

HERALD

SERVING SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS IN THE LAKE UNION SINCE 1908

SEPTEMBER 2026



MISSION AT HOME

NEW DISCIPLESHIP CENTER
OPENS AT ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

Christ

"... For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."

We're often trying to better our lives and there's nothing wrong with that. Still, it's always good to pause and take stock of our intentions. *Why* are we trying to improve?

One thing is clear: the way forward is not found in insisting on doing things our own way or loving ourselves to the point where we're centered on selfish ambitions. Life isn't about us. It's about pleasing the God who gave us life and patterning our life after His.

I was reminded of this truth while reading the stories in this issue focused on Andrews University and hope it will give you pause in examining how you have committed your own life to Christ.

You'll read about students such as Olivia Horvath and Elena Hardinge who are combining hobbies such as crocheting with small group Bible studies (p. 18). You'll also meet theology undergrads who surrender their summers and much of their time outside the classroom, collectively dedicating more than 1,000 hours each semester to putting their faith into action (p. 10).

Johnny Schnepf (p. 14) and Ciin Kim (p. 43) are devoting their lives to encouraging others to trust God. In the same vein, there's Harvey Burnett who is faithfully leading out as Buchanan (Michigan) chief of police while serving as professor and department chair in the School of Social & Behavioral Science at Andrews University (p. 22).

These stories are life-giving — and life-saving.

Debbie



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FEATURES

14

A Renewed Campus Movement

by Kaara Baptiste

18

Living by Faith

by Nicholas Gunn

PHOTO CREDIT: Dave Sherwin

ABOUT THE COVER: Alanna Rodriguez steps into the new home and role as director of the Andrews University Discipleship Center.

CONTENTS

PERSPECTIVES

Editorial	4
Sharing Our Hope	10
Telling God's Stories	14
HIStory	24
Conversations with God	25

EVANGELISM

One Voice	42
On The Edge	43

LIFESTYLE

Family Focus	22
Alive and Well	23

CURRENT MATTERS

AdventHealth	26
Andrews University	27
News	28
Mileposts	38
Classifieds	38
Calendar of Events	41

TELLING THE STORIES OF WHAT GOD IS DOING IN THE LIVES OF HIS PEOPLE

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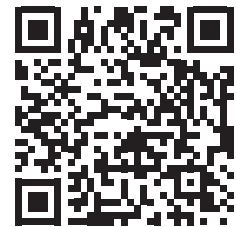
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Made to Stand

In the 1950s, a psychologist named Solomon Asch invited college students in for what they believed was a simple vision test: match a line on one card to the correct line, of three, on another. The answer was obvious. So obvious that, tested alone, people chose correctly more than 99 percent of the time.

But Asch had planted accomplices in the room. One by one, they confidently gave the same wrong answer. And then the real participants' turn arrived.

The results were sobering. Nearly three-quarters conformed to the group's wrong answer at least once, many repeatedly. Asked why, some said the group's agreement made them doubt their own eyes. Others admitted they knew the answer was wrong — but didn't want to stand out.

I have been thinking about that experiment. Not because I worry about our ability to judge the length of lines, but because what it reveals is everywhere: in professional settings, in social-media feeds, in the quiet compromises that accumulate across a life. The pressure to conform is relentless. It works through our desire to belong, to avoid the awkwardness of being the one who sees things differently.

And it asks each of us what it asked those students: Will you say what you know to be true, even when everyone around you says otherwise? Will you stand out, not to be contrary, but for the sake of what is right?

An older story

Long before Asch set up his lab, the same experiment played out on an ancient stage. The book of Daniel opens with a young man carried far from home and placed in a setting engineered to reshape his very identity. Babylon was, among other things, a school. It offered the finest education of its day. It provided Daniel with a new language, a

new name, sumptuous food, and a clear path to power. And intended to use all of it to dissolve his very self.

I have spent my life around a different kind of school, and, before that, I was shaped by one. I am a graduate of Andrews University, and the contrast with Babylon has never left me. Where Babylon's formation was designed to erase identity, the calling of a place like Andrews is to anchor it — to root a young person so deeply in Christ that he or she can walk into any circumstance and remain unmistakably His.

What impresses me about Daniel is the quietness of his resolve. He “purposed in his heart” that he would not defile himself, then respectfully asked for an alternative (Daniel 1:8). It was a decision made not in the spotlight of crisis but in the ordinary rhythm of daily life.

