

EDITORIAL
Mission: A Gift From God

JUST FOR KIDS
Show and Tell

TABLE TALK
Walking Home

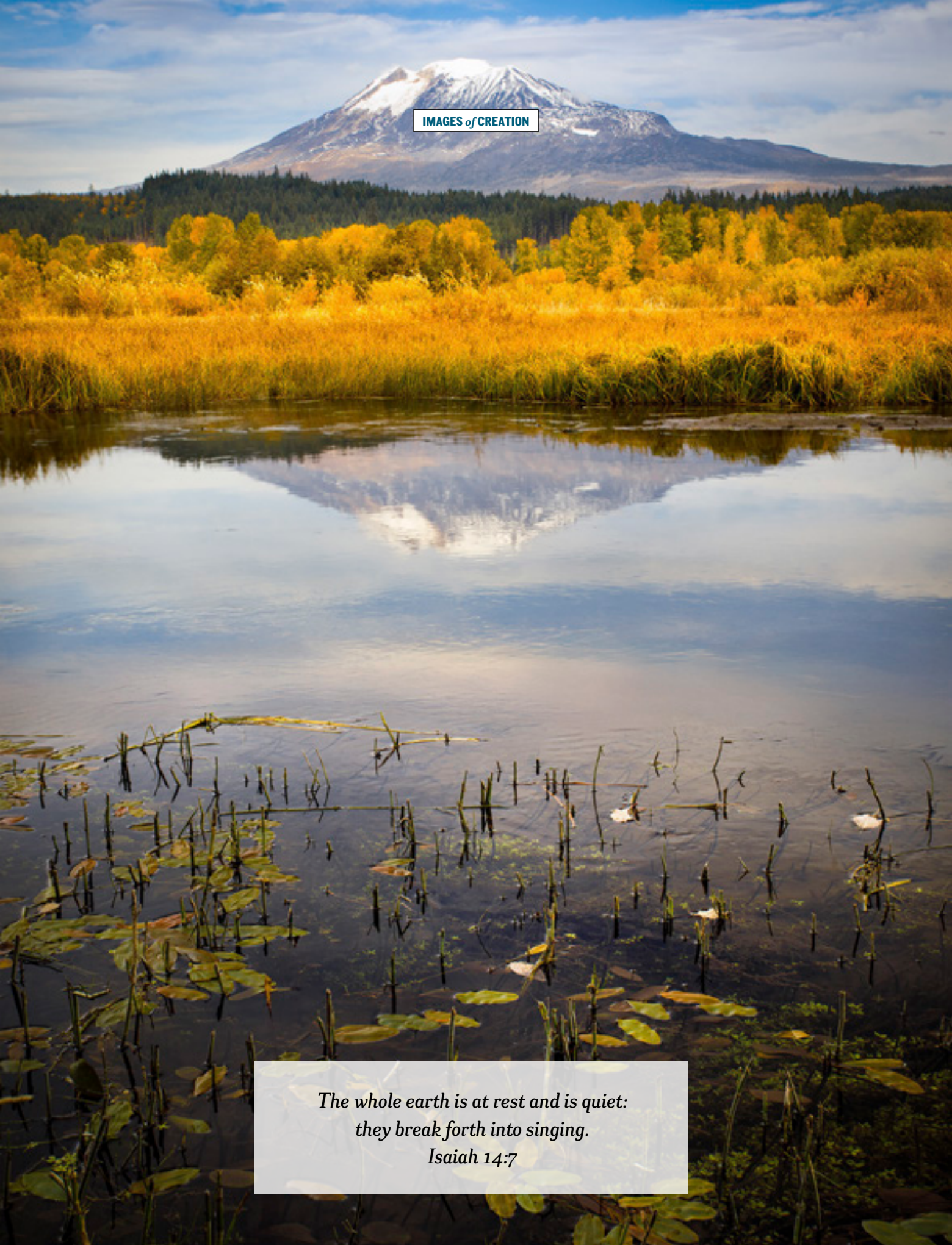
gleaner

NORTHWEST ADVENTISTS IN ACTION

MISSION AND GLOBAL FAMILY:
The Gifts We Share



NOV/DEC
2025
VOL. 120, N° 6



IMAGES of CREATION

*The whole earth is at rest and is quiet:
they break forth into singing.
Isaiah 14:7*

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NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2025

MISSION: A GIFT FROM GOD

ASISAT day after day, listening and reflecting, a realization began to take shape in my mind: Mission is not merely a task or strategy; it is the natural overflow of divine love into creation.

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FROM INSPIRING WORSHIP to mission-focused collaboration, the 62nd General Conference Session revealed how every Adventist plays a role in God's unfolding mission. Through moments of vision, dialogue and shared purpose, delegates and guests rediscovered the strength of a global family united in service. Explore how this worldwide gathering highlighted the gifts that come with belonging — and how the mission that starts on the convention floor continues in each of our communities.

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The Gifts We Share

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ATTENDING GC SESSION helped me realize we are truly a global church — reflective of every nation, kindred and tongue, and especially of the people of color who make up the largest portion of our worldwide membership.

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MISSION: A GIFT FROM GOD

**THE LAST TIME I ATTENDED
A GENERAL CONFERENCE
SESSION — IN TORONTO —
I WAS SERVING AS A LOCAL
PASTOR. THAT CALLING
STILL LIVES IN ME, BUT MY
ROLE HAS SINCE EXPANDED:
I NOW SERVE IN A BROADER
ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY,
GUIDING MINISTRIES ACROSS
A REGION RATHER THAN
SHEPHERDING A SINGLE
CONGREGATION.**



EUGENE LEWIS
*North Pacific Union vice
president for regional affairs*

Years later, in St. Louis at our most recent GC Session, something stirred in my spirit again. As I listened to evangelistic reports from around the world, I was deeply moved — not merely by the stories themselves, but by the spirit that animated them. The presenters weren't just recounting data or accomplishments; they radiated joy. Their voices bore the unmistakable tone of people swept up in a mission far greater than themselves.

During those moments, I was reminded of something I hadn't fully grasped in a while: mission is a gift. Not merely a task we perform for God, but a grace He extends to us. We are invited — welcomed — into His redemptive work. In that participation, we are transformed in a personal way.

That realization shifted something in me. Mission stopped feeling like a command to obey — “Go ye into all the world ...” — it began to feel like a sacred invitation, a chance to join the Creator in His ongoing restoration of all things. Gratitude replaced duty.

This truth is deeply rooted in what I believe to be the very nature of the God I've come to know — self-giving, relational and eternally generous. The Trinity — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — exists in a perpetual dance of love, continually extending grace outward.

As I sat day after day, listening and reflecting, a realization began to take shape in my mind: Mission is not merely a task or strategy; it is the natural overflow of divine love into creation. It's God's desire to share that love, to draw all of creation into communion with Himself. This, I've come to see, is the ultimate impetus for mission.

The Incarnation is the clearest expression of this gift. God didn't send a distant emissary — He came Himself. He entered our story, walked our roads, wept our tears and bore our burdens. Jesus didn't come to command us; He came to serve us and to give Himself for us.

Here's the liberating truth: We are not the architects of mission. We are co-laborers with God. That shift frees us — from the pressure to perform, from the anxiety of outcomes. We are called to be faithful, not fearful, and obedient, not necessarily “successful” as the world might see success.

The parable of the sower speaks to this beautifully. The sower scatters seed — not knowing which soil will yield a harvest. His task is not to control the growth, but to sow generously. The mystery of growth belongs to God.



*We are not the architects of mission.
We are co-laborers with God. That shift
frees us – from the pressure to perform,
from the anxiety of outcomes.*

So, we sow. We speak. We serve. We trust. In doing so, we discover that mission is not just something we do – it's something that does something to us. It transforms us. It draws us deeper into the heart of God. Before He sends us out, He first draws us in. We are welcomed into His life, His love and His communion. It's from that sacred intimacy that we are sent forth, not as performers of a task, but as bearers of divine love.

As I departed St. Louis by plane for home, I felt humbled. To see mission not as an obligation but as a gift had awakened in me a deeper humility and a renewed sense of gratitude. It reminded me that we are not chosen because we are worthy – we are chosen because God is gracious. He does not ask us to accomplish what lies beyond our reach; He invites us to participate in what He alone is capable of doing through us.

Hence, I now see the greater need for dependence and trust in Him – a recognition that made me much more aware of my need to lean totally on God's strength and return all glory

to Him. Mission, then, is not merely a summons to action; it's a summons to worship. It's a call to live in awe of the magnitude of God's love and the wonder of His invitation.

After landing back in Seattle, bags in hand and the road behind me, I found myself reflecting again. What once felt like duty now revealed itself as delight. I now see mission as a privilege to cherish. The most extraordinary gift one could ever receive.

EUGENE LEWIS
*North Pacific Union vice president
for regional affairs*



More online at [NWADVENT.ST/120-6-EDT-69](https://nwadvent.st/120-6-EDT-69)

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Copyright © 2025
November/December 2025
Vol. 120, No. 6

Gleaner (ISSN 0746-5874) is published bimonthly for a total of 6 issues per year by the North Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 5709 N. 20th St., Ridgefield, WA 98642. It is printed and mailed at Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1350 N. Kings Rd., Nampa, ID 83687-3193. Subscription rate: \$15.50 per year. Periodical postage paid at Ridgefield, WA 98642 and additional mailing offices.

OUR MISSION: Connecting Northwest Adventists with news and inspiration.

POSTMASTER: Send all address changes to:

North Pacific Union Conference
Gleaner
5709 N. 20th St.
Ridgefield, WA 98642
360-857-7000
info@nwadventists.com
nwadventists.com

SUBMISSIONS: Timely announcements, features, news stories and family notices for publication in the *Gleaner* may be submitted directly to the managing editor at the address listed above or submitted online at nwadventists.com/contribute. Material sent directly to local conference correspondents may be forwarded to the *Gleaner* and vice versa.

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IMAGES OF CREATION, P. 2

"Autumn Splendor,"
in Trout Lake, Washington,
by Roger Windemuth,
of Brush Prairie, Washington.



MISSION AND GLOBAL FAMILY: The Gifts We Share



Mission is one of those ministry terms that we know deep in our hearts. Yet because it is so broad — sometimes even nebulous — it's easy to step back and assume others will take it on for us.

Why does that concept of mission often feel that way? Jesus gave us a clear command: "Go therefore ..." Yet in our own lives, it can be easy to wonder how our own gifts, skills and passions fit into that calling.

The truth is, each person's gifts and perspective are essential in God's work.

Few places bring this into sharper focus than a General Conference Session. Here, thousands of Adventists cycle through business meetings, training seminars, concerts, community service projects, local evangelism meetings and an exhibit hall overflowing with ministry and mission resources.

Every program, presentation and conversation with friends, acquaintances or strangers reflects purpose-driven, hope-filled mission.

At the heart of it all, three "big picture" mission windows bring urgency and purpose — and a fourth mission window brings it home.

Let's explore these mission windows together and discover the gifts that come with belonging to a global church family.

GIFT OF MISSIONAL VISION

Every five years, Adventists from around the world converge for a GC Session. In St. Louis, Missouri, the 62nd GC Session celebrated mission growth, discussed global priorities and extended a clear invitation to every member: to consider their own gifts, respond to God's call and confidently say, "I will go."

From the 10/40 Window to additional mission fields in Post-Christian Western culture and urban centers worldwide, the church's call to share hope is more urgent than ever.

The **10/40 Window** represents a stretch of 68 countries between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, home to 5.4 billion people. With only 12% of the Adventist Church's membership living in the birthplace of Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, the mission work in this region presents unique challenges and extraordinary opportunities.

The **Post-Christian Window** encompasses Western nations, where secularism and materialism are reshaping society. For 1.2 billion people, Christianity is no longer assumed, and the church must find creative ways to witness in a world where faith is often private or questioned.

The **Urban Window** brings mission to the world's sprawling cities. One example of many is Delhi, India, with nearly 35 million residents and just 3,808 Adventists. These urban centers are laboratories for innovative connections, service and community-building.

In his executive secretary report, delivered just hours before his nomination as GC president, Erton C. Köhler highlighted all three mission windows, challenging members to see the bigger picture, work together and go where the need is greatest.

"My two priorities are unity and mission," said Köhler at his first press conference as a world church president. "If we have unity, we'll be stronger in mission. If we have unity, our identity will be solid. If we have unity, the Holy Spirit will come and live among us. Unity can help us to integrate all the needs and the challenges as we work together to accomplish the mission of the Lord."

Six global mission centers, established since 2022, are actively training thousands of pastors, leaders and church members to more effectively reach people in these global mission windows.





"In every corner of the world, we are integrated by one purpose," Köhler said. "To bring hope, healing and a message of love to all nations."

Hazel Byeon, Buena Vista Adventist School teacher and North Pacific Union young adult delegate, found the mission challenge and the GC Session experience both eye-opening and energizing. "There are so many things I didn't know before," she said. "It's inspiring to see so many people united around the theme of mission. This experience has renewed my commitment to mission and reminded me of the impact I'm making in my classroom."

GIFT OF GLOBAL FAMILY

Beyond mission strategy, GC Session also serves as a living reminder of the church's worldwide family.

In all, 2,400 of 2,800 eligible delegates who attended came from all 13 divisions, with just 7% from North America—the denomination's birthplace.

"It's remarkable to see how this message has spread around the world," said Kara Johnsson, Oregon

Conference vice president for administration and NPUC delegate. "We have representatives from our entire world body who come together to pray, to connect with each other as a family and to make decisions affecting the church globally."

Betty Cox, local church attendee from Puyallup, Washington, remembered going to the session in San Francisco as a little girl. Since then, she's made an effort as an adult to travel to sessions in Indianapolis, San Antonio and Utrecht. Her motivation is to understand her church on a global scale.

"We need to know how big this church is," she said. "It's sometimes hard to see that at our own local church. We might notice it a little at camp meeting, but this is huge. People come from all over the world—and not everybody speaks English. Being here reminds me that we're part of something much bigger than ourselves."

The 18-member Les Chanticleers choir from the Seattle and Portland areas also saw the diversity of the church in their interactions and musical performances at GC Session.

"We saw how the church is made up of mostly people of color," related Pattric Parris, Les Chanticleers director, from the choir's debrief. "We experienced the worldwide church and saw its diversity. The church is made up of people from all around the world with a lot of different viewpoints."

For KhaiKhai Cin, Andrews University seminary student and delegate, his first GC Session felt both a privilege and sacred duty.

"If you're a delegate, you have a voice to represent your place, your community and your context where you came from," he said. "For me, it's a sacred duty to represent the voices of the people I serve—and the greatest privilege is being among the young adults."

Together, the voices and experiences at GC Session reminded delegates and attendees that awareness of the church's global family deepens both perspective and belonging—a gift that extends far beyond the event itself.



GIFT OF SHARED VOICE

This global gathering isn't just for worship and mission connections—it's also where delegates from around the world offer their voice, perspective and ministry context to guide the denomination.

Each business day, after debate and respectful discussion—even in the midst of disagreement—delegates raised their yellow voting cards or used a secure mobile service called Election Buddy to elect leaders and decide on changes to the Church Manual and the Constitution and Bylaws.

"The decisions that are made by the delegates at the GC Session are really the highest body of authority of the Adventist Church," explained Doug Bing, Washington Conference president and NPUC delegate. "Once that's voted, there's no further review unless it comes back to a GC Session later on in another five years."

The Church Manual is especially significant because it provides the framework for local church governance, used by congregations of every size, in every corner of the globe. Its guidance is meant to serve all ministry contexts, helping churches carry out their work consistently wherever they are located.

Many of this year's changes were editorial, updating language to be more current. Substantive updates included a new outline of the pastoral role and

responsibility, a redemptive reconciliation philosophy for church membership reviews, refined stewardship practices, a fresh focus on disciple-making and a renewed commitment to Adventist Youth Ministries.

The gift of shared voice means being willing to listen respectfully and understand a variety of viewpoints. This was tested the first afternoon of GC Session when a segment of delegates attempted to add an agenda item to discuss the church's vaccination statement.

During the discussion, it eventually became clear that two slightly different statement versions existed, both emphasizing personal choice.

While delegates ultimately voted not to further engage on the statement, the experience reminded everyone that disagreements are not an excuse for discord: patience, humility and grace toward one another are central to living out a Christlike community.

Jim Jenkins, Montana Conference president and NPUC delegate, reflected on how this dynamic played out across the wider session.

"I thought the church was being open and transparent, and in many ways it is, but you could also see in the debates that some people perceive a lack of trust," he shared. "A lot of what we hear about distrust or lack of transparency is amplified online, but the overall body seems pretty convinced and unified once it came time to vote."

He encourages Adventists not to get sidetracked by external criticism or conspiracies, saying, "We're not perfect, and there are cultural differences and disagreements, but the mission is what unites us, and the Holy Spirit works through it all."

Together, these conversations and votes underscore the gift of shared voice, as the worldwide family discerns how best to serve God's mission in unity.

OUR LOCAL WINDOW

As the final Sabbath drew near and GC Session approached its close, delegates were invited to reflect on their experience and consider how God is calling His people to live out the gospel locally.

Contextualization is the ability to understand and apply God's mission in ways that fit the people and place you serve. It functions as a fourth mission window: The message of Christ remains consistent, but the methods in how it's shared are adaptable, connecting real lives in real settings.

In a "Mission for All"-themed presentation, Justin Kim, *Adventist Review* executive editor, invited delegates to pause and wrestle with four balancing acts—practical tensions that keep mission both rooted and alive: mission as both service and proclamation, sending and receiving, urgent yet empathetic living between the Advents and the inseparable bond of mission and theology.

Mission is both service and proclamation—feeding, healing, teaching and advocating, while also preaching, baptizing and discipling to provide a whole gospel for whole people.

"Mission breathes in and out," Kim noted, comparing it to a healthy body of water that must both receive and pour out to avoid stagnation or exhaustion. He emphasized that mission is no longer a one-way flow "from West to the rest." Today, mission flows in all directions from "everyone to everywhere"—from Africa to the Americas, Asian campuses to Middle Eastern neighborhoods, island villages to inland deserts, rural hamlets to global cities and back again.

