrection are our only hope.

On the cross, Jesus took our sin, guilt and shame upon Himself. The consequence of carrying our sin was death. His burial buried our sin, shame and guilt forever separating them from us.

We’ve been set free and there is now “no condemnation” to those who believe in Jesus and walk by His Spirit. Christ burst forth from the tomb conquering death and sin. The grave could not hold Him. Christ’s victory became our victory. We have been set free from bondage to sin and are now empowered to live an abundant life in Christ.

Christ’s transparency of a delay in His return is refreshing. Even more powerful is the reason for the delay that we find in Peter’s writings.

“Scoffers will come in the last days ... saying, ‘Where is the promise of His coming?’ ... The Lord is not slack concerning His promise ... but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:3,4,9).

The purpose of the delay is for the salvation of as many people as possible! This is our mission.

Matt. 24:14 is often quoted as a sign of the Second Coming, but it also points to our mission: “This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all nations and then the end will come.”

In this world, during the delay of the Second Coming, we are to preach, share and teach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Why? Jesus is our only hope in this world. God wills that none of us are lost, but that all should receive salvation.



Some of the best gifts you can offer are simply listening, inviting people into your home and sharing your life with them.

Sharing the gospel is our *mission!* We find it repeated in Matt. 28, Acts 1 and Rev. 14.

We are first and foremost the children of God. Our life finds purpose when we are accomplishing our mission. We find joy and peace in moving forward our mission for the salvation of those who have not yet experienced the truth about our loving and merciful God.

The holiday season is an incredible time to show gratitude for the kindness of God by showing kindness to others. Just as God gave us the ultimate gift of His Son, this is a wonderful time to give gifts to others. The most powerful gift God gave was Himself, and that gift has impacted us more than anything else.

The Father sent the Son to take on our human flesh, become one with us and die for our sins. He poured out the Holy Spirit who willingly lives in those who believe in Christ as the Son of God.

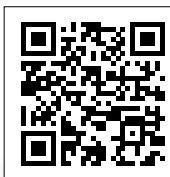
God's desire is for us to know Him and spend time with Him. We are invited into a transformative relationship where we are changed into the very image of God, one day at a time.

Others need to see God in the flesh – through our grateful lives. They also experience God when we give small gifts,

whether through acts of kindness or the gift of time and appreciation. Some of the best gifts you can offer are simply listening, inviting people into your home and sharing your life with them. It doesn't need to be fancy or lavish. Pour yourself into others, listen to their hearts and appreciate them. These gifts are priceless.

As the Holy Spirit lives in you, He will give you the words to point others to Jesus. When people see Jesus in your everyday acts of caring and kindness, they will be more open to receiving the God you know.

In light of this, consider participating in the Pentecost 2025 evangelism initiative, a movement inviting believers to share their faith through proclamation events. These are powerful opportunities to share the hope and love of Christ in meaningful ways, leading others into the same transformative relationship with God. By allowing God to work through us, we can help bring others closer to Him.



JOHN FREEDMAN
North Pacific Union president

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/119-6-EDT-21](https://nwadvent.st/119-6-EDT-21) 

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"Freezing March," in Coldfoot, Alaska, by William Frohne, of Walla Walla, Washington.






The Village of Faith

How Connecting Generations
Strengthens Our Spiritual Community

In the heart of every vibrant church is a village of faith — a community where connections across generations breathe life into our shared spiritual journey. Faith isn't just taught; it's caught and lived out through dynamic relationships that invite each person, of each generation, to join the journey.



Beloved youth ministries across the Adventist Church have made a monumental impact by nurturing hearts and shaping young minds through the years. However, when the focus becomes too program-centric, the relational aspect can diminish in its effectiveness.

Recognizing this, North Pacific Union administrators, leaders and pastors continue to advocate for a vital shift back to deeper connections, championing the “Growing Together” initiative—a commitment to authenticity and intentionality that seeks to address the emerging needs of young people.

This approach focuses not on creating new programs but on revitalizing the relational aspects of ministry. The Growing Together Cohort for church revitalization exemplifies this effort, focusing on collaborative engagement that ensures faith is experienced relationally in the context of real life.

In this village of faith, every voice matters and every generation plays a crucial role in strengthening our spiritual community.

Two leading figures in this effort in the Pacific Northwest are Rob Lang, NPUC youth and young adult ministries director, and Benjamin Lundquist, Oregon Conference young adult ministries director. They work with a broad network of pastors, youth and young adult leaders, and advocates for generational engagement to address the pressing needs for relational connections.

“As a denomination, we’ve made intentional investments in programs for our young people because we recognize that, if we fail to pass on our faith to the next generation, we risk losing our relevance,” Lang said. “While we’ve been diligent in creating programs—perhaps more so than any other denomination—it’s important to acknowledge that programs have limitations. Ultimately, it’s the relationships formed within these programs that truly make a difference.”

“It takes a village to raise a child” is a common phrase in the American lexicon. This is particularly true in the Adventist Church, where the entire body of Christ, with its variety of gifts and abilities, is essential in nurturing faith.

1 Cor. 12 elaborates on the diversity of gifts, differences of ministries and variety of activities that enhance God’s village of believers. Paul acknowledged, “But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.”

“I love talking with parents and grandparents,” Lundquist shared. “Their heartbeat is for Adventism to be sustainable until Christ comes. They want to make a lasting impact, leave a legacy that endures beyond their lifetime and ensure that, as they age, they remain relevant. Engaging deeply with students, young adults and young professionals helps the next generation step into their gospel identity, understand their giftedness and live out their purpose.”



Value of Voices

During this summer's DiscipleTrek—a three-week intensive training course offered by NPUC for college students who want to share their faith at their public or private university—Lang once again observed: Young people value the voice of experience.

"They want to know how individuals navigated the crossroads and challenges in their lives and how faith and church remain relevant," Lang noted. "You, as an older member, have a valid voice."

Florence Phillips, DiscipleTrek participant and medical student, affirmed this: "The investment of time and relational connection has meant so much to me at this point in my life. I am beyond grateful!"

The importance of this "village of voices" becomes especially evident during adolescence.

"When someone gets to adolescence, they're looking for other voices to either confirm or disprove their parents' theories, their parents' faith or their own question marks. They need other voices speaking into their lives," Lang explained. "Whether you have a church title or not, each adult has a prime opportunity to connect with, influence and encourage the younger generation through personal interaction."

Further, he added, "Adults need to hear the fresh faith developing in young people because this, in turn, nurtures their faith. There is a mutually validating experience as our ears and our voices engage with one another."



This last year held an interesting mix of one-on-one connections, small-scale events and an extra large event with the International Pathfinder Camporee in Gillette, Wyoming.

One of the many meaningful stories that emerged from the camporee involved a young man from Palau—a ministry territory associated with NPUC.

Most Pathfinders from Palau come from non-Adventist families who appreciate the values-based education associated with the Adventist school system and Pathfinder clubs. This young man listened to the personal stories of faith shared by adult mentors and Damien Chandler, the camporee evening speaker, and knew in his heart that he wanted to be a Christ follower, too.

In the pouring rain, when most people had gone to seek shelter, the young fellow stepped forward to respond to a call to be baptized—the first in his family. Because of how adult mentors spoke into his life, he is now excited about sharing his new-found faith with his family and friends.

Whether with personal interactions or group activities, Lang underscored a crucial point: "Never underestimate the power of the gospel and the power of your voice to share what the gospel has meant to you."



Reality Check

Denominations often experiment with various “secret sauce” recipes for youth ministry and faith transfer, each presenting their approach as the ultimate solution. However, the true essence of effective youth ministry lies in the relationships and core values that shape personal interactions, ministry development and program offerings.

Adventism’s emphasis on volunteer-led ministries and lay engagement stands out compared to other denominations.

“Baptists, for example, have a much higher percentage of youth pastors,” Lang said. “They don’t have as many lay engagement opportunities as we do for lay people to be involved in the sharing of faith with their children.”

“Mormons do an excellent job at building Mormons, especially with their two-year mission program,” Lundquist noted. “Then there are non-denominational churches that are standalone. It’s sink or swim because it’s only you.”

“The beauty – and the challenge – of the Adventist Church,” Lundquist continued, “is that we have sustainability power in our history and a global network of 20 million Adventists and growing. I think there’s a challenge in our long history in that we sometimes cannot be as open to innovation because our history is so long and deep.”

Lundquist and Lang both noted that youth ministry leaders and researchers from Fuller Youth Institute and Barna admire the Adventist legacy of being founded by young people and wonder why these roots are not more actively leveraged today.

“We’ve put a lot of resources into programs as if the program itself is the vehicle,” Lang acknowledged. “Programs are simply an opportunity for relationship. Too many parents and grandparents seem to think that, if they just send their children to an Adventist school or enroll them in Pathfinders, their job is done because the ‘professionals’ are leading the way in faith development.”

There’s a reality check here. Lang said, “Parents, or even grandparents, may discount their voice and their experience. They often lack the confidence to share life and faith insights firsthand, in real life, with their children,” Lang said. “We each have a calling and responsibility to foster our faith in genuine, relational connections with our children, grandchildren and young people at church.”

“The heartbeat of the Growing Together Cohort and our pathway forward needs to be a revisioning of each generation’s greatest contribution to Adventism based on their age demographic,” Lundquist said. “We need the seasoned, resourced and positioned older generation to understand that their greatest contribution to Adventism is in the reaching, loving and empowering of the next generation.”





Helping Young Adults Navigate Their Faith

As we listen to young adults, their questions and doubts naturally arise. Many are deconstructing their faith — reexamining what they’ve been taught and seeking a belief system that resonates with their personal experiences.

But doubt doesn’t have to lead to disillusionment. When churches create spaces for open, honest conversations, they provide an opportunity for young adults to explore their faith in a supportive environment.

Want to learn more about how to walk alongside them on this journey? Scan the QR Code below to access an extended digital feature from Antonee Aguilar, Sandy Church interim pastor, offering insights and practical ways to support young adults on their faith journeys.



More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-FT-15



Building Authentic Connections

While the vision of intergenerational ministry is clear — empowering the next generation through meaningful connections — the question remains: How can these relationships be intentionally nurtured in everyday church life?

Building authentic connections isn’t just about structured programs; it’s about embracing everyday opportunities to relationally engage, mentor and grow together in faith. These acts of connection can range from simple gestures to profound, involved efforts.

Examples from the past show that simple, intentional gestures can have a significant impact. A few years ago when North American Division championed a comparative research study with Barna, one of the notable stories that emerged involved two elderly sisters who “adopted” some young girls at their church.

The elderly women chose to delay their annual trip to Florida to attend the church Christmas pageant where the girls performed. This act of love left a lasting impression on the young girls, who cherished the time and attention given by these older sisters.

Similarly, one Northwest education leader shared recently how he engaged in conversation and expressed interest in the life of a contractor whose children were highly involved in a 4-H club. His willingness to engage and curiosity to learn more opened the door for a meaningful connection.

When the leader mentioned that the Adventist Church has a similar program called Pathfinders, the contractor’s eyes lit up. “I know about Adventists!” he exclaimed. “I went to an Adventist summer camp, and it was one of the greatest experiences of my life.”





In another example, a pastor felt compelled during a sermon to appeal for someone in the congregation to fund a young person’s college education. Within 40 minutes, a couple responded and fully funded a four-year education for a local student in need. Each of the authentic connections started with curiosity, goodwill and a willingness to listen well.

In various congregations, seasoned leaders have stepped up to build authentic connections through gestures like providing cars, vehicle maintenance, a weekly gathering spot for a hot meal and conversation, financial coaching, resource networking and simple gestures of friendship.

Auditing Your Connections

“What are you going to do individually? What can your community do practically to support the next generation?” Lundquist asked. “There are basic things you can do that create a sense of welcome and connection. It’s about showing them that they are seen, heard and valued.”

Leaders like Lundquist and Lang emphasize that the key to quality relational connections lies in intentionality and presence. It’s about recognizing those everyday moments that can be transformative.

“This is a call to action on an individual level,” Lundquist urged. “It’s not about building a new program but about partnering with God to support young people practically. If you plan to pray for them, be prepared to help them.”



To start, consider auditing your connections and calendar:

Identify key young people: Who are the young people in your life? What challenges are they facing?

Evaluate your engagement: Where do young people show up on your calendar? How can you invest time and attention in the next 90 days?

Start small: Begin with small, intentional actions. Show up, listen and create space for their stories and struggles.

Share your story: As you build relationships, begin to share your personal faith experiences. It’s about being authentic and open about your journey, not having all the answers.

Create opportunities: Invite young people to participate in projects or provide input in church activities. It’s about giving them a voice and a place.

As you take a look at your audit results, you may see progress or room for growth. That’s the beauty of a village of faith: the opportunity to grow together.

For a broader impact, consider joining the Growing Together Cohort in spring 2025. This nine-month journey offers practical steps to foster intergenerational connections and revitalization in your church. Sign up at growingtogethercohort.com.

“This Growing Together Cohort will help your church become a place for all generations,” Lang said. “In a world that seeks to divide, this approach keeps us together in ways Christ knew we would need in the last days.”



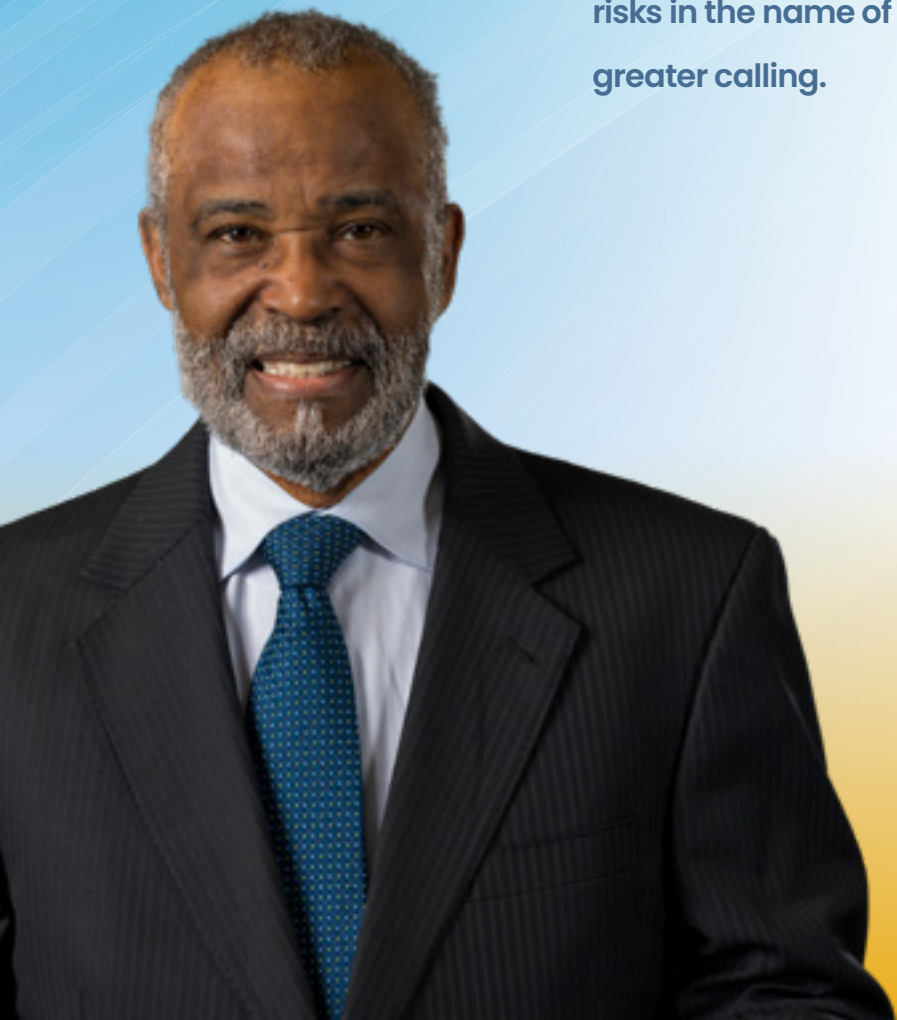
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More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-FT-71



A GIFT OF *Initiation*

Byron Dulan's 52-year career is a testament to following where God has called and taking risks in the name of a greater calling.



As he retires as North Pacific Union vice president of regional ministries, it's a privilege to reflect on a spectacular life in ministry and how a leader invited hundreds of people to God's table.

A loving family and positive church influence have always anchored Dulan's life. Growing up, his home was six blocks from Immanuel Temple Church where his father was the head elder for 20 years and his mother helped run a local Dorcas Society. Within this environment, church was an all-day event where friends, neighbors and congregants collected, filling the house with conversation and worship.

The proximity and influence of being around the corner from a church that is considered the mother of all African American Adventist churches was balanced by being 1 1/2 miles from the Black Panther headquarters. On one side, there was the beautiful church community; on the other was the headquarters of a major activist movement. Both are active representatives of the influences present in Dulan's life.

