

# Village Voice



January  
2026

## Of New Birth, New Beginnings, New Years

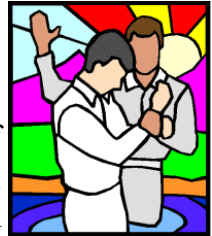
by Carolyn Karlstrom



"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:  
The old has gone, the new is here!" 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

Rick and I recently celebrated our 20th birthdays. Yes, 20th! On November 19, 2005, we were rebaptized in the Vancouver SDA church after having been non-attenders/non-observers for nearly 18 years. Rick was the one who awakened to our peril and our need, and he resolved to return to church. He invited me to join him, and I did.

There was an evangelistic series beginning the very evening of our first Sabbath back. We attended. At the end of the third week, on the last night of the meetings, we were baptized for the second and final time, as it seems to have "taken." It was the beginning of a brand-new life for us; was the beginning, in fact, of eternal life. We've never looked back. And we'll be forever grateful for God's patience with and perseverance toward us.



Four years ago, we moved to Walla Walla. Walla Walla is the city of my birth and where Rick and I met in college. This is always where I've wanted to end up, and moving back has injected new life into me; it feels like a grand restart. The distance between the home I currently live in and the one I grew up in is 1.67 miles. I've come full circle, literally.

I love being here. Truly, the Lord alone knows how much it means to me. I can and, on a regular basis, I do, drive by my old

house; my grandparents' house; my friends' houses; my old school; the first church I remember worshipping in; the church I was baptized in the first time; my childhood library; through the downtown area, which holds the most amazing and wonderful memories for me; and past and around landmarks of various sorts. I can look up at the Blue Mountains any time I want to! I'm home.



We've just begun a new year. This is my 73rd of them and, like many others, I find myself reflecting on the trajectory of my life. I want to be on and stay on course. And I recognize that I need to make a few adjustments. The one thing of supreme importance to me is my relationship with Jesus. I could be doing better in holding up my end. I resolve to do so.



I'd encourage you to consider your own relationship with Him. This would be the ideal time. Twenty twenty-five is behind us; 2026 is baby-new. If you need to begin again, or just fine-tune a bit, do it now. Let this be your moment.

**Carolyn K.**



Choose new.

*Let us gather up the treasures of the past year,  
and carry with us into the new year  
the remembrance of God's goodness and mercy.*

*Let us brighten the future  
by the thought of past blessings."*

—Ellen G. White, Letter 202, 1902





Do you ever get the New Year Doldrums? Sad that the holidays are over? Discouraged because you've already failed your New Year's Resolution? Have I got the prescription for those January blues! Come to Village Church Sabbath mornings for Apocalyptic Pin Drops, a sermon series on the three angels of Revelation 14. The new year is the right time to pause and consider our place in the flow of history and our calling to serve God in this hour of earth's history. There are so many reasons to be glad about what is happening in this old world. We're almost home. Apocalyptic Pin Drops, January 2026.

Steve Reasor





by Elizabeth Travis

We all have our favorite Christmas traditions that we look forward to each year. As soon as the weather gets cold and holiday decorations start to appear, we're already giddy with expectation, eager to take part in that one special treat that makes Christmas so special.

For Village Church, one of the beloved holiday traditions is getting to host glorious Christmas concerts in the sanctuary, opening our doors for one and all to receive the blessing of music and hear the good news of Christ's birth.



The first Christmas concert, *Sing We Noel*, was presented by the Walla Walla Choral Society and its talented artistic director Robb Harrison on Sunday, November 30 at 3 p.m. The repertoire included many classic and well-loved carols, highlighting the versatility and beauty of the human voice. Along with the skilled singers of the Choral Society, the concert also featured the children's choir of Liberty Christian Church and a number of accompanists, playing instruments that ranged from the cello and guitar to the organ and flute, and even a five-piece brass band. The concert was a great success, received by a full house.



The following week, on December 6, Village Church got to host another full house as Liubov Brunton, Yanina Khomenko, and the Violin Praise orchestra presented their Christmas Cantata, joined by the handbells,



chimes, children's ensemble, and choir. Two of the songs were performed during the morning's church service, but the real concert began at 4 p.m.

The cantata was titled *The Song Heard Round the World*. As the name suggests, this concert featured tunes and Christmas carols from all around the world, representing how Jesus came to bring salvation to all and how the good news of His birth has spread far and wide, ready for any who are willing to open their hearts and hear it. The opening medley featured traditional songs from a wide range of cultures, including Czech, Hebrew, the West Indies, and more.