"No matter the size or setting," Kim said, "every church can be both a mission center and a mission field."

During the session, delegates broke into small groups to wrestle with questions that could also serve as conversation starters for families, small groups or Sabbath schools.

- » What are some of the greatest challenges to mission in the 21st century?
- » What is your personal involvement in the mission of the Church? What ways have you found effective in sharing your faith? How is your local congregation making an impact on your community?

The discussions surfaced a wide range of challenges—secularism, digital distraction, migration, polarization, conflict zones, resource gaps, burnout and language barriers—that delegates were encouraged to continue exploring in their local conversations.



REACHING EVERY WINDOW

As the GC Session closed and delegates traveled back home, the questions lingered, inviting ongoing reflection:

- » How can my church become a place of training and sending, not just gathering?
- » Which mission windows – 10/40, Post-Christian, Urban or Local – will you lift up in prayer this year?

These questions all point us back to the heart of mission itself. Perhaps the question we each must answer is simply: what is mission? It's what you make of it – listening to God, following His leading and extending friendship that says, "Let's journey together."

Mission is both personal and collective, flowing through God's people into every corner of the world and every neighborhood at home. Each of us, applying our unique gifts in every mission window, can answer the Holy Spirit's nudging with confidence: "I will go."

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Young Adult Outreach Summit Fosters Connection and Innovation

Young adults from across the Pacific Northwest gathered in Seattle, Washington, for the third annual North Pacific Union Young Adult Outreach Summit — a growing movement where young adult-driven mission and outreach embody the spirit of “I Will Go.”





During the two-day event, held Sept. 12–13 at Volunteer Park Church, attendees worshipped, networked, shared ideas and presented pitches for ministry funding during Spark Tank.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

Kevin Wilson, international speaker, pastor and entrepreneur, opened the dynamic weekend with a message on Friday evening about table theology — a theological entry point into ministering with people who are the “other.”

“The burden and blessing of Adventism is that we are not given the luxury of choosing who to love,” Wilson said as he encouraged listeners to connect with others, regardless of differences in beliefs or backgrounds. Wilson carried the theme of building connections throughout the weekend.

YOUNG ADULTS IN ACTION

As Saturday opened with Young Adults in Action, last year’s Spark Tank winners shared how their ministry outreach ideas came to life.

Storyline Church in Eugene, Oregon, built a solidarity wall at University of Oregon, sparking meaningful connections with students around shared struggles. This opened the door for ongoing campus presence, including small groups and an invitation to host a table at this year’s back-to-school event.

Summit Northwest Ministries in Post Falls, Idaho, hosted camping and paddleboarding trips designed to build friendships and open space for natural faith conversations. Their event attendance greatly increased through their outdoor

adventures, leading to additional faith-based interactions.

Mount Tabor Church in Portland, Oregon, developed a role-playing Adventist game called Peculiar People—a creative way to spark small group discussion about the peculiarities of Adventism. The game and its companion podcast are available at peculiar-people.com.

LifeBridge Church in University Place, Washington, organized a free dental clinic that served 162 patients over two days. The effort not only met practical needs, but also drew new people into the church community and recruited volunteers for a follow-up clinic.

“We are all seeing the impact of young adults who are engaging missionally,” said Rob Lang, NPUC youth and young adult ministries director. “There’s a special momentum that’s building between church plants and Spark Tank support. More young adults are getting involved, sharing their faith and talking about their plans for next year.”

UNITING IN WORSHIP

As the sanctuary filled with a mix of event participants and VPC members, Wilson continued his weekend theme, speaking on reconciliation — the act of two or more parties coming together to a single point so that all parties are simultaneously transformed.

“Ministers of reconciliation must prioritize connection over conversion, creation over complacency and curiosity over condemnation,” he said.

Wilson encouraged event participants to focus on building bridges as they develop ministry ideas that connect communities.

Participants wasted no time building bridges as they connected with young adults from other conferences over lunch and afternoon activities.

“Unexpectedly, the weekend became a sort of reunion where young adults saw friends and worshipped together. I saw strangers become family in a short period of time through eating, worship and creative challenges crafted around mission to their local communities,” said Abner Campos, VPC pastor.

SPARK TANK

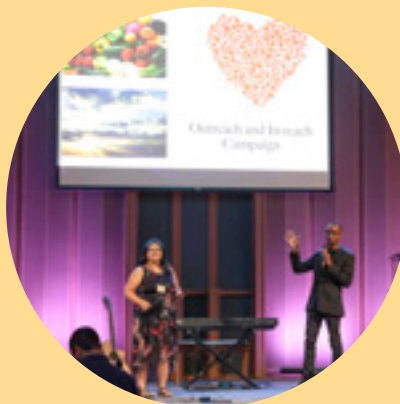
The highlight of the weekend was Spark Tank. Eleven teams pitched innovative ministry ideas to the NPUC young adult leadership team, comprised of young adult representatives, conference young adult leaders and two outreach ministry experts.

Thanks to ministry supporters, up to \$10,000 in matching funds were available for each project, with a total of \$70,000 awarded. Each team submitted a budget and a commitment from their local church to match the funding.

“We’re developing a culture of on-ramps to help people know Jesus and the fullness of His message,” Lang said. “Our goal is to invite them into deeper places of faith — a truly missional endeavor.”

“Spark Tank presentations need to clearly state their on-ramp, because we’re looking for movement along the journey,” he continued. “At the heart of it, we want to see the intersection of relationships and the next steps of faith development.”

Hillsboro Spanish Church shared plans, via Zoom, to expand their Impact Service outreach program, which already



Young Adult Outreach Summit Fosters Connection and Innovation

provides 75 weekly food boxes. With Spark Tank support, they hope to serve 200 families with hygiene items and create an ongoing resource hub.

Community Passion Groups Network in Tacoma, Washington, is launching a microchurch built around passion groups – gatherings that connect people on common ground and open space for faith conversations. The two presenters were brothers who came to faith through small group experiences.

Living Word in Oregon City, Oregon, is growing Soul Place Ministry, which draws 100–150 people to outdoor music and faith gatherings. The ministry also connects 300–500 viewers with online music content designed to reach Eastern European refugees and immigrants who are seeking identity in Christ.

Rekindle Ministry in Idaho is pursuing two creative projects: art nights that help combat loneliness among young adults and Jam and Bread, a gathering that blends music with Bible study.

Blessed Hope church plant in Washington pitched Love Our City Week. The church plant plans to host a week of community service projects next July in collaboration with Tacoma-area Adventist churches and community partners.

Creative Juices, a new center of influence in Lacey, Washington, is taking shape to provide a creative hub for the community. They plan to offer a cafe, music studio, video studio and innovation rooms among other creative outreach ideas.

Lifebridge Church is planning Kindling Hearts Project next February. Their goal is to provide 400 love packages

for the community, followed by a celebration and Bible study invitations.

Spokane Valley Spanish is launching Heavenly Sounds music lessons, offering free instruction in keyboards, guitars and drums with an experienced music teacher. The six-month training will culminate with a recital celebration. Their Spark Tank funding will cover extra instruments, with instrument donations also accepted.

Triumph church plant in Renton, Washington, is a growing young adult group finding ways to invest in the next generation. Triumph members are planning a back-to-school kids' day and family outreach for next year.

Hope City church plant in Puyallup, Washington, is building momentum in the South Hill area through community gatherings, info meetings, preview worship sessions and focus groups ahead of their official launch. Their efforts have already gained 10 new Bible study interests.

UNEXPECTED IMPACT

David Kebert's team had just wrapped up their Spark Tank pitch for Hope City when he added a surprising confession: He isn't even an Adventist – at least not yet.

"I wasn't even a church member when I first got involved – just someone searching for purpose," Kebert explained in a later interview. "I remember wishing I could do something meaningful, something that brought young people together in a safe, welcoming place without drugs, alcohol or high costs. After about six months of being part of the church, I am now preparing for

baptism. Through this [church planting] project, God has made that dream real."

For Kebert, the project isn't just about statistics, demographics or funding goals. It's deeply personal. Hope City's mission to reach one of the most unchurched regions in North America mirrors his own journey from isolation to belonging in a spiritual family.

BIG PICTURE

"Spark Tank isn't just about funding; it's about empowering young adults, fostering long-term relationships and creating stepping stones to deeper conversations," Lang said. "We're asking: What do we do with the connections young adults are forming in their communities? How do we help them bring people to the heart of God? Through collaboration, ongoing dialogue and continued prayer, we see this as an opportunity to grow forward together and become more effective for the Lord."

That vision will continue next fall in Spokane when Spark Tank gathers again to fuel even more young adult mission initiatives and ministry innovations.

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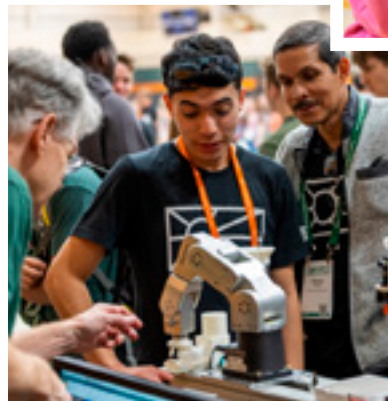
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**Seniors in NPUC academies will be attending the April event with their schools.*



U-DAYS 2026
at Walla Walla University

Young People Share ‘Voices of Power’ for Pentecost 2025

ON AUG. 14–17, 11 COURAGEOUS YOUNG PEOPLE GATHERED AT PASCO HISPANIC CHURCH TO SHARE THE GOSPEL AS PART OF THE VOICES OF POWER ORATORY CONTEST IN CONNECTION WITH PENTECOST 2025 EFFORTS.

The participants—Jarod Aranda, Rubí Avalos, Crystal Barajas, Jazmín Castillo, Joseph Chávez, Sasha De Dios, Pablo Gil, Adrián Guevara, Fátima López, Kary López and Samuel Sánchez—captivated the congregation with personal stories, biblical promises and calls to persevere.

Video greetings were provided by pastors and leaders from various locations, including Iván Novaković from Athens, Eliezer Graterol from Tennessee, Elizabeth Talbot from California and Aura Consuelo Prieto from Colombia, who congratulated the participants for their efforts.

Nine-year-old Julio Mena opened the event with a reminder that God can do great things even with just two fish and five loaves of bread. God did great things that day indeed!

Sánchez’s heartfelt story about losing his brother and his mother’s unwavering faith deeply moved many in attendance. Other themes presented included “Jesus is My Peace,” “Saving Grace” and “Called to Shine.” The task of judging the participants was no easy feat.

López, the first-place winner, inspired the congregation to embrace their identity in Christ. Castillo, who took second place, shared her experience of identifying with the apostle Paul, emphasizing that God’s “no” can sometimes serve as a form of sufficient grace. De Dios, in third place, encouraged the congregation to recognize how God cares for His captive people and sets them free.

Other participants shared their reflections on the event. Avalos expressed, “I learned that you don’t have to be perfect or have everything figured out to be used

by God. In our difficulties, God speaks more powerfully—to us and through us. As I shared my message about feeling distant from God and the fading of His presence, many reached out to me, and I realized I wasn’t alone in this feeling. It meant a lot to me. God showed me that He could use me even in my brokenness.”

Gil added, “I felt privileged to share God’s word as a recent convert. The best part was the learning process while preparing my topic; it helped me understand the gospel better. I confirmed that sometimes, the one who learns the most is the one who preaches.”

At the end of the event, each speaker received a certificate and a Bible to encourage them to continue sharing God’s word with powerful voices.

SASHA DE DIOS

Richland Spanish Church member



- Kary López preaches in the Voices of Power competition. Kary López predica en el concurso Voces de Poder.



Eleven young participants receive certificates of participation.

Once jóvenes participantes reciben certificados de participación.

Jóvenes Comparten 'Voces de Poder' para Pentecostés 2025

DEL 14 AL 17 DE AGOSTO, 11 JÓVENES VALIENTES SE REUNIERON EN IGLESIA HISPANA DE PASCO PARA COMPARTIR EL EVANGELIO COMO PARTE DEL CONCURSO DE ORATORIA VOCES DE PODER EN RELACIÓN CON PENTECOSTÉS 2025.

Jarod Aranda, Rubí Avalos, Crystal Barajas, Jazmín Castillo, Joseph Chávez, Sasha De Dios, Pablo Gil, Adrián Guevara, Fátima López, Kary López y Samuel Sánchez inspiraron a la congregación con historias personales, promesas bíblicas y llamados a perseverar.

Por medio de video, pastores y líderes de diferentes lugares les saludaron y felicitaron, incluyendo Iván Novaković de Atenas, Eliezer Graterol de Tennessee, Elizabeth Talbot de California y Aura Consuelo Prieto de Colombia.

Julio Mena, de 9 años, inauguró el evento recordándonos que Dios puede hacer grandes cosas incluso con dos peces y cinco panes. ¡Y Dios ciertamente hizo grandes cosas!

La historia de Sánchez sobre la pérdida de su hermano y la fe inquebrantable de su madre conmovió los corazones. Otros temas fueron "Jesús Es Mi Paz," "Gracia que Salva"

y "Llamados a Brillar." La tarea de evaluar a los participantes fue difícil.

López, ganadora del primer lugar, invitó a la congregación a aceptar su identidad en Cristo. Castillo, segundo lugar, compartió su experiencia identificada con el apóstol Pablo, recordando que el "no" de Dios puede ser una forma de gracia suficiente. De Dios, tercer lugar, invitó a la congregación a ver cómo Dios cuida de su pueblo cautivo y lo libera.

Otros participantes reflexionaron sobre el evento. Avalos expresó, "Aprendí que no es necesario ser perfecta ni tener todo resuelto para ser usada por Dios. En nuestras dificultades, Dios habla con más fuerza a nosotros y a través de nosotros. Al compartir mi mensaje sobre sentirme lejos de Dios, sentir que la pasión se desvanece o su presencia se siente distante, muchos se acercaron a mí y me di cuenta de que no estaba sola en este sentimiento que significó

mucho para mí. Dios me mostró que puede usarme aún en mi quebrantamiento."

Gil expresó, "Me sentí privilegiado de compartir la palabra de Dios siendo un recién convertido. La mejor parte fue el proceso de aprendizaje sobre mi tema; me ayudó a entender mejor el evangelio. Confirmé que, a veces, el que aprende más es el que predica."

Al final, los predicadores recibieron un certificado y una Biblia para seguir compartiendo la palabra de Dios con voces de poder.



SASHA DE DIOS
Miembro de Iglesia
Hispana de Richland

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-HSP-93



Florencio Bueno, pastor, smiles with the winners of the Voices of Power competition: Fátima López, Jasmín Castillo and Sasha de Dios.

Florencio Bueno, pastor, sonríe con las ganadoras del concurso Voces de Poder: Fátima López, Jasmín Castillo y Sasha de Dios.

Camp Volunteer Baptized at Wrangell Church

ON JULY 12, WRANGELL CHURCH WITNESSED A BEAUTIFUL CELEBRATION OF FAITH AS ARCHER MCGILL WAS BAPTIZED BY CRAIG HAMILTON, KETCHIKAN AND CRAIG CHURCH PASTOR. WHAT MADE THIS BAPTISM PARTICULARLY MEANINGFUL WAS THE JOURNEY THAT LED MCGILL TO THIS MOMENT OF COMMITMENT.

For several years, McGill has been a dedicated member of the mission group from White Salmon/Hood River, traveling to southeast Alaska to volunteer at Camp Lorraine, a beloved children's camp in the region. Through his faithful service and involvement with the camp projects, McGill has become a familiar and treasured face in the community.

McGill shared that he had been contemplating baptism for quite some time, but this year something was different. "It was easy with no hesitation," he explained, describing how the decision finally felt clear and right. For him, Camp Lorraine represents more than just a place of service; it's his "happy spot," a place where his faith has grown and flourished through meaningful work and fellowship.

Originally, McGill had hoped to be baptized at the camp itself, which would have been a fitting location given his deep connection to the ministry

there. However, poor weather conditions necessitated a change of plans, and the decision was made to hold the baptism at Wrangell Church instead. Despite the venue change, the significance of the moment remained unchanged.

Those who know McGill recognize him for his exceptional work ethic and dedication to Camp Lorraine's mission. His commitment to service is legendary among the mission group, particularly remembered for the year he strapped himself in to work safely on the camp's steep roofs—a testament to both his skill and his willingness to tackle challenging projects for the benefit of the camp and its young visitors.

Following the baptism service, the congregation gathered for a potluck, creating an atmosphere of fellowship and thanksgiving. While McGill was baptized in Wrangell, he will be joining his local Adventist church back home, carrying

with him the memories and spiritual growth fostered through his years of service at Camp Lorraine. It was truly a day of celebration all around, as the church family welcomed McGill into the body of believers through baptism.

McGill's story reminds us that God works through service and community, drawing hearts to Him through faithful witness and dedicated ministry. His baptism represents not just a personal decision, but also the fruit of years of faithful service and the loving fellowship he has experienced through his work at Camp Lorraine.



BROOKE REYNOLDS
Wrangell Church member

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-AK-94

Craig Hamilton, pastor, (right) baptizes Archer McGill (left).

Archer McGill volunteers at Camp Lorraine with the White Salmon/Hood River mission group.



MISSION AND OUTREACH

Neighbors Join Hands to Fight Hunger

ON A RECENT THURSDAY AFTERNOON, THE LINE OUTSIDE ANCHORAGE NORTHSIDE CHURCH'S FOOD BANK FORMED WELL BEFORE THE DOORS OPENED. BY 3 P.M., ABOUT 50 FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS WERE READY TO PUSH THEIR CARTS THROUGH THE CHURCH BASEMENT, PICKING UP BOXES OF FOOD, FRESH PRODUCE, FROZEN SALMON AND EVEN PET SUPPLIES.

Behind the scenes, a small team of volunteers had already put in days of work to make that moment possible.

The program, which paused briefly during the COVID-19 pandemic to improve safety, has steadily grown under the leadership of Danya Nicketa, coordinator. Volunteers handle everything from renting trucks to bagging frozen fish, each person filling a vital role.