As a local historian, Dulan recognizes that growing up in Oakland, California, in the '60s and '70s meant landmark historical moments were happening in his backyard. This was the time of the Vietnam War, which famously sparked protests and public outrage mainly from young people. Haight-Ashbury, the sexual revolution, hippie culture and the Civil Rights movement were all at their height



during this time and were at their most potent in California.

“It was a volatile space,” Dulan remembered, “and it was hard to ignore.” Yet this atmosphere created fertile ground for the beginning of a life in ministry.

It was a time of social unrest and immense change. Even as a young man, Dulan saw the effect such movements had on his community and African American youths. From age 15–20, he dedicated his time to tutoring, mentoring and encouraging higher education for African Americans in Oakland. In 1986, he conducted college tours through an educational emphasis organization.

As a young man, Dulan was involved in youth work and youth ministry for his local church, teaching Sabbath School and becoming a member of the Youth Federation. In 1975, he proposed the existence of a Youth Congress for his local union.

Dulan never intended to enter the ministry, however, when asked what led him to develop such a proposal, he responded, “I was just crazy. There was a great need and it was a transition period.”

His advocacy for a Youth Congress was influenced by his time working at Pacific Union College’s financial aid offices. Within his role, he was also responsible for recruiting African American men for theology, introducing them to a calling that would strengthen and inspire young men for generations.

Dulan credits his ability to connect with people no matter their background to his time at Golden Gate Academy, the first North American Division academy to open with a multi-racial student body in 1923.

“I grew up with different cultures,” recalled Dulan, “and I learned how to connect to all types of people.”

His experience has been a wonderful anchoring point; he quips he is always able to find a Golden Gate Academy alumnus anywhere he goes.

This education also shaped his skills as a pastor – skills that he would later rely on during his 10 years in Southern California Conference, with six of those years as the associate youth director, two as a lead pastor for Mid-City Church in Los Angeles and two as associate pastor at Tamarind Avenue Church in Compton.

God then called him Seattle, Washington, to pastor Maranatha Church and later Lighthouse Christian Fellowship Church, all while holding three positions concurrently in Washington Conference: Adventist Community Services, regional affairs and personal ministries department director. His memories of this time range from heartfelt to humorous.

“You had to laugh,” Dulan said, “God always finds a way to provide a way to make you laugh.”

Throughout his 52 years in ministry, Dulan has overseen prison ministry and founded, chaired and served in leadership positions for West Coast

Black Administrators Caucus, Black Adventist Historical Society, Emergency Feeding Program in Greater Seattle and Northwest Adventist African American Local Elders Federation.

He also continued his investment in youth through his time as a trustee for Oakwood College and Walla Walla University and secured scholarships for those who wished to pursue higher education.

Yet as impressive as his resume is, it all makes sense when you meet the man himself. When asked what inspired his career, it all goes back to a consistent and constant desire to glorify God.

This gift of initiation and invitation has encapsulated Dulan’s career, which has been pursued with a humility that can only come from someone who is so eager to follow God’s will.

His is the kind of servant leadership that builds community and inspires a legacy that will outlive him. Dulan has modeled a standard of active faith and community building that will continue to inspire generations across all walks of life.



NICOLE BROWN-RODRIGUEZ
Freelance writer

More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-NPUC-87

Forest Grove Spanish Church Shares the Christian Experience

AFTER MANY MEETINGS OF ANALYSIS AND DIALOGUE WITH CHURCH LEADERS INITIATED IN MID-2022, FOREST GROVE SPANISH CHURCH LANDED WITH ITS STRATEGIC PLAN AT THE BEGINNING OF 2023.

The church defined its mission and vision, proposing to “be an active and friendly church that reflects on, lives and shares the Word of God with Christian love.” The acronym summarizing the church’s strategic mission is FRIL which stands for Friendship: An active and friendly church; Reflectivity: Reflective Bible study; Integrity: Living the Bible; and Love: Sharing its experience with love.

Having built an active and friendly church that reflects on Bible study and lives what it preaches, it was time to share the Christian experience with love. This year, the evangelistic project titled Decisions: Determine Destinies was launched with renowned preacher Joel Flores, Nuevo Tiempo evangelist and pastor.

The evangelistic plan started with small groups meeting in different homes every Friday night. Additionally, evaluations were conducted every three months through small group festivals.

Next, the Gift a Bible plan was launched. Each member was encouraged to think of a person to gift a Bible. Over 10 weeks, Gluder Quispe, Forest Grove Spanish Church pastor, recorded 20 lessons via YouTube and Facebook. The congregation’s task was to share the lesson links with the recipients of the Bibles and follow up with them.

The evangelistic campaign took place July 15–20, 2024. Three weeks prior, 200 invitation cards were distributed to those who had received Bibles and other friends. These cards featured a QR Code to

identify the invitee and other details. Two Saturdays before, invitation flyers were distributed, knocking on doors in Forest Grove and Cornelius neighborhoods.

A month before the date, each commission team had clearly defined responsibilities. Lighting arrangements were made and a giant screen was set up. The entire church was involved in a commission. The program included a gift for guests; a mental health topic presented by Yeny Quea, Quispe’s wife; praises and intercessory prayers; and a sermon by Flores.

During the campaign days, more than 50 new people attended. Most of them continue to follow the Faith of Jesus course. Finally, the Holy Spirit convinced eight new believers to be baptized. There are commitments from others on the following Saturdays.

GLUDER QUISPE
Forest Grove Spanish Church pastor



IGLESIA

Iglesia Hispana de Forest Grove Comparte la Experiencia Cristiana

DESPUÉS DE MUCHAS REUNIONES DE ANÁLISIS Y DIÁLOGO CON LOS DIRECTIVOS E IGLESIA INICIADAS A MITAD DE 2022, LA IGLESIA HISPANA DE FOREST GROVE ATERRIÓ CON SU PLAN ESTRATÉGICO A INICIOS DE 2023.

La iglesia definió su misión y visión, proponiendo “ser una iglesia activa y amigable que estudia reflexivamente, vive y comparte la Palabra de Dios con amor Cristiano.” Las siglas que resumen el quehacer misional estratégico de la iglesia son ARIA – Amistad: Una iglesia activa y amigable; Reflexividad: Estudio reflexivo de la Biblia; Integridad: Vivir la Biblia; y Amor: Compartir su experiencia con amor.

Habiendo construido una iglesia activa y amigable que estudia la Biblia reflexivamente y que vive lo que predica, era el momento de compartir con amor la experiencia Cristiana con otros. Este año, se lanzó el proyecto evangelístico titulado Decisiones: Determinan Destinos con el reconocido predicador Joel Flores, evangelista y pastor de Nuevo Tiempo.

El plan evangelístico inició con los grupos pequeños que se reunían en diferentes hogares todos los viernes de noche. Además, se hacía una evaluación cada tres meses a través de los festivales de grupos pequeños.

Luego, se lanzó el plan Regala una Biblia. Se animó a cada miembro a pensar en una persona a la que regalar una Biblia. Durante 10 semanas, Gluder Quispe, pastor de Iglesia Hispana de Forest Grove, grabó 20 lecciones a través de YouTube y Facebook. Lo que tenía que hacer la hermandad era compartir el link de la lección con los destinatarios de las Biblias y darles seguimiento.

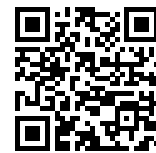
La campaña evangelística se llevó a cabo del 15–20 de julio de este año. Tres semanas antes, se repartieron 200 tarjetas de invitación para las personas que habían recibido la Biblia y otros amigos. Esta tarjeta tenía un Código QR para saber el nombre del invitado y otros datos. Dos sábados antes, se repartieron volantes de invitación, tocando puertas de los vecinos de Forest Grove y Cornelius.

Un mes antes de la fecha, cada equipo de las comisiones tenía escrito exactamente cuál era su responsabilidad. Se hicieron arreglos de la iluminación y se puso una pantalla gigante. Toda la iglesia estaba involucrada en una comisión. El programa incluía un regalo a los invitados; un tema de salud mental presentado por Yeny Quea, esposa de Quispe; alabanzas y oraciones intercesoras; y un sermón de Flores.

Durante los días de la campaña, asistieron más de 50 personas nuevas. La mayoría de ellos continúa siguiendo el curso La Fe de Jesús. Finalmente, el Espíritu Santo convenció a ocho nuevos creyentes para el bautismo. En los siguientes sábados se tiene el compromiso de otros más.

GLUDER QUISPE

Pastor de Iglesia Hispana de Forest Grove



More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-HSP-79



Delegates Look to the Future

DELEGATES TO THE 19TH ALASKA CONFERENCE CONSTITUENCY SESSION GATHERED SEPT. 22 TO RECEIVE MINISTRY REPORTS, ELECT LEADERS AND PROCESS CHURCH BUSINESS.

FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

Alaska Conference, like many others, faced various post-pandemic challenges affecting staffing, infrastructure, services and finances.

Financial difficulties were highlighted by the 2021 audit, which was disclaimed, preventing a full audit. In a cascading effect, the 2022 audit resulted in a split decision, an unqualified balance and a disclaimed financial statement. Fortunately, the 2023 audit achieved a qualified opinion, putting the conference on a better accounting footing.

“Progress is being made in correcting the issues we’ve had in our record keeping,” said Bob Sundin, interim treasurer from North Pacific Union. “God has provided us with what is needed to move into the future on a positive basis.”

Amid the challenges, Mark Remboldt, NPUC vice president for finance, praised the Alaskan membership for their strong tithe, their top-tier tithe per capita and a solid working capital fund.

MINISTRY ENGAGEMENT

Alaska churches continue to enhance their digital engagement, including monthly online evangelism and discipleship training. The introduction of Starlink in 2022 provided high-speed satellite internet to underserved Bush communities and now supports 26 low-power radio stations statewide.

Working with NPUC and It Is Written, Alaska Conference coordinated a successful statewide evangelism series in 2024. From 2020 to 2023, God blessed Alaska Conference with 232 baptisms, 33 professions of faith and 143 membership transfers.

Alaska Conference is home to 36 churches and companies, five Adventist schools, 14 pastors, 12 teachers, 10 administrative staff, two Arctic Mission Workers and 3,817 members. There are also 161 students and a territory covering 665,384 miles. In the last four years, 75 mission groups from the Lower 48 have come to assist with humanitarian and outreach projects.

- NPUC and Alaska Conference leaders pray for a newly baptized couple who shared their testimony at constituency session.



LEADING FORWARD

This summer, Alaska Conference asked for feedback on perceived successes, challenges and suggested actions for the future. Three key themes emerged: a call for more active listening to constituents, improved financial accountability and increased communication between the conference and its churches.

The following leaders have been reelected to incorporate these themes into their work: Ashwin Somasundram, vice president for administration; Garrett Holmes, vice president for finance; Tobin Dodge, Alaska camps and Arctic Mission Adventure director; Brenda Campbell Johnson, communication director and educational support; John Winslow, education director and youth and young adult director; and Daniel Jean-Francois, ministerial director.

After serving eight years as president, Kevin Miller was not renominated. Delegates honored Miller with a standing ovation as a gesture of thanks for his dedicated service. NPUC will now lead a process in the coming months for electing a new president.

As they look ahead, leaders emphasize the importance of moving forward “Together in Mission.” By embracing new opportunities and uniting in purpose, Alaska Conference can navigate challenges, foster community and make a positive kingdom impact.



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



AMA Fills Backpacks for Village Schools

AS PART OF THE ANNUAL SOUTHCENTRAL CAMP MEETING IN PALMER, ALASKA, THE IMPACT OF ARCTIC MISSION ADVENTURE WAS SHARED. MEMBERS AND A NETWORK OF VOLUNTEERS SUPPORT AMA AND EMULATE THE HANDS AND FEET OF JESUS IN ALASKA VILLAGES.

The camp meeting theme was “Loving God” as directed in Deut. 6:5. With this idea in mind, AMA wanted to demonstrate this love and decided to have a back-to-school supply drive as part of the camp meeting experience. The goal was to fill 500 backpacks and send 100 each to the villages of Kotzebue, Nome, Dillingham, Bethel and Utqiagvik.

AMA backpacks were ordered and the supply drive was promoted across the state. There were two ways to participate: Supporters could bring donations to camp meeting or place orders online to be delivered to the conference. Along with standard supplies – crayons, markers, rulers – personal hygiene items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste and feminine hygiene products were collected as well.

Colette Reahl, former Bethel AMA worker, and her children took on the challenge of filling more than 300 backpacks for transport. In addition to the school supplies, extra backpacks and lunchboxes were also donated. When the backpacks were complete, more than 1,000 pounds of school supplies were ready to mail.

Tobin Dodge, AMA director, and family shipped the supplies to the villages of Bethel, Dillingham/Togiak and Utqiagvik. Eric Fanene, Utqiagvik AMA worker, reported that the backpacks would be distributed in conjunction with a community outreach project with the Lyons Club.

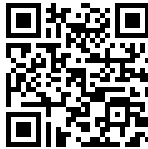
Josephine Gosuk, Dillingham preschool teacher, along with Gina Parker, co-teacher, and Aaron Dasher, AMA worker, shared that they planned to distribute backpacks to schools in Dillingham – both the public and Adventist schools – as well as to students in the neighboring villages of Togiak and

Manokotak. With each donation, whether a pack of pencils or a notebook, Alaska members’ generosity made a big difference!

North Pacific Union has designated the Nov. 30 offering to support AMA. Thank you for your continued prayers and support of this donor-funded mission field in Alaska.

BRENDA CAMPBELL-JOHNSON
*Alaska Conference
communication director*

TOBIN DODGE
*Alaska Conference Alaska
camps and Arctic Mission
Adventure director*



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/119-6-AK-70



Colette Reahl and youth Finese Reahl, Brooklynn Paukan-Fisher, Sadie Boy Scout and Hayzen Boy Scout fill more than 300 backpacks for AMA.



**BUILDING BRIDGES
CHANGING LIVES!**

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ARCTICMISSIONADVENTURE.ORG



YOUTH

AGA Students Witness to Hikers

THE GROUP OF 11 BACKPACKERS FROM AMAZING GRACE ACADEMY HAD 2 MORE MILES TO WALK BEFORE REACHING THEIR CAMPSITE.



New friendships form after a weekend of fellowship between hiking groups.

They were out for three nights in a paradise of ocean, mountains and rainforest in Seward, Alaska. Everything was working out for the group. That's when two families – a total of nine hikers – appeared.

The immediate concern of Ryan Rogers, Palmer district pastor and group leader, was that both groups planned to stay at North Beach for the night. While he didn't mind sharing, he knew that not every group of strangers is appropriate for a Christian youth group to share a campsite with.

The new hikers weren't strangers for long. Both parties shared the beach and adventured as one group of 20 hikers until they said goodbye in the parking

lot at the end of the trip. Meals were shared and the kids spent every bit of free time together.

They planned goofy team challenges, times of solitude and scripture reflection, group discussions and a Sabbath worship experience that included singing in the rich acoustics of a World War II bunker. The group of nine joined the AGA hikers for all of it. One of the kids they met on the trip is now a student at AGA!

It was not how they had planned it; it was better. The Palmer outdoor ministry setting was ideally suited for delivering those unexpected blessings that could never really be planned.

In February, North Pacific Union and Alaska Conference granted \$20,000 of



Palmer Church members enjoy outdoor ministry with AGA.



The two groups hike along North Beach together.

Spark Tank evangelism funds to Palmer Church and AGA for outdoor ministry.

The ministry has welcomed 40 backpackers, ranging from ages 8–78, on three separate multi-day backpacking trips. Groups have paddled glacial rivers, summited mountains, snowshoed in negative temperatures and shared priceless moments of worship and spiritual conversation.

The church and school are grateful to NPUC and Alaska Conference for having the vision to see this kind of ministry as evangelism and for supporting it with funds to get started.

Learn more about the outdoor ministry at palmersda.org/ministries/outdoor.