The songs featured throughout the cantata drew inspiration from countries and cultures all around the world, including a vast array of genres and instruments. Brass and stringed instruments filled the platform, jostling for space with the accordion, guitar, and steel drums, but thanks to the skill and dedication of the Violin Praise orchestra, the cantata was a rousing success.

**Beth Travis**

It has been a tremendous joy for Village Church to share the gift of music with everyone this year, and we are looking forward with anticipation to all the blessings we will enjoy in 2026. A Happy New Year to all and God Bless.





## Progressive Christmas Party

by Michael Jeffery

On Sabbath, December 13, approximately 120 Pathfinders and Staff from the Blue Mountain District clubs descended upon the Walla Walla Eastgate SDA Church. The clubs that participated were from the Pendleton Church, Walla Walla University Church, Walla Walla Eastgate Church, Walla Walla City Church, College Place Spanish Church and the College Place Village Church.

The idea of a progressive party was born from the idea that we wanted to provide an opportunity for all the Pathfinder clubs, within the district, to celebrate the season together. All too often we stay in our own churches or clubs because it is simpler and we all have so many other things calling for our attention. So, the club directors decided we were going to take action to provide a joint event. The plan was to have each club who wished to host a stop on the progressive party to do so, and we would arrange to have all the kids transported from one location to another. Not only would we have multiple activities provided for the Pathfinders, but the Pathfinders would get to see where the other clubs meet.



Our first stop was at the Walla Walla Eastgate Church and was hosted by the Many Waters Club. We began in the sanctuary where the Many Waters Club conducted worship with song service led by one staff and several Pathfinders. Next, one of their

staff shared a worship thought. After worship and instructions from club directors, the Pathfinders and staff boarded three buses. The buses were provided by the Sunrise club, Torchbearer Club, and Waiilatpu.



Since the Pendleton Church was too far away for us to visit, the Pendleton Pathfinders hosted travel activities on all three buses. They had fun games and songs planned out for each leg of our trip.

At our second stop, hosted by the Sunrise Club at Walla Walla City Church, we filed into the fellowship hall and could smell the cookies baking. It was amazing. The Sunrise Club had



all the kids take seats at a table where they had markers and crayons ready for use. They provided the kids with paper to make a Christmas card for a loved one. It could be a neighbor, family member, sick church member, or anyone else they chose to give a



card to. The kids went right to work coloring and writing messages. While they were doing this, tables were dismissed one at a time to

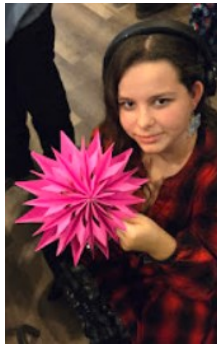


get a cookie and a hot chocolate. Then it was time to load the buses again to

head to the next stop, the College Place Spanish Church.



Here the Nova Pathfinder staff had paper, glue, and scissors organized on tables marked with skill level of beginner, intermediate, or advanced. The craft they were going to make was a beautiful 3D-like snowflake. The kids filed into their fellowship hall and went straight to work. The College Place Spanish Church had also prepared some snacks and hot drinks for the kids to enjoy once they finished their craft.



Our fourth stop took us to the Walla Walla University Church lawn where the Torchbearer Club led out. Since it was now well past sunset, they planned for our group of 120 to play a few rounds of capture-the-flag in the dark. Each Pathfinder

donned an illuminated wrist band that signified which team they were on. White rope lights designated the different team play areas and other light-up devices served as the flags. I had never seen anything like it, but the kids really seemed to enjoy themselves.

A short walk from the WWU Church lawn and we arrived at our final stop, the College Place Village Church Youth Center where Waiilatpu Club took on the hosting



role. We handed out roller skates and allowed the Pathfinders and staff to skate for about an hour. Meanwhile, the Blue Mountain District Coordinators, Felix and Khai Ling Tan, provided ice cream for the entire group. So, in the Pathfinder room we had Pathfinders spread around eating ice cream while the gym was full of skaters.