On Tuesdays, Dan de la Torre rents a U-Haul while Shirley Temple and her daughter, Haley, shop for and load boxes of groceries. Other helpers unload the truck at the church, moving canned goods, dairy and frozen food into the distribution center.

Preparation continues the next day. Temple and 91-year-old Joan Tobuk spend hours repackaging large cases of salmon into meal-sized bags, often taking breaks to warm their hands as they work through the frozen slabs. By Thursday afternoon, the food bank floor is ready.

Volunteers Sallie Plaster, Vicky Hahn, Ercil Griffith, Susan Low and Barney Baty join in to assist with distribution. Clients check in with Ketsia Guerrier before collecting carts preloaded with staples. From there, they choose fruits, vegetables, frozen items and ready-to-eat foods, while Baty runs the finicky elevator to keep supplies moving.

Upstairs, Emmanuel Guerrier helps load vehicles, assisted by his teenage sons, Jeremiah and Jonathan, who return carts and reload them for the next family in line. Their energy has become a welcome addition to the largely older team.

For many clients, the process takes only minutes. For the volunteers, it is a three-day effort marked by sore muscles, frozen fingers and plenty of teamwork. But the reward, they say, is seeing neighbors leave with food on their tables and hope in their hands.

GINY LONSER

Anchorage Northside Church member



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-AK-29



Haley Temple (left) and Shirley Temple (right) unload groceries for the food bank.



Dan de la Torre loads the U-Haul with food items for transport to Anchorage Northside Church.



Vicky Hahn helps prepare for clients' arrival.

Series Strengthens Unity and Inspires Baptisms

SAMOAN CHURCH IN ANCHORAGE TOOK A REMARKABLE INITIATIVE THIS YEAR BY LAUNCHING AN EVANGELISTIC SERIES TITLED “WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?” UNDER PENTECOST 2025. THIS SERIES WAS SET TO BE A TRANSFORMATIVE THREE-MONTH JOURNEY THAT BEGAN ON JAN. 11.

Led by Galumalemana Asoovailoa Toleafoa, dedicated pastor, the series was hosted every Sabbath at Anchorage Junior Academy, the local Adventist school. It delved deeply into the teachings of the Bible, providing attendees with a unique opportunity to explore and understand the Bible in a profound and meaningful way.

As the evangelistic series progressed, participants were encouraged to immerse themselves further into scripture, and the series expanded to include Wednesday prayer meetings. This addition offered another valuable opportunity for spiritual growth and community engagement, as participants gathered to reflect, pray and discuss biblical teachings in a supportive environment.

The spiritual journey reached a profound moment of commitment and celebration on March 22, with a moving baptism ceremony at O'Malley Church in Anchorage. The event was a joyous occasion that marked a pivotal step for those who chose to affirm their faith through baptism.

The Samoan Church family celebrated the baptism of 13 souls, a significant milestone for any community. These baptisms symbolized a new beginning and a deepening of their spiritual journey. Having children present, particularly newborns, further emphasized the sense of renewal and hope for the future.

Samoan Church extended its thanks to O'Malley Church for providing a nurturing environment for spiritual growth and fellowship. Their support and hospitality were invaluable in making this event a success.

The evangelistic series served not only as a platform for biblical education, but also as a catalyst for fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose among all participants. Under the insightful guidance of Toleafoa, attendees explored the timeless wisdom of the Bible and found new ways to apply its teachings to their lives. It was a transformative experience for all involved, leaving them with strengthened faith and unity among the congregation and visitors alike.



TIFFANY TAGO
Samoan Church member

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-AK-33



Galumalemana Toleafoa, pastor, leads Samoan Church's evangelistic series.

Nov. 29th Sabbath Offering

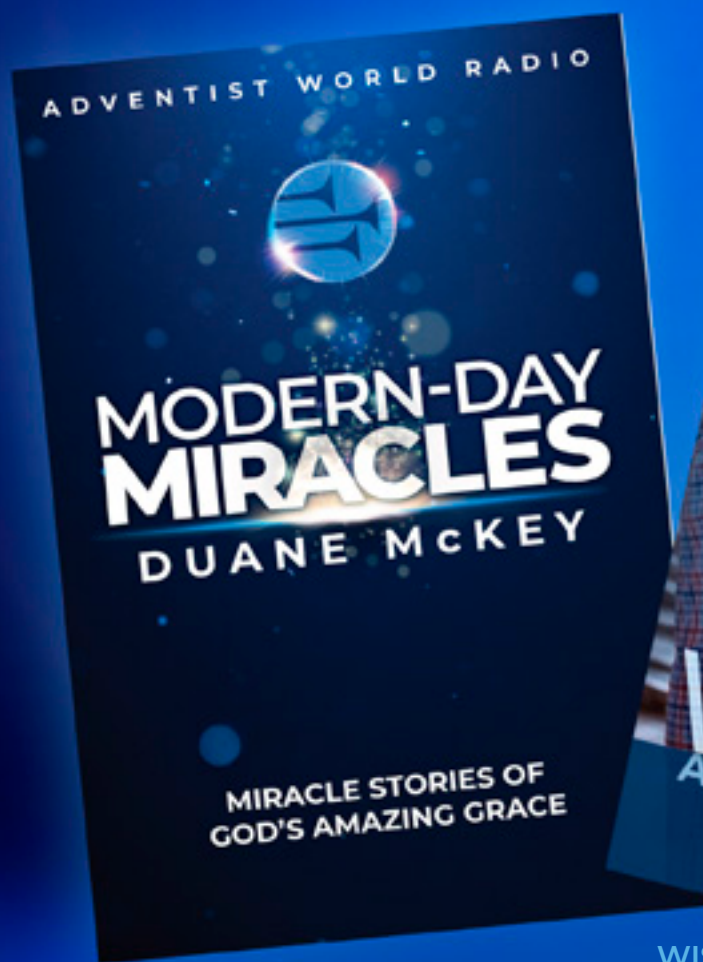
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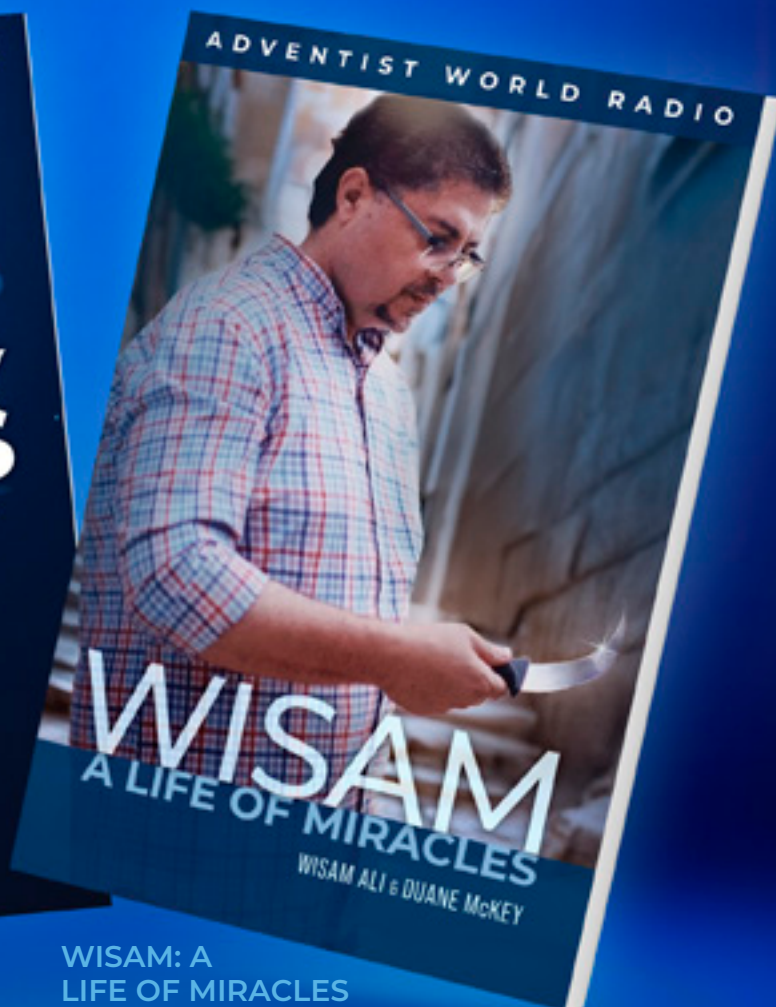


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Idaho Hosts 'Not Just Another Women's Retreat'

WHEN WOMEN FROM ACROSS IDAHO CONFERENCE GATHERED AT CAMP IDA-HAVEN ON SEPT. 5-7 FOR THIS YEAR'S WOMEN'S RETREAT, MOST EXPECTED THE USUAL RHYTHM: A WEEKEND OF FELLOWSHIP, INSPIRING MESSAGES, GOOD FOOD AND BEAUTIFUL NATURE. BUT GOD HAD SOMETHING FAR GREATER IN STORE.



Cheri Gatton, Parma Church pastor, baptizes Klarissa Arocha.



Lineah Gibson (center) comes up out of the water to hug Nitza Salazar (right).

PHOTOS BY EVE RUSK

As attendees arrived, they checked in, browsed the silent auction and shopped at the mini ABC. The weekend started with the group of women singing together and watching the sunset over Payette Lake.

Guest speaker Nitza Salazar, Idaho Conference children's ministries coordinator, shared a powerful message about how God created us to be "Better Together."

As the evening drew to a close, attendees retreated to their cabins. Some groups rested and others stayed up late catching up with friends.

After a wonderful breakfast, Salazar spoken again painting a picture of faith as a butterfly's metamorphosis: the hidden, painful "cocoon stages" of our lives where God feels distant and the miraculous moment when His love breaks through, releasing us into something beautiful and free.

Her words struck deep. As God moved, the retreat schedule took an unexpected turn.

Lineah Gibson, from Long Creek, Oregon, planned on being baptized at the retreat. She had studied the Bible for years and had responded to a baptism call from Salazar at Long Creek Church.

At the end of her message, Salazar announced the planned baptism. As she invited others to consider giving their lives to God, another hand raised.

Klarissa Arocha, who had come to the retreat through a last-minute miracle of provision, boldly said she wanted to be baptized *that very day*.

Arocha had met Erica Figueroa, Parma Church member, at their gym. They had started studying together. Arocha started attending several of the churches in the area. She wanted to go to the retreat but couldn't afford it. Arocha and Figueroa were both praying for a way for Arocha to go. At the last moment, someone else's emergency opened the door for her to come.

Figueroa's pastor, Cheri Gatton, arrived just in time to baptize Figueroa. Standing by the lake, surrounded by her sisters in Christ, she chose to give her life fully to God.

Attendees learned how God had worked in Gibson's and Arocha's lives to make commitments to Him. As both women rose from the waters of baptism, joy radiated across the retreat. The "ordinary" retreat had become extraordinary — a living testimony of God's power to transform lives. If you want to see it, go to Idaho Conference's Facebook page, [@idahoadventist](#).

This weekend was a reminder that no matter where we are in our journey — stuck in the cocoon or spreading new wings — God is present. He shows up in ways we don't expect. And when He does, everything changes.



EVE RUSK
Idaho Conference
communication director

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-ID-70

MISSION AND OUTREACH

Vale Church Community Baby Shower Has Biblical Parallels

IN JESUS' PARABLE OF THE GREAT BANQUET, FOUND IN LUKE 14:15–24, THE INVITED GUESTS DON'T COME, SO THE HOST SENDS HIS SERVANTS INTO THE "HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS" TO BRING IN THOSE WHO WILL.

This story is a reminder that God's invitations are for everyone – and sometimes we need to go beyond our doors to find those He is calling. Vale Church recently experienced this lesson firsthand when hosting a community baby shower.

The baby shower was for anyone wanted to come, so we couldn't really ask for RSVPs. We didn't know who was coming, and when it came time to start the community baby shower, no one who was invited showed up.

The food was ready, games were prepared and community partners were present with gifts for new or expecting mothers. However, when the event began, no mothers were there.

Three of us prayed together and asked the Lord to bring us the people who needed help. Still, no one came. We decided to pray again, this time with a larger group of volunteers. Still, no one came.

This time, Gina Parker, the pastor's wife, felt impressed to take action. She quietly slipped out and began walking around town in her "highways and byways" search, inviting people she met on the streets and in local shops.

She found some new mothers and some who were expecting and invited them to come. Soon the hall of the church was filled with moms, dads and children picking out baby clothes and supplies, enjoying cupcakes and connecting with others.

In all, we were able to serve eight families that day. God answered the prayer to help people and sent us people

who seemed to need help. Because we had many supplies and a smaller number of recipients, we loaded them up and they went home with cars full of stuff for their new babies. They were all very grateful for what they had received.

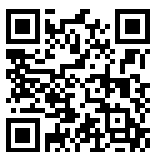
"Though it started out slow, I think it was a success for those families who attended," one community partner said. She asked to be included in future events.

As we reflect on this event, the church sees how God turned a moment of uncertainty into an opportunity for faith. In Jesus' parable, when the expected guests didn't arrive, God opened doors to reach others. The result was not only provision for families, but also new partnerships and ongoing opportunities to serve.

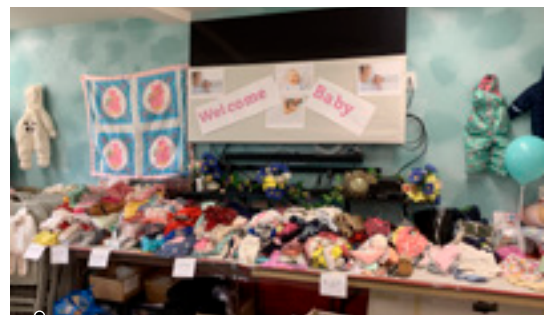
Vale Church is now exploring additional creative ways and agency partnerships to connect with new and expecting mothers. The prayer is simple: to keep listening to the Spirit's leading, going wherever He sends—even to the highways and byways.

DANETTE SCOTTO

Vale Church personal ministries director



More online at
[NWADVENT.ST/120-6-ID-79](https://nwadvent.st/120-6-ID-79)



Vale Church partners with local vendors to organize a community baby shower.



Baby clothes are sorted and displayed.



Church members decorate the fellowship hall for the baby shower guests.

Students Reflect on Past and Look to Future

FIFTH- THROUGH EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS FROM TROUT CREEK ADVENTIST SCHOOL AND MOUNTAIN VIEW CHRISTIAN SCHOOL RECENTLY EMBARKED ON AN UNFORGETTABLE HANDS-ON HISTORY ADVENTURE THROUGH IDAHO AND WASHINGTON.

MAURITA CREW



A history tour for Montana elementary students helps them think about the past and their futures.

The Trailblazers' journey began at Treaty Rock in Post Falls, Idaho, where students took a short walk to view a historical signature on the rock – a powerful reminder of the treaty made with a Native tribe in that region.

Next, the group traveled to Palouse Falls, where the roaring waters and rainbow mist offered not just breathtaking scenery, but also a valuable lesson in geology. Students marveled at how natural forces shaped the surrounding landscape.

The heart of the trip centered in Walla Walla, Washington, where students spent several days immersed in history and campus life. Tuesday's visit to Fort Walla Walla gave students a vivid look into 19th-century life through period-style homes and businesses. The Trailblazers explored the fort grounds and gained a deeper understanding of what life might have been like for early settlers in the region.

From there, the group moved on to Whitman Mission, a sobering and informative experience where students helped set up a tepee and learned about the tragic events that unfolded there – events that had a lasting impact on relationships between the U.S. and Native Americans.

Walla Walla University warmly welcomed the students with open arms. Wednesday began with a hearty breakfast in the cafeteria and a worship thought from Darren Wilkins, WWU vice president for student life.

Mindy Coleman, WWU guest relations coordinator, organized a campus tour followed by engaging presentations from multiple departments. A highlight for many students was the engineering department, which included an up-close look at the specialties within the field and future career options.

One eighth-grader was inspired to declare, "I think I would like to be a

bioengineer," reflecting just how influential the experience was.

After a delicious lunch, Jefre Humbert, WWU product design instructor, led students through hands-on creative projects and showcased current university student work – an eye-opening experience that broadened perspectives on college possibilities.

Later, Kraig Scott, WWU professor of music, welcomed the group into his piano and organ performance class. Students were fascinated by the music and especially enjoyed a behind-the-scenes tour of the organ pipes. Crawling beneath the pipes to hear the deepest and highest notes was a moment filled with gasps and exclamations of, "That is so cool!"

The evening offered more fun with rock climbing and swimming, capping off a full day of learning and connection.

Before returning to Montana on Thursday, the group stopped at Sacajawea Interpretive Center near Pasco, Washington. A museum scavenger hunt brought history to life, reinforcing key learning in a fun and engaging way.

From historic sites to university inspiration, this trip left a lasting impression on our Trailblazers – opening hearts and minds to the past, present and future.



MAURITA CREW
Trout Creek
Adventist School
teaching principal

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-MT-08

EDUCATION

Schools Unite for Field Day

ON A BRIGHT SPRING DAY IN MISSOULA, MONTANA, THE SOUND OF LAUGHTER, CHEERING AND FRIENDLY COMPETITION FILLED THE AIR AS MORE THAN 70 STUDENTS FROM ADVENTIST SCHOOLS IN RONAN, HAMILTON, KALISPELL, TROUT CREEK AND MISSOULA GATHERED FOR A MEMORABLE JOINT FIELD DAY.

Students were grouped by grade level into mixed-school squads and rotated through a variety of events, including ultimate football, tug-of-war, kickball, foot races, javelin and softball throwing, parachute play and more.

It was a true team effort with teachers and parents stepping in as station leaders and cheerleaders, making sure every student had a chance to participate and shine.

Even a short rain shower during a pizza lunch couldn't dampen spirits. As soon as the skies cleared, activities resumed with renewed energy. All around the field, friendships were formed, teamwork blossomed and joy radiated from students.

The participants summed it up best in their own words:

- » "Best field trip ever."
- » "I made new friends."
- » "I love this game."
- » "Best day ever."
- » "We were outside all day."
- » "I made three new friends."