We imagine that conviction is forged in dramatic moments — the public stand, the decisive confrontation. Daniel's story suggests otherwise. The most important decisions of our lives are rarely the ones that make headlines. They are the small, daily, often invisible ones: honesty when dishonesty would be easier; faithfulness when the crowd has moved on.

The fourth man in the fire

There is a remarkable scene a few chapters later. Three of Daniel's companions — Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego — are ordered to bow before an enormous golden image. They choose to stand.

Three vertical lives in a horizontal world.



▲ JOHN WESLEY TAYLOR V



The consequence is not hypothetical. The furnace heated seven times hotter. They can see the flames. And their answer is one of the most courageous statements in all of Scripture: “Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us ... But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods” (Daniel 3:17–18, NKJV).

But if not. Three words that change everything. This is not the bravado of people certain of rescue. It is the resolve of those who have decided that faithfulness is not contingent on outcomes.

Then the king looks into the furnace and sees something astonishing. The young men are not consumed. And they are not alone. There is a fourth presence, one whose appearance, the king says, is like the Son of God (Daniel 3:25).

What we are trying to build

At Andrews University, we speak often of preparing World Changers. It is a bold aspiration, and I believe in it. But world-changing rarely looks the way we expect. Sometimes it looks like a student choosing honesty when no one would ever know. Sometimes it looks like a nurse advocating for a patient when every pressure rewards efficiency over compassion. Sometimes it is simply someone who won’t cut an ethical corner while others get ahead by doing so.

I have the privilege of watching this formation up close — in classrooms and residence halls, in mentoring between faculty and students, in the small choices that reveal a purpose already settled in the heart. And I want to say something plainly to the parents, grandparents and congregations

of the Lake Union: The young people you have raised and prayed over; we count it a sacred honor to help form. What you began at home and in the pew, we are committed to carry forward.

Across 150 years, Andrews has sent graduates into every corner of the world. What defines them is not primarily their credentials, though many have distinguished themselves. It is their character, the “purpose in the heart” they carried from this campus into their own Babylon.

The power of one

Return, for a moment, to Asch’s lab. The researchers discovered that when even one other person in the room gave the correct answer, conformity collapsed. A single dissenting voice gave everyone else the courage to trust their own eyes.

Think about that. One person, willing to say what is true, changed the equation for everyone.

That is what we are called to send out. Not crowds who go along, but graduates with clear voices, standing with grace, humility and unshakable commitment to what is good and right and true.

So, purpose in your own heart. Choose conviction over convenience, integrity over approval, truth over comfort. Be the one voice in the room. And know that when you stand, you never stand alone. There is a Fourth Man in every fire.

In a world desperate to go viral, be the person heaven recognizes. ■

John Wesley Taylor V is the seventh president of Andrews University. He took office on July 1, 2023.

▲ Across 150 years, Andrews University has sent graduates into every corner of the world. What defines them is not primarily their credentials, though many have distinguished themselves. It is their character.



Out for Service

Each semester, theology and religion majors at Andrews University step out of the classroom and into the community, completing 25 hours of ministry involvement. Whether in local churches or volunteering with campus initiatives, these students collectively dedicate over 1,000 hours each semester to putting their faith into action.

For many, these experiences aren't just a graduation requirement; they're a transformative bridge between academic study and real-world impact, shaping their calling and those they serve.

Ministry Close to Home

Students choose where and how they'll serve, including various local churches and ministries; they can also get involved on campus, said Rodney

Palmer, chair of the Department of Religion & Biblical Languages.

Seth McKelvey, a theology major, is very involved with campus ministry opportunities. He is an officer of the Andrews Ministerial Association and works with Campus Ministries' Anchor Groups. McKelvey, a former student missionary, also partnered with another student to start Project Launch, to promote the student missions program and connect student

“MINISTRY IS LIKE A LIFESTYLE. YOU LIVE BY IT; YOU LIVE BY WHAT YOU PREACH.”

missionaries with local churches for support. “The department does a really good job making sure we have opportunities,” he said.

In one poignant moment, McKelvey was speaking with a student who was on the fence about leading a small group. “You have a lot of people that’re, like, I’m super busy. I don’t know if I can be a part of Anchor Groups,” he recalled. That student eventually took the step to start a group. “It’s super exciting,” Seth said, “really seeing someone work through this idea that there is time in their life for ministry.”