Our event started at 3 on Sabbath afternoon, and didn't end until 8 that



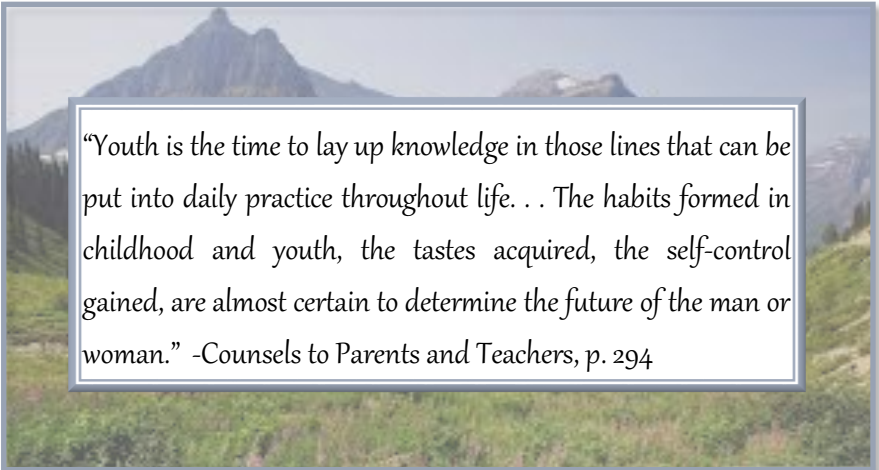
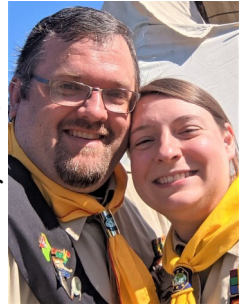


evening. The Pathfinders and staff all had a blast at each stop and along the way.

Throughout the Christmas season, we celebrate God's gift to us where He

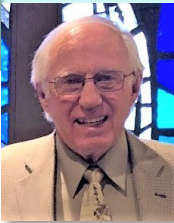
sent His Son to be born in a stable and to eventually die on a cross. We need to remember all year long that the youth in our churches are yet another gift from Him. We don't know what God has in store for each of them, but I know each story will be amazing! Thank you for supporting Pathfinder ministry.

**Michael & Tonia**



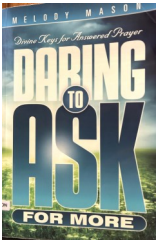
*“Youth is the time to lay up knowledge in those lines that can be put into daily practice throughout life. . . The habits formed in childhood and youth, the tastes acquired, the self-control gained, are almost certain to determine the future of the man or woman.” -Counsels to Parents and Teachers, p. 294*

**From the Library—by Marcel Grondahl**



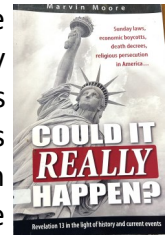
Dr. Ross Campbell wrote this book for parents: “How to Really Love Your Teenager.” He asks some basic questions about the relationships in a family with teenagers. If you have difficulty with honestly answering these questions, you should read this book: Do you really give your teenager unconditional love? Do you have difficulty showing affection to your teenager? Do you

know the causes and cures for teenage depression? Do you know how to train your teenager in proper expression of anger? These and other questions are dealt with in this book. So if you are comfortable with your responses to these questions, don't read this book.



How is your prayer life going? If you are satisfied with it then skip this book, "Daring To Ask For More" by Melody Mason, because reading it will encourage you with fresh insights to answered prayer and to a closer walk with God. It will expand your faith and help you recognize the dangers of counterfeit forms of prayer so you can avoid being swept away by deception in the last days. Your prayer life can be inspiring, daring and audacious! Give it a try!

Marvin Moore has written many books on end time events and this is one of his best: "Could It Really Happen?" As the editor of 'Signs of the Times' he is able to relate events that are happening around us on a regular basis to those prophesied by our church that are now being fulfilled. If you wonder about the following you will want to read this book: Sunday laws, economic boycotts, death decrees, religious persecution in America. Be informed.



On a lighter note our last book is, "Tawny the Magnificent Jaguar." It is the eighth book in the series of Joe L. Wheeler's 'The Good Lord Made Them All' compilations, so I give you an excerpt to whet your appetite. 'Tawny showed no alarm. Why should he? He was not afraid. The great three-



hundred-pound cat had never in his life met anything that he could not conquer, but now Tawny's quivering nostrils caught a faint trace of something else-the dreaded man scent! He did not need to see the group of native hunters half hidden in the underbrush to know that all was lost!' What happened? Read the story and find out.

Editor's note: The following two stories illustrate how closely heaven is in touch with earth. The second story is one of listening, while the first outlines a less-talked-about experience—one when the gentle Voice went unheeded and the distressing results.

The contrast is sobering and gives us pause to consider, as we enter 2026—when God speaks, are we open to hearing and following His prompting? Do we recognize His voice?