This special day reminded everyone of the strength of community and the joy that comes from shared experiences.

One of the blessings of having small schools in proximity is the chance to come together, build friendships and create memories that will last for a long time. Plans are already underway to make this multi-school partnership an annual tradition.

MAURITA CREW
*Trout Creek Adventist School
teaching principal*



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-MT-07



Students form friendships with kids from different schools.

Students from neighboring schools work together for tug-of-war.



PAA Keeps Auto Mechanics in the Curriculum

PORTLAND ADVENTIST ACADEMY IS PROUD TO HAVE AN AUTO MECHANICS CLASS AS PART OF THE CURRICULUM. AUTO MECHANICS HAS BEEN ONE OF THE DIVERSE OFFERINGS PAA HAS CONTINUOUSLY TAUGHT SINCE THE TECH BUILDING OPENED IN THE 1980S. LEARNING BASIC AUTO MECHANIC KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IS SOMETHING COUNTLESS STUDENTS HAVE APPRECIATED.

For the past several years, Adam Hinckley, a hospital physical therapist by profession, has generously taken time from his schedule to teach students the fundamentals of vehicle maintenance – everything from basic repairs to troubleshooting common problems.

Students consistently share how valuable this class's content and experience are. Even those who are not yet driving find it helpful to understand the basics of how a car or truck operates. The skills gained not only equip students to

perform simple repairs, but also give them confidence to recognize issues and be an educated consumer when taking a vehicle to a repair shop.

The class is highly hands-on. While there is some textbook learning, most of the education happens under the hood, where students reinforce their knowledge through real-world practice.

Generous donors have contributed older, sometimes non-running vehicles to PAA, providing perfect training opportunities. Students repair and restore

these vehicles, and the school has been able to sell several of them.

Thanks to their efforts, the auto mechanics class raised \$15,000 toward purchasing a much-needed school truck replacement. With the help of a matching campaign last spring, PAA was able to purchase a beautiful 2020 Ford F-250 pickup truck – an incredible upgrade for the school.

Many students over the years have been excited to find their calling, their passion, through the introduction this class provides, going on to become mechanics or to use the knowledge in engineering careers. Students regularly express deep appreciation for Hinckley's teaching, with one frequent comment echoing through the shop: "Every student should take this class."

U'LEE BROWN

Portland Adventist Academy communication and development director



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-OR-67

Adam Hinckley, a hospital physical therapist by profession, generously takes time from his schedule to teach students the fundamentals of vehicle maintenance.



YOUTH

Pathfinders Head to Jasper for Annual Camporee

MORE THAN 300 PATHFINDERS AND STAFF GATHERED IN JASPER, OREGON, FOR A SPIRITED WEEKEND OF WORSHIP, SERVICE AND ADVENTURE AT THIS YEAR'S OREGON PATHFINDER CAMPOREE. HELD UNDER THE THEME "MADE FOR MORE," THE EVENT BROUGHT TOGETHER YOUNG PEOPLE FROM ACROSS THE REGION TO EXPLORE FAITH, COMMUNITY AND PURPOSE.

The weekend kicked off with dynamic worship sessions led by Jason Calvert, Oregon Conference director of church ministries, whose messages challenged attendees to embrace their calling and live with intention. His engaging style and heartfelt storytelling set the tone for a weekend filled with growth and connection.

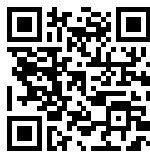
Saturday offered Pathfinders the chance to earn honors or embark on scenic hikes through the lush Oregon landscape. Whether learning new skills or soaking in nature's beauty, participants embraced the spirit of discovery.

Sunday was dedicated to service and play. Volunteers rolled up their sleeves to clean a local orchard, maintain trails and help tidy up camp facilities – demonstrating the Pathfinder

commitment to stewardship and community care.

After the hard work, campers enjoyed a variety of fun activities, including gaga ball, water ball, musical rope, stilts and more. Despite a surprise thunderstorm and the absence of traditional campfires, spirits remained high as laughter and teamwork filled the campgrounds.

Oregon Pathfinder Camporee proved once again that even with a little rain, a lot of heart can shine through. As the theme reminded everyone, we are truly "Made for More."



SANDI CARPENTER
*Willamette District
assistant Pathfinder
coordinator*

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-OR-68

- Pathfinders work hard to learn new skills and earn honors.

More than 300 Pathfinders and staff gathered for this year's Oregon Pathfinder Camporee.

PHOTOS BY OREGON PATHFINDERS



Whether learning new skills or soaking in nature's beauty, participants embrace the spirit of discovery.



Jason Calvert challenges attendees to embrace their calling and live with intention.



YOUTH

Latino-Hispanic Teen Weekend Draws More Than 500

OVER THE WEEKEND OF AUG. 22–24, MORE THAN 500 TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS TRAVELED TO WASHINGTON FAMILY RANCH IN ANTELOPE, OREGON, FOR THE ANNUAL WEEKEND RETREAT HOSTED BY OREGON CONFERENCE LATINO-HISPANIC MINISTRIES.

As the largest such event in recent years, the weekend was divided for the first time into earliteen and young adult programming, all under this year's theme of "Authentic Intimacy."

With services offered in both English and Spanish, many of the weekend's leaders were young adults themselves, including speakers from across the conference and worship teams from ECHO and Hillsboro Spanish churches.

"I loved the opportunity to connect and grow with God in a place that made me appreciate community, nature and worship," shared Zoe Altamirano, a young leader from ECHO.

Fernando Chavez, who serves as Portland Adventist Academy vice

principal and spiritual life director, spoke to the earliteen group and emphasized the importance of growing into an authentic relationship with God in an increasingly artificial world.

"You could tell each message carried a lot of significance to the speaker's personal story," said Samuel Ramos, a young leader from Hillsboro Spanish Church, "and I think that allowed them to make the most of the time they were given."

In addition to worship, those in attendance enjoyed Washington Family Ranch's go-karts, gymnasium, swimming, the big swing, a zipline and more. When Sabbath evening came, several young people made the decision to be baptized — surrounded by close

friends, family and trusted leaders — while others began preparing for their baptisms in the future.

KALEB EISELE

Oregon Conference digital content specialist

ASHLEY CASTRO-RODRIGUEZ

Oregon Conference communication intern



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-OR-90

Several young people make the decision to be baptized on Saturday.

Many of the weekend's leaders are young adults themselves.



EDUCATION

Maranatha Volunteers Give Milo Gym a Facelift

IN JUNE, MILO ADVENTIST ACADEMY WAS THE DESTINATION OF 75 VOLUNTEERS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY. THE TRIP WAS ORGANIZED BY MARANATHA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL, A SUPPORTING MINISTRY OF THE ADVENTIST CHURCH. TEAM MEMBERS SPENT TWO WEEKS COMPLETING VARIOUS MAINTENANCE TASKS. THEIR LARGEST PROJECT WAS SPRUCING UP THE GYMNASIUM WITH NEW PAINT, WINDOWS AND SIDING.

"Probably the most important thing was the gym. It was an obvious eyesore," said Jeffrey Birth, Milo teacher and project coordinator. "We poured a lot of concrete as well and put new lighting and new ceiling tiles in the [administration] building basement classrooms."

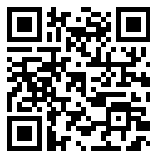
Birth knows firsthand how crucial Maranatha projects are for the campus. "Milo was built in the late '50s and early '60s ... so here we are many years later. Some of the buildings have been upgraded and some have not," he said. "If you take a large campus — our campus is 475 acres — and, of course, older facilities, oftentimes there's no way that those needs can be met because just the labor of the staff is using the funds from tuition," he explained.

Maranatha has helped maintain Milo's facilities since 1989, when the very first volunteer team remodeled staff housing. Since then, numerous groups have worked at the school, creating a lasting impact.

"What it has allowed is for our campus to actually be brought up to some more modern standards and repair things that have fallen into disrepair over the years," said Birth. "The difference from a decade ago until now is just a night and day difference."

However, volunteers' work is about more than just appearances. "The mission is to have students to reach for Jesus. If the facilities are more appealing ... students are going to be more interested in coming. Parents are going to be more interested in coming here," Birth remarked. "I think even though looks aren't everything, looks are a lot. It speaks to the care we have for the school. Bringing it up to speed is a key role in getting students here."

Maranatha Volunteers International mobilizes volunteers to build churches, schools, water wells and other urgently needed structures around the world, including North America. Since 1969, Maranatha has constructed more than 16,000 structures and more than 3,500 water wells in nearly 90 countries.



SIDNEY NEEDLES
*Maranatha Volunteers
International
communications specialist*

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-OR-88

PHOTOS BY EDWARD JENSEN



In addition to new lighting and ceiling tiles, volunteers pour new concrete.



Volunteers spruce up the gymnasium with new paint, windows and siding.

Maranatha has helped maintain Milo's facilities since 1989, when the very first volunteer team remodeled staff housing.



CHURCH

Hundreds Gather for Second Annual Valley-Wide Church

ON AUG. 16, SIX CONGREGATIONS SET ASIDE THEIR SEPARATE ROUTINES TO WORSHIP, PRAY AND FELLOWSHIP TOGETHER AS ONE FAMILY AT ROGUE VALLEY ADVENTIST ACADEMY FOR THE SECOND ANNUAL VALLEY-WIDE CHURCH. IN A TIME WHEN DIVISION IS GROWING, MORE THAN 500 ADVENTISTS OFFERED A DIFFERENT PICTURE OF UNITY.

Southern Oregon pastors began organizing the event in May. They invited all Adventist churches within 50 miles of Medford to close their doors and gather at the school for the day of worship. Six churches attended directly, and members from four other churches joined as well.

Throughout the day, volunteers from the participating churches helped with parking, deacon duties and lunch, with many of the local pastors leading the service.

A team of teachers from across the valley led Sabbath School classes for all ages. Kip Bradford and Gateway Church's praise team's country band filled the adult Sabbath School with joyful music before Ed Nelson, Grants Pass Church pastor, guided a lesson study panel.

Worship service began with a warm welcome from Tanner Martin, Ashland Church and Valley View Church pastor. Rejoicing Brass from Grants Pass Church played inspiring music, and Kim Cornette, Oregon Conference education associate superintendent, told the children's story. Medford Spanish Church provided special music and Kenton Gonzalez, Medford Church pastor, shared a message titled "Join In. Stand Out."

Because the school year was beginning a few days later, the service was also used as the annual education dedication. Educators, school staff and homeschool families were invited to come forward for prayer and encouragement as George Knight, church historian, offered a special prayer of dedication for the school year ahead.

All who attended were truly encouraged, revived and inspired by the joy of worshiping together. The day ended with fellowship over a haystack lunch.

"I wish we could do this twice a year!" and "It's wonderful to see so many churches involved!" were comments heard from those who attended.

The enthusiasm of participants showed leaders why this kind of event matters. When churches join together in worship and mission, the whole community is strengthened. Southern Oregon's Valley-Wide Church is more than a date on the calendar; it's a growing testimony of Adventists choosing connection over separation and shared mission over individual effort.

JOYCE MITCHELL
Medford Church secretary



Six congregations gather at RVAA for a day of worship.



More than 500 people worship as one big family.



Teachers receive a prayer of blessing before the school year starts.



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-OR-86

BIBLE READINGS for December 2025

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

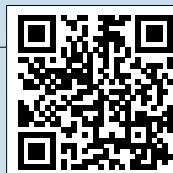
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	<u>1</u> Neh. 8–10	<u>2</u> Neh. 11–13 Psalm 126	<u>3</u> Malachi	<u>4</u> Luke 1 John 1:1–14	<u>5</u> Matt. 1 Luke 2:1–38	<u>6</u>
<u>7</u> Matt. 4 John 1:15–51	<u>8</u> John 2–4	<u>9</u> Mark 2–3	<u>10</u> John 5 Mark 1	<u>11</u> Matt. 12:1–21 Luke 4–7	<u>12</u> Matt. 5–7 Matt. 8:1–13	<u>13</u>
<u>14</u> Matt. 11	<u>15</u> Matt. 12:22–50 Luke 11	<u>16</u> Matt. 13 Luke 8	<u>17</u> Matt. 8:14–34 Mark 4–5	<u>18</u> Matt. 9–10	<u>19</u> Matt. 14 Luke 9:1–17	<u>20</u>
<u>21</u> Matt. 15 Mark 6–9	<u>22</u> Matt. 16 Luke 9:18–27	<u>23</u> Matt. 17 Luke 9:28–62	<u>24</u> Matt. 18	<u>25</u> John 6–8	<u>26</u> John 9–10 Luke 10	<u>27</u>
<u>28</u> Luke 12–13	<u>29</u> Luke 14–16	<u>30</u> Luke 3 Luke 17:1–10	<u>31</u> Matt. 2–3 Luke 2:39–52			

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](https://nwadvent.st/120-1-BLE-61)



Teachers Equipped and Empowered at In-Service

UPPER COLUMBIA CONFERENCE GATHERED ALL TEACHERS FROM ACROSS THE CONFERENCE FOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING MEETINGS DESIGNED TO EQUIP, ENCOURAGE AND EMPOWER EDUCATORS IN THEIR VITAL WORK OF ADVENTIST EDUCATION.

The meetings took place at the UCC office in Spokane, Washington. Each day provided focused professional development, practical strategies and spiritual encouragement for the educators.

Renae Young, North Pacific Union early childhood education director, opened the in-service meetings by leading kindergarten through second-grade teachers in a specialized training on new skills for teaching reading. With literacy at the foundation of student success, teachers were given tools and strategies based on the science of reading to strengthen early learning and ensure students are building a solid foundation for reading.

Adam Littell, UCC vice president for education, shared a special message with educators on the second day of in-service. "Adventist education prioritizes whole-person development, focusing on spiritual and academic growth," said Littell. "Our mission is to provide a safe environment for students to grow in their relationship with Jesus; that is at the forefront of all we do as educators."

Following Littell's message, the meeting room buzzed with joyful reunions and shared stories with the entire team of K-12 educators present. Training continued with Renee Whiting, Southwestern Union associate director of education, providing information on the use of MAP testing results.

Teachers explored how to interpret data effectively and apply it in their classrooms to guide instruction and support student growth. The training helped educators connect the MAP assessment results with teaching in practical applications.

"It's no small task," said Littell, "Teachers have an incredible number of responsibilities and opportunities; our in-service prepares them for both."

On the third day, Mindy Salyers, who partners with UCC to provide counseling services for teachers and students, presented on a range of relevant topics. Her sessions included strategies for addressing bullying and discussing teacher self-care. Her expertise reminded educators of the importance of mental, emotional and spiritual health in building strong, resilient school communities.

"The most valuable thing we can give our students and teachers is time," said Littell. "Showing up, being present, volunteering without being asked, that's what they will remember most."

UCC provided more than just professional growth, as the time together was also a spiritual blessing. The training equipped and empowered UCC teachers to better serve their students, while also reinforcing the mission of Adventist education: to enable learners to develop a life of faith in God and to use their knowledge, skills and understandings to serve God and humanity.

Prepared for the 2025-2026 academic year, UCC teachers returned to classrooms following in-service meetings, knowing that they are supported in their mission by a community of educators and the loving Teacher who invites little ones to come to Him.

ISAAC MEYTHALER
*Upper Columbia Conference
communications coordinator*



Renae Young, NPUC early childhood education director, presents specialized training for teaching early reading.



Teachers take dutiful notes on tools and strategies to use in the classroom.



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-UC-95

Maranatha Volunteers Show Care Through UCA Repairs

SUMMERTIME IS VACATION SEASON, BUT THE VOLUNTEERS WHO GATHERED AT UPPER COLUMBIA ACADEMY DIDN'T SEEM TO GET THE MEMO. FROM JUNE 22–JULY 2, THE 62-MEMBER TEAM PROVIDED FREE LABOR AT THE CAMPUS.

They remodeled the school's home economics classroom, reroofed a staff house, painted fire escapes and a large pavilion, and reinforced a footbridge. Their service project was organized by Maranatha Volunteers International, a supporting ministry of the Adventist Church.

"For our plant services team, it has been a sigh of hope and relief that someone is there to help," said PJ Deming, UCA principal. "Most of the time, we have difficulty finding the time to do maintenance; we do crisis management. Maranatha helps us get ahead of the game a little bit. It helps us have things done that usually go unnoticed just because of the volume of other things that need done."

Maranatha volunteers' labor may be free, but it's far from cheap. "They come with an expertise. They find the project and get to work, which is a huge benefit," remarked Deming. "I've often seen many projects at our churches and schools left unfinished, but Maranatha finishes a project and that's crucial."

The physical impact of this project is obvious. "We see the improvements, and those improvements are long lasting," said Deming.

The volunteers' care for the campus also had an emotional impact. "When they come, it helps you feel like the mission you are doing is valuable," explained Deming. "It makes us feel like we're not alone—that they see the value. And to think that we are being seen as valuable enough for someone to care about and invest in—it leaves me speechless."

Maranatha Volunteers International mobilizes volunteers to build churches, schools, water wells and other urgently needed structures around the world,



Maranatha volunteers gather at UCA to help with summer renovations.

including North America. Since 1969, Maranatha has constructed more than 16,000 structures and more than 3,500 water wells in nearly 90 countries.



SIDNEY NEEDLES
*Maranatha Volunteers
International
communications
specialist*

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-UC-81



Maranatha volunteers reroof a UCA staff house.

Campout Leads to Riverside Baptisms

FOUR CHURCHES AND A COMPANY FROM UPPER COLUMBIA CONFERENCE GATHERED FOR A REGIONAL CAMPOUT WITH THE THEME "I WANT TO GO TO HEAVEN." TUCKED AWAY IN WILDERNESS GATEWAY CAMPGROUND OF THE NEZ PERCE-CLEARWATER NATIONAL FOREST, THE WEEKEND MEETINGS DREW CAMPERS FROM AUG. 13-17.

Morning and evening devotions challenged campers with the aspects of preparing for Jesus' coming. Topics included discerning and defending the truth of God's word, experiencing God's mercy and extending that mercy to others, understanding the importance of our cooperative response to Christ's sacrificial death, and the need for continued growth after making a decision for Christ and being baptized.