RYAN ROGERS
Palmer district pastor

More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-AK-90

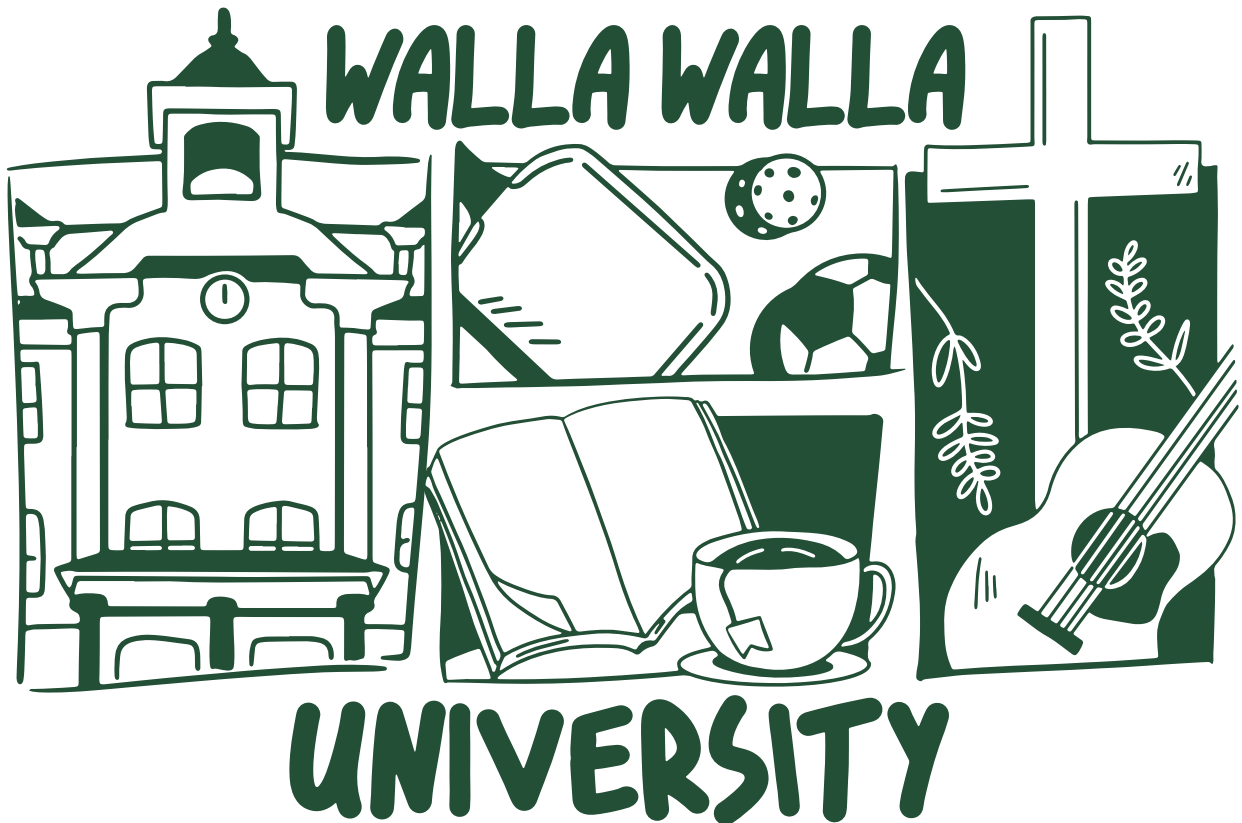
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**Seniors in NPUC academies will be attending the April event with their schools.*

Delegates Vote New Future for Idaho Education

IDAHO CONFERENCE DELEGATES MET ON SEPT. 15 FOR A SPECIAL CONSTITUENCY SESSION TO PROCESS AN UNSOLICITED OFFER FOR LAND SURROUNDING GEM STATE ADVENTIST ACADEMY.

In additional actions, 286 delegates reaffirmed guidelines for the GSAA Operating Endowment and reallocated 4 acres of land for a new Caldwell Adventist Elementary School.

“We believe these actions will help maintain a strong GSAA and Adventist Christian education system for our youth throughout the conference for the foreseeable future,” said David Prest Jr., Idaho Conference president.

In the 1950s, C.M. Munsey and Dean Dennis, two visionaries, bought a sagebrush turkey farm that became what is now known as the current GSAA campus.

Through the years, GSAA stakeholders have held ongoing conversations about how to best steward the GSAA legacy, including exploring a

K-12 program located on GSAA's campus, upgrading school facilities, investing in well-functioning endowments and retaining sufficient real property.

A land use committee was established to explore, within defined parameters, how to best utilize GSAA land assets of 385 acres. Among other activities, the committee negotiated farm leases, commissioned a variety of studies and cooperated with a sale of 4 acres to the City of Caldwell for a pathway project and 24 acres to Vallivue School District.

Previously, GSAA sought to retain enough land for present and future academy needs and sought to solicit potential buyer(s). Constituents were favorable to this recommendation at a special session on May 21, 2006 and

interest remained at 2011 and 2015 constituency gatherings to seek enhanced revenue-producing options.

The intervening years were spent preparing the land for sale and taking care of any problems prior to offering the property for sale. When market conditions changed dramatically in 2015, the property was taken off the market. Offers continued to come in and were reviewed. Most were ultimately rejected as not being in the best interest of the school.

In May 2021, Idaho Conference received an unsolicited offer for approximately 288 acres of academy land. Leaders noted how much prayer was involved in the three-year negotiating process and that God never shut the doors.

“The Idaho Conference secondary education program was begun with vision and continued with vision, and we are faced with another opportunity to continue that vision,” said Eve Rusk, Idaho Conference planned giving and communication director. “When we go with God, we have no fear of going forward in the future.”

Delegates received detailed reports from one of five attorneys involved in the complex Purchase and Sale Agreement, a commercial real estate broker with 18 years of experience representing Idaho Conference and a representative from M3 Companies who outlined the developer's vision for creating master-planned communities to support the rapid growth in Caldwell and beyond.





Delegates had ample opportunity to ask questions of the buyer's representative, the attorney, the broker and conference leaders. Their inquiries covered topics such as the project timeline, upcoming public hearings, school boundaries, benefits outlined in the master plan, definitions of key terms, the profitability of the current lease, feasibility studies and specifics about the endowment fund.

The buyer intends to purchase the land in phases over an approximate six-year period—a standard arrangement for large land sales. The buyer could also accelerate the purchases or extend one extra year.

Proceeds from the sale will be placed in a carefully managed endowment fund overseen by a committee of conference and school leaders, along with members with strong financial expertise. The committee will interview professional wealth management firms and select one to invest the funds, ensuring annual oversight.

"The creation of the endowment fund represents a transformative opportunity for GSAA," said Oscar "Michael" Sanchez, Idaho Conference vice president for finance. "This fund will provide a stable, long-term source of financial support, allowing GSAA to enhance its educational offerings, maintain and improve facilities, and potentially increase scholarship opportunities for students."

Throughout the day, delegates voted using red cards for "no" and green cards for "yes," but when it came time to vote on

the land sale, a secret ballot was used. The motion to sell passed with 236 votes in favor, 36 opposed and one abstention.

In the final action of this special constituency meeting, delegates from southern Idaho and eastern Oregon voted to allocate land so that 69-year-old CAES could move to a newly designated 4-acre plot adjacent to the existing GSAA campus. This move will create a unified K-12 environment, where the distinct schools can collaborate to share resources, reduce costs and provide academy students with opportunities to work and volunteer.

"This land has not been used for anything productive for some time and is a piece that, if not used for a school, would probably remain vacant," said Patrick Frey, Idaho Conference superintendent.

"We believe this is God's school," said John Soulé, GSAA principal. "He has performed miracle after miracle, keeping the academy functioning in the midst of many challenges. Resources matter, but nothing matters more than our young people making it to the kingdom. GSAA is a school of prayer, and we pray that God will be ever present in our school."



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

More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-ID-08 



Williams Ordained to Ministry

JASON WILLIAMS WAS ORDAINED TO THE GOSPEL MINISTRY AT CLOVERDALE CHURCH IN BOISE, IDAHO, ON JULY 27.



David Prest Jr., Idaho Conference president, congratulates Jason Williams after giving the ordination charge.



PHOTOS BY EVE RUSK

David Salazar, Idaho Conference vice president for administration, leads the prayer of ordination surrounded by fellow ordained ministers.

Idaho Conference has made it a practice to ordain pastors in the churches where their ministry is occurring. It gives church members a greater opportunity to witness and celebrate this high moment in their pastor's life.

Williams was born in Jamaica and became an Adventist. He began his ministry journey in 2006 and has served in door-to-door evangelism, as a Bible worker and in pastoral ministry.

He joined his wife, Wendy, in Idaho in 2016 and began working as a locally funded pastor at Cloverdale Church. Williams was hired full-time as associate pastor there while working on a master's degree in pastoral ministry from Andrews University Theological Seminary.

His acceptance into the seminary program was an answer to prayer. Williams explained he was never a great student and wasn't certain that ministry was his calling. God had other plans. Williams

continues to pursue ministry growth by attending conferences and workshops such as Voice of Prophecy School of Evangelism.

Williams is a dynamic preacher and is a favorite of the earliteens at camp meeting. He is passionate about discipleship, Bible studies and outreach. Introducing people of all ages to Jesus Christ is his primary aim.

Williams is also devoted to creating a vibrant and inclusive church community where all members can grow in faith, support and experience the joy of their journey in Jesus. His enthusiasm for ministry is evident in everything he does, including serving as a guide in Meridian Church's Journey to Bethlehem during the Christmas season.

David Bullock, head elder, opened the ordination service with prayer. Barry Curtis, Idaho Conference ministerial director, introduced Williams. Troy Haagenon and Marlon Seifert, his

mentoring pastors, each participated in the service. David Salazar, Idaho Conference vice president for administration, invited the ordained ministers in the congregation to come forward and surround Williams and his wife during the prayer of ordination.

Williams provided beautiful special music with Samantha Barragan, one of his church members. David Prest Jr., Idaho Conference president, presented the ordination charge to Williams. Salazar and Oscar "Michael" Sanchez, Idaho Conference vice president for finance, welcomed Williams to the gospel ministry and presented him with his ordination certificate.

Miguel Valdivia, Pacific Press Publishing Association representative, presented Williams with an Andrews Study Bible. Steve Echelmeier, who served as a locally funded pastor at Cloverdale Church with Williams, closed the service with prayer.

Cloverdale Church showed overwhelming support for their newly ordained associate pastor. After the service, everyone was invited to the HUB365 building, the church's community service center, for a delicious meal.



EVE RUSK
Idaho Conference
communications director

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/119-6-ID-09](https://www.nwadventist.org/st/119-6-ID-09)

YOUTH

The boys, a few mentors and several other church members test their abilities, teamwork and patience at the boys retreat.



Mentorship Cultivates Meaningful Connections

SUPPORTING, ENCOURAGING AND EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN AND YOUNG MEN IS IMPORTANT TO THE MEMBERS OF MOUNT ELLIS ACADEMY CHURCH, IN BOZEMAN, MONTANA. BECAUSE OF THEIR ONSITE PROXIMITY TO MOUNT ELLIS ACADEMY, THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DO THIS BY SPONSORING A SPECIAL MENTORING PROGRAM THAT MATCHES WILLING MEMBERS WITH STUDENTS.

In September, the teens were treated to separate weekend retreats, with several mentors participating. Girls and mentors enjoyed a meet-and-greet Friday evening focused on the empowerment of picking healthy friendships and they created friendship band keepsakes. After breakfast prepared by the mentors, they spent Sabbath at a campsite on Hyalite Lake enjoying nature and each other.

“Girls retreat was a blast! We got to meet our mentors and eat snacks the first night. Saturday we went out to a lake for the day,” said Isabel Blair, MEA freshman. “We used paddleboards, hiked to a waterfall, played games and ended the night with hotdogs and s’mores – one of the best times ever!”

Meanwhile, the boys loaded up for a camping weekend at North Meadow. At the event coordinated by Dale March with equipment provided by numerous members, the boys enjoyed two days of riding dirt bikes and four-wheelers and adventuring on challenging trails.

“This year’s boys retreat went great!” enthused Lucas Lindberg, MEA sophomore. “We arrived at the campsite on Friday, set up our tents and ate delicious food which the chefs made for us. Saturday we rode our vehicles up the nearby trail, and when we arrived I was astonished. The lake was very clear and there was snow on the ground. This year’s

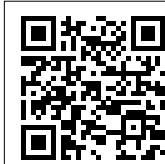
boys retreat was fun and exciting, and I would recommend it to any boys who are interested.”

Ingrid Stuart and Eric Beavon, Mount Ellis Academy Church members, teamed up with Sheila Elwin to coordinate the two programs this year. The boys program had two trial runs in past years and started fresh this school year with pairs of men teamed with groups of three or four boys. The girls program matches individual women and girls and has been active since 2007.

Stuart, a founder of the girls program, noted that it started “as a response to young ladies trying to navigate life away from home but still needing a loving adult to provide some stability and mentorship.”

There have been opportunities for growth and empowerment through retreats, outreach, self-defense training and simply fun times spent together.

“I’ve seen so many awesome bonds develop between girls and their mentors that have lasted well beyond academy years,” said Stuart. “I’m incredibly grateful for these women who invest in the girls year after year and that the girls open themselves up to these connections.”



SHEILA ELWIN
Mount Ellis Academy
Church member

More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-MT-26



Retreats are a time for relaxation, bonding and entering the presence of God in nature.

Sus Manos and Las Palmas students collaborate in preparing a house for painting.

PAA Sus Manos Visits ICC Las Palmas

“I LONG TO SEE YOU SO THAT I MAY IMPART TO YOU SOME SPIRITUAL GIFT TO MAKE YOU STRONG — THAT IS, THAT YOU AND I MAY BE MUTUALLY ENCOURAGED BY EACH OTHER’S FAITH” (ROM. 1:11-12).

Rom. 1:11-12 motivated Portland Adventist Academy to visit Las Palmas Children’s Village – a cluster of 10 orphan homes in the Dominican Republic established by International Children’s Care – in March. While short-term mission trips often focus on helping less fortunate brothers and sisters in materially poor countries, Sus Manos, the outreach arm of PAA’s Spanish program, takes an asset-based and collaborative view.

Nine PAA students spent several months preparing their hearts and minds for this cross-cultural service-learning experience. Preparation included developing a daily quiet time of Bible reading and prayer, building cultural awareness and strengthening Spanish skills.

At Las Palmas, PAA students painted a house that will receive orphaned and vulnerable children sent by the government court system. However, their focus was not on the physical work but on recognizing and supporting assets already in place at the village: loving parents, dedicated administrators, Christian teachers and energetic children.

ICC Las Palmas Children’s Village is divided into six homes of 10–12 children. PAA students spent time each day with families observing how the loving and patient houseparents blessed the children who had come from difficult and often traumatic backgrounds. ICC hires local houseparents to nurture the children in their cultural context.

The assets at Las Palmas – the buildings, land, school and wonderful staff who care for the children – are made possible by generous donors from NPUC and throughout the world. Caring donors, especially those who provide monthly through sponsorship and systematic giving, create a nurturing haven for children who would otherwise have nowhere to turn.

Ana Burgos, PAA senior, said, “I thought we were going to see only poverty ... but it wasn’t the most important part; there were beautiful kids with joy and happiness all over the place!”

Rita Barrett, PAA Spanish teacher, presented workshops for teachers and parents, underscoring the importance of



pleasure reading for academic growth. The group donated more than 400 new books in Spanish to the campus library. Las Palmas’ librarian proved to be another great asset, with her passion for connecting children and teens with books that will motivate a lifelong love of reading.

Participation in Las Palmas’ annual Family Olympics games and outings to the beach and waterfalls were additional opportunities for building relationships between PAA students and Las Palmas children and teens. One local teen said, “They taught us to be more united.”

Chelsea Rose, PAA junior, shared, “I really valued seeing all of the openness that people had with their belief and relationship with God. I haven’t always experienced being in a place where believers are open about their relationship with God and what they’re studying.”

“Sharing with our group every morning and seeing how the kids loved talking about God really stuck with me,” continued Rose. “It was a reminder that you don’t have to have the ‘perfect thing’ to say or the best theology to talk about God with others.”

Playing, working and worshipping together, visitors and hosts found opportunities to encourage each other’s faith and to grow stronger together.



RITA BARRETT
Portland Adventist
Academy Spanish
teacher

More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-OR-82

• Books donated for the Las Palmas library will help staff promote reading for pleasure.

PHOTOS BY RITA BARRETT



CHURCH

New Video Series Shows Connection Points



THOUGH WE SHARE THE SAME DENOMINATIONAL LABEL, ADVENTISTS ARE A WIDELY DIVERSE GROUP. ACROSS AGES, GENDERS, CULTURES AND GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS, THERE ARE MANY THINGS WE TEND TO SEE DIFFERENTLY. RECENT YEARS HAVE HIGHLIGHTED THOSE DIFFERENCES AS WE LIVED THROUGH THE DAWN OF THE DIGITAL AGE, THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND A RAPIDLY POLARIZING SOCIETY.

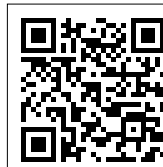
While the differences between us are evident, how often do we consider the values we still share as Adventists? This summer, the Oregon Conference communication team set out to explore these common threads in a new documentary-style series featuring 15 church members from across the conference territory. They visited schools, churches, community centers, hospitals and a farm to ask members, “How does your faith look in your everyday life?”

Featuring interviews with Adventists across the conference, *Living Faith* is a five-episode resource focusing on five core values shared nearly universally conference-wide: Sabbath, music and worship, evangelism, Jesus and the Second Coming, and community service.

A corresponding small group discussion guide is also available for each episode free of charge for online or offline use. Through this series each of us can

ask, “Despite our many differences, how can we find some common ground?”

Find each episode and its corresponding discussion guide online at LivingFaithPNW.org.



KALEB EISELE
Oregon Conference
digital content specialist

More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-OR-88

YOUTH

RAC Encourages Kids to Connect Face-to-Face



AS TECHNOLOGY BECOMES DEEPER EMBEDDED IN MOST AMERICANS' LIVES, A GROUP OF ADVENTISTS BETWEEN UMPQUA VALLEY AND THE OREGON COAST WORKS TO PROVIDE REMOTE ADVENTURE CAMP — A UNIQUE, OFFLINE EXPERIENCE THAT RECONNECTS KIDS WITH NATURE AND JESUS.