The idea that ministry can be part of your life, even if you’re not a theology major, is important for Seth. “We’re going to go and we get paid to work in ministry. But other people also have outside jobs. How do we equip them and walk them through a process to where ministry becomes a part of what they do too? I think that God is calling all of his people to be involved in ministry.”

Theology major Pau Khual also serves on campus. Influenced by a high school teacher’s passion for God, Pau wants to reach other young people. At Andrews, he has served as freshman class pastor and is the incoming president for the Myanmar Student Association, a group that’s active in bringing programming and encouragement to area churches. This year he was also the religious vice president for the Student Association; he helped start a prayer group and reintroduce AY programming on campus to provide students with something fun and spiritual to do on Sabbath afternoons. Post-program feedback was positive: “A lot of [students] were like, wow, it feels like I’m at home again.”

Barnabas Internship

Students also serve in churches across the North American Division. One of these options is the Barnabas internship. Based on the example of Barnabas in the book of Acts, students serve 8–10 weeks during the summer in churches in full-time

ministry while working with pastoral mentors. In addition to mentorship, students earn scholarships toward their tuition. The department also partners with the seminary’s Center for Community Change to provide mentoring and expenses for students when they travel to their assigned churches in the Lake Union and beyond.

Last summer, Pau served at the Spencer church in Indiana, one of four churches in his mentor pastor’s district; two other students shared the other churches. His responsibilities included visitation, distributing literature at community events, following up on Bible study requests, assisting with Vacation Bible School and occasional preaching. One significant thing he learned was: “Ministry is like a lifestyle. You live by it; you live by what you preach,” he said. With schedules that can change daily, he added, “I learned that ministers always have to be ready for anything.”

What stood out to him as a pastoral intern was being one of the youngest, or the only youth, in the congregation. He grew up in churches with more young people, so he was shocked to see that it was not the norm.

“The only time you’d see young people in the church is during VBS,” he said. “So I asked one of the kids, ‘Hey, are you coming to church next week? I’ll be there.’” When the child responded that his grandparents don’t usually take him to church, Pau realized the significance of that week of

▼ Pau Khual served his Barnabas internship at the Spencer Church in Indiana.

Courtesy of the Department of Religion & Biblical Languages





▲ Georgia Schulze, in orange dress, and a group of young people lead song service during her Barnabas internship at the Cadillac church in Michigan.

programming and relationship-building. “To spend one week with those kids felt meaningful, not only to them, but also for me. It helps them step away from whatever they’re doing and see that church isn’t always what you think of. It’s not boring ... And relationships are a big part of that.”

Why It Matters

The ministry hours and Barnabas internship do more than provide boxes for theology and religion majors to check. The requirement promotes intentionality and opportunities to apply classroom learning.

“Because we have a requirement every semester, it helps us to be consistent,” says Pau. “If we’re just required to do [hours] our senior year, and we’re just learning from textbooks, it’s not really practical. I think the consistency helps us to keep developing.”

He added that working on campus taught him quite a few things about communication and planning. “I also learned that when it gets overwhelming, just to trust in God.”

Ministry is different from the classroom, Seth observed. “There’s a lot of soft skills that you have to [learn] in order to do ministry effectively,” he said. The department recognizes that “there’s things that you have to learn outside of the classroom,” he added. “That’s why it’s a valuable opportunity.”

This is the impetus behind these offerings, Palmer says. “The 25-hour ministry involvement, the Barnabas internship — the whole idea here is to provide students with practical experiences so they can take the theory they get in the classroom and make sense of it through real-world ministry.”

“The skills students develop align with what the NAD Ministerial Association identifies as the core qualities of a pastor,” says Palmer, which include

character, evangelism, leadership, worship, management, scholarship and relationship.

Specifically, Palmer said he has observed that Barnabas interns have a different maturity level. “When they come back, you can see the drastic change in their understanding of church and their approach to their ministry preparation.” Those students tend to get hired first for employment, he added, saying feedback from participating pastors has been positive, often highlighting students’ work ethic, humility, biblical knowledge and attitude. “We had one conference who just came and said, we need two students because the one that they had before was just excellent.”

Even when there’s room for growth, the feedback provides data for Palmer to create a coaching plan for the student to develop in a particular area.

Scholarship Support

Seth and Pau are both recipients of the Lake Union Scholarship for Theology and Education, which is offered to Andrews’ students accepted into the theology or teacher education programs at the University.