Around 150 members and guests from as far away as Arkansas gathered for Sabbath worship. The keynote speaker, Steve Rogers, district pastor, encouraged campers to stay connected to God's church

for nourishment and for protection from those who would try to deceive and draw them away.

Acts 20:29 says, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." This admonition from Paul echoes Jesus' own warning from Matt. 24:4-5, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My name ..."

Following a haystack lunch, members from Kamiah, Orofino, Weippe and Grangeville churches, Kooskia Company and other guests gathered on the shore of the beautiful Lochsa River for five baptisms.

John Stinson, from Weippe Church; Joshua DePaula, from Kooskia Company; Joshua and Caleb Prado, from Orofino Church; and Angel Padilla, from Kamiah Church, followed through with their commitment to Christ as Rogers baptized them.

As the campout ended, members soaked in the beauty of God's creation, reflected on God's mercy and returned home with five words in mind: "I want to go to heaven."



CATHY LAW
Kamiah Church
communication leader

More online at NWADVENT.ST/120-6-UC-83

Lochsa River serves as the site for five baptisms.

Friedrich Hart and other musicians provide accompaniment to favorite hymns at the baptisms.



DAZANIPADILLA

SonBridge Celebrates 20 Years of Service

SONBRIDGE CENTER FOR BETTER LIVING IN COLLEGE PLACE, WASHINGTON, HELD AN OPEN HOUSE AND RESOURCE FAIR ON JULY 13 TO CELEBRATE 20 YEARS OF BRINGING HELP AND HOPE TO THOSE OF GREATEST NEED IN THE WALLA WALLA VALLEY.

The open house brought together more than 130 friends of SonBridge, including church members, current and former staff and volunteers, and curious community residents, to celebrate SonBridge's legacy of service. The event also highlighted several organizations that partner with SonBridge to ensure that no person in need falls through the cracks.

Open house guests enjoyed tours of the SonBridge facility, including stops where they could watch videos to learn more about historical highlights; speak with SonBridge Dental Clinic, SOS Health Services and KLRG Radio staff; and talk with some of the original founders of the organization. Guests were also encouraged to stop at the SonBridge Thrift and Gift Store.

"SonBridge embodies our commitment to Serve One More through its genuine service to the people of the Walla Walla Valley," David Jamieson, Upper Columbia Conference president, said in a video welcoming open house guests. "When I say genuine service, I mean serving with no strings attached and with bold generosity, serving all people with dignity and respect because of their God-given value."

Over the last two decades, SonBridge has grown from an idea in the hearts of some service-minded church members to an organization that has grown and adapted to meet the ever-changing needs of its community. The flexibility and resilience present throughout SonBridge's history were the focus of a short talk given by Norman Thiel, executive director.

"With a 20-year history, our community continues to ask SonBridge to do more," Thiel said. "We have no idea what the future holds or what God has in store for the next 20 years of SonBridge,

but we are committed to meeting the challenges and needs that arise, and following His leading."

SonBridge was founded in 2005 as an Adventist Community Services Center by eight Walla Walla Valley Adventist churches who recognized the importance of direct access to low-cost community services. For 20 years, SonBridge has sought to understand community needs and extend programs and resources to meet them. SonBridge provides help to the underserved through family assistance services, education and support groups, dental and medical care, and job skills training.

This year, UCC's Serve One More initiative was able to partner with SonBridge to help launch new needs-focused programs. "SonBridge does incredible work engaging with the community residents and partner organizations while providing ways for people to serve their neighbors," said Richie Brower, Serve One More associate director. "We look forward to continuing to support their innovative efforts."

"SonBridge serves the community as Jesus did by meeting physical needs first," Jamieson said. "In meeting these needs for clothing, medical and dental care, financial assistance and much more, SonBridge offers something even more valuable: meaningful connection — meaningful connections with a caring community and the chance for a life-changing connection with our Creator."

To learn more about SonBridge and support this ministry, visit sonbridge.org.

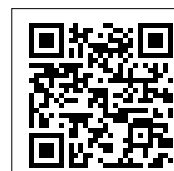
KIMBERLEY JESKE-KUZMA
Freelance writer



More than 130 friends of SonBridge celebrate SonBridge's 20-year legacy of service.



Partner organizations participate in SonBridge's open house.



More online at NWADVENT.ST/120-6-UC-80 +

Camp MiVoden Staff Member Reflects on God's Blessings

CAMP MIVODEN, AN ADVENTIST CAMP WITH MORE THAN 500 ACRES NESTLED ON THE EASTERN SHORE OF HAYDEN LAKE IN IDAHO, IS A PLACE FILLED WITH HAPPY MEMORIES AND BLESSINGS FOR CAMPERS AND STAFF MEMBERS ALIKE. JOSHUA PENHALLURICK, FORMER CAMPER NOW SERVING AS A MIVODEN STAFF MEMBER, REFLECTS ON AND SHARES HOW GOD CONTINUES TO SHOWER BLESSINGS AT MIVODEN.



Joshua Penhallurick (right) prays with a group of campers.



This summer, Camp MiVoden celebrated baptisms each week.

This last summer marked my fifth year working at Camp MiVoden. I first went to MiVoden when I was 8 years old. I was hooked. I kept coming back each summer until I was able to work there as a staff member. I started in maintenance, then kitchen, an activities counselor and this last summer was my second year as boys' director.

This summer was one of the most memorable summers of my life. When I arrived at camp, I had no idea what God had in store for us. At staff orientation week, everyone quickly bonded and got to know each other.

Then, with the first week of campers, there was a different atmosphere. The tight-knit connections between staff quickly spread to the campers, too.

Walking around camp, I could feel the love and joy being spread. In the way people acted and treated each other, there was an overwhelming sense of God's presence everywhere I went.

It was clear to me that this summer wasn't just about having fun at camp with friends; there was a spiritual

transformation in the hearts of everyone coming to camp.

This year's five-night play told a story of how Jesus actively pursues us, even when we're not looking for Him. The story took place in a medieval fantasy setting, reminiscent of *The Princess Bride*. From the youngest adventure camper to the wisest family campers, everyone was excited about the story of Jesus.

Every week, the final night of the play included a reenactment of the crucifixion, showing just how far Jesus is willing to go to pursue us. And all week long, the counselors started and ended each day with worship, continuing to tell campers the stories of Jesus' love.

I was amazed at the effect that MiVoden was having on people. Then teen week happened. That week, Sam Smith, pastor, shared his personal journey with Jesus and religion. He was completely open and honest. It was vulnerable, it was real and it resonated with campers and staff alike.

After his first night speaking, we had campers



UPPER COLUMBIA

SERVE | ONE MORE // CONFERENCE 

There's more to Camp MiVoden than just having fun with friends.

in tears and several who wanted to be baptized that week on Sabbath. The staff made a quick decision to offer additional early morning Bible studies, and Smith offered baptismal studies. We had around 45 campers getting up earlier in the morning to go to these studies!

As we saw this unfold, our leadership team at camp decided that we should set aside a time and space where campers could ask more personal questions that they had about God or their personal struggles. We asked Smith, and he agreed to do it with with Jeff Wines, MiVoden director.

It was a leap of faith. We had no clue how many people would go or even be interested, but we knew that it would be worth it even if only a few showed up.

After the program on Friday, we ended up having around 60 campers asking questions and fully engaged in conversation. All of this led to Sabbath afternoon, when we traditionally offer baptisms at

camp. Teen week this year had five baptisms in a single afternoon!

God worked wonders this summer at MiVoden. We had at least one baptism every week this summer, something I have never seen before in my five years working there. But it wasn't just the baptisms that made this summer special, it was all the seeds that were planted in the hearts of everyone that came that will continue to grow for years to come.

This summer, I found a renewed faith, a full heart, deeper friendships and a gratitude for everything God has done and continues to do at MiVoden.

Watch a camper's perspective on finding Jesus at MiVoden at news.uccsda.org/ruby1125.



JOSHUA
PENHALLURICK
Camp MiVoden
staff member

More online at  NWADVENT.ST/120-6-UC-77



WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

GREATER THINGS IN HIS TIME | BY HIS SPIRIT

EDUCATION

Community Honors the Life and Legacy of Craig Mattson

ON AUG. 16, AN OVERFLOW OF 700 PEOPLE FILLED THE PUYALLUP CHURCH GYMNASIUM AND SANCTUARY AS FAMILY, FRIENDS, COLLEAGUES AND STUDENTS GATHERED TO CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF DEVOTED EDUCATOR CRAIG LEE MATTSON. A BELOVED HUSBAND, FATHER AND FRIEND, HIS INFLUENCE CONTINUES TO RIPPLE THROUGH COUNTLESS LIVES ACROSS THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST AND BEYOND.

Mattson, who served as Washington Conference vice president for education from 2017 to 2022 and later returned to lead Northwest Christian School as principal, was remembered as a man whose faith, joy and love for people defined his life and ministry. His calling was Adventist education, but his passion was people.

Born Sept. 21, 1978, Mattson reflected a deep commitment to faith and family. He and his wife, Lizzette “Lizzie,” married in 2005 and built a Christ-centered home while raising their two daughters, Emma and Nicole. Remembering her father, Emma shared, “He knew kids needed to feel loved before they could learn. He always made them feel safe and valued, the same way he made everyone feel. My dad believed in humanity as a precious creation of God.”

Mattson’s journey in education took him from recruiting for Newbold College to serving in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and ultimately to Washington Conference.

Whether mentoring teachers, shaping policies or kneeling beside students in the hallway, Mattson was known for his relational leadership and unwavering belief that everyone

deserves to feel seen and appreciated. He believed Adventist education could transform lives.

Friends and family remembered Mattson’s infectious laugh, adventurous spirit and ability to make everyone feel like his best friend. He embraced life fully — from spontaneous bonfires and rock-hunting adventures, to mentoring international students and supporting colleagues during challenging seasons.

Melissa Howell, pastor, described Mattson as “an explosion of God’s love” — someone who lived intentionally and joyfully, with faith at the center of everything. Stories from neighbors and students portrayed him as a man who lived his values, used his spiritual wisdom to bless others and encouraged educators and students to believe in God’s purpose for their lives.

Mattson’s life touched students, parents, teachers and friends worldwide, leaving a community deeply shaped by his compassion and vision. While his passing leaves a profound void, his influence endures through the students he taught, the leaders he mentored and the family he loved.

As the service closed, Lizzie invited attendees to hold onto Mattson’s ability to find clarity amid life’s toughest situations. “I don’t have clarity on why we had to face this loss,” she said, “but I do have the certainty that God has been with us every step of the way.”

To continue Mattson’s passion for Adventist education, the Craig Mattson Endowment Fund has been established. For more information or to donate, contact jdolson@nwchrstianschool.org.



With standing room only, the gathering became a sacred space to honor the life of someone cherished by so many people.

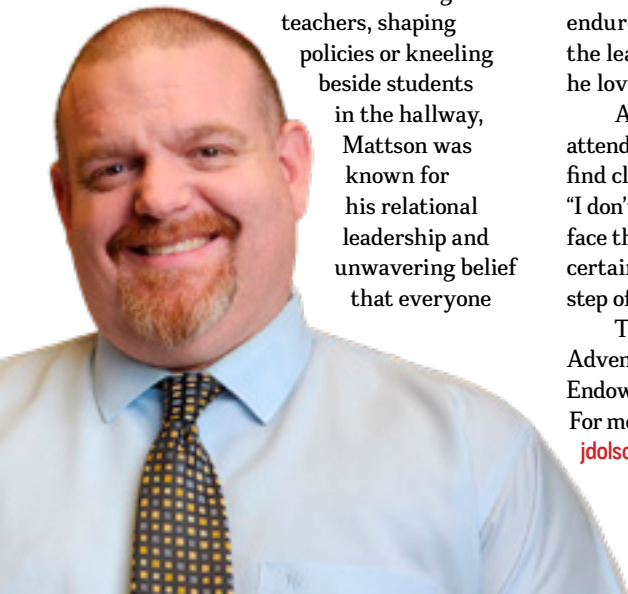


Students share stories of how Mattson served daily as an inspiration to others and as a spiritual mentor who guided others to Christ.

ENOC GARCIA
Washington Conference
communication director



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-WA-46



MISSION AND OUTREACH

Sound Life Day Camp Inspires Faith and Leadership

THIS SUMMER, SOUND LIFE DAY CAMP BECAME MORE THAN JUST A PLACE FOR GAMES AND ACTIVITIES. ACROSS THREE SITES, MORE THAN 100 KIDS GATHERED WEEKLY, AND WITH NEARLY 60% COMING FROM NON-ADVENTIST HOMES, THE CAMPS BECAME POWERFUL SPACES WHERE CHILDREN MET JESUS AND YOUNG LEADERS DISCOVERED THEIR CALLING.

RYAN BING



Puyallup campers tour T-Mobile Park during sports week.

For Shechinah Gonzales, a counselor at the Port Angeles site, the experience was life-changing. “When I first agreed to be a counselor, I thought of it as just a summer job to help pay for college,” Gonzales shared, “but God had a bigger plan. From the very first week, I realized this wasn’t just work; it was ministry.”

Gonzales spent her summer leading worship, playing games and having conversations that often turned into opportunities to share God’s love. Many campers came from challenging home situations or had little exposure to faith.

“Hearing them laugh, sing about Jesus and ask if I could return next summer showed me the eternal impact of this camp,” Gonzales added.

Beyond the fun, this summer became a lifeline for kids who needed hope.

Sound Life Day Camp is part of a growing network of self-funded day camps in Washington Conference, designed to provide five to seven weeks of Christ-centered fun for kids and intentional spiritual mentorship for youth staff.

This year, the newly-launched Puyallup site joined Tacoma Central and Port Angeles, expanding the reach of this vital ministry. Leaders hope to add even more sites in the coming year to meet the growing demand from local churches and families.

“This experience reminded me of my calling to live up to my name and bring God’s presence wherever



SHECHINAH GONZALES

Campers and counselors build strong bonds after several weeks of intentional mentoring.

I go,” Gonzales reflected. “Through the challenges and joys of camp, I saw how God works through simple acts of kindness, patience and love. It gave me a passion for ministry that I will carry into my future as a nurse and beyond.”

Sound Life Day Camp was part of a dynamic summer of children’s ministries across Washington Conference. Together, 48 Vacation Bible Schools—including 44 church-based programs, three day camps and two international sites—engaged more than 1,500 children with the help of nearly 1,000 volunteers.

The conference VBS Library saved participating churches nearly \$11,000 in curriculum, backdrops and costumes, ensuring more

resources went directly toward connecting kids with Jesus.

“Children meet Jesus in real, practical ways at camp,” Gonzales said, “and young leaders like me are equipped to serve.”

Thanks to the prayer, support and investment of local churches, volunteers and families, God’s presence was evident—from children experiencing Jesus for the first time to counselors discovering a deeper calling.



ENOC GARCIA
Washington
Conference
communication
director

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-WA-47 

ACF Institute Marks 20 Years of Discipleship on Campus

WASHINGTON CONFERENCE HOSTED THE 20-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF ADVENTIST CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP, MARKING TWO DECADES OF MINISTRY AND DISCIPLESHIP ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES.



Brenda Obonyo, University of Washington student, is baptized during ACFi's Sabbath afternoon service.



Students worship joyfully as they witness two peers confess their faith through baptism.



Planned and spontaneous moments of prayer set the tone for the entire week.

The spirit-filled week, held July 28–Aug. 2, began at Washington Conference headquarters in Federal Way with 30 public campus ministries leaders from across North American Division gathering to celebrate God's leading, reflect on past victories and plan the next five years of campus ministries.

On Tuesday afternoon, leaders traveled to University of Washington to welcome students to the 10th biennial Adventist Christian Fellowship Institute. The institute opened with a social at Husky Union Building, where incoming students met new friends, bowled and reconnected with ACF chapters from around North America. That evening, more than 100 participants came together for a week filled with worship, networking and

practical training designed to equip students for ministry on secular campuses.

The theme, "Life at the Center," invited students to keep Christ central in their academic, spiritual and personal lives. Keynote speaker Roy Ice, Faith for Today director and speaker, and Ron Pickell, ACF director, explored Ephesians through *Life at the Center*, the newest Bible study from *The Journey* series. They also introduced The Bible Lab, an innovative Sabbath School initiative focused on authentic, grace-filled community and deeper biblical exploration.

The week combined spiritual growth, community-building and mission focus. One highlight came when participants prayer-walked the University of Washington campus, asking God to bless students and faculty.

On Sabbath afternoon, Brenda Obonyo, from University of Washington, and Xavier Miller, from University of Wisconsin–Madison, publicly committed their lives to Christ through baptism, surrounded by fellow students, campus ministries leaders and cheering friends who celebrated the moment with songs and prayer.

For many, ACFi was more than a training event; it was a catalyst for mission. During Shark Tank, an NAD youth department initiative, \$10,000 in funding was awarded to support student-led evangelism projects. Students left inspired to return to their campuses as ambassadors for Christ, equipped with practical tools, spiritual encouragement and a supportive network of peers and mentors across the division.

As ACF celebrates 20 years of ministry, the movement continues to grow. From small groups on secular campuses to large regional gatherings like ACFi, the vision remains clear: to disciple students, reach campuses and change the world together for Christ.

JOHN LEIS
Washington Conference public campus ministries director



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-WA-50

YOUTH

STEM VBS Teaches Kids First Angel's Message

STEPS TO CHRIST CHURCH IN FEDERAL WAY, WASHINGTON, HOSTED AN INNOVATIVE STEM VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL, AUG. 10-14, UNDER THE THEME "IMAGO DEI."

Designed to combine science, technology, engineering and math with faith, the program gave children hands-on opportunities to explore creation while learning practical ways to live out the First Angel's Message. Children rotated in groups, building teamwork and confidence.

Alexander Harmash, Steps to Christ Church pastor, said the goal was to help children see how scientific discovery reflects God's image in humanity. "It's not enough to create STEM projects," said Harmash. "We want to connect scientific truths to the lessons God desires to impart." Leaders opened and closed each day with worship and prayer, rooting experiments in scripture.