Creative projects throughout the week teach campers skills for other areas of life.

Church members of Bandon, Coquille and Coos Bay Churches have led RAC for almost two decades.

Joy Ross, camp director, first volunteered with RAC after her pastor asked her to teach a cake decorating class. Every year after, she helped out. Ross was later nominated as RAC director.

“I think it’s a wonderful project and it’s something I can get behind because it’s an outreach that’s so needed today,” shared Ross.

“I’ve seen changes in kids’ lives,” Ross said. “We’re doing whatever we can to show

them we love them. It makes a difference in their lives.”

“A lot of these kids are used to having [access to technology all the time], so for them to choose to come here without any says something to me,” Ross continued. “They want to be here. And if they want to be here, there’s a reason. I want to provide the best reason for them to be here—to show them the love of God.”

RAC is held near the end of each summer and serves families who may not have access to larger camp settings.

If you would like to get involved, contact Ross at joyshammot@gmail.com or through RAC’s Facebook page at facebook.com/RemoteAdventureCamp.



KALEB EISELE
Oregon Conference
digital content specialist

More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-OR-88

MISSION AND OUTREACH

Farmer Connects Immigrants and Refugees With the Land

ON A FARM IN BORING, OREGON, A GRESHAM SPANISH CHURCH MEMBER HAS BEEN HARD AT WORK IN HER COMMUNITY.

Around two decades ago, Maximina Hernández Reyes moved to the U.S. from Oaxaca, Mexico. New to the area and still learning English, Hernández Reyes faced many challenges as she settled into her new life in Gresham. She found there were many barriers to local services, like hard-to-access information and a lack of Spanish-speaking staff.

In 2012, she came across a community garden in Gresham's Vance Park. Back in Oaxaca, Hernández Reyes' family were farmers, so when she found contact information, she decided to reach out. She learned that Outgrowing Hunger provides plots at a small cost to immigrants and refugees to help them provide for their families and earn a sustainable income. Along with her family, Hernández Reyes began to farm a small plot in the community garden.

"What motivated me to start farming was seeing the need in our community. Many families didn't have access to fresh vegetables, especially when the pandemic hit," Hernández Reyes shared. "Stores had no fresh vegetables; everything was empty. With my small garden, I helped families, even if it was just with five tomatoes or peppers or a squash left on their doorstep. There was a real need for fresh fruits and vegetables during that time."

Gesturing to her now flourishing crops, she continued, "If we had had all this back then, we could've helped so many

more people. So, I thought, 'If I could help many families with that small space, why not have a larger one?' I began working harder to provide my produce to the community by working with churches and organizations that were willing to buy my vegetables and give them away to others for free."

Initially, Hernández Reyes gardened in addition to working at her local McDonald's. As the years passed, she became a leader in her community through her gardening work. She began to teach others how to farm the land and grow fresh food. A couple of years ago, she moved from her community garden plot to a 1-acre farm in Boring, thanks to a partnership with Outgrowing Hunger. She began selling her produce, and last year she was able to leave her job at McDonald's to work on the farm full time.

Hernández Reyes now serves as Outgrowing Hunger's board of directors vice chair and coaches other women on how to turn farming into sustainable income through a program called Guerreras Latinas.

Hernández Reyes' faith plays a major role in how she views her work. She said, "What I enjoy most is serving others. So, if I'm going to do this anyway, why not use it to bless other people? That's my motivation—to keep working to help others, whether through food or teaching, in whatever ways that I can, for my community and those in need of help.

That's what Jesus did for us! He loved us, so why shouldn't we share that same love with others? He gives us everything we have. Why shouldn't we give all that we can to others, too?"



KALEB EISELE
*Oregon Conference
digital content specialist*

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/119-6-OR-86](https://www.nwadvent.org/st/119-6-or-86)



KALEB EISELE

MISSION AND OUTREACH

Milo Hosts Maranatha Volunteers

THE PEACE AND QUIET OF MILO ADVENTIST ACADEMY'S SUMMER VACATION WAS INTERRUPTED BY A LARGE GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS FROM MARANATHA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL, A SUPPORTING MINISTRY OF THE ADVENTIST CHURCH.



In addition to adult volunteers, roughly 20 teenagers work to make the project a success.



Teens help paint the boys' dorm halls.



Volunteers of all ages work seamlessly together, inspired by a common goal.

PHOTOS BY EDWARD JENSEN

A 67-member team saved the Oregon school a large amount of money by completing several maintenance projects free of charge. Their work is especially appreciated by school staff who don't have the spare time to do the projects themselves and students who are enjoying a tidier campus.

Volunteers spent most of the project's two-week duration painting Milo's cafeteria and boys' dorm. They also squeezed in other projects, like landscaping and repairing termite damage.

"The volunteers who come on these projects are very driven and motivated," said Edward Jensen, project coordinator. "They understand the benefits we're providing to Milo. They have very Godly attitudes about it that rub off on each other."

In addition to adult volunteers, roughly 20 teenagers worked to make the project a success.

"They were very energetic kids and they did a really good job," remarked Jensen. "We turned them loose on [painting] the boys' dorm halls, and they knocked out several halls."

Volunteers of all ages worked seamlessly together, inspired by a common goal. Jensen was impressed by the way service seemed to bridge a generational divide. "There's no pushing back really," he recalled. "The ones who are really experienced are willing to help the ones who aren't experienced."

Maranatha has worked to make a difference at Milo since 1989, completing 14 volunteer projects over the years. Nestled in the southern Cascade Mountains, the campus is surrounded by beautiful natural scenery. The volunteers' firm belief in Milo's mission draws them back again and again. The school provides a Christ-centered community, which helps students discover their individual interests and gifts and prepares them to answer life's calling.

Many volunteers also join Maranatha projects, like the one at Milo, because of the connections they make with mission-minded individuals.

"They just love the experience of working with those folks," said Jensen. "We enjoy seeing each other every year and making our connections."

Having served on countless projects with Maranatha over the years, Jensen has experienced the community they cultivate as well as anyone. "I've probably met more people in my entire life working for Maranatha in my retirement than I did the whole time during my career."

Each year, Maranatha works with organizations in the U.S. and Canada to provide volunteer labor for various construction or renovation projects at summer camps and retreat centers, schools and churches. Work ranges from renovations of existing buildings to new construction and saves thousands of dollars in labor costs.

SIDNEY NEEDLES

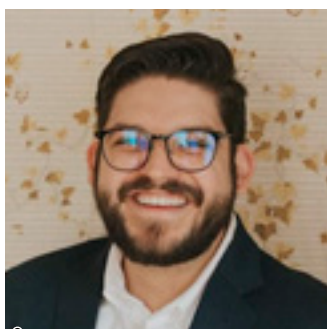
Marantaha communications specialist



More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-OR-81 

Medford Church Welcomes Crowdfunded Pastor

EARLIER THIS YEAR, MEDFORD CHURCH MEMBERS CAME TOGETHER TO CROWDFUND A PASTOR'S SALARY.



Kenton Gonzalez, Medford Church associate pastor

While being led by Dan McCollough, volunteer interim pastor, the need for an additional pastor to lead Medford Church's large, active youth program couldn't be ignored. Through donor matching and pledges, the church has committed to a two-year associate pastor's contract.

Kenton Gonzalez, who graduated from Andrews University Theological Seminary in 2020 with a Master of Divinity degree, accepted the contract and was dedicated during the Aug. 10 church service. Recently, Allie Morse, 12-year-old Medford Church correspondent, sat down with Gonzalez to get to know him better.

Q: God calls everyone to minister in some way. When and how do you feel God called you to be a pastor?

GONZALEZ: This is a tricky question for me because, honestly, I've always wanted to be a pastor. When my friends and other kids my age were dreaming of being firefighters, astronauts or zoologists, I knew I wanted to be a pastor. My dad actually tells a story of finding me at age 3. I had lined up all of my mom's stuffed animals in a row and was "preaching" my Sabbath School lesson to them.

It has always been something that I've known God wanted for my life, and so that's what I did.

Q: As you are going to be working with the youth, what do you envision for them? How can we as a church support that?

GONZALEZ: I think the biggest thing about working with youth is getting them involved – and not just in easy background tasks; I mean putting them in charge of things. This church is already doing such a great job at that, so I want to continue that and see where I can empower the youth to start to take charge and make this their church.

Q: You are a young pastor with a young family. How can young families find connections and ways to serve when life with kids is so busy?

GONZALEZ: I once got a piece of sage advice when I started pastoring. I was told, "Remember, your family are your first church members." Sometimes we feel the need to give, give, give to those outside our family, because that's what you're supposed to do, right? Help out at church, go to the programs, lead and participate. These are all good things.

Church is there to not only be a blessing to ourselves but for us to be a blessing to

others. That being said, I think the most important thing families can do to serve the church is to make sure they're staying connected to God as a family. Family worship, reading, learning and serving together – it all comes back to the family unit.

Q: What do you see as being some of Medford Church's strengths, and how can we grow in other areas?

GONZALEZ: Since coming to the Medford Valley, I've noticed that Medford Church in particular is very giving – financially, of course, but also of their time and person. I also love how the church is so friendly; there really is an atmosphere of love and acceptance when you walk through the doors of the church.

Medford Church is so grateful for Gonzalez's and his wife, Kayla's, ministry, and for God's goodness in providing them with a pastor.



ALLIE MORSE
Medford Church correspondent

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/119-6-OR-89](https://www.nwadvent.org/st/119-6-or-89)



The Gonzalez family is excited to be working with the young people of the Medford area.

BIBLE READINGS

for

November

2024

Follow the daily reading plan and you will read the entire Bible in a year.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1 Ezek. 16-19	2
3 Haggai	4 Ezek. 20-21	5 Ezek. 22-23	6 Ezek. 24-27	7 Ezek. 28-31	8 Ezek. 32-37	9
10 Ezek. 38-39	11 Ezek. 40-41	12 Ezek. 42-43	13 Ezek. 44-45	14 Ezek. 46-48	15 Joel	16
17 Dan. 1-6	18 Dan. 7-9	19 Dan. 10-12	20 Ezra 1-3	21 Ezra 4-6; Psalm 137	22 Zech. 1-7	23
24 Zech. 8-14	25 Esther 1-5	26 Esther 6-10	27 Ezra 7-10	28 Neh. 1-5	29 Neh. 6-7	30

Our Bible reading plan leaves Sabbath as a time to share and reflect on your readings for the week. Find creative ways each Sabbath to share your reflections with others on what God is teaching you from your Bible reading time!

Follow us @NWAdventists on Instagram and Facebook.

More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-BLE-97



CHURCH

Blue Mountain Valley Church Celebrates 60 Years of Service

EARLIER THIS YEAR, BLUE MOUNTAIN VALLEY CHURCH IN ATHENA, OREGON, CELEBRATED THE 60TH YEAR OF THEIR CHARTERING.

Previous pastors, as many as were alive and could be contacted, were invited to return and share in the event. Seven did: Loren Fenton, Doug Johnson, Roger Kruger, Ole Olesen, Matthew Lombard and Lloyd Perrin. Nancy Canwell was not able to be present but sent a message to be read.

The pastors were allotted 10 minutes to share whatever was on their hearts, followed by special music. At least three pastors provided music—one played a violin duet with his wife. There were also memoir moments

by previous members. After a delightful two hours of reminiscing, a meal was served for all in attendance.

As attendees made their way from the sanctuary to the fellowship room, they were treated to a Hall of Remembrance, featuring pictured bulletin boards of the history of the chartering, the building of the church, the growth of the school and years of Pathfinders adventures.

After the meal, a story hour ensued. The church has

served its local community with two medical clinics, a healthful bakery, Bags of Love — a quilt, stuffed animal, book and toiletries for displaced children — quilt ministry, card ministry, prayer ministry, YouTube series — “Stories for Kids by Aunt Myla” — missionaries and many mission trips.

Some of the highlights of the memories included the years of work on the Umatilla Reservation, where a church and school were located in Mission, Oregon. Lee and Verna Clay spearheaded that venture. Though the couple has long passed, many church members remember them fondly.

Another story shared was from an elderly couple who attended the celebration. Ed and Ruth MacKenzie were original charter members who told of how they sent a letter several days later explaining why, although signing the charter, they never became members.

In January 1964, the couple, both 20 years old, signed their church charter. They married in June of that same year and, on their wedding weekend, planned to move their mobile home from College Place, Washington, to Pendleton, Oregon, for work at Harris Pine Mills. As they passed the Weston, Oregon, junction, strong winds caught their trailer and tipped it over.

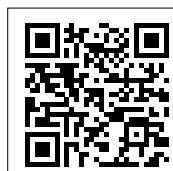
“It broke the hitch and sent us towards the bank,” the letter from the MacKenzie’s stated. “The trailer had slid across all four lanes of traffic. We were not hurt but very shaken. The trailer was totaled but thank God our belongings were OK.”

The couple went to Idaho instead to sell books, but the silver mines had closed and people didn’t have money for books.

“We came back to Walla Walla College, and Ed went to school and I worked,” the letter continued. “It is how we became involved in missions.”

An evening concert was also held with the 60-member orchestra portion of Inland Northwest Musicians, who were celebrating 25 years of serving small, underserved communities in Washington and Oregon. Musicians drove hours from all directions to participate. One flew in from Colorado, where she currently lives. The sanctuary again filled and overflowed into the balcony as spectators enjoyed an hour and a half of spectacular music.

JACQUELINE BILOFF
Blue Mountain Valley Church member



More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-UC-98

Loren Fenton, Blue Mountain Valley Church former pastor, shares memories from his time there.



MISSION AND OUTREACH

PLR Collects Donations for Food Banks

POSITIVE LIFE RADIO LISTENERS ONCE AGAIN MADE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER ACROSS THE NORTHWEST DURING THE 25TH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS IN JULY FOOD DRIVE.

As part of their Hands and Heart program, PLR listeners and volunteers came together to collect more than 14,000 pounds of food and cash donations for local food banks from Portland, Oregon, to Lewiston, Idaho.

“It was particularly encouraging to see listeners donate more food than last year while grocery prices are so high,” said Chris Gilbreth, PLR general manager.

This community effort is particularly crucial as food banks nationwide continue to face challenges due to the lingering effects of the pandemic, inflation and a decline in support during the summer

months. The generous contributions from PLR listeners will help replenish dwindling supplies and provide much-needed support to families in the Northwest.

PLR is a non-profit Christian radio network based in Walla Walla, Washington. They have multiple signals across the Northwest and its flagship station has been on the air for 60 years. They believe in creating nurturing and enduring friendships through active involvement in the local community, local and international humanitarian projects, and sharing encouraging music.



CHRISTIN BEIERLE
Positive Life Radio
assistant program
director and promotions
director

More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-UC-00



• Positive Life Radio collects more than 14,000 pounds of food for nearby shelters and food banks.

MISSION AND OUTREACH



SHINE 104.9 PRESENTS GLISTEN CHRISTMAS

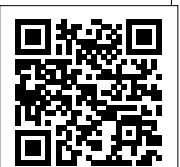
SHINE 104.9 FM in Spokane, Washington, has prepared a special station for Christmas this year.

“We’ve created a Christmas music station called Glisten Christmas, which features the most variety of any station you’ll find,” said Darin Patzer, Shine 104.9 manager. “In addition to classics from Bing Crosby like ‘White Christmas,’ you’ll also find lesser-known renditions of traditional Christmas songs featuring Christian artists, as well as country singers and hits from decades past.”

The music is completely commercial-free and is free for anyone to listen to. Just download the Live365 app on iPhone or Android and search for “Glisten Christmas.” The station will play Christmas music from November to January.

“We hope it becomes a part of your Christmas tradition,” said Patzer.

DUSTIN JONES
Upper Columbia
Conference
communications director



MORE ONLINE AT
NWADVENT.ST/119-6-UC-99

CHRISTIN BEIERLE

Richland Spanish Church Serves One More in Brazil

IN JULY, SEVERAL MEMBERS OF RICHLAND SPANISH CHURCH TRAVELED TO BRAZIL ON A MISSION TRIP THROUGH SHAREHIM.

The first words you'll hear from us about Brazil are unbelievable, caring and loving—unbelievable experiences, caring congregations and loving details. We felt love not only of God but of the people.

With smooth flights to Brazil and no delays, we arrived on time. We were blessed to stay at a hotel located in front of the iconic Ponte Estaiada in São José dos Campos. Throughout our stay, we were continuously blessed.

On nights when we were nervous, we prayed. How could we as first-time preachers fulfill our mission of 10 sermons each in one week? Our answer came as a feeling of being illuminated by God's presence.

Goose bumps tickled our skin as we felt the Holy Spirit work through us. We thank God for the calm that wrapped

around us as we stood before a crowd. The more we prayed to touch people's hearts, the more love seemed to be poured over us each night.

Our respective church families smiled across tables as we tried new foods like a cashew drink, palmito and acai. Fruit like bananas and papaya were sweeter and grape juice was richer.