Seth was doing a student missionary year at GLAA when he heard about the scholarship. Being accepted led to his transfer to Andrews, and he’s thrown himself into service on campus. “I really do think it was divine leading,” he said. “My experience at Andrews has been very full.”

Pau says receiving the scholarship relieved some of the financial burden so he could focus on his education. “I was really grateful that the church, the union, they are investing in young people.”

By the time students in the department graduate, they’ve spent hundreds of hours putting their faith into action. But what they’ve gained goes beyond time logged; they’ve impacted other people, learned about themselves, and confirmed their commitment to serve. Seth says, “It’s affirmed my calling because I felt God leading,” in his steps to and at Andrews.

Pau agreed. “When I get involved with these things, I realize that I actually really enjoy it. It’s not like a job; it’s like a passion thing... To see other people give their life to Christ kind of motivates me to just keep doing what I’m doing.”

Palmer envisions a future where students serve a full semester as interns in local churches, taking practical courses while in the field. “That’s my dream,” he said.

In the meantime, he and the department continue to encourage students to take what they learn into the field, whether on campus or in the community.

“We are here to serve our constituency,” he said. “If there’s a church who needs an intern for the summer, someone to help with an evangelistic series, community outreach, whatever it is ... we are here and our students are willing to serve.” ■

Kaara Baptiste is an assistant professor of communication at Andrews University.

BY THE TIME STUDENTS
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Anchored in Faith

Johnny Schnepf's faith journey included a detour from aviation to theology. A senior religion major at Andrews University, he now helps lead an Anchor Group on campus; but it all started with a simple friendship. "I met this guy who was a theology student," he recalled. "He was the first friend I had who really talked to me about God." That friend, Adrian Jones, didn't just share his faith; he walked Johnny through the Bible until he found himself eager to dig deeper.



At first Johnny was hesitant to speak up in the Bible study. But he kept showing up, listening and learning, until he eventually asked Rodney Palmer, the chair of the religion department, for materials to better understand the Bible and start a study group with his friend.

“I became so set on fire with studying the Bible from that point right there,” he said. Now, Johnny is part of the movement expanding small groups across campus, turning curiosity into community.

Anchor Groups is a small-group ministry initiative through Campus Ministries, designed to facilitate leadership and fellowship through student-led gatherings. Through these groups, students build community through sharing experiences and intentionality about growing their faith. The groups meet weekly at various locations on campus. Of the 38 registered groups during the 2025–26 school year, more than 30 were spiritual groups, while the rest were either activity- or service-based, according to data compiled by the office.

Anchor Groups are the offspring of Grow Groups, a small-group initiative through Pioneer Memorial Church. The program moved under the auspices of Campus Ministries a few years ago, and Associate

Chaplain Jacob Gibbs changed the name to Anchor Groups in 2025.

“There’s a theme in the book of Hebrews; it talks about how we need to be anchored,” he said. People “don’t leave Christianity or Adventism or Jesus in a moment. It’s a continual process of drifting away, but you can’t drift away if the anchor is solid in the bedrock. So, I like the idea of being anchored in Jesus.”

Johnny started leading out a Bible study on his own in the spring semester of 2022 and eventually collaborated with other students. As more small groups developed on campus, Johnny talked with Chaplain Gibbs about partnering with Campus Ministries, which came to fruition in 2025. “He was like, why don’t we just come together and start working together?” Johnny said. They created a campaign to get people who would be interested in leading small groups. At the beginning of fall semester 2025, a retreat was held on campus to help prepare these leaders for their roles.

“The first semester was a bit shaky, as we were kind of figuring things out, learning how to structure the ministry,” Johnny said.

This year, Johnny led the Anchor Group “Revelation” on Mondays. As the name suggests, the focus was on the book of Revelation, one which people are somewhat hesitant to approach due to all the end-time prophecy it contains. He took the route of focusing on how to see Jesus in prophecy. “It’s called the Revelation of Jesus and that was the plain focus this past year. As Adventists, that is kind of our book,” he said. Additionally, he chose this book for personal Bible study and to help others understand it through a shared learning environment. His group typically has 15 to 20 people attending, consisting of both those who grew up in the church and those who have not.

Group leaders aim to be intentional with how they engage with their members. Katherine Coronel is a sophomore theology major who co-leads the anchor group “Wrestling Club” with senior Derek Wonenberg. The group “wrestles” with passages from the Old and New Testaments that get overlooked or easily misunderstood. For Katherine, creating a space where members feel comfortable falls onto the leaders. “Leaders must measure how vulnerable they themselves want to be and know



▲ Anchor Group leaders, including Johnny Schnepf, left, third from front, enjoy time together at the beach and dinner.