A diverse team of volunteers, including two engineers, a nurse, an accountant and a landscape architecture student, helped develop the program. Their vision was to show that every field of knowledge can be used to honor the Creator. Children were encouraged to explore, experiment and find joy in learning while searching for the God who made them curious by design.

Each day highlighted a scientist whose work was

shaped by reverence for God. Six interactive stations offered different ways to learn. In the physics station, children played games to understand natural laws. Hydroengineering let them build a working hydraulic robotic arm, applying pressure and flow principles.

In the technology lab, they dismantled household items to learn how they function and then reassembled key parts. Anatomy lessons emphasized the wholeness of body, mind and spirit through dissections and microscope work. Mathematics uncovered fractals, patterns and compound growth. Architecture invited students to design and build models, linking creativity to the image of God.

Parents noticed how engaged their children were throughout the week. Organizers reflected that while traditional VBS has value, crafts alone may not hold every child's attention. In contrast, STEM VBS offered projects that captivated participants and countered the pull of constant screen time.

"This program fully engaged the kids," one parent said. "They came home excited every day, asking when they could do it again." Parents enthusiastically requested that



The program is an evangelistic platform to serve community families.



Children participate in an engineering workshop.

similar programs be offered in the future.

The event reached beyond the church community. Organizers reported that about 20% of participants came from non-Adventist backgrounds, showing the program's potential as an evangelistic platform. By blending scientific exploration with biblical truth, the week gave children a foundation to navigate today's academic and cultural environment while holding on to their faith.

For Steps to Christ Church, STEM VBS offered a

clear way to proclaim the First Angel's Message: Discovery, learning and creativity all glorify the Creator.

ENOC GARCIA
*Washington Conference
communication director*



IVETA HARMASH
*Steps to Christ
Church member*

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-WA-49

PHOTOS BY ALEXANDER HARMASH

Volunteer Park Church Celebrates 60 Years of Faithfulness and Mission

VOLUNTEER PARK CHURCH, ROOTED IN SEATTLE'S HISTORIC CAPITOL HILL NEIGHBORHOOD, CELEBRATED ITS 60TH ANNIVERSARY ON AUG. 15-16. FOR TWO DAYS, THE CONGREGATION GATHERED TO REMEMBER, WORSHIP AND GIVE THANKS, REFLECTING ON GOD'S FAITHFULNESS AND GUIDANCE THROUGH SIX DECADES OF MINISTRY.



PHOTOS BY SIENNA HUBIN

The celebratory weekend kicks off with a worship evening filled with singing, powerful testimonies and inspiration.

The celebration began Friday evening with a night of worship in VPC's newly upgraded sanctuary. Filled with music, stories and recorded testimonies, the service was captured for a live worship album planned to be released on music streaming platforms.

In the church lobby, guests were welcomed by a newly created history wall, curated under the leadership of Elias Fuentealba, VPC elder, and Sienna Hubin, VPC communication director.

The display turned the greeting area into a gallery of VPC's resilience and Christ-centered mission, showcasing original newspaper clippings, blueprints, letters and photographs. Among its stories was the February 1962 fire, when arsonists burned down the original Seattle Central Church building on a Sabbath morning. Out of that loss, VPC emerged as a thriving city church, committed to loving and serving its community.

Sabbath morning was filled with anticipation and joy as past and present members gathered, including some who helped lay the foundation of the current church building in the early 1960s. Doug Bing, Washington Conference president, led a special prayer of dedication, while a highlight video featured community

partners like Chelsea Dziedzic, Lowell Elementary School principal, who attended the celebration.

Dziedzic expressed her gratitude, saying, "Thank you for all the amazing things we've been able to accomplish together over the last several years. Thank you for your generosity, your kindness and your commitment to the Capitol Hill community and the students at our school."

VPC also celebrated its partnership with North Capitol Hill Emergency Communication Hub. Kurth Guntheroth, co-captain, reflected, "VPC is supporting our mission to help our neighbors help their neighbors. We are so very glad that you are a part of our community!"

Celebrations like these help VPC guard against mission drift, reminding the congregation of its purpose and calling. This anniversary was a time to reflect on the church's identity — not as a castle with a moat, but as a sending hub for mission. With renewed momentum, VPC plans to continue upgrading its 60-year-old space, including a kitchen renovation, while also leaning into church-planting initiatives that expand its reach across the city.

The weekend concluded with a banquet on the church patio and a gym



Current leaders thank and acknowledge the historic spiritual leaders and pillars of the church.

night at Puget Sound Adventist Academy, where members enjoyed pickleball, volleyball, basketball and board games.

Through fires and floods, challenges and triumphs, VPC has survived and thrived — a testimony of God's faithfulness, the sacrifices of its members and a mission to love and serve the city for generations to come.



ABNER CAMPOS
Volunteer Park Church
pastor

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-WA-61

An Introduction to Bible Reading Plan 2026:

ACTS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

After Jesus went back to heaven, His disciples went everywhere telling the world about Him. What if we had been there?

Can you imagine seeing the fire of the Holy Spirit fall on the day of Pentecost, listening to Peter preach that powerful prophetic sermon and then watching as 3,000 people are baptized?

What would it be like to meet regularly with other believers at the temple and from house to house, bonding together and praying for boldness to witness for Jesus?

What if we had been there when God used His servants to heal the lame man, raise Dorcas and Eutycus from the dead, or cast the demons out of the young slave girl?

Would you have traveled with Paul and his missionary assistants on their church-planting journeys across the Roman Empire, experiencing incredible joys while learning to trust God in suffering?

What would you have said or done to encourage unity when the church seemed so divided at the Jerusalem council?

Can you picture Paul standing before kings and leaders, boldly telling the story of Jesus while in chains?

What if you could hear Peter, James, Jude and John reading their letters to the churches aloud as they wrote, inspired by the Holy Spirit?

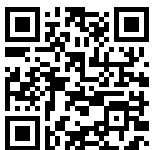
In our 2026 Bible Reading Plan, we will relive the experiences of Acts and the early church as our daily readings take us from Acts through Revelation, as well as through *Acts of the Apostles* from *Conflict of the Ages Classic Commentary* by Ellen G. White.

Let's let God's word and inspired insights transform us and prepare us for Jesus' return!



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

JVL EXPRESSIONS





New 'Living Room' Setting Will Shape Student Life

AT WALLA WALLA UNIVERSITY, EDUCATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN MORE THAN CLASSES AND CREDITS. IT'S ALSO ABOUT FINDING FRIENDS WHO BECOME FAMILY, DISCOVERING PROJECTS THAT SPARK JOY AND PURPOSE, AND GROWING A FAITH THAT LASTS A LIFETIME.



The new Student Life and Ministry Center will be the hub for student life at WWU.

Countless moments outside the classroom—meals, conversations, worship and service—have shaped who WWU students become, even long after their graduation. That's why WWU is investing in the creation of Student Life and Ministry Center, the new "living room" on the College Place campus. SLMC will become the heartbeat of student life and a place where friendships deepen, faith grows and community thrives.

Worth the Disruption

Work has already started on 67-year-old Kellogg Hall, and the comprehensive renovation is expected to be completed in 2027, with a timeline designed to minimize disruption to students. At completion, SLMC will increase Kellogg Hall's footprint to more than 22,000 square feet dedicated to student life.

The transformation is far more than adding square footage. WWU is bringing

campus ministries, student life, The Atlas and dining together under one roof, forming a hub where students can eat, worship, serve and simply be with one another. With spaces for music, games and gathering, SLMC will nurture friendships, spark spiritual growth and support the vibrant life that makes WWU distinctive.

"Some of my most life-changing college moments took place outside of the classroom," said Darren Wilkins, WWU

vice president for student life. "Late-night conversations still turn into lifelong friendships, and faith is still discovered in everyday campus life. I am so pleased that we can finally give our students a campus 'living room' where they can laugh, study, pray and grow into the people God is calling them to be."

Invest in WWU's Future

A student center has been needed for decades, and WWU needs your help to make this a reality. To see how your gift can help WWU finish strong, visit wallawalla.edu/slmc.



CAEDEN ROGERS
WWU university
relations supervisor

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-WWU-73

Scan the QR Code
to invest in
WWU's future!



Students Build Faith Through Service

AT WALLA WALLA UNIVERSITY, EDUCATION EXTENDS BEYOND CLASSROOMS AND TEXTBOOKS. IT IS ABOUT SHAPING LIVES BY CULTIVATING COMPASSION, NURTURING PURPOSE AND GROWING A FAITH THAT LASTS LONG AFTER GRADUATION.

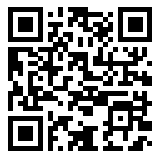
Through Center for Humanitarian Engagement resources and events, students find opportunities to turn learning into living ministry. Whether supporting seniors in the community, responding to local emergencies or joining global service initiatives, WWU students are discovering that service is more than completing a task; it's an expression of discipleship.

This summer, a simple yard project reminded WWU of that truth. A student arrived ready to clear blackberry bushes, but before beginning the work, he paused to share a favorite Bible story with a neighbor. The real ministry that day was not measured in bushes removed, but in the dignity of listening, the joy of shared scripture and the gift of presence.

Moments like this reveal what makes WWU distinctive. Service is never only

about the job at hand. It's about building faith—faith in God's leading, faith that grows as students serve and faith that offers hope in Christ.

From College Place to communities around the world, WWU students are learning that their calling is bigger than themselves. As they listen, serve and build, they are discovering that the most meaningful lessons often happen outside the classroom, when hands and hearts come together in the name of Jesus.



CAEDEN ROGERS
WWU university
relations supervisor

More online at
[NWADVENT.ST/120-6-WWU-74](https://nwadvent.st/120-6-wwu-74)



Student service and outreach is at the core of student life at WWU.

**NEWS
FROM WWU**

Check out these headlines from WWU:

Engineer. Trailblazer. Award Winner.

WWU alumna honored for leadership in engineering

Champions of Character

WWU named NAIA Champions of Character

Timeless Tales

WWUdrama announces its 2025–2026 season

Many Hands, One Mission

WWU launches 39 students into global service

For more, visit wallawalla.edu/news.



5 Back-to-Basic Ways to Stay Well This Winter

YOU AND YOUR FAMILY LIVE BUSY LIVES. YOU DON'T WANT TO WASTE A MINUTE BEING SICK. HOWEVER, AS WINTER SETS IN AROUND THE NORTHWEST, COLD AND INFLUENZA VIRUSES SEEM TO BE EVERYWHERE, JUST WAITING TO ATTACK.



The top ways to help everyone stay well are:

- » Get a flu shot.
- » Wash your hands frequently.
- » Cover your cough.

But there are other day-to-day choices that can help boost your immune system as well.

1. TAKE A LONG WINTER'S NAP

This could be an actual nap, but the best option is to get a good night's rest. For adults, that means seven to nine hours of sleep each night. Children need eight to 15 hours a night, depending on their age. To help you meet your target, establish cozy winter routines at night, like regular bedtimes, screens and phones turned off early, and lower household night temperatures.

2. GET A C AVERAGE

Make sure you and your family are getting enough vitamin C. This essential nutrient supports your immune system in many ways. The best way to get yours is to regularly eat fruits and vegetables rich in vitamin C. Oranges and other citrus fruits may immediately come to mind, but you'll also find lots of vitamin C in blueberries, kale, broccoli, kiwi, mangoes, orange and red bell peppers, and sundried tomatoes—a basic rainbow of fresh goodness.

3. DRINK UP

Your body relies on water for cellular health, proper digestion, removing waste and a host of other functions. Despite the rain outside, it's hard to stay hydrated in the winter, especially inside heated buildings. Make sure you drink plenty of water. In addition, you can eat hydrating foods, such as cucumbers, lettuce, strawberries, grapes and soup. Avoid salty snacks and dried fruit.

4. POWER UP YOUR SHOWER

The warm, moist conditions that cause soap scum and mildew to develop in your shower are perfect for the growth of bacteria and viruses. When hot water hits your bath and shower walls, germs can be aerosolized and then breathed. You can help your family stay well by keeping your bathroom surfaces cleaned regularly with hot, soapy water. White vinegar helps disinfect surfaces. Be careful using harsh chemicals that may stress your respiratory system.

5. CHILL OUT

While we don't entirely understand how stress impacts the immune system, it's clear that both acute and chronic stress make it harder for your body to protect itself from illness. Participating in noncompetitive activities releases chemicals that boost your mood and relieve stress. Winter is also a great time to indulge in a massage or a warm bubble bath. Don't forget to look for three positive moments each day and share those with a loved one or write them in a gratitude journal.

If, despite all your best efforts, you or a loved one comes down with a cold or the flu, stay home and isolate from others as much as possible. Avoid going to work or social gatherings until symptoms disappear. Call your doctor or visit the hospital immediately if you develop emergency symptoms, including trouble breathing, sudden confusion, bluish lips or face, or persistent chest pain.

Regularly following these practices can make a significant difference in helping you stay healthy this winter.

C.J. ANDERSON

Adventist Health Portland communications manager



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-AH-97



Residents Provide Care During Global Health Rotation

A GROUP OF FIVE RESIDENT PHYSICIANS FROM ADVENTIST HEALTH TRAVELED TO LORETO, MEXICO, FOR A TRANSFORMATIVE WEEK OF MEDICAL SERVICE AND CROSS-CULTURAL LEARNING DURING THE FIRST ADVENTIST HEALTH CENTRAL CALIFORNIA RESIDENCY GLOBAL HEALTH ROTATION.

The team held clinics in eight rural communities surrounding Loreto, where residents have limited access to medical care. The rotation, which has been in development for two years, was created to broaden the clinical and cultural understanding of participating physicians.

"We incorporate global health into the training of our medical residents so they can understand health systems across beliefs and cultures," said Raul Ayala, Adventist Health ambulatory medical officer. "Global Health education addresses content areas essential to the developing physician, including cultural humility, understanding social determinants of health, and appreciation for public health and preventive medicine."

Resident physicians from the family and internal medicine programs at Adventist Health Hanford and Adventist Health Tulare participated in the seven-day mission, working under the supervision of clinical faculty.

Bukhtawar Munir, second-year resident, described the experience as transformational. "Serving on this rotation was more than healing; it was about becoming part of a story larger than my own," Munir said.

The program was developed by Ayala; Bucky Weeks, community health initiatives coordinator; John Schroer,

global mission director; and Adnaan Edun and Shruti Javali, supervising physicians, in collaboration with Mexico's minister of health in Baja Sur.

Collaboration with the Mexican government ensured that the Adventist Health team provided care in the areas most in need. "We asked where they would like us to go, and the Loreto community embraced us," Weeks said.

Tiffany Yu, third-year resident, said the experience left a lasting impact. "What was once an unfamiliar place now holds a piece of our hearts," Yu said.

Javali, who leads the Hanford residency program, said the trip reinforced the mission of medical education rooted in service. "Early exposure can shape careers—and service, at its core, is what sustains us," she said.

The Global Health Rotation exemplifies Adventist Health's mission of living God's love through inspired healthcare—without borders.



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

More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-AH-98



Tiffany Yu cares for two patients at a clinic held outside Loreto.



Raul Ayala (left) joins the residents on the trip along with Bucky Weeks (right). They are pictured here with Ochoa Paz, Municipality of Loreto president.



Residents hold a special clinic for moms and children.

ADVERTISEMENTS

EMPLOYMENT

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY IS SEEKING qualified Adventists who may fill open roles in fulfilling its mission to seek knowledge, affirm faith and change the world. If this is of interest to you, please check out the current openings at andrews.edu/jobs.

LOCATED IN BEAUTIFUL SOUTHERN HUMBOLDT COUNTY, this is a live-on-site, year-round position. Applicants must have basic mechanical, electrical and plumbing skills. For more information and to apply, please contact the Northern California Conference human resources department at 916-886-5600 or email hr@nccsda.com.

NE OREGON ADVENTIST LOOKING FOR ASSOCIATE OPTOMETRIST with ownership opportunity. Country living at its finest! Two and a half hours to Walla Walla, Washington. Email jbaileyod@gmail.com for more information.

REGISTERED DENTAL HYGIENIST(S) NEEDED One to four days per week, in beautiful northeastern Washington for a small office practice with a strong patient base. Fantastic patients, doctor and Adventist staff. Relocate to a smaller town with an opportunity for country living! The area offers outdoor sports, including several ski areas only 45–60 minutes away and large city amenities only 90 minutes away. Adventist church and K–8 school in the area. To learn more about our office and town, please call or text 509-995-6623.

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY continuously seeks qualified candidates to fill various positions around campus, including faculty, salaried staff and hourly staff positions. If you are interested in working at Southern, we encourage you to view the positions that are currently open at

sau.catsone.com/careers and apply as God leads. To view current open educational positions pre-K through college across North American Division, please visit jobs.adventisteducation.org.

UNION ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY is searching for applicants for the position of life coach in student success. This is a full-time, non-exempt position. A bachelor's degree is required, master's degree preferred. Duties include serving as a life coach/academic advisor for assigned freshmen, working with high-risk students and providing specialized services, assisting freshmen with registration, providing accountability coaching for academic probation population and other duties. Please see the job description and instructions for application at uau.edu/employment.

YOU CAN CHANGE LIVES! Canvasback Missions is seeking a dedicated couple of strong faith to be co-directors of our Wellness Center, Majuro Atoll, Marshall Islands in the tropical North Pacific. More information: canvasback.org/career/ or call 707-746-7828.

FOR SALE
ACCORDIONS AND CAMERAS FOR SALE Full-sized accordions owned by a camp meeting musician are for sale. Also, camera equipment, including a view camera. Call or text John at 503-349-4046.

MISCELLANEOUS
ACTIVE SMALL CHURCH, QUIET SMALL TOWN Enjoy small-town living and the hospitality of a small, active and mission-minded Adventist church. Heppner, Oregon, lies in the Willow Creek Valley just 20 minutes from the Blue Mountains. Everything in town is within walking distance. Heppner welcomes new residents, and Heppner Church welcomes new members. Come to visit! Come to stay! For information, see our

website, heppneradventist.org, or visit heppnerchamber.com. Heppner Seventh-day Adventist Church on Facebook.