September of 1964 found me at Fort Benning, Georgia. My two years of active duty were over, and I was headed home to Oregon.

Before I was discharged, I had often thought of visiting my grandparents. I loved and missed them, and it had been four years since I had last visited their happy home. It was only 580 miles from Columbus, Georgia, to their home in Flat Rock, Illinois.



Larry Sharon

When the time came to leave Fort Benning, I decided to visit my brother in Texas instead. I figured that after my visit with my brother I would head for Eugene, Oregon, get my car, get squared around, and *then* I would go and see Grandma and Grandpa.

When I returned to Eugene, time passed quickly. I got a job with the Southern Pacific Railroad and moved into an apartment. This all happened in March of 1965.



In May, Mom got a phone call from Illinois—Grandma had died of a heart attack.

Ever since my discharge, I had been thinking of going to see my grandparents. The thought had never left my mind. I was constantly reminded that I should do that very thing. I knew it was the right thing to do. I had the time to do it and I had the money, but there were other plans for my time and other



plans for my money and now it was too late; all I had were regrets.

Now that I am much older, I believe it was the Holy Spirit that was urging me to make the trip to Illinois. For whatever reason, I believe my life would have been richer had I made the trip. The thought that I didn't listen to that Still Small Voice saddens me yet today.



Sydney Smith, a clergyman in the 1700's, is credited with these words: "Regret for the things we did can be tempered by time. It is regret for things we did not do that is inconsolable."

What I needed in those earlier days was guidance. God was willing to give me guidance; I wasn't willing to accept it. Isaiah 30:21 reads, "Your ears shall hear a word behind you saying, 'This is the way walk in it.'" Psalm 32:8 reads, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go. I will guide with you with My eye" (NKJV).



What I needed then and what I still need today is guidance. My prayer is, Lord, grant me the wisdom to discern Your voice. When You speak to me give me strength to follow; Lord, continue to give me direction so that I have no regrets for what I did or didn't do.

"All who are under the training of God need the quiet hour for communion with their own hearts, with nature, and with God. In them is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, or its practices; and they need to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God. We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God."

—The Ministry of Healing, p. 58



# Spoken to by an Angel

by Dave Cowles

This experience happened to me during my college years at Walla Walla University (then Walla Walla College). I was driving back to the college in early January at the end of Christmas break from my home out on the Washington coast.

It was during the era of the OPEC oil embargo and the maximum legal driving speed was 55 mph. I had been driving my old rear-engine Volkswagen at that speed since shortly after daylight, but with the short days and



crossing the icy pass I had only gotten to the divided highway near Toppenish as dusk arrived. The day was extremely gloomy, with thick, dark, glowering clouds gathered at best only 200 feet above the ground. Below the clouds, swirling bands of heavy mist drifted almost aimlessly in all directions and filled the air with vapor which splatted heavily against the windshield. The passage of the car along the rain-soaked road stirred up the mists even more. They swirled and sprayed against the overworked windshield wipers, limiting my view of the road ahead illuminated by the headlights.

Virtually everyone who didn't absolutely need to be out was snug at home, and for the past hour I had encountered very few cars along the almost-deserted highway. As the short winter day faded into deeper and deeper dusk, the clouds seemed to drop even lower and the mist to swirl higher. The weary, weak lights of my little Volkswagen struggled to light up the road against the encroaching blackness.

As I drove steadily along the highway in the slow lane heading for Walla Walla, suddenly a distinct, seemingly familiar voice sounded through my mind, "Move over into the fast lane!"

"What? that is weird!" I thought. I was already driving slightly below the speed limit because of the reduced visibility, and my driver's training reminded me that one should drive in the



slow lane whenever possible, leaving the fast lane for passing vehicles. There was no reason I needed to pass anything on the virtually deserted road. I shrugged the thought off and continued traveling along into the darkness. A few moments later, the voice thundered through my head again as a shout so insistent I could not ignore it this time, “Move over into the fast lane, NOW!!!”



Somehow, I knew that I had heard that voice before, and that it was to be trusted and obeyed. Reflexively, I swerved sharply into the fast lane, hardly even taking time to check my rear-view mirror.

Scarcely an instant later my heart leaped into my throat as an apparition galloped past me in the darkness and swirling mists. There, running straight up the center of the slow lane in the wrong direction was a dark horse, its sides stained even blacker by the soaking rain.

Driving past it in the fast lane I could hardly see it at all except for the short white blaze between its eyes. It was there for a moment, its wild eyes bulging, sweat flying, and the blaze briefly lighting up in the beam of my headlights, then in a flash it was gone, still running to some unknown destination.