Food wasn't the only blessing we experienced. Laughter, testimonies and wisdom woven into each conversation satisfied a hunger deeper than the rumbling of our stomachs.

Members lovingly reached out to us, prayed for us and thanked us for a sermon they identified with most. They marveled at how young we were, some as young as 16. We in turn still marvel that our Creator connects us despite our cultural differences.

Through conversations, we understood how large the Adventist family really is and how our beliefs and ideals pull us together globally.

If we did anything, it was surrendering ourselves to God—allowing Him to use us to comfort and show kindness. By living under His hand, we inspired other teens to try preaching about God in a different country. We witnessed seven baptisms. What was once ink on paper tucked inside our Bibles has now become something we breathe and touch.

Our eyes have been opened and we now see something we were only told about before. We are important to God. He finds it important to use us to influence others. And the beautiful part of this revelation is that it came through people including pastors, elders, translators and church members. Their smiles, tears and hugs spoke louder than ink and proved the quote true: "To love another person is to see the face of God."

SASHA GABRIELA DE DIOS
Richland Spanish Church member

Members of Richland Spanish Church gather for a photo in the airport prior to departing to Brazil.

Miembros de Iglesia Hispana de Richland se reúne para una foto en el aeropuerto antes de partir a Brasil.



IGLESIA

Iglesia Hispana de Richland Sirve a Uno Más en Brasil

EN JULIO, VARIOS MIEMBROS DE LA IGLESIA HISPANA DE RICHLAND VIAJARON A BRASIL EN UN VIAJE MISIONERO A TRAVÉS DE SHAREHIM.

Las primeras palabras que escuchará de nosotros sobre Brasil son increíbles, cariñosas y amorosas—experiencias increíbles, congregaciones cariñosas y detalles amorosos. Sentíamos amor no solo por Dios, sino por la gente.

Con vuelos tranquilos a Brasil y sin retrasos, llegamos a tiempo. Tuvimos la bendición de alojarnos en un hotel ubicado frente al icónico Ponte Estaiada en São José dos Campos. A lo largo de nuestra estadía, fuimos bendecidos continuamente.

En las noches en que estábamos nerviosos, orábamos. ¿Cómo podríamos nosotros, como predicadores

primerizos, cumplir nuestra misión de 10 sermones cada uno en una semana? Nuestra respuesta llegó como un sentimiento de ser iluminados por la presencia de Dios.

Se nos puso la piel de gallina al sentir que el Espíritu Santo obraba a través de nosotros. Damos gracias a Dios por la calma que nos envolvió mientras estábamos frente a una multitud. Cuanto más orábamos para tocar el corazón de las personas, más amor parecía derramarse sobre nosotros cada noche.

Nuestras respectivas familias de la iglesia sonreían a través de las mesas mientras

probábamos nuevos alimentos como una bebida de anacardo, palmito y acai. Las frutas como los plátanos y la papaya eran más dulces y el jugo de uva era más rico.

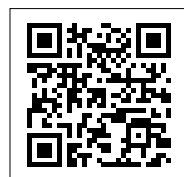
La comida no fue la única bendición que experimentamos. Las risas, los testimonios y la sabiduría entrelazados en cada conversación satisfacían un hambre más profunda que el rugido de nuestros estómagos.

Los miembros se acercaron amorosamente a nosotros, oraron por nosotros y nos agradecieron por el sermón con el que más se identificaban. Se maravillaron de lo jóvenes que éramos, algunos de tan solo 16 años. Nosotros, a su vez, todavía nos maravillamos de que nuestro Creador nos conecte a pesar de nuestras diferencias culturales. A través de conversaciones, comprendimos cuán grande es realmente la familia adventista y cómo nuestras creencias e ideales nos unen globalmente.

Si hicimos algo, fue rendirnos a Dios—permitiéndole que nos usara para consolarnos y mostrar bondad. Al vivir bajo Su mano, inspiramos a otros adolescentes a intentar predicar acerca de Dios en un país diferente. Fuimos testigos de siete bautismos. Lo que una vez fue tinta sobre papel metido dentro de nuestras Biblias ahora se ha convertido en algo que respiramos y tocamos.

Nuestros ojos se han abierto y ahora vemos algo de lo que solo se nos había hablado antes. Somos importantes para Dios. Considera importante que nos utilicemos para influir en los demás. Y la parte hermosa de esta revelación es que vino a través de personas como pastores, ancianos, traductores y miembros de la iglesia. Sus sonrisas, lágrimas y abrazos hablaron más fuerte que la tinta y demostraron que la cita era cierta: “Amar a otra persona es ver el rostro de Dios.”

SASHA GABRIELA DE DIOS
Miembro de Iglesia Hispana de Richland



Move online at [NWADVENT.ST/119-6-UC-02](https://www.nwadventist.org/st/119-6-uc-02) +



Four Churches Evangelize to Okanogan County

WHAT STARTED AS AN IDEA QUICKLY MATERIALIZED INTO A PHENOMENAL OUTREACH FOR FOUR CHURCHES IN UPPER COLUMBIA CONFERENCE. THE CHURCHES IN BREWSTER, OMAK, OROVILLE AND TONASKET JOINED FORCES TO PRESENT A SEMINAR SERIES FROM APRIL 2-27.

“It was a *big* step of faith when our speaker, Brian McMahon, suggested that I consider doing a multi-church meeting,” said Dan Cole, Omak, Oroville and Tonasket pastor. McMahon is a speaker from Prophecy Unsealed.

“I was not confident that all the churches would buy in, but one at a time they joined in enthusiastically as the Holy Spirit moved them,” continued Cole. “UCC and North Pacific Union came through with evangelism funds in a great way.”

Omar Rodriguez, Brewster Church pastor, brought his congregation on board and work quickly began with more than 80 volunteers.

“We’ve had local church prophecy seminars before and

had some success, but this is the first time we’ve done a county-wide meeting before,” said Cole.

The first night had an attendance of 206 at Okanogan County Fairgrounds’ Agriplex. The event featured a children’s ministry and was also streamed online.

Through the event, more than 75 individuals recommitted their lives to Jesus. Twenty-six of those were decisions made for baptism, to join the church by profession of faith and/or be baptized. Of those 26 decisions, nine have been baptized, one has joined by profession of faith and three have been rebaptized so far.

“We had one baptized at Oroville Church – Kaiza El-Haj, who was prepared for baptism by her grandpa, Bill Hughes,

and filled out a decision card for baptism during the meetings,” added Cole.

Two individuals are preparing to join by profession of faith, four individuals are planning to be rebaptized and three teenagers and one individual will be baptized in the next couple of months.

“My faith has grown as I’ve watched God work in the lives of men, women and children who have chosen to accept Christ and be baptized,” said Cole.

Several other individuals have attended some of the churches and are taking Bible studies in English and Spanish – all thanks to the series the churches hosted together.

“We continue to praise God from whom *all* blessings

flow as the Holy Spirit clearly was poured out and so tremendously blessed our Okanogan Countywide joint outreach,” said Cole.

Watch a video documentary on the seminar series at vimeo.com/941670927.

DUSTIN R. JONES
Upper Columbia Conference communications director



More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-UC-04

• Event organizers welcome individuals who chose to be baptized during the event.



BIBLE READINGS

for

December

2024

Follow the daily reading plan and you will read the entire Bible in a year.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1 Gen. 1-3	2 Gen. 4-7	3 Gen. 8-11	4 Job 1-5	5 Job 6-9	6 Job 10-16	7
8 Job 17-20	9 Job 21-23	10 Job 24-28	11 Job 29-31	12 Job 32-34	13 Job 35-39	14
15 Job 40-42	16 Gen. 12-15	17 Gen. 16-18	18 Gen. 19-21	19 Gen. 22-25	20 Gen. 26-29	21
22 Gen. 30-31	23 Gen. 32-34	24 Gen. 35-37	25 Gen. 38-40	26 Gen. 41-42	27 Gen. 43-47	28
29 Gen. 48-50	30 Exod. 1-3	31 Exod. 4-6				

Our Bible reading plan leaves Sabbath as a time to share and reflect on your readings for the week. Find creative ways each Sabbath to share your reflections with others on what God is teaching you from your Bible reading time!

Follow us @NWAdventists on Instagram and Facebook.

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/119-6-BLE-98](https://www.nwadvent.org/st/119-6-ble-98)





SAA Prayers Are Answered

AS THE 2023–2024 SCHOOL YEAR WAS ENDING, AUBREY FAUTHEREE, SKAGIT ADVENTIST ACADEMY PRINCIPAL, KNEW THAT THE SCHOOL URGENTLY NEEDED AN ANSWER TO PRAYER.



KELVIN J. BEATON

A group of SAA students poses for a picture in the play area.



KELVIN J. BEATON

SAA Beginner Strings group performs.



LAVONNE LONG

Conference administration submits the check to SAA's principal and business manager.

“We had been making prayer an important part of the school year,” said Fautheree. During the previous school year, SAA worked with an organization that aimed to increase school enrollment. As a result, the school budgeted for an increased student population for the 2023–2024 school year.

Unfortunately, the increase did not happen as planned and there was a decrease of about 10 students. “So, we were 25 students short,” added Fautheree.

Around February 2024, Fautheree felt a strong conviction to take this matter to prayer. Inspired by Pavel Goia's talks at a prayer conference and his reading of Debleaire Snell's book, *Get Unrealistic*, Fautheree challenged the school board and staff to join in 40 days of prayer.

Trusting that God would answer their prayers for financial sustenance, the group continued praying beyond the 40 days until the end of the school year. “We just laid the school before the Lord and said, ‘Look, this is Yours. You take care of it,’” said Fautheree.

Throughout this process, Fautheree also prayed with conference administrators and let them know of the school's financial needs. It was estimated that SAA would be about \$80,000 short.

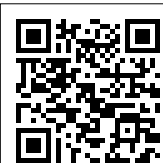
On Aug. 20, the prayers were answered. Fautheree was scheduled to have a routine prayer visit with the conference treasurer, but instead he was visited by the administration team.

To his surprise, they handed him a check for the exact amount the school needed. It was the first check of a larger amount that had been designated to SAA from a matured will. A generous donor had chosen the school to be a beneficiary. Unbeknownst to Fautheree, while he and others were still praying for a miracle, God had already chosen the way to provide for that need.

“What a blessing it is that people value Adventist education and are willing to support it,” said Fautheree. Through this generous donation, SAA can continue to operate and continue its mission of educating children for eternity.

Regarding this prayer experience at SAA, Fautheree added, “This is not our battle. This is not. This is His school. We get to come alongside and allow Him to work. We serve a big God. He's capable and not limited.”

For more information about how you too can bless God's work through planned giving, visit washingtonconference.org/giving.



ENOC GARCIA
*Washington Conference
communication director*

Move online at
NWADVENT.ST/119-6-WA-75



CHURCH

Hispanic Ministries Enriches Washington Families

ON AUG. 10, FEDERAL WAY HISPANIC CHURCH HELD GROWING IN THE CHURCH AND AT HOME, A SPECIAL EVENT ORGANIZED BY WASHINGTON CONFERENCE HISPANIC MINISTRIES AND LED BY VICTORIA MARTÍNEZ AND YVÁN BALABARCA.

Some of the topics covered included evangelism to teens, becoming receptive churches and teaching Sabbath School. This gathering brought together more than 90 people, including children's Sabbath School teachers, parents interested in the spiritual development of their homes and ministry leaders from related areas such as Pathfinders.

The invited presenters, Delia Fernández, Central East Peruvian Conference director of women's ministries and children's ministries, and Nilda Carrasco, Peruvian Union University advisor for international students and admissions, traveled from Peru to share their knowledge and strategies.

Their main goal was to strengthen children's worship; share evangelistic strategies for women; provide methodologies for teaching children,

juniors and youth in Sabbath School; and teach valuable strategies for managing time in family worship.

The sessions began at 10 a.m. and continued until 5 p.m. in a dynamic and enriching environment. In addition to the invited presenters, the event featured Wagner Cilio, Washington Conference Hispanic ministries coordinator, and Francisco Brito, Washington Conference Hispanic ministries assistant coordinator, who provided support and contributed to the success of the day.

Martínez, Fernández and Carrasco shared practical strategies and valuable teachings that were highly appreciated by the participants. They shared teaching materials specifically designed to meet the needs of multiple age groups.

Growing in the Church and at Home emphasized the importance of spiritual

instruction from childhood, reminding everyone of Prov. 22:6: "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it." This principle was the central focus of the teachings shared during the day.

Participants expressed their satisfaction with this event, stating their desire for it to be repeated in the future. They look forward to using the principles learned to strengthen their faith at home and at church.

Leer en español escaneando el Código QR a continuación.



YVÁN BALABARCA
Auburn, Kent and
Seattle Hispanic
district pastor

More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-WA-73

EPITACYO MARTINS



Victoria Martinez explains the use of the didactic materials.

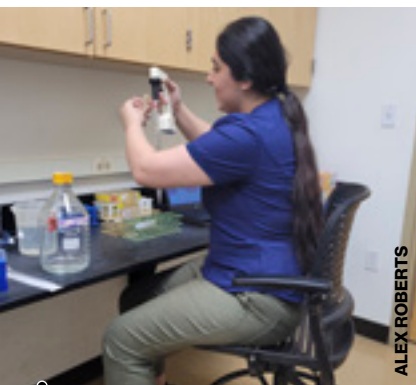
JEHIELY BALABARCA



From left to right: Nilda Carrasco, Francisco Brito, Victoria Martinez, Delia Fernandez and Yvan Balabarca each contribute their expertise and support to help families in their spiritual development.

Student Finds ACF Chapter at UW

ZARIEL ZAMUDIO, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON BIOLOGICAL OCEANOGRAPHY STUDENT, IS IMPACTING BOTH HER FIELD OF STUDY AND HER CAMPUS.



ALEX ROBERTS

Zamudio transfers cultured isolates into new tubes with a pipette for the growth rate experiment on the unique prochlorococcus isolates.



ZARIEL ZAMUDIO

Zamudio smiles in the control room for the famous ROV Jason, a remotely operated vehicle, after a successful first dive during VISIONS'24.



BALDEMAR ZAMUDIO

Zamudio presents her research at the SURP symposium.

She balances her academic pursuits with a deep commitment to fostering a supportive faith community. Upon starting at UW for the 2023–2024 school year, Zamudio began attending Volunteer Park Church where she found herself helping establish an Adventist Christian Fellowship club on campus.

Zamudio was introduced to a group of UW students at VPC who welcomed her into their community. Through them, she met John Leis, Washington Conference public campus ministries director. Leis, who is dedicated to assisting students in any way possible, became a mentor to her and others.

After asking for a ride to the dentist, Zamudio was curious about Leis' role and how he was able to devote so much time to helping students.

Leis explained his work as a campus ministries leader and introduced her to the mission of ACF. Zamudio became actively involved in founding an ACF club, which officially launched in September 2024 during UW's Dawg Daze – a time for clubs to connect with students.

As ACF's first student president, Zamudio leads worship services, hosts Bible studies at her home and engages socially with students to build a community where they can depend on each other and deepen their faith.

Zamudio's passion for community building extends beyond her religious activities. During the 2023–2024 school year, she worked in an oceanography lab on UW's campus. While there, she learned about Washington NASA Space Grant Consortium's Summer

Undergraduate Research Program. Zamudio sent in an application and the lab requested the program hire her. She was accepted into the internship.

During the internship, Zamudio collaborated with a graduate student who had cultivated two unique isolates of prochlorococcus from the Oxygen Deficient Zone off the coast of Mexico. Together, they grew the isolates under high light levels and compared them to other known isolates of picocyanobacteria. The results challenged the current theory of the evolutionary process for the picocyanobacteria phylum of prochlorococcus.

After presenting her research at the SURP symposium, Zamudio participated in another project called VISIONS'24 where she worked aboard a National

Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration research vessel 300 miles offshore.

Zamudio is continuing her studies in biological oceanography while also following the example set by her mother, Blanca Ortiz, by volunteering at the UW food pantry. She looks forward to building ACF into a successful and supportive community.

You can learn more about Zamudio's experience during her summer internship at nwadvent.st/sfc4y.

LACEY STECKER
Washington Conference
communication intern



More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-WA-72

MISSION AND OUTREACH

LifeBridge Church Holds First Annual Kids Summer Fest

ON AUG. 2, LIFEBRIDGE CHURCH HELD ITS FIRST-EVER KIDS SUMMER FEST IN UNIVERSITY PLACE. ALTHOUGH INITIALLY INTENDED AND PLANNED FOR 200-300 PARTICIPANTS, MORE THAN 1,000 PEOPLE ATTENDED.

The idea for the event stemmed from the church's desire to intentionally connect with local families in a deep and meaningful way. To provide a connection point, Kids Summer Fest 2024 was initiated. Though an event like this is often thought of as secular entertainment, this event was anything but that. It was intentionally designed to embed spirituality and biblical principles in a fun, positive environment.

Kids Summer Fest was action packed with a bounce house, live petting zoo, games, live music and food. Upon arrival at the registration booth, attendees discovered that each festival station was part of the Creation Challenge with an activity for each day of creation.