Courtesy of Johnny Schnepf

where to draw the line before oversharing and overburdening attendees,” she said. “People move at their own pace and get into that comfortable aspect in their own time. It’s not something you can pressure them into.”

Although programs such as Thursday chapels, deans’ worship, and vespers services are established to be able to foster spiritual growth at Andrews University, they rarely offer the chance to create deep connection. Some students are more focused on meeting credit requirements than engaging with classmates to build community and enhance their spiritual growth. Moraya Truman, a senior digital communications major, is a frequent attendee of the “Wrestling Club.” She attends chapel for credit but does not believe it’s spiritually fulfilling due to being mandatory and speaking to a broad audience, not particular needs. “There’s been a couple times over the semester where I have thought about some spiritual thing and I’m like, I need to talk about this with somebody, like, this is fascinating to me,” she said. The freedom of choice within Anchor Groups makes it much more meaningful to come together as a community.

What makes Anchor Groups stand out on a campus replete with spiritual offerings is making room for connection, Gibbs says. “Jesus taught in lines, but he transformed in circles,” he says. “I think the environment is riper for transformation in a small group, a circle than in a grid of lines,” he added, referring to sitting in pews or classroom setups.

Through community, sharing experiences and creating meaningful conversations about the Bible or even just life, Anchor Groups become a space where faith can be strengthened, and not just another obligatory program students must attend.

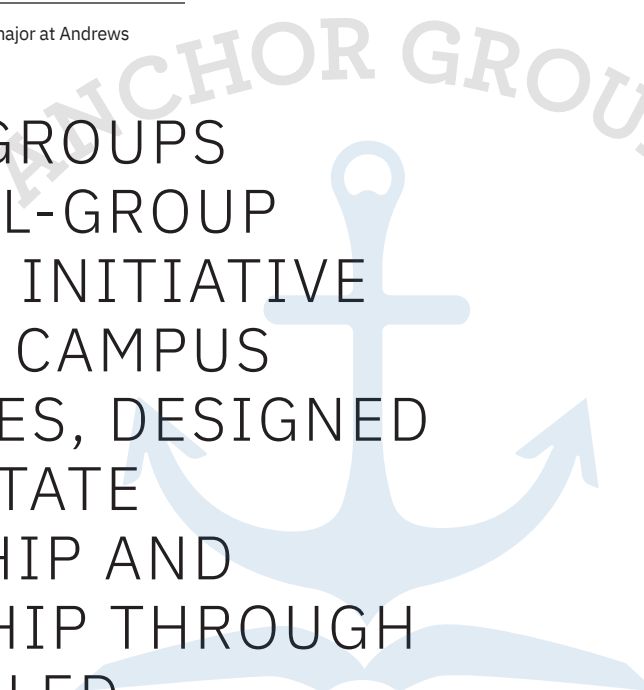
Participation isn’t restricted to Bible studies. Simone Jones, a graduate student studying speech-language pathology, hosts the “Crafty Things” group. Each Tuesday evening, they come together to do various crafts and discuss the highs and lows of the week. Crafting projects include making greeting cards, bookmarks, customized coasters and bracelets. What most inspired Simone to lead an Anchor Group is the community that comes with it. “Actually talking about how I felt and what happened throughout the week, and just making it a place to cultivate

conversation and you can be honest about how you feel,” she said.

Being a student leader on campus comes with its own challenges, especially when balancing leadership roles and deadlines that come with homework assignments. However, for Anchor Group leaders, the impact of making intentional connections can outweigh other academic responsibilities. “You can’t take your grades to heaven, but you can take your friends to heaven,” said Johnny. Chaplain Gibbs has observed that Anchor Groups give students a chance “to be part of something bigger than just a degree.” He recalls hearing from a colleague whose friend has a son in an Anchor Group. “He said, ‘What you’re doing is making his son very excited to be at Andrews.’” Gibbs added, “It’s giving the students a purpose to change people’s lives.”

As Anchor Groups continue, with coaching support from Campus Ministries and the Discipleship Center, Gibbs hopes the groups continue to fortify students in fellowship and faith on campus and outside of Andrews. “If young people find community, in a place where their spirituality is being founded, they’ll stay for a lot longer, hopefully forever.” ■

Ysa Dennis is a digital communications major at Andrews University.