Meanwhile, my knees shook and I snapped to attention as I realized what would have befallen the horse, me, and my little Volkswagen if I hadn't obeyed the voice instantly and avoided the unseen peril. I poured out my heart in deep thanksgiving to God as I continued on my way back to the college

I recognize that God doesn't intervene like that every time, so I am left with the conviction that God must have had a special reason for such a startling rescue, and with a firm commitment to be faithful to accomplish His purposes. I certainly have clear and irrefutable evidence that He cares for me!

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**Dave Cowles**



## The Village Pantry—hosted by Pattie Reasor

This delicious dish features lentils, and there are many great reasons to include lentils regularly in your meals.

As one of the best plant-based protein sources, lentils are excellent for vegetarians, vegans, and anyone looking to reduce meat consumption. They contain both soluble and insoluble fiber which helps improve digestion, lower LDL cholesterol, and stabilize blood sugar levels.



**Pattie & Steve Reasor**

Lentils are naturally low in fat and high in potassium, folate, and magnesium—nutrients known to support healthy blood pressure and heart function. Lentils provide many benefits in addition to those mentioned, including iron, zinc, and B vitamins which support mental health and mood stabilization.

This hearty main dish, accompanied by a fresh salad, makes an easy-to-prepare, tasty and nourishing meal.



### Easy Mediterranean Lentils and Rice

#### Ingredients:

- 2 cans (15 oz. each) of lentils drained and rinsed
- 1 ½ cups of cooked basmati rice
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 onions, thinly sliced
- 1 Tbsp. honey
- 2 cloves of garlic, grated
- 1 tsp. paprika



1 tsp. coriander  
½ tsp. cumin  
½ tsp. cinnamon  
½ tsp. turmeric powder  
¼ tsp. red pepper flakes  
¾ tsp. salt or to taste  
2 Tbsp. flat leaf parsley  
1 large lemon, juiced



**Instructions:**

Cook the rice according to the package directions. In a frying pan add the onions and olive oil and sauté over medium heat. Add the honey and garlic and caramelize the onions. You may add a little water to keep them from burning if you need to.

Add the spices and lentils and mix thoroughly. Then add the rice and taste to see if you need to add any more salt. Squeeze the fresh lemon juice over the hot dish and serve with warmed flat bread. Left overs will store well in the fridge for several days.



### The Year of the Ear

You know how the Chinese name the years—the year of this or that. Well, why don't we name 2026 The Year of the Ear! Yes, let's feature ears.



Ears that listen! And let's care about what our children say. When we listen, we learn a lot more than when we talk. We can learn what our children are concerned about, what they think about school and their friends, classmates, teachers, future, what they want and wish, what they think about God, what makes them sad, afraid, happy, and angry. We need to know their thoughts, attitudes, fears, and hopes, and who they admire and why. We can ask where they would like to live for a year or where they'd like to go on vacation if they could go anywhere in the world. We can have fun while gaining some information.

Conversations end if we criticize their opinions, so don't do that! Instead just say, "Oh! Interesting!" You might give some of your own thoughts after a while, like: "I think it would be interesting to live by a beach in a warm climate." Or "I wish I could fly an airplane." You can ask about their favorite animal, Bible character, color, song, flower, game, book, etc. To keep the kids talking, we need to keep our talk to a minimum during the conversations. Sometimes youth are surprised to realize we are interested in hearing their thoughts, and that we aren't rushing to tell them what we think they should do or to challenge their opinions. After the pattern is set, difficult topics will be easier to discuss.



Year of the ear! Let's listen more. The younger the child is when we start, the easier it will be. It's a loving and wise thing to do. Right?



Bev Donahey has degrees in psychology and Applied Behavioral Science and shares tips she picks up from her experiences, friends and research.

Dear Village Voice readers,

As I read over the valued words of Village Voice contributors this month, I notice a theme. Do you see it too? Listening more actively, especially to the voice of God.

In describing a shepherd, John 10:4, 5 states, “And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers” (NKJV).

God speaks most clearly through His Word. Nature, too, has a voice and gentle rhythms that speak of our Creator and His power and care.

Our part is to turn down or silence the voices that clamor for our attention, arousing fear, creating anxiety, and fomenting strife. “For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love and of a sound mind” I Timothy 1:7 (NKJV).

**Karen Ekkens**



In 2026, let's listen more intentionally and learn to recognize His precious voice.

God bless you!

*Karen Ekkens, editor*

## Village Voice

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