DAY 1: LIGHT

Kids learned about light refraction and played with bubbles while waiting in line to get their pictures taken at a photo booth.

DAY 2: AIR

Kids enjoyed God's gift of air by jumping in a bounce house.

DAY 3: PLANTS AND TREES

Kids created a nature craft and chose to go on a nature scavenger hunt.

DAY 4: SUN AND MOON

Kids got their faces painted and enjoyed launching a rocket into the sky.

DAY 5: BIRDS AND FISH

Kids played a fish game and listened to a ventriloquist share a story about this creation day.

DAY 6A: ANIMALS

Families enjoyed a petting zoo with sheep, goats, rabbits, guinea pigs, chickens, quail, a camel, an alpaca, a duck and a tortoise.

DAY 6B: PEOPLE

Kids learned about organs and parts of the body by creating people using Play-Doh and clay.

DAY 7: REST, RELATIONSHIPS AND WORSHIP

Families experienced Sabbath through rest, relationships and worship with live music and snack booths. Here they gathered, watched Handy Andy perform, heard words of blessing and found out if they won one of the grand prizes.

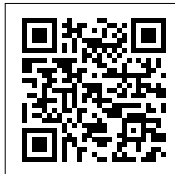
At the end of each activity, an activity paper was stamped. When all eight stamps were

collected, a raffle ticket was given to participants for a chance to win services, gift cards and items donated from local businesses.

The first Kids Summer Fest was an amazing experience and an intentional bridge event that let the community know LifeBridge Church is here to serve and support their emotional, social and spiritual needs. From this event, one family began attending worship gatherings and connected with a small parenting group.

As the Kids Summer Fest event continues to be a part of the cycle of evangelism, it will be exciting to see what the harvest cycle has to bring the rest of this year and the years to come.

ALEXANDRA DE LA PAZ
LifeBridge Church correspondent



More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-WA-49



Kids Summer Fest serves as a bridge from LifeBridge Church to the community.



PHOTOS BY AJ PASTOR PRODUCTIONS

MISSION AND OUTREACH

Holy Spirit Brings Woman to God

CAMILLE GARVEY WAS BORN INTO AN ADVENTIST FAMILY. LIFE GOT BUSY, AND THE GARVEY FAMILY STOPPED ATTENDING CHURCH. WHEN GARVEY ASKED HER MOTHER WHY, SHE EXPRESSED CONCERNS ABOUT THE JUDGMENT AND COLDNESS MEMBERS OFTEN DISPLAYED.



PHOTOS BY BRENDA CARDOZO



Although they stopped attending, they still honored the Sabbath by listening to worship music and watching sermons. Garvey and her siblings attended Catholic school, where she developed a fear-based relationship with God due to the legalism and judgment of members.

A close relative eventually lost their walk with God and was determined to disprove Jesus' existence. Garvey soon came to believe that all she'd been taught was a lie.

"To be honest, there was a sense of relief in pulling away from that because I had to—I could drop the guilt," Garvey said.

As she pulled away from God, Garvey began learning about spiritualism. She developed depression and began having suicidal thoughts and ideation. She couldn't find peace.

"I kept trying to numb as much as I could. Feelings would come up to

the surface, and then I would feel so overwhelmed with all the feelings," Garvey said.

Until the COVID-19 pandemic, Garvey was able to pull herself back from going too far with various vices. Once things got settled and she had time to think during quarantine, she lost all self-control. "It literally scared the life out of me," Garvey said. She realized she couldn't keep living this way.

Garvey knew she needed things to change but understood that she couldn't do it alone. She began revisiting speaking to God as a forgiving father. She began asking God if Jesus was really real, if He had died for her and if He loved her unconditionally. Garvey asked God to reveal the truth about Jesus to her.

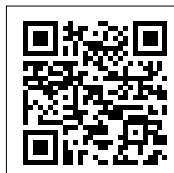
"I had a moment in my room where I was at my wits' end and I realized the Holy Spirit was revealing to me all the sin I was

carrying and the separation I had from God. And that is what was really killing me," said Garvey.

"I just laid on my bed and had this real honest, guttural cry like I needed help. I was just dying for that peace and presence for years, and I couldn't get it. When I finally just asked Him and surrendered, it was undeniable," she continued. "He was just this presence in my room and this love. And that's when I had my first true encounter with God."

Garvey began to study the Bible for herself and came to see God as loving and merciful. She began looking for a church. She remembered the Sabbath from her childhood and found Volunteer Park Church in Seattle. The people were kind and welcoming – not judgmental as she'd remembered from her youth. She had finally found a loving God with a loving family.

Garvey has taken on a personal mission to spread the news of the loving God she knows. She does this through VPC's community outreach programs and volunteering at a crisis center. She prays that God speaks through her to those who need Him.



LACEY STECKER
*Washington Conference
communication intern*

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/119-6-WA-47](https://www.nwadvent.org/st/119-6-wa-47)

BIBLE READINGS

for

January

2025

Follow the daily reading plan and you will read the entire Bible in a year.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1 Num. 14-15	2 Num. 16-17	3 Num. 18-22	4
5 Num. 23-25	6 Num. 26-27	7 Num. 28-30	8 Num. 31-32	9 Num. 33-34	10 Num. 35-36	11
12 Deut. 1-4	13 Deut. 5-7	14 Deut. 8-10	15 Deut. 11-13	16 Deut. 14-16	17 Deut. 17-23	18
19 Deut. 24-27	20 Deut. 28-29	21 Deut. 30-34	22 Psalm 90-91	23 Joshua 1-4	24 Joshua 5-11	25
26 Joshua 12-15	27 Joshua 16-18	28 Joshua 19-21	29 Joshua 22-24	30 Judges 1-2	31 Judges 3-7	

Find the complete 2025 reading plan online now by scanning the QR Code or visiting the link to the right.

Our Bible reading plan leaves Sabbath as a time to share and reflect on your readings for the week. Find creative ways each Sabbath to share your reflections with others on what God is teaching you from your Bible reading time!

Follow us @NWAdventists on Instagram and Facebook.

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-1-BLE-61



School of Business Offers New Online MBA

WALLA WALLA UNIVERSITY'S SCHOOL OF BUSINESS WILL BEGIN OFFERING AN ONLINE MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM IN JANUARY 2025 IN ORDER TO BUILD FAITHFUL, ETHICAL BUSINESS LEADERS AND MANAGERS.

Conna Bond, MBA program director, and Bruce Toews, WWU School of Business dean, shared more about how the program will build strategic skills and Christian ethics among students.

Q: What does this particular MBA program cover? What is the advantage of this focus?

BOND: The program is designed to provide aspiring business leaders and managers from any discipline with the ethical, strategic decision-making skills needed to lead organizations in today's fast-paced marketplace. We will heavily employ the Harvard case study teaching method that allows students not only to develop solutions to real-world problems but also to strategically identify and define what those challenges are in the first place.

We are shaping the program to be a high-quality, affordable, accessible option for students who see the advantage of being able to confidently address the rising ethical challenges brought to all areas of business by ever-changing technology.

Q: Why is WWU uniquely positioned to offer an MBA that highlights ethical leadership?

BOND: Every new student will begin the program with an intensive ethical leadership seminar presented by a variety of business leaders and facilitators with unique experience in leading with moral

fortitude. In addition, the content in all the other courses will incorporate leadership principles and values from a faith-based perspective.

Q: What aspect of the program makes you most excited?

BOND: I'm especially excited about working with Alix Anderson, WWU experienced instructional designer, to design courses that are interesting, varied and engaging. I also look forward to personally advising each student through the program as they design their own path to becoming compassionate, successful business leaders.

TOEWS: The program aims to build leadership skills of people from any background, including those working in education, engineering, government, nonprofits and the Adventist Church. As our graduates lead, they will make significant contributions to their organizations, communities and the world.

WWU will offer multiple electives in healthcare administration, finance, artificial intelligence, business analytics and cybersecurity and is working towards adding specializations in these areas to the MBA.

Learn more about how this program aims to be accessible through flexible scheduling, minimal prerequisites and affordable cost at wallawalla.edu/mba.



KELSI DOS SANTOS
WWU marketing and university relations director

More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-WWU-06

- The new program will provide a values-driven Christian perspective on leading organizations in today's fast-paced markets.



MICAH NAUKKARINEN

EDUCATION

Speaker Bureau Launches

STEEPED IN MORE THAN 130 YEARS OF CHRISTIAN ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE, WALLA WALLA UNIVERSITY IS A GATHERING POINT FOR EXPERTS WHOSE UNDERSTANDING IS GROUNDED IN AN ADVENTIST WORLDVIEW.

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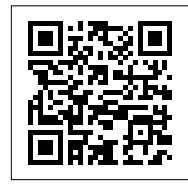
Faithful faculty with serious knowledge in the fields of engineering, economics, Renaissance literature, special education, faith-based filmmaking, the Reformation, organizational leadership, grief processing and more challenge and grow students every day. To share this precious resource more easily with its communities, WWU has launched a speaker bureau.

While faculty and staff have a long tradition of professional activity, the speaker bureau is a centralized way for the community to access WWU's teaching talent.

The bureau includes a few of WWU's experts who have extensive experience engaging congregations and inspiring audiences across the U.S. and around the world. Speakers expand the educational mission of WWU beyond its walls, pouring into communities across North Pacific Union.

WWU seeks to convey a wisdom that translates academic excellence into responsible citizenship, generous service, a deep respect for the beauty in God's creation and the promise of re-creation through Jesus Christ.

For more information about the speaker bureau, visit wallawalla.edu/speaker or contact Pam Cress, WWU vice president for academic administration, at 509-527-2431.



KELSI DOS SANTOS
WWU marketing and university relations director

More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-WWU-12 



CHRIS DRAKE



SAM GOMEZ

The ministry of WWU includes making professors available for preaching and teaching beyond the borders of campus.



4 Strategies to Help Kids Navigate Disappointment

DISAPPOINTMENT IS A NATURAL FEELING WHEN THINGS DON'T TURN OUT THE WAY WE EXPECT. WHEN SOMETHING HAPPENS TO DERAIL A MUCH-ANTICIPATED EVENT — SUCH AS THE WEATHER'S IMPACT ON THE PATHFINDER CAMPOREE THIS SUMMER — HOW WE DEAL WITH THAT DISAPPOINTMENT CAN BE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH.

Sarah Lundy, Adventist Health Portland licensed clinical social worker, shared four things adults can do to help kids cope with disappointment.

1. RECOGNIZE DISAPPOINTMENT AS A GRIEF PROCESS.

"It's important to validate and support kids to normalize what they're feeling," Lundy said. "A personal example can give kids permission to feel sad and talk about their experience. Try saying something like, 'You know, I've had things unexpectedly change. When that happens to me, I feel really sad or frustrated.'"

We can unintentionally put judgment on kids' feelings by making "at least" statements, such as, "At least you got to see your friends for a few days," or "At least you made it home safely."

"When we do this, we can inadvertently send a message that minimizes their experience," Lundy added. "It's important to show kids that all feelings are welcome at the table. They can say as much or as little as they want, but their feelings are not too big for grown-ups."

The key is to make space for what they're feeling without having guilt about those feelings.

2. REDUCE ANTICIPATORY ANXIETY BY BUILDING THE SENSE OF "I CAN HANDLE THIS."

"What happens in anxiety, particularly for children," said Lundy, "is a belief that if something bad happens, I won't be able to handle it. We can't tell kids something like that won't happen again, because we don't know. Instead, we can talk about what we could do if that were to happen."

Lundy suggested starting a conversation with, "I really believe you can get through that. Let's talk about what that would look like. What would you need? What are your ideas?"



Start with the child's natural ideas or sense of ability, and then help them be curious about what they could do. To conceptualize this, have kids write down 10 things they could do if something happened, such as 1. Call Mom and Dad, 2. Find a grown-up, 3. Find a friend, etc.

Keep the list of what they come up with. Place it in a location where kids can be reminded that if something unexpected happens they have a plan.

3. BE TOGETHER AND TALK.

If a group of kids has negatively experienced something together, follow-up conversations can help them look forward to positive future moments. "You can help them repair negative experiences by looking toward experiences in the future," Lundy said.

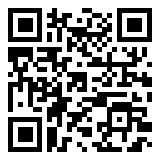
Facilitate conversation by having kids write on index cards one thing they missed about not having the get-together. Maybe they missed a game they love, swimming in the lake or a certain food.

Then, Lundy said, "Collect the index cards and read them to the group without naming who wrote it. As you go along, have kids raise their hands if they also missed that thing. Invite them to say something about what they missed and why."

4. RECOGNIZE IT'S OKAY FOR KIDS TO STRUGGLE.

"As grown-ups, we want to solve things when kids are upset or have hurt feelings. We feel OK when they're OK," Lundy explained, "but it is a potentially rich learning experience for kids to go through disappointment and learn they can support each other and have a positive experience next time."

"Allowing kids to be uncomfortable, to feel sad and to cry with no clear solution is actually a really wonderful opportunity to build life skills and resilience over time," Lundy said.



KIM STROBEL
Adventist Health
program manager
for religion, faith and
mission

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/119-6-AH-92](https://www.adventisthealth.org/NWADVENT.ST/119-6-AH-92)

HEALTH



THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF GRATITUDE

IT'S THE TIME OF YEAR to remember what we're thankful for. This doesn't mean refusing to acknowledge life's difficulties. Instead, it means your thoughts are focused on how you can approach life in a positive way. Keeping a gratitude list is even correlated with better exercise habits and fewer trips to the doctor.

Here are four strategies for increasing gratitude:

1. Keep a gratitude journal. Studies have found keeping a list of things you're thankful for has a stronger impact on mental health than writing down frustrations.

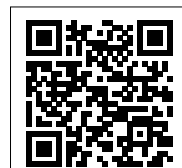
2. Send thank-you notes. Expressing gratitude to others can make you happier and improve your relationships.

3. Pray daily. Prayer is a perfect opportunity to express thankfulness.

4. Share gratitude lists as a family. Teach your children how focusing on the positive aspects of life can help their health and well-being. Keep a family gratitude journal.

Gratitude helps us focus on what we have instead of what we lack. It can help us feel happier and healthier in every way.

KIM STROBEL
Adventist Health program manager for
religion, faith and mission



MORE ONLINE AT
[NWADVENT.ST/119-6-AH-91](https://www.adventisthealth.org/NWADVENT.ST/119-6-AH-91)

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THE DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

at Andrews University is looking for a Ph.D.-trained biologist to fill a tenure-track position beginning fall 2025. The successful candidate will demonstrate a capacity for effective college biology teaching, productive scholarship, good interpersonal skills and commitment to the integration of faith and learning. Further information at andrews.edu/jobs.

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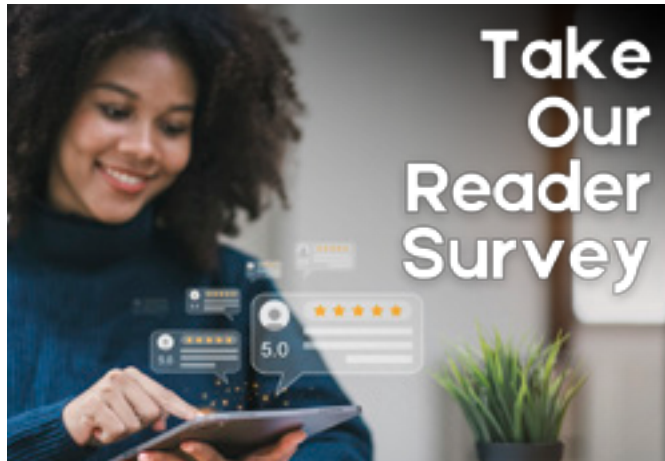
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STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

This Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation for 2024 was filed on Sept. 24, 2024, with the U.S. Postal Service for the *Gleaner*, for publication number 0746-5874, a magazine owned and published by the North Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 5709 N. 20th St., Ridgefield, WA 98642. It is published 6 times a year at a subscription price of \$15.50. The following figures for the extent and nature of the circulation apply to the year ending with the Nov/Dec 2024 issue of the *Gleaner* and were printed in the Nov/Dec 2024 issue of this publication.