ANCHOR GROUPS
IS A SMALL-GROUP
MINISTRY INITIATIVE
THROUGH CAMPUS
MINISTRIES, DESIGNED
TO FACILITATE
LEADERSHIP AND
FELLOWSHIP THROUGH
STUDENT-LED
GATHERINGS.



A RENEWED CAMPUS MOVEMENT

THE ANDREWS UNIVERSITY DISCIPLESHIP
CENTER IS RAISING STUDENT LEADERS

BY WINTER BREAK OF HIS FRESHMAN YEAR, Alex Thang was already thinking about leaving Andrews University. Then he remembered his commitment to lead a small Bible study spring semester.

Earlier that year, Alex and a friend went from small group attendees to leaders, starting a Bible discussion through the book of Romans. The group grew quickly, drawing students from across campus and even neighboring University of Notre Dame. Most weeks, about a dozen students gathered to share a meal, study Scripture and encourage one another. Some nights, attendance reached 22.

By April, Alex's plans had changed.

"At the beginning of the semester, I had decided that I was going to leave Andrews," he told fellow students at an end-of-year

celebration. "But then we started this group and now I don't want to leave. Because this has meant so much to me, seeing how God has worked."

This all began when Alanna Rodriguez, assistant to the director of the Andrews University Discipleship Center, invited Alex to join the discipleship group she was hosting on campus. That invitation became the first step in a journey that changed his plans and prepared him to help lead others.

Stories like Alex's are why Andrews University established the Discipleship Center. In its first year, the center has

BY KAARA BAPTISTE



▲ IGNITE students and staff worship and bond at a bonfire.

become a place where students deepen their relationship with Christ, build lasting friendships and learn to disciple others.

According to Alanna, Alex's story represents "a small splash, so to speak, but I believe it's a token of what God wants to do and is going to do on this campus."

Located in the Campus Center, the Discipleship Center isn't just another department at Andrews; in just a year, it's become a hub where faith, friendship and leadership combine, bringing transformation and purpose to students.

MORE THAN PROGRAMS

The center is an initiative borne from brainstorming and partnership between President John Wesley Taylor V, the Department of Discipleship in the Seminary, the Office of Campus Ministries and the Department of Religion & Biblical Languages. The desire was to provide a space to develop the spirituality of young people on campus, specifically through discipleship, or mentoring.

"Discipleship affects every aspect of life: It impacts your academic choices, your marriage choice, your time management, the friends that you choose," Alanna said. That part of the Christian life doesn't come automatically upon baptism. "To learn how to frame our lives in context of God and His will for us and who He is — that takes practice. And therefore, you need someone to walk with you in that journey, especially as a young person."

When a donor came forward to fund a discipleship initiative, the dream became reality; there would now be a space to help students grow their relationship with Jesus, form friendships and realize their purpose.

"One of the biggest needs is for young people to be really grounded in their faith as a Seventh-day Adventist, but it being inextricably bound to their relationship with Christ," Alanna said. "Oftentimes we know doctrine, but we don't know the God of the doctrine."

Alanna, hired in May 2025, came to Andrews after working at the Michigan

"DISCIPLESHIP
AFFECTS EVERY
ASPECT OF LIFE."



▲ The crochet small group met weekly in the Discipleship Center office in the Campus Center.

Conference as the director of public campus ministry. For almost 20 years, she worked on up to 13 different campuses, working closely with Adventist students at universities and local churches. Though the setting is different, she brings the same passion she used to develop student leaders on public campuses to the Discipleship Center.

"I enjoy working with people and talking with our young people, especially," she said. "I want to discover what their view is of God, because that translates to everything else."

LEARNING TO MAKE DISCIPLES

The Discipleship Center functions as an auxiliary to any department wanting resources to delve deeper into spiritual guidance. Alanna said, "If the department wants to consult or collaborate with the Discipleship Center on how to bring discipleship in a more prominent role, that's how the Center functions." For example, leaders of Anchor Groups, officially the small group-initiative through Campus Ministries, receive training through the Center.

The Center helps host IGNITE, a three-week summer discipleship program for young people ages 16–21 to grow deeper in their relationship with God through mentorship and community. It features four components: a three-credit class on personal witnessing; daily devotion time; discipleship; and evangelistic training. The program also helps participants leverage their social media use for outreach.