BUYING U.S. GOLD/SILVER COINS, proof and mint sets, silver dollars, rolls and bags. PCGS/NGC certified coins, estates, accumulations, large collections, bullion, platinum. Will travel. All transactions confidential. Please call 208-859-7168.

CONSIDERING RURAL LIVING? Explore Greeneville, Tennessee! Located near the Smoky Mountains, Greeneville Adventist Academy has an accredited K–12 day school program, supported by two constituent churches, prioritizing the Bible, evangelism, mission trips, academics and a high-quality music program (voice, band, bells and strings). mygaa.org. 423-639-2011.

REAL ESTATE
ACTIVE OREGON REAL ESTATE BROKER serving eastern Oregon. Wallowa Mountain Properties, Enterprise, Oregon. Contact Mike Lavezzo: office, 541-426-5382; cell, 509-429-1917. Email detroswestern@yahoo.com.

EXPERIENCED ADVENTIST REAL ESTATE BROKER serving the greater Seattle-Tacoma area. Megan Bonifant with John L. Scott Real Estate. Call 253-737-7804 or email meganb@johnlscott.com.

SERVICES
DEWOLFE AND SONS MOVING EST. 2012 offers residential and retirement moving with the customer service that you deserve. Open six days a week. Specializing in retirement moving. ODOT #149881. Contact Dion DeWolfe at 541-231-7674 or diondewolfe@gmail.com.

HOLIDAY PROGRAMS Fill your life and home with a Christian spirit of Christmas. LifeTalk Radio plays Christmas music all through December with special concerts

nightly at 8 p.m. (Eastern) from Dec. 6–25. Enjoy Christmas music 24/7 at lifetalk.net.

SUMMIT RIDGE RETIREMENT VILLAGE, an Adventist community in a rural setting, offers affordable homes or apartments and caring neighbors with fellowship you will enjoy. Onsite, church-planned activities and transportation as needed. Onsite Wolfe Living Center offers independent living and nursing homes. Visit summitridgevillage.org or call Bill Norman at 405-208-1289.

TEACH SERVICES HELPING AUTHORS Publish your book, including editing, design, marketing and worldwide distribution. Visit teachservices.com to submit your manuscript for a free evaluation or call 706-504-9192. Shop for new/used Adventist books at teachservices.com or at your local ABC.

VACATIONS
BIBLE STUDY TOUR OF GREECE Footsteps of Apostles Paul and John in Greece! June 24–July 6, 2026. A biblical journey through Philippi, Amphipolis, Thessalonica, Vergina, Berea, Meteora, Delphi, Athens and Corinth. Enjoy a cruise to Patmos, Crete, Santorini, Mykonos and Ephesus. Experience Greek culture and food. Info: biblicaltouring.com, George Dialectakis, 860-402-2247

FIND YOUR WINTER WONDERLAND IN SUNRIVER, OREGON! Make our Quelah condo the starting point for great relaxation or your favorite winter activity. Visit sunriverunlimited.com for more information or call 503-253-3936.

GREAT CONTROVERSY TOURS invites you to visit 60 places in 15 cities. Locations include Switzerland, Germany, France and Rome, Italy. March and September 2026. Contact 470-833-2887 or email gctours@naver.com.

SUN VALLEY, IDAHO Perfect base for enjoying world-class recreation and cultural activities. Adventist church has two guest rooms for \$85/night donation. Each has two queen beds, a full bath, mini fridge, microwave and Wi-Fi. Apartment also available for \$125/night donation. It has two bedrooms with queen beds, full bath, full kitchen, living/dining area. Donations help us make the guest rooms available for our emergency housing ministry. To book, contact Yvonne at 208-721-1629. woodrivervalleyid.adventistchurch.org/ministries/guest-room.

SUNRIVER, CENTRAL OREGON Four-bedroom vacation home on the North Woodlands golf course. Two master king suites, two

queens, one bunk set, hot tub, A/C, loft, Jacuzzi bath, gas log fireplace, BBQ, W/D, bikes, all "lodge amenities," sleeps 10, no smoking, no pets. For rates, photos and reservations: 541-279-9553 or schultz@crestviewcable.com.

TRAVEL ON A WILLIAM TYNDALE REFORMATION TOUR Aug. 26–Sept. 11, 2026, celebrate the 500th anniversary of the English New Testament with Carl Cosaert of Walla Walla University. Explore Tyndale's England with an optional Germany and Belgium extension. To learn more, visit adventtours.org or email info@adventtours.org.

ONLINE

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JAN./FEB. 2026

OCT. 27, 2025

MARCH/APRIL 2026

JAN. 5, 2026

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NORTH PACIFIC UNION

Offering

Nov. 1—Local Church Budget

Nov. 8—Annual Sacrifice for Global Mission (GC)

Nov. 15—Local Church Budget

Nov. 22—Local Conference Advance

Nov. 29—Alaska Conference (NPUC)

Dec. 6—Local Church Budget

Dec. 13—Adventist Community Services (NAD)

Dec. 20—Local Church Budget

Dec. 27—Local Conference Advance

North Pacific Union Directory

5709 N. 20th St., Ridgefield, WA 98642
360-857-7000 • fax 360-857-7001 • npuc.org
Monday–Thursday 7:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

President	John Freedman	Hispanic, Ministerial and Multicultural	Peter Simpson
Executive Secretary, Evangelism	Bill McClendon	Information Technology	Loren Bordeaux
Assistant	Kristina Lopez	Associate	Daniel Cates
Treasurer	Jeffrey Fogelquist	Legal Counsel	André Wang
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Assistant	Makena Horton	Regional Affairs and Outreach Ministries	EuGene Lewis
Media Coordinator	José Segovia	Trust (WAF)	James Brown
Creation Study Center	Stan Hudson	Association Treasurer	Jay Graham
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Secondary	Brian Harris	Associate	Velvet Lang
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Local Conference Directory

ALASKA CONFERENCE

6100 O'Malley Rd.
Anchorage, AK 99507-7200
907-346-1004 • alaskaconference.org
Rodney Mills, president; Ashwin Somasundram, v.p. administration; Garrett Holmes, v.p. finance

IDAHO CONFERENCE

7777 W. Fairview Ave.
Boise, ID 83704-8418
208-375-7524 • idahoadventist.org
David Prest Jr., president; David Salazar, v.p. administration; Oscar Sanchez, v.p. finance

MONTANA CONFERENCE

175 Canyon View Rd.
Bozeman, MT 59715
406-587-3101 • mtcsda.org
Jim Jenkins, president; _____, v.p. administration; Solomon Agdon, v.p. finance

OREGON CONFERENCE

19800 Oatfield Rd.
Gladstone, OR 97027-2546
503-850-3500 • oregonadventist.org
John McVay, president; Kara Johnson, v.p. administration; Eric Davis, v.p. finance; Ron Jacaban, v.p. education

UPPER COLUMBIA CONFERENCE

3715 S. Grove Rd.
Spokane, WA 99224
509-838-2761 • uccsda.org
David Jamieson, president; Eric Brown, v.p. administration; Allee Currier, v.p. finance; Adam Littell, v.p. education

WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

32229 Weyerhaeuser Way S.
Federal Way, WA 98001
253-681-6008 • washingtonconference.org
Doug Bing, president; Randy Maxwell, v.p. administration; Jerry S. Russell, v.p. finance; Michelle Wachter, v.p. education

WALLA WALLA UNIVERSITY

204 S. College Ave.
College Place, WA 99324-1198
509-527-2656 • wallawalla.edu
Alex Bryan, president; Pamela Cress, v.p. for academic administration; Prakash Ramoutar, v.p. for financial administration; Darren Wilkens, v.p. for student life; Jodi Wagner, v.p. for marketing and enrollment; Gayla Rogers, v.p. for alumni and advancement

Adventist Book Centers

800-765-6955 • adventistbookcenter.com

NAMPA ABC

1350 N. Kings Rd., Nampa, ID 83687-3193
208-465-2532
M–Th 10:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

OREGON ABC

19700 Oatfield Rd., Gladstone, OR 97027
503-850-3300
M–Th 10 a.m.–5 p.m.
F 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
Sun 11 a.m.–4 p.m.

UPPER COLUMBIA ABC

3715 S. Grove Rd., Spokane, WA 99224
509-838-3168
M–Th 9 a.m.–5:30 p.m.
Sun 10 a.m.–3 p.m.

COLLEGE PLACE ABC

505 S. College Ave., College Place, WA 99324
509-529-0723
M, F, Sun 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
T–Th 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

AUBURN ABC

5100 32nd St., Auburn, WA 98092-7024
253-833-6707
M, T, Th 10 a.m.–5:30 p.m.
W, F 10 a.m.–2:30 p.m.
Sun 11 a.m.–3 p.m.



Sunset times:
nwadventists.com/sunset

Hodges 65th



Maris Kay and Howard L. Hodges

Howard L. and Maris Kay (Bliesath) Hodges celebrated their 65th anniversary on Sept. 17, 2025 with a family dinner party at their home.

Howard and Maris met at a basketball game at Andrews University and were married in Jackson, Michigan, in 1960. Their first child, Pamela, was born there in 1962. After a cross-country move to Capitola, California, they adopted their son, Timothy, in 1967. Howard taught at Virgil Hauselt Memorial Junior Academy.

In 1970, their daughter, Staci, was born. In 1975, they moved to Salem, Oregon, where Howard taught at Livingstone Junior Academy for the next 25 years. Maris was a certified medical assistant. In their retirement, Howard and Maris enjoy camping, boating and gardening.

The Hodges family includes Pamela (Hodges) Larson of Keizer, Oregon; Timothy Hodges of Salem, Oregon; and Rogene and Staci (Hodges) Talento of Salem, Oregon; 4 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

AMUNDSON—Betty Lou (Reinke), 94; born March 31, 1931, McClusky, North Dakota; died June 20, 2025, Kalispell, Montana. Surviving: son, Gary; daughters, Sandra Nixon and Donella Manuel; 6 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

DAVIS—Bradley K., 67; born Oct. 25, 1957, Missoula, Montana; died Oct. 30, 2024, Spokane, Washington. Surviving: spouse, Susan Davis; sons, Brent and Justin Davis; mother, O.D. Davis; brother, Scott Weston Davis; sisters, Karen (Binki) Davis and Joanna Nelson; 2 grandchildren. *(This is a reprint with corrected information from September/October 2025.)*

DURY—Jean Carol (Livingston), 96; born Oct. 10, 1928, Spokane, Washington; died May 2, 2025, Liberty Lake, Washington. Surviving: sons, Daryl and Brian; daughters, Brenda Grovet and Cheryl Becker; sisters, Carol Hartman and Linda Grasson; 11 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

FISCHER—Roberta Theone (Davis), 100; born Feb. 4, 1925, Ilwaco, Washington; died Aug. 31, 2025, Vancouver, Washington. Surviving: sons, David and Curtis; daughter, Jackie (Fischer) Fish; 2 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

HARRIS—Bertie Lee (Haines), 83; born Jan. 26, 1942, San Francisco, California; died Aug. 23, 2025, Imbler, Oregon. Surviving: spouse, Jim; son, Joe; daughters, Nina (Harris) Swank and Rebecca (Harris) Bissell; brothers, Doug, Hal and Marty Haines; sister, Cindy (Haines) Moss; 4 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

HEISLER—Edward James, 101; born Nov. 6, 1923, Farmington, Nova Scotia, Canada; died Aug. 22, 2025, Chattanooga, Tennessee. Surviving: son, Bruce; daughters, Elizabeth Adels, Barbara Heisler and Beverly Heisler; brothers, Robert Coupland and Ralph Coupland; 6 grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren.

KAPPEL—Robert “Bob” G. W., 89; born Nov. 26, 1935, Granger, Washington; died May 19, 2025, Riverside, California. Surviving: daughters, Lori Kappel Chinn, Viki Kappel Spain, Karynn Kappel Gutierrez and Janel Kappel Christiansen; 7 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren.

LAMPSON—Darlene Mae (Edgar), 91; born July 21, 1934, Tillamook, Oregon; died Sep. 7, 2025, Vancouver, Washington. Surviving: son, Eldon; daughter, Caryn (Lampson) Earl; 2 grandchildren, 2 step-grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

LARSEN—Darayl Dwain, 83; born Nov. 11, 1941, Los Angeles, California; died Aug. 26, 2025, Moses Lake, Washington. Surviving: spouse, Sandy (Smith); sons, Jon and Chris; daughters, Dawna (Larsen) Krause and Shawna Larsen; sister, Penny Larsen; 5 grandchildren.

LOVEJOY—Dolores “Dee” Ruth (Morris), 92; born June 5, 1932, Terre Haute, Indiana; died May 6, 2025, Manchester, Tennessee. Surviving: spouse, Delmar “Del”; sons, Morris and Marc; daughter, Faith Lovejoy-Gilson; 5 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

MCQUEEN—Leo Lindy, 86; born June 12, 1939, Brownsville, Oregon; died June 20, 2025, Scio, Oregon. Surviving: spouse, Pat Waterman McQueen; daughters, Roxanne Fenton and Cherina Ramirez; brother, Jim; 1 grandchild and 1 great-grandchild.

REEVES—Roger Gordan, 77; born May 5, 1948, Pendleton, Oregon; died July 10, 2025, College Place, Washington. Surviving: sister, Judy Kuhl.

SAMPLE—Ernest Larry, 83; born Aug. 27, 1941, Falls City, Oregon; died March 21, 2025, Portland, Oregon. Surviving: daughters, Thana (Sample) Anderson and Jodi (Sample) Pengra; brothers, Clyde Jr. and Ed; sister, Bonnie (Sample) Sargeant; 1 grandchild and 3 step-grandchildren.

1933–2025

WILMA (JONES) HEPKER

Wilma (Jones) Hepker, born Nov. 1, 1933, in Sebastian, Texas, to William and Novella Jones, passed away March 15, 2025, in Walla Walla, Washington.

On June 1, 1953, she married Dale Hepker after graduating from Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska. They embarked on their teaching journey in Little Rock, Arkansas, followed by roles at Ozark Adventist Academy in Gentry, Arkansas, and Union College in Lincoln. They welcomed their first two sons, Devin and David, while in Lincoln.



In 1966, the family moved to Beirut, Lebanon, where they served as missionaries at Middle East College. It was there that she and Dale had their third son, Don, and daughter, Donna.

Wilma's passion for education led her to earn advanced degrees, including a Master of Arts in sociology in 1966, a Ph.D. in 1976, and a Master of Social Work in 1983. She began teaching at Walla Walla College in 1973 and played a pivotal role in creating the School of Social Work and Sociology, which was named for her upon her retirement as dean after 33 years.

Wilma is survived by her children, Devin and his wife, Wendy; David and his wife, Tami; Don and his wife, Giselle; and Donna and her husband, Steve Ellis; nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

WILHELMS – William Peter Sr., 79; born Oct. 11, 1945, New Castle, Pennsylvania; died June 26, 2025, Medford, Oregon. Surviving: spouse, Jeanie (Smedley); sons, Bill Jr. and Clint; daughter, Donna Wilhelms; brother, Bob; sister, Linda (Wilhelms) Clark; 8 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

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

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

A Promise to Hold

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 PETER 1:3–5

SCHAFER – Madalynn (Skeels), 93; born Sept. 19, 1924, Fruita, Colorado; died July 18, 2018, Milton-Freewater, Oregon. Surviving: 1 grandchild.

VERSTAPPEN – Elizabeth Hubertina (Kerens), 98; born April 16, 1927, Holtum, Netherlands; died June 23, 2025, Grants Pass, Oregon. Surviving: daughter, Geri Verstappen Wytcherley; 3 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.

WELLS – Sylvia Frances (McDonald), 100; born May 19, 1925, Minneapolis, Minnesota; died Aug. 12, 2025, Riverview, Michigan. Surviving: sons, Gary and Daniel; 3 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

WERNER – Noble Theo Jr., 73; born Aug. 24, 1951, Enid, Oklahoma; died May 10, 2025, Spokane Valley, Washington. Surviving: spouse, Linda (Ricke); sons, Noble III and Charles; daughter, Trisha Werner; 13 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren.

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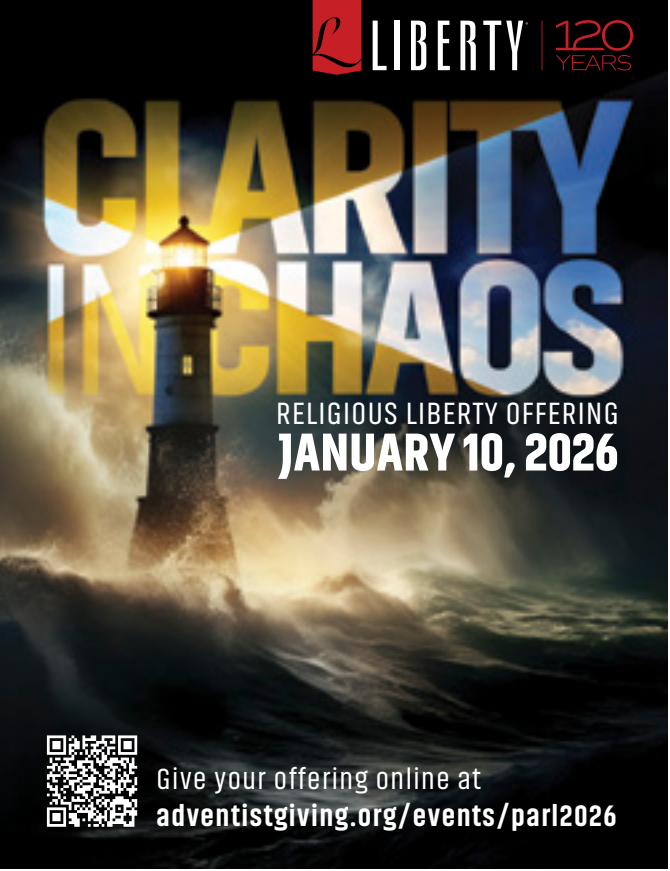
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gleaner 2025

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION YEAR AVERAGE SEPT/OCT ISSUE

This Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation for 2025 was filed on Sept. 3, 2025, 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 2025 issue of the *Gleaner* and were printed in the Nov/Dec 2025 issue of this publication.