Total number of copies
Paid circulation mailed outside-county
Paid circulation mailed in-county
Sales through dealers, carriers, street vendors
Other classes mailed through USPS
Total paid distribution
Free or nominal rate outside-county
Free or nominal rate in-county
Other classes mailed through USPS
Free or nominal rate outside the mail
Total free or nominal rate distribution
Total distribution
Copies not distributed
Total
Paid Electronic Copies
Percent paid

	YEAR AVERAGE	SEPT/OCT 2024 ISSUE
Total number of copies	37,501	37,764
Paid circulation mailed outside-county	37,361	37,623
Paid circulation mailed in-county	0	0
Sales through dealers, carriers, street vendors	0	0
Other classes mailed through USPS	0	0
Total paid distribution	37,361	37,623
Free or nominal rate outside-county	140	137
Free or nominal rate in-county	0	0
Other classes mailed through USPS	0	0
Free or nominal rate outside the mail	0	0
Total free or nominal rate distribution	140	141
Total distribution	37,501	37,764
Copies not distributed	100	100
Total	37,601	37,864
Paid Electronic Copies	0	0
Percent paid	99.63%	99.63%

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NORTH PACIFIC UNION

Offering

- Nov. 2 – Local Church Budget
- Nov. 9 – Annual Sacrifice for Global Mission (GC)
- Nov. 16 – Local Church Budget
- Nov. 23 – Local Conference Advance
- Nov. 30 – Alaska Conference (NPUC)
- Dec. 7 – Local Church Budget
- Dec. 14 – Adventist Community Services (NAD)
- Dec. 21 – Local Church Budget
- Dec. 28 – Local Conference Advance

WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

SAA Alumni: Update Your Info

Attention Skagit Adventist Academy Alumni: In preparation for Alumni Weekend – Jan. 31–Feb. 2, 2025 – we are updating our alumni contact list. If you or your family attended or worked at SAA, please share your current contact information. Call 360-755-9261, email alumni@skagitadventist.com or fill out the form at tinyurl.com/SAA-Alumni.

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ADAMS—Nieta Rae (Pflugrad), 92; born Aug. 31, 1931, Walla Walla, Washington; died Aug. 26, 2024, College Place, Washington. Surviving: son, Duane; daughter, Diane Adams; brother, Edvern Pflugrad; 5 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

BANKES—Carl Raymond, 89; born Jan. 16, 1934, Grier City, Barnesville, Pennsylvania; died Oct. 9, 2023, Beaverton, Oregon. Surviving: spouse, Barbara Bankes; sons, Raymond Bankes, Roger Bankes, Roger Penn and David Penn; daughters, Donna Bankes and Janene Bankes; 12 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

BECHTEL—Ronald Lee, 78; born Feb. 26, 1945, Redmond, Oregon; died Feb. 16, 2024, Medford, Oregon. Surviving: spouse, Betty Hamblin Frasier Bechtel; son, Lewis Frasier; daughters, Radine Bechtel Hallam, Heather Bechtel Spence and Georgia Fraiser Prince.

BLACKWOOD—James E., 86; born Aug. 29, 1937, Santa Cruz, California; died July 30, 2024, Lebanon, Oregon. Surviving: spouse, Judy (Elijah); daughters, Jane (Blackwood) Wagman and Janet Blackwood-Knapp; sister, Jane (Blackwood) Frye; 2 grandchildren, 2 step-grandchildren and 1 step-great-grandchild.

CHRISTIE—Ralph Neal, 78; born Jan. 29, 1946, Lima, Peru; died May 18, 2024, Walla Walla, Washington. Surviving: spouse, MindaLea (Shepherd); sister, Judy (Christie) Haste.

DELINGER—Marilyn L. (Johnson), 79; born Dec. 31, 1944, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; died July 21, 2024, Cody, Wyoming. Surviving: spouse, John; sons, Jonathan and Timothy; 2 grandchildren.

FISHER—William George Edgar Jr., 63; born July 4, 1961, Ritzville, Washington; died Sept. 6, 2024, Salem, Oregon. Surviving: spouse, Viki (Kemp); sons, Will Fisher and Andy Jones; daughters, Laura (Fisher) Campbell and Kristin (Jones) Rux; mother, Darlene (Phelps) Fisher; brother, Darryl; sister, Rhonda (Fisher) Patrick; 8 grandchildren.

FITCH—Gem (O'Brien), 90; born March 5, 1934, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada; died Aug. 11, 2024, Lacombe, Alberta, Canada. Surviving: spouse, Victor Sr.; sons, Shaun and Victor Jr.; daughter, Lana (Fitch) Franklin; 9 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

GARVIN—Kathy Carol (Jennings), 77; born April 16, 1946, Hood River, Oregon; died Jan. 22, 2024, Astoria, Oregon. Surviving: spouse, Greg; sons, Dwight, Jeff and Stan Keightley; sister, June Walter; 8 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild.

HUMPHREYS—Ronald F., 80; born July 9, 1942, Puyallup, Washington; died April 7, 2023, Mead, Washington. Surviving: spouse, Geri Walker Humphreys; son, Scott; daughter, Karina Humphreys Pettey; brother, Donald; 6 grandchildren, 4 step-grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

JACKSON—Vincent Dale, 93; born March 13, 1931, Kalispell, Montana; died May 19, 2024, Fort Worth, Texas. Surviving: son, Robert; daughter, Roberta Jackson-Ingram; stepsons, Fred, Lenard, Neal and Steven Wittlake; stepdaughters, Evie Tenorio and Joan Gutierrez; 4 grandchildren, 20 step-grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren and 20 step-great-grandchildren.

KELLOGG—James Russell, 91; born April 15, 1933, Palo Alto, California; died Aug. 8, 2024, Springboro, Ohio. Surviving: daughters, Diane (Kellogg) Mattheson and Helen (Kellogg) Sierra; stepsons, Gary and Steve Redwine; stepdaughter, Linda (Redwine) Goodpaster; brother, Donald; 6 grandchildren, 5 step-grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild and 3 step-great-grandchildren.

KNAUFF—Daryl Aden, 83; born March 28, 1941, Boise, Idaho; died June 6, 2024, Sequim, Washington. Surviving: spouse, Stelle (Shepard) Knauff; daughter, Lacey (Knauff) Clark; stepsons, John and Brian Lyles; 3 grandchildren.

KNAUFF—Gayle (Cook), 76; born Dec. 19, 1947, Roseburg, Oregon; died Aug. 17, 2024, Grants Pass, Oregon. Surviving: spouse, Roger; son, Kaleb; daughter, Janell Knauff; brother, Harry Cook; sister, Lynda (Cook) Gott; 3 grandchildren.

LOGAN—Ava Leona (Brumfield), 98; born Dec. 18, 1925, Pierce, Colorado; died Aug. 9, 2024, Nampa,

Idaho. Surviving: son, Harold Logan Jr.; daughters, Kathleen Guagliardo, Peggy Logan and Kelley Glazier; 9 grandchildren, 42 great-grandchildren and 23 great-great-grandchildren.

MCDONALD—Lorraine (Zaversnake), 79; born Oct. 14, 1944, Selkirk, Manitoba, Canada; died Aug. 18, 2024, Happy Valley, Oregon. Surviving: spouse, Bob; daughters, Tamma-lynn (McDonald) McGinnis and Terri-lynn McDonald; brothers, Bert Savers and Richard Zaversnake; 2 grandchildren and 1 step-grandchild.

MORFORD—Betty M. (Moyer), 92; born Oct. 15, 1931; died Aug. 8, 2024, Walla Walla, Washington. Surviving: sons, Ted, Tim and Todd; brother, Jim Moyer; 4 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.

NEU—Ronald Frank, 79; born May 3, 1944, Redlands, California; died Nov. 21, 2023, Clarkston, Washington. Surviving: spouse, Darrelyn Hope Neu; son, Bruce James Neu; daughter, Rhonda (Neu) Clark; 2 grandchildren.

OGLESBY—Betty Ruth (Brown), 94; born June 19, 1930, Colville, Washington; died July 30, 2024, Forest Grove, Oregon. Surviving: sons, Steven and Douglas; daughters, Juanita Oglesby Dillenburg and Rose Marie Oglesby Hibbs; 6 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

PIFER—George, 82; born Oct. 11, 1941, Miami, Florida; died July 15, 2024, Fall River Mills, California. Surviving: spouse, Elizabeth;

daughters, Anita Marie McGrew and Raylene Feather; 3 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

REUER—Connie Rae (Pearson), 84; born Feb. 12, 1938, Sioux Falls, South Dakota; died Sept. 17, 2022, Boise, Idaho. Surviving: son, Jason Lee Reuer.

REUER—Duane Alson, 86; born July 12, 1936, Bowdle, South Dakota; died March 16, 2023, Meridian, Idaho. Surviving: son, Jason Lee Reuer.

SANFORD—Tom, 80; born Dec. 23, 1943, Albion, Pennsylvania; died Aug. 4, 2024, Sequim, Washington. Surviving: spouse, Bonnie (Fike); son, Craig; daughter, Kelly (Sanford) Hagele; brother, Dale; sisters, Diana and Beverly; 5 grandchildren.

SCHIPPMANN—Nancy Jean (Jacobson), previously Nancy Stagl, 87; born Aug. 5, 1936, Kanakanak, Alaska; died July 30, 2024, Tigard, Oregon. Surviving: spouse, Doug Schippmann; sons, Steven, Stuart, Stanley and Michael Stagl; daughters, Marie (Stagl) Scodris and Michelle Shephard; 15 grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild.

SCHMECHEL—Kathryn Pauline (Boepple), 98; born Oct. 6, 1925, Medicine Hat, Alberta, Canada; died April 7, 2024, Newberg, Oregon. Surviving: daughters, Joanne Piper, Penny Ausmus and Susan Feierfeil; 13 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

SCHNEIDER—Robert “Bob” Clarence, 85; born May 21, 1939, Woodland,

1943–2024

TOM SANFORD

Tom Sanford, founder of Project Patch and advocate for troubled teens, passed away on Aug. 4, 2024 at age 80. Despite struggling with dementia, he often spoke of his longing for Heaven.

After a challenging childhood detailed in his autobiography, *The Wounded Healer*, Sanford graduated from Indiana Academy and Andrews University, marrying Bonnie Fike in 1966.

He began his “jack of all trades” pastoral ministry in Montana Conference in 1968 and was ordained in 1973. To enable easier visits with parishioners, he earned a pilot’s license—a skill that would later allow him to transport foster children and then serve for nearly 20 years as a Civil Air Patrol chaplain and search pilot.

Sanford pastored in Oregon Conference starting in 1975, often assisting young people in crisis and eventually chairing the Juvenile Services Commission in Hood River County.

In 1984, he left pastoral work to establish Project Patch, which grew into a licensed residential treatment facility helping thousands of teens ages 12–17.

He is survived by his wife, Bonnie; daughter, Kelly Hagele, and her husband, Chuck; son, Craig and his wife, Eniko; brother, Dale; sisters, Diana and Beverly; five grandchildren; and numerous nieces and nephews.



California; died Aug. 6, 2024, Longview, Washington. Surviving: son, Todd; daughters, Pamala (Schneider) Burrill and Trina Schneider; stepson, Noel Gumm; stepdaughter, April (Pierce) Pierre; 4 grandchildren, 2 step-grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild.

SMITH—Twyla Louise (Weilage), 95; born Jan. 31, 1929, Sprague, Nebraska; died Aug. 15, 2024, Roseville, California. Surviving: sons, Jerry and David; daughter, Judy (Smith) Casper; sister, Melody

Hale; 3 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

STEVENS—Robert Curtis, 98; born Nov. 6, 1925, Arnegard, North Dakota; died Jan. 8, 2024, Ooltewah, Tennessee. Surviving: spouse, Lenore Weeks Stevens; sons, David and Douglas; daughter, Peggy Stevens; 5 grandchildren, 2 step-grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren and 3 step-great-grandchildren.

STUDEBAKER—Gary Lee, 77; born June 27, 1946, Salem, Oregon; died

April 3, 2024, Walla Walla, Washington. Surviving: spouse, Sharon (Snyder); daughters, Shelley Studebaker and Julie Studebaker.

WHISENANT—Ella “Dee” Yeuldine (Fitzgerald), 92; born June 19, 1932, Payne County, Oklahoma; died July 20, 2024, Grants Pass, Oregon. Surviving: sons, Thomas and Bruce; daughter, Terry Whisenant Hankins; brother, Albert “Gene” Downs; half sister, Sharon Downs; 6 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

WOOD—J. Loyd, 86; born Sept. 1, 1937, Southland, Texas; died July 4, 2024, Medford, Oregon. Surviving: spouse, Judy Sabo Wood; sons, Jeff, Brian and Jon Wood; 8 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.

WOODRUFF—Shirley Beth (Prusia), 91; born Sept. 17, 1932, Tekamah, Nebraska; died June 26, 2024, Mission, Kansas. Surviving: sons, Alan and Andy; daughters, Susan Gray and Sally Enevoldson; 3 grandchildren.

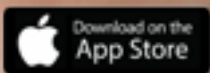
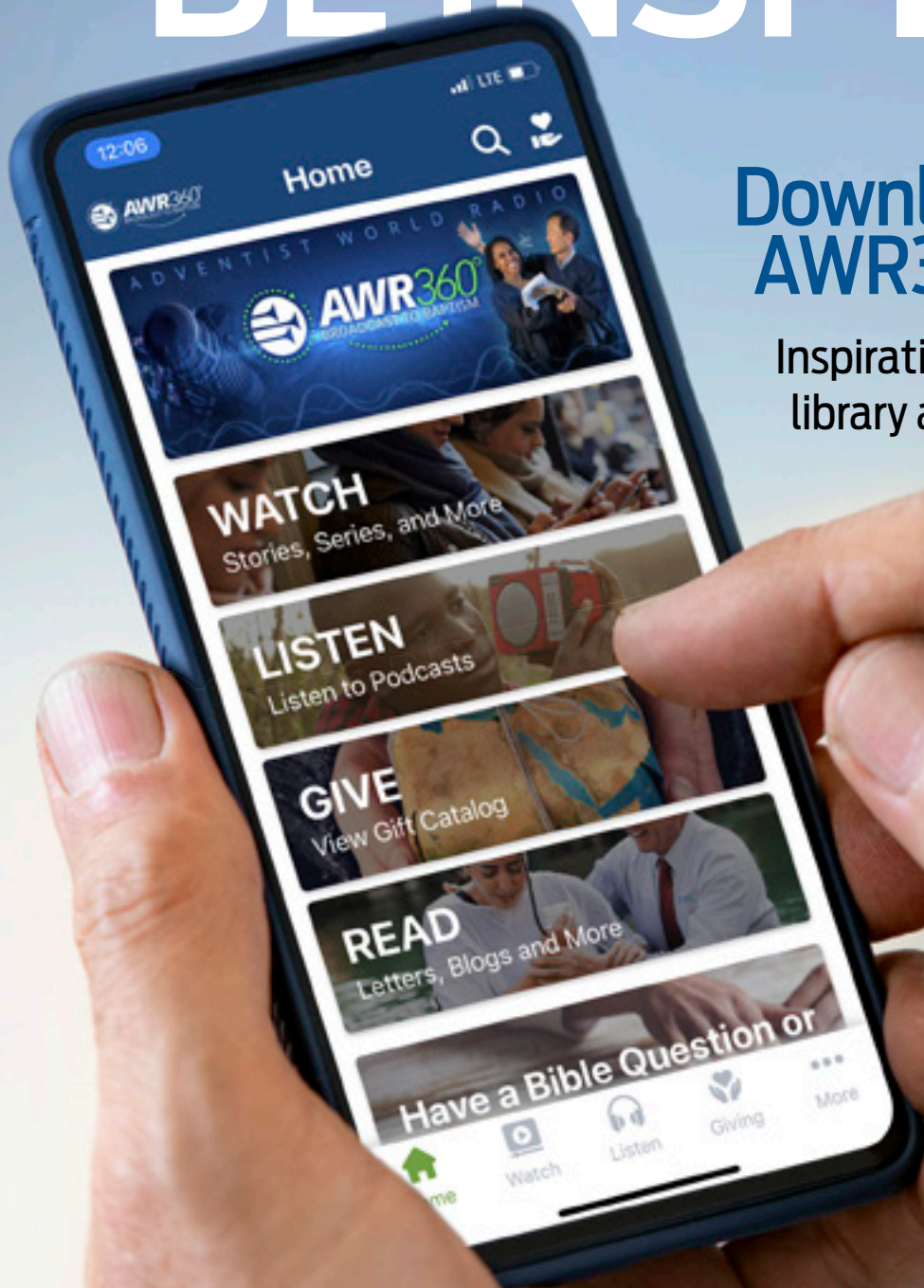
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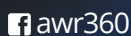
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Adventist Health Portland presents our 15th annual

Celebration of Thanksgiving

featuring **Take6**

Friday, November 22 at 7 p.m.
(doors open at 6:30 p.m.)

East Hill Church

701 N. Main Avenue, Gresham, Oregon

Adventist Health Portland hosts this free annual event as an expression of gratitude for our community's faith and support. Admission to the event is free with:

- Your ticket.
- A nonperishable food item for Portland Adventist Community Services (PACS).
- A new pair of socks for Portland Rescue Mission to share with houseless people in our community.



About Take6

This year we are excited to welcome gospel-infused a Cappella jazz group Take6! With 10 GRAMMY® Awards, 10 Dove Awards, a Soul Train Award, and as Members of the Gospel Music Hall of Fame, this musical phenomenon has six virtuosic voices united in crystal clear harmony against innovative arrangements and funky grooves that bubble into an intoxicating brew of gospel, jazz, R&B and pop.



Get your tickets

Tickets are distributed on a first-come, first-served basis and cannot be reserved by phone. Limit of four tickets per family. Get tickets online at AdventistHealth.org/PortlandThanksgiving, or scan this QR code. Call 503-251-6174 if you have any questions.