	YEAR AVERAGE	SEPT/OCT 2025 ISSUE
Total number of copies	38207	38457
Paid circulation mailed outside-county	38065	38315
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	38065	38315
Free or nominal rate outside-county	142	142
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	142	142
Total distribution	38207	38457
Copies not distributed	100	100
Total	38307	38557
Paid Electronic Copies	0	0
Percent paid	99.62	99.63



JUST FOR KIDS

SHOW AND TELL



Show and tell is when you can share something special with others. It can be a rock you picked up, a flower you grew from a seed or your favorite sticker.

You can also tell others about a fun time, like hiking or helping bake cookies. You might share your favorite Bible story or a time when God answered your prayer.

When you show and tell people about God's love, you're being a missionary.

Some missionaries go to other countries. Some move to a new state. But many people tell others about Jesus right where they live.

Mission Stories

The Bible doesn't use the word "missionary," but it tells lots of stories about people who shared God's love. Naaman's servant girl and Abraham were missionaries. Paul went to many places to tell people the good news about Jesus.

Philip was a missionary too. One day, an angel told him to walk down a desert road. So Philip went. On the road, he saw a man from Ethiopia riding in a chariot. The man was reading from Isaiah but didn't understand it.

God's Spirit told Philip to talk to him. Philip ran up to the chariot and asked, "Do you know what you are reading?"

The man said no and invited Philip to sit with him. Philip told him all about Jesus. The man believed in Jesus and wanted to follow Him, so Philip baptized him!

Then God sent Philip to another place to tell more people about Jesus, and the man went home to tell others, too!

You can be a missionary just like Philip. You can talk about God while you ride in a car or play kickball. You can show God's love by sharing your cookies. You don't need to be afraid. God will help you know what to say and do.

Just ask Him, "God, how can I show and tell others about You today?"

You can read Acts 8:26–40 for family worship.



PAULA WART
Just for Kids columnist

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/120-6-KIDS-91](https://www.nwadvent.org/st/120-6-kids-91)

MAKE A WHEEL

Being a missionary isn't about going far away. It's about listening to God and loving others wherever we are. This wheel will help you see all the ways you can be a missionary right now!



Things You'll Need

- » Two sheets of construction paper
- » Scissors
- » Brass fastener or thumbtack
- » Ruler or other straight edge
- » Crayons or markers
- » One salad plate
- » One teacup saucer
- » Stickers (optional)

1. Create the Mission Base

- » On a sheet of paper, trace around a salad plate to create a large circle.
- » Center a teacup saucer inside the big circle and trace to create a smaller circle.
- » Divide the smaller circle into eight "pizza slices."
- » In each slice, draw or write a missionary idea.

2. Make the Wheel

- » On a second sheet of paper, trace both plates again.
- » Divide the smaller circle into eight slices, and leave a small circle in the middle for the fastener.
- » Cut out one slice to make a window.
- » Decorate the wheel to look like a chariot wheel.

3. Put It Together

- » Stack the wheel on top of the base.
- » Poke a hole through the center and fasten with a brass fastener or thumbtack.

4. Spin and Share

- » Spin the chariot wheel to reveal an idea for showing God's love. Every turn gives you a new way to be a missionary right where you are!



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-KIDS-92

PAULA WART
Just for Kids
columnist



PHOTOS PROVIDED BY PAULA WART



Praying Together Through the Parenting Years



AUTHOR

I am back in the working world as the social media manager for my Tribe. Both of my kids are teens now. My husband is very busy with Pentecost 2025, church revitalization and evangelism. Life is a bit crazy this season. Can you relate? It's in these busy times that we *must* be intentional with our family time and time with God.

At this time in our life journey, I am stepping away as a regular *Gleaner* perspective writer. I have so enjoyed sharing with you all. It's been fun to run into you in real life and have discussions about what I have written and how you're experiencing family life. I will miss you, of course.

I have written 46 articles for the *Gleaner* over the last five years. Here are some excerpts from five of my favorites:

"10 BIBLE VERSES FOR TIRED PARENTS"

"2 Cor. 12:9 – 'But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.'"

LaVonne Long

"BUILDING FAITH IN KIDS IN TIMES OF STRUGGLE"

"In an unpredictable world, what can we do, as adults, to help our kids build their faith in times of struggle? We must equip our children to find hope, strength and peace through reliance on God."

"TEACHING COMPASSION TOWARD NEURODIVERGENT PEERS"

"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."

"EXTENDING GRACE: 3 SIMPLE WAYS TO SHOW YOUR KIDS GOD'S LOVE"

"Instead of responding with harsh criticism or undue punishment, let us remember God's grace is abundant and covers all our imperfections. By offering understanding, patience and forgiveness, we create an environment where our children feel safe and loved, mirroring our God's unconditional love and forgiveness."



More online at
[NWADVENT.ST/120-6-POV-01](https://nwadvent.st/120-6-POV-01)

EDITORIAL NOTE:

Please join us in thanking our Perspective columnists, Kevin McGill and LaVonne Long, for their insights, encouragement and moments that stretched our thinking. Their faithful contributions have been a valued part of the magazine's voice. In the coming issues, we'll be welcoming new voices who will continue sharing stories and lessons that build faith, community and mission.



PERSPECTIVE

“

*Parenting is hard. ... We must pray a lot.
We must apologize when we mess up.
We must extend grace. We must listen to
them. We must love them well.*

“30-DAY POSITIVE PARENTING CHALLENGE”

“With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can be cycle breakers. Positive parenting takes work, and I frequently make mistakes. But I also want to own those mistakes, apologize and start over again. Maybe you’d like to commit to being a more positive parent?”

The Final Word

Parenting is hard. I have said that again and again because it’s true. We must be intentional. We must pray a lot. We must apologize when we mess up. We must extend grace. We must listen to them. We must love them well.

We are told in Rom. 8:26, “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our

weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”

Won’t you pray for me on this journey, as I pray for you?

LAVONNE LONG

Northwest Adventists family
columnist





When God Plants You at Home

I

n 2001, my father was asked to go overseas and present an evangelistic series, using what is now called “Share Him.” He was shown a map and asked where he wanted to go and do this series. He and my mother chose Kenya, because they had a friend who had grown up there and could lead our group to the location.

My whole family went, and for nearly two months we worked in a small village on the eastern coast of Kenya. My father spoke each night, my mother gave health talks and worked with the local doctors and nurses, and my sister and I organized nightly children’s programs.

As a 12-year-old, this had a monumental impact on my life. Leaving the safety and comfort of the U.S. and going to a truly poor country was life-changing, to say the least. Witnessing people with nothing, struggling to survive, yet overcome with joy and happiness as they gave their lives to Jesus still remains vivid in my mind all these years later. That trip lit a fire in my soul for mission evangelism.

I went on every mission trip that was available from then on, traveling to Peru, Sri Lanka,

the U.S. began to sink in, and my horizons began to feel smaller.

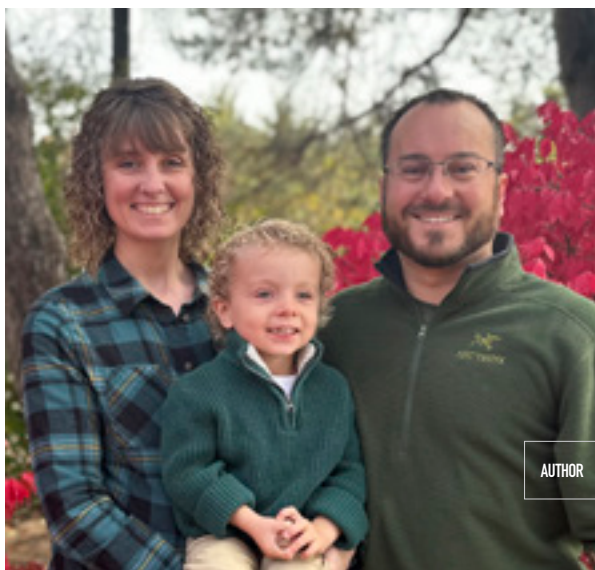
I became frustrated that I wasn’t going to make it out of the U.S. as a missionary. However, as I continued in the pursuit of pastoral ministry, I began to see that there were plenty of truly daunting and large mission fields even in my backyard.

I want to stop here briefly to say: I am truly in awe of the dedication and sacrifice of overseas missionaries. They are truly selfless and God-filled to do what they do, and they live in so many challenging and dangerous places just to try and reach people for Jesus. I often think of and pray for them, and I’m honored to be part of a denomination that values overseas mission work.

The reality remains, though, that many, including myself, just can’t go overseas full-time to do mission work. This can leave us feeling as though we aren’t missionaries. But this couldn’t be further from the truth.

Each Christian who lives their life dedicated to Jesus and is willing to profess that to others is a missionary. Some are old, some young, some women, some men, some professionals, some tradesmen, etc. Each true believer of Jesus can be and is a missionary each day where they live and work.

Is there someone better equipped to understand and minister to the people in your city, town or neighborhood than you? Can you be a missionary in your hometown? Of course, and frankly you should be.



AUTHOR

Natashia McVay

El Salvador,
Honduras,

Guatemala and Australia to speak about my love for Jesus and how others could get to know Him.

I dreamed of being an overseas missionary, living in rural and wild places and getting to tell people about Jesus. As I aged, the challenges of traveling outside



PERSPECTIVE

Each Christian who lives their life dedicated to Jesus and is willing to profess that to others is a missionary.

God has placed you where you are for just a time as this. He has given you opportunities to witness about Him to the people you see each day and week. Don't just wait for the faraway opportunity; make sure you pay attention to the local opportunities.

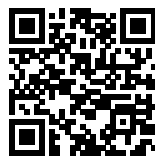
Jesus' words should ring in our ears no matter where in the world we find ourselves witnessing.

Matt. 28:19–20 says, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything

I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Jesus has called each one of us to share His love and salvation with all nations, all peoples, all countries, all cities, all neighborhoods.

This includes your own city, town, neighborhood and street!



NATASHIA MCVAY
Pacific Northwest
pastoral columnist

More online at [NWADVENT.ST/120-6-POV-99](https://nwadvent.st/120-6-POV-99)

FILL THIS OUT FOR YOURSELF

I, _____, _____
(name)

am a missionary/witness for Jesus Christ.

As a _____,
(occupation or current status)

I am a missionary to _____,
(main group you are around)

and I share Jesus through my _____.
(actions, prayers, attitude, etc.)





A Delegate's Reflections on Faith and Mission

I am proud to be a Black Adventist believer and deeply honored and humbled to have been selected as a delegate to the 62nd General Conference Session representing Oregon Conference and North Pacific Union. I express my sincere gratitude to those responsible for my selection.

Neither my wife, Tamala, nor I had attended GC Session before, so we were looking forward to the experience.

Even before being named a delegate, we planned to attend because our singing group, Les Chanticleers – an a cappella ensemble primarily performing Negro spirituals for more than 50 years – was performing “I’ll Never Turn Back No More.”

Being chosen as a delegate was the icing on the cake. The powerful message of this song reminds us that we must continue to press forward, fulfilling the Great Commission.

Attending GC Session helped me realize that, beyond the U.S., we are truly a global church – reflective of every nation, kindred

and tongue, and especially of the people of color

who make up the largest portion of our worldwide membership.

As a student at what is now Oakwood University, I served as a student missionary to South Korea. Meeting people from South Korea, Jamaica, the Philippines, China, Peru, Austria, Ghana and beyond while witnessing the Parade of Nations gave me a

foretaste of the harmony we will share in Heaven.

The theme, “I Will Go,” was simple yet powerful – a call to fulfill Matt. 28:19–20: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

Coupled with Matt. 24:14, “And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come,” these scriptures embody our call to mission and service: to go and evangelize the world.

It was a joy to witness the selection of Erton C. Köhler as the 18th world church president. I was immediately impressed by his mission-minded focus and that, like me, he is a man of color.

I believe his appointment is critical to our church’s mission – God-ordained for where we are now and for what He is calling us to do as a collective body of believers.

On the first Sabbath of every GC Session, the GC secretary speaks, and on the last Sabbath, the president speaks. Köhler, having held both offices, was uniquely positioned to emphasize our mission focus on both Sabbaths, bookending the session with clarity and purpose.

AUTHOR

Karl L. Newsome

HEIDI BAUMGARTNER





PERSPECTIVE

Serving as a delegate helped me come full circle, showing how every leadership role is vital to the mission and growth of the Adventist Church.

Being engulfed by the mass choir singing “We Have this Hope,” accompanied by the orchestra amid that great throng of people was a feeling I will not soon forget.

The GC Session theme should strongly resonate in the hearts and minds of every Adventist believer, inspiring renewed earnestness and urgency as we labor together to fulfill the Great Commission.

FULL CIRCLE

God-inspired leadership is crucial to the task of evangelism before us. As a proud Oakwood alumnus, I see how the God-ordained institution has shaped many of the church’s leaders who followed the university’s admonition to “Enter to Learn, Depart to Serve.”

I remember reading in *A Place Called Oakwood*, a compilation of Ellen G. White’s counsels and writings about the school, that she

was convinced the Lord had chosen this site to prepare Black students as workers in His vineyard. To witness that vision alive today is deeply moving.

Seeing this embodied in the leadership of Oakwood alumni fills me with joy and pride. Among them are the current North American Division president, two union presidents and countless others serving as regional and state conference presidents and in other key roles.

This Oakwood connection is especially meaningful to me because it was there that I met Tamala. Like me, she dedicated her life to mission service, including teaching at elementary schools on both coasts.

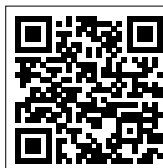
Throughout my upbringing, I have had the opportunity to serve in many roles: Sabbath School teacher for cradle roll, primary and adults; Sabbath School superintendent; Pathfinder

counselor and leader; deacon; Missionary Volunteers and Adventist Youth leader; elder and church nominating committee member.

Serving as a delegate helped me come full circle, showing how every leadership role is vital to the mission and growth of the Adventist Church. It was an honor to serve in this capacity, and I believe that only in heaven will we fully see the harvest of our collective labor in God’s vineyard as we reach souls for His kingdom.

KARL L. NEWSOME

*Guest columnist and
North Pacific Union delegate*



More online at
NWADVENT.ST/120-6-POV-06

• Les Chanticleers sing “I’ll Never Turn Back No More” at the Monday afternoon musical concert.





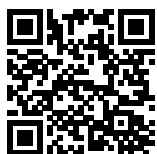
Walking Home

SOME OF US MOVE QUICKLY, SOME SLOWLY — AND ALL OF US ARE CALLED TO WALK FORWARD TOGETHER.



BENDALUSONG

AUTHOR Heidi Baumgartner



More online at nwadventists.com/120-6-TT-64

Leaving St. Louis after General Conference Session, I reflected on how much I had grown as a Christ follower and as an Adventist as I gained a deeper appreciation for the church, its leaders, its people and, above all, the urgency of our mission.

In that city and that setting, I noticed something else: Adventists seem to have two walking speeds — we either amble or speed walk.

Some of us are quick to adopt new methods, make new friends or gain fresh insight into long-held beliefs. Others of us take our time. We weigh the options. We pause to listen, to learn, to evaluate and to discern. Sometimes we dig in our heels, grounded in tradition.

At times, the fast walkers — eager for innovation and change — grow frustrated with the slow walkers. They want to accelerate the process and push things forward.

Yet there's something sacred about ambling in community. In the slower moments, we learn our shared history. We discover the traditions that hold us together. We hear the stories worth passing on to the next generation.

Speed walkers have their own kind of wisdom to offer. They often sense urgency when others feel comfortable. They see what's possible and call us to imagine more. They bring energy to the mission and a willingness to try, to risk, to move.

Here's the beautiful truth: No matter the speed, we are still moving forward.

Wherever God calls, we can answer with a commitment: I will go — to serve, witness and love in every mission field, whether in our own neighborhoods, across the globe or anywhere God places us.

Our collective momentum is one of progress — if not always in pace, then in purpose. Just as our feet move forward, our minds and attitudes should be shaped by grace and goodwill.

As we walk together at different speeds, we inevitably bump into each other, sometimes even causing pain.

I appeal to you to seek whatever reconciliation, forgiveness or healing you need. Perhaps you need to let go of a negative thought process and replace it with generosity of thought. Some of you may feel like religion was shoved down your throat. I am so sorry for your experience. I pray that you would consider rediscovering God for yourself.

Maybe you've been hurt, criticized or judged. Perhaps God is calling you to model and be a better example of what the church can and should be.

The church is made up of imperfect people serving a

perfect God. Sometimes we stumble, whether individually or collectively. Sometimes we find our stride. Either way, God calls us to keep moving as we learn, grow and walk forward together.

May we walk with grace alongside one another — hands holding gently the past, eyes firmly fixed on the future. God has something greater in store for all of us. We can be salt and light in whatever context God calls us to.

May we keep walking Home together.

HEIDI BAUMGARTNER

North Pacific Union communication director and Gleaner editor

TABLE TALK PROMPT

Where in your church community do you see fast walkers and slow walkers? How can you encourage mutual respect and shared progress?

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

GERHARD WEINER / AME (CC BY 4.0)





10 DAYS OF PRAYER

U N L E A S H E D !

JANUARY 7-17, 2026



PUBLISHED BY THE GENERAL CONFERENCE MINISTERIAL ASSOCIATION
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“When You said, ‘Seek My face,’ my heart said to You,
‘Your face, O Lord, I will seek.’”
Psalm 27:8

This past year may have brought challenges or uncertainty, yet God’s light continues to guide us, and His presence comforts us each step of the way.

As we look to the year ahead, may we seek Him with open hearts and trust Him to lead us forward. Let us also share His light with those around us — through acts of care, encouragement and hope.

Thank you for being our readers and walking this journey of faith with us!

Blessings from the *Gleaner* team

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