In the Footsteps of Elijah

Elijah was a bold leader for God. He stood up against kings and mighty men. He prayed for fire to come down from heaven — and it did! Then he ran as fast as a horse when rain finally fell in Israel. But he hid when the wicked queen tried to hurt him.

Why did Elijah hide? He was tired and lonely. God knew Elijah needed a friend to work by his side. So God asked Elijah to anoint and mentor Elisha. A mentor helps someone learn and grow. Elijah would mentor Elisha to take his place.

Called By God

Elisha loved God. He was humble and kind. He worked hard on his father's farm. He finished what he started, whether a job was big or little. He was cheerful and cared for others. Elisha was ready to be trained as the next leader for God.

Elijah walked where God told him to go. He saw Elisha plowing a field. Elijah threw his cape over Elisha's shoulders. Elisha gladly followed him.

Elisha was Elijah's helper for 10 years. He went wherever Elijah went. He watched Elijah pray. He heard Elijah tell people about God. Elisha was happy to learn how to serve God.

As Elijah and Elisha worked together, they trusted God more and more. One day, God brought Elijah to heaven to live with him forever. Elisha was ready to take over Elijah's job as prophet and leader.

God talked to Elisha, just like He had done with Elijah. God talks to you, too, by His Spirit and through mentors.

When you want to sass your parents but a voice in your mind says no, that's God's voice. When you feel a nudge inside you to make friends with a new kid in school, that's God's voice too. When a teacher or parent prays with

you and helps you make good choices, they mentor you.

You can be a mentor too. You can spend time with other kids. You can be kind, tell them Bible stories and pray with them.

You can read 1 Kings 18:30–39, 44, 45 and 19:3–21 for family worship.

Teaching Others

You can be a friend and mentor, teaching others about God.

Follow the Leader

Read 2 Kings 2:1–6. Elisha followed Elijah wherever he went. Play follow the leader with your family and tell the story of these two friends. Take turns being the leader. When you're the leader, make sure to do things that everyone who is following you can do, and take turns being faithful followers.

Make a Cape

Read 2 Kings 2:8–15. Elijah used his cape to part the water in the Jordan River. Drape a bath or beach towel over your shoulders to make a cape. You can use a safety pin to keep it closed.

Pass the Baton

When Elijah went to heaven, he gave his cape to Elisha. Today, we might say we "passed the baton" when someone takes our place. Sometimes people in a race pass a baton — a short stick passed from runner to runner. Plan a race for your friends where teams pass a baton or cape.



Tell the Story With Sock Puppets

To tell the story of Elijah and Elisha, you'll need:

- » Two socks
- » Markers
- » Red fabric like felt (optional)
- » Four googly eyes or buttons (optional)
- » Yarn (optional)
- » Scissors (optional)
- » Glue (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Make the mouth.

Put the sock on your hand. The knuckles closest to your palm go into the heel of the sock. Pinch the toe of the sock with your fingers and thumb to form a mouth. Now color in the mouth with a red marker.

You can also make the mouth with fabric. Cut an oval out of red felt or other fabric. The oval should be a little smaller in size than the sole of the sock. Glue along the outside edge and in the middle of the oval. Then, glue the oval to the sole.

2. Make eyes.

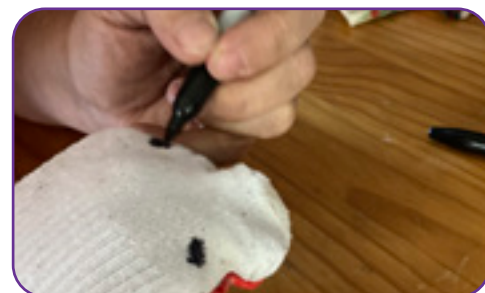
When the glue dries, put the sock on your hand with the mouth between your fingers and thumb. Use a marker to make eyes. You can keep the dots as eyes or glue googly eyes or buttons over the dots.

3. Add hair.

If you want, you can add hair to your Elijah puppet. (Elisha was bald, so no hair for him! See 2 Kings 2:23.) Cut 10 strips of yarn. Put glue on the top of your puppet's head and put the yarn on the glue. Let the glue dry.

4. Put on a show!

You're now ready for your sock puppet show! Reread the verses and enact the story of Elijah and Elisha.



PAULA WART
Just for Kids columnist

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/119-6-KIDS-82

Teaching Compassion Toward Neurodivergent Peers

As parents, we always try to help our kids navigate the world with patience, kindness and love.

Paul tells us in Gal. 5, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” Knowing this verse is easy, but modeling and teaching these fruits to our children can be difficult—I’m not going to lie.

It’s important, as parents, to teach and model these fruits for our kids, especially toward neurodivergent kids. Your kids will come into contact with neurodivergent kids and it’s important that they show Christ-like love to their peers.

What is Neurodivergent?

Neurodivergent is a term used to describe people whose brains process information differently than most people. It’s not a medical diagnosis, but rather a way to describe people without using terms like “normal” or “abnormal.” For example, children with ADHD, autism or learning disabilities may be called neurodivergent.

There are many children in our neighborhood, church and school who are neurodivergent, so my kids have plenty of opportunities to learn how to treat other kids who are different from they are. Believe me, we’ve had lots of conversations about this.

Col. 3:22 tells us, “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”

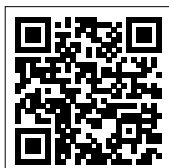
It’s important to have open and honest talks with your children about neurodivergence and what it means, as well as why it’s important to practice kindness and patience with their neurodivergent peers. Every child is valuable—make sure your kids understand that.

5 Ways to Teach Compassion Toward Neurodivergent Peers

Active listening: It might take neurodivergent kids longer to respond. They might take longer to process information. Teach your kids not to interrupt or try to mind read. Encourage them to be active listeners. Practice this skill with them—it’s an important life skill to learn for all communication.



AUTHOR LaVonne Long



More online at [NWADVENT.ST/119-6-POV-81](https://www.nwadvent.org/st/119-6-pov-81)



It's important to have open and honest talks with your children about neurodivergence and what it means, as well as why it's important to practice kindness and patience with their neurodivergent peers.

Offer help: It's okay to offer help but realize that help might not be needed. Practice this question with your kids: "Would you like my help?" Neurodivergent kids might accept your help with explaining the rules of the game more slowly or organizing their classroom materials. Don't assume neurodivergent kids aren't capable though.

Inclusiveness: Neurodivergent kids can sometimes be left out, so teach your kids to be inclusive. Invite kids to play and modify games if necessary. Kids just want to feel like they belong somewhere. Rom. 15:7 tells us, "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."

Be patient and flexible: Because some neurodivergent kids take longer to process information, kids need to practice patience and flexibility. That's not always easy. Practice at home what patience and flexibility look like. Talk about actual situations and explore ways to do better. Your kids are also still learning.

Use kind words and encouragement: Teach your kids to use positive and encouraging words to build others up. We *all* love a kind word given to us. Teach your kids practical ways to build up their neurodivergent peers. Eph. 4:29 tells us, "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up."

You are your kids' best teacher. Model compassion to them. Show them what it looks like, sounds like and feels like.

Communicate well with your kids. Discuss and reflect on their social interactions and help them

do better in love. Pray for your kids and their peers—God created us and we are all valuable to Him.

Psalm 139:14 says, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well." As best you can, with the Holy Spirit as your helper, show Christ-like love in all your interactions with your spouse, your kids and your neighbors—and let your kids see this.

LAVONNE LONG
Northwest Adventists family columnist



The Treasure Map is Not the Treasure

“You search the scriptures because in them you think you have eternal life. But the scriptures point to Me!” (John 5:39).



Imagine you were given a map that offered a path to treasure. The map itself would be priceless. But what if, instead of looking for the treasure, all you did was study the map?

You made copies of it and studied it with friends. You went to seminars and meetings about the map. Over time the goal of finding the treasure was replaced with debates about the map. Different groups formed claiming they had the best interpretation. Other people convinced themselves that the map itself was the treasure. But what good is a map if it doesn't lead to treasure?

The Bible is a map that claims to lead to a great treasure, but it is not the treasure itself. The Bible tells the stories of a religious people—the Jews—who misplaced their identity with their religion. They were chosen for a mission—to explain God's message of love to all people. However, instead of focusing on the mission, they focused on themselves, their rituals, their temple and their Judaism.

They studied scripture and lost the plot. Instead of drawing people in, their religion became about keeping people out. Any religion that makes people more exclusive, judgmental and mean is not a religion worth having. Religion is the cup, not the substance.

In his book, *The End of Religion: Encountering the Subversive*

Spirituality of Jesus, Bruxy Cavey puts it like this:

“Picture a thirsty person holding a cup of water. Now picture that person licking the outside of the cup in an attempt to quench his thirst. That is a picture of religion. Religious people tend to focus on the cup and forget about the contents. They argue about which cup is best but forget to drink from any. Some cups are ornate and some are simple. People are attracted to different kinds, yet none of them will quench your thirst. Religion itself is not what refreshes. The Bible calls this process of confusing the cup with the substance ‘idolatry,’ and it happens to well-meaning people all the time.”

The Israelites were given a map to help lead them to God, but instead of worshiping God, they began to worship the map. They memorized it, taught it to their children and even walked around with it attached to their foreheads. Yet, when the Christ of scripture arrived, He was rejected. “He came unto His own, but His own received Him not” (John 1:11).

Christ accepted outsiders, talked about loving enemies and reframed the entirety of religion as culminating with Himself. For religious leaders who believed their understanding of scripture

AUTHOR

Kevin McGill



PERSPECTIVE

Asking if the Bible is authoritative is the wrong place to start. We should start by exploring how to best interpret the Bible.

was infallible, the thought of not recognizing the prophesied Christ must have been unsettling.

They thought they were the chosen ones. They thought they had the truth, and they thought they alone were the gatekeepers of scripture. Jesus confronted all of that and said, "You search the scriptures because in them you think you have eternal life. But the scriptures point to Me!" (John 5:39).

They were so focused on the map that they missed the treasure. What about us? Is it possible that the way we think about the Bible could be wrong?

We ask the wrong questions when we ask, "Is the Bible infallible? Is it authoritative? Is it without error?" We would never say that children, food, art or marriage are infallible because that's not the point. All of these things at their best are inspired by beauty, truth, goodness and God.

Asking if the Bible is authoritative is the wrong place to start. We should start by exploring how to best interpret the Bible. People who believe the Bible is authoritative have used it to tell women they can't wear pants, preach or teach; to tell slaves to obey their masters; and to threaten those who don't believe the same things they do about God, that God will burn them in hell forever.

We should begin with the acknowledgment that everyone interprets the Bible and not everyone has interpreted it well. The Bible

is an ancient collection of poems, stories, history and perspectives written by imperfect people that point us to the Word of God.

I believe in the infallible, inerrant Word of scripture and His name is Jesus.

The Bible is a treasure map. It is not the treasure. Don't make the mistake of worshipping the map! Seek the Treasure.

KEVIN MCGILL

Green Lake Church senior pastor



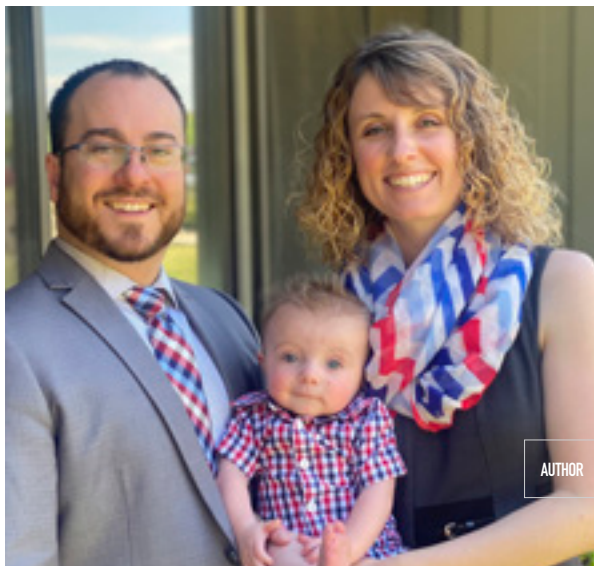
More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-POV-93





Leaving the World Behind

This year marks 55 years since man first stepped on the moon.



On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong became the first man to set foot on the moon. After spending eight days in space, all three astronauts in the Apollo 11 mission returned safely to Earth after completing the only known manned moon landing in history.

The excitement of space travel has captivated the known world for millennia. Being able to leave this planet and go to places unknown has the great allure of exploring undiscovered territory. Hollywood has made millions of dollars off of the concept of space, space travel and extraterrestrial life.

Why does leaving this planet excite us so much as human beings? Shouldn't we be happy here on this planet? How do we as Adventist Christians answer this question today?

The idea of leaving this world behind – or turning from the world – is a biblical concept and because of this, I believe the answer to the above question is twofold.

First, yes we can find happiness on this planet, and God does call us to find joy in life here. While we are here there are many things we can find great joy in: new life, change of seasons, the beauty of nature, the joys of family and many more.

Second, however, we are not to get too comfortable here as this is not the end or the final destination for devoted Christians.

The biblical authors, John and Paul, talk about how Jesus calls us to not be conformed to this world.

1 John 2:15–17 says, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life – is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”

John tells us that true followers of Jesus will leave the things of this world behind, as these are fleeting and not eternal. Rather, true followers of Jesus are to do the will of God which lasts forever and in whose presence we desire to dwell forever. The promise is given again and again in scripture that for those who follow Jesus, there is a reward that is out of this world!

Paul writes in Rom. 12:2, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of

AUTHOR **Natashia McVay**



PERSPECTIVE

Paul says do not imitate or follow the ways of this world, because just as John said, these things come from pride and not from God. Rather, we are to be altered, changed and remolded into the likeness of God.

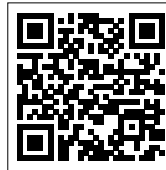
God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Paul says do not imitate or follow the ways of this world, because just as John said, these things come from pride and not from God. Rather, we are to be altered, changed and remolded into the likeness of God. This only occurs with intentional time spent in developing a living relationship with God. When we get to know Him, He promises to make us more like Him and less like the world.

While we live on this planet, we will be involved in the everyday realities of life here. We are not called to bury our heads in the sand. But we are not to become like this world; we are to stay separated and unique. We are to be transformed by God living in us, to become more like Him than the earth.

Someday soon, those who follow God will be taken to be with Him forever in a perfect world. What an amazing, exciting, first-ever space travel experience that will be!

NATASHIA MCVAY
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Listening Again

IN LIFE, WE OFTEN NEED TO LISTEN AGAIN TO HEAR THE TRUE MESSAGE BENEATH THE NOISE.

The first notes of a concert cacophony were more noise than music, as audio waves bounced off hard brick walls. People on the outskirts of the makeshift concert hall quickly fled as the reverberating sound was intensely awful.

The stream of people walking out of the concert gave me pause as I walked in. I was a guest photographer for this overall event and the concert at the end had been promised as a volunteer perk. From what I initially heard, I wasn't sure if it was a reward or punishment.

Slightly curious, I poked my head through the auditorium doors. It was truly difficult to listen from the sidelines. I even snidely wondered aloud to someone next to me about why the artist was invited—as if the artist had any control over the acoustics. The initial impressions gave me no reason to stay.

Yet, as I looked deeper across the audience, I saw people joyfully engaged in the concert and happily singing along. I didn't know the artist or his songs, so the echoing music I heard didn't mean anything to me.

Even though the sound still grated, I couldn't help but wonder why others seemed so joyful.

The Holy Spirit nudged me to step away from the wall of judgment and take a seat in the center, inviting me to listen again.

Just after the artist concluded a song set, I slid into my seat. The artist began to share his testimony, describing how God had intervened in his life, transforming his struggles into songs of praise.

The more I listened, the more I began to appreciate how the music's backstory gave such beautiful and meaningful context. The former cacophony became a concert of praise. An unknown artist became a known artist.

Since that time, the artist's music has uplifted my life multiple times. What was once meaningless became meaningful.

Just as I had to listen again during that concert to hear the deeper meaning, I find myself applying this lesson in my relationships—with family, friends, neighbors and even strangers. Sometimes, the noise of the moment can block the message beneath.

James 1:19 reminds us, "Know this, my dear brothers and sisters: Everyone should be quick to

listen, slow to speak and slow to grow angry."

As we close out this year and gather around holiday tables, there will likely be lots of family interactions and opportunities to apply this principle of listening again.

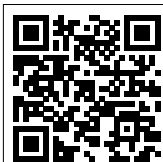
There could be friendly banter, intense debate or deep conversation. Whatever and whomever you encounter in your table talk experiences, may God give you the grace, wisdom and discernment to listen well and even to listen again.

HEIDI BAUMGARTNER
North Pacific Union communication director and Gleaner editor



BENDALUSONG

AUTHOR Heidi Baumgartner



More online at NWADVENT.ST/119-6-TT-76

TABLE TALK PROMPT

Who in your life brings a perspective you haven't fully understood or appreciated? Consider inviting them to your table for a time of meaningful listening and learning. You might be surprised by what you discover.

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





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