"Adventist Connect trains them on how to engage in spiritual conversations on social media platforms," Alanna explained. "How do you ask questions? How do you take someone who gives a one-word answer and grow that into an opportunity for Bible studies? So, they're getting really practical training on how to actually disciple someone through maybe having just an initial spiritual interest to growing that interest deeper."

This year, the Center helped organize Standout, a spiritual retreat weekend on campus for homeschooled students or those attending public schools. They used a small group model for the weekend sessions to foster community. The Center was also co-sponsor of the D3 Conference, held in October, which brought together leaders to discuss discipleship in a global context.

"It's really neat because Andrews University is a microcosm of the world church. And I believe that it's one of the reasons why the Discipleship Center has been established here of all places," says Alanna.

SIGNS OF REVIVAL

Alanna is encouraged by the work happening on campus. Students are drawn to what the Center offers, even though the campus is a busy place with many activities and events.

"When I see the dedication of these students to share the Word, students that show up every single week, even if someone doesn't come," she says, "that tells me that God is doing something and that students are willing to make sacrifices for God. God honors that."

While you can count the amount of discipleship groups a year or attendance at events, she says there are other ways to see the impact on students who connect with the Discipleship Center, including talking about personal devotionals naturally, comfort praying aloud, attending Sabbath School at local churches and sharing their faith.

"Those are just some practical things that I see where there's spiritual growth. These are observable things that happen naturally

because the Holy Spirit is working in someone's life."

Some students specifically point to the Discipleship Center and its staff as pivotal to their Andrews experience.

Olivia Horvath, a nutrition major, was an Anchor Group leader this year, running a crochet small group. "It's been really impactful to get to be working closely with people who are very mission-driven and really want to foster community for other people on campus."

She found the spiritual community she was looking for at the Center. "It's about creating spaces for people to really feel connected and like they can use their gifts. I think that's what keeps people in the church and makes it meaningful to them ... feeling like you are part of something that's bigger than you is just so important."

Involvement in these groups has made Horvath more excited about her faith and deepened her sense of connection to Andrews. "Being involved in Anchor Groups has allowed me to feel like, yeah, this is my school and I'm involved in something that I can be proud of."

Anchor groups were also a point of introduction to the Discipleship Center for Elena Hardinge, a graphic design major. After hearing about it during a program for incoming freshmen, she joined Olivia's crochet group. By the end of the semester, Hardinge felt inspired to launch her own Bible study group, her first, focused on Asaph — "Songs from the Sanctuary." She said Alanna's mentorship and guidance helped her feel confident to lead.

"Anchor Groups was an answer to prayer, giving me a community to study the Bible with," she said. With the Discipleship Center, "I feel like I have people that I can go to if I need help or just someone to be happy with. It's helped me feel like this is where I need to be right now."

This is what the Center's work is about, Alanna says, "identifying the leaders, [and] then empowering them to lead as well."

THE NEXT CHAPTER

In addition to deepening the relationships formed this year, Alanna and her team are looking forward to what lies ahead. Both staff and students are anticipating the opening of the Discipleship House, a recently renovated house on campus for students to fellowship and host small groups. "I want the Discipleship House to be known as a place where I can grow in my relationship with God," Alanna said. "If I want to connect with people who love God and want to grow in that relationship, this is the place for me."

There are also plans to launch discipleship coaching for students, expand opportunities for faculty and staff to be involved, and continue partnerships with Campus Ministries, the Seminary, and local churches for training and mission opportunities.

"I believe that God is working through individual lives. And we just have to work where He is working," Alanna said, reflecting on the past year. "When we do, He pulls all these amazing different pieces together. That's what I see has happened this year in the Discipleship Center. I believe there's a revival that's taking place on this campus that's going to surprise everyone." ■

Kaara Baptiste is an assistant professor of communication at Andrews University.

"I BELIEVE
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▼ *IGNITE students take a three-week summer course on discipleship.*





▲ Harvey J. Burnett Jr. is chief of police for the Buchanan Police Department. Burnett also serves as a professor and department chair at Andrews University and has spent decades on the Buchanan Community Schools Board of Education.

LIVING BY FAITH

FOR HARVEY J. BURNETT JR., SOME DAYS begin in a classroom at Andrews University and end at the Buchanan Police Department. The setting may change, but his purpose does not. “I’m not walking by sight,” Burnett said. “I’m walking by faith.”

For Burnett, faith is not something reserved for a specific place or time. It is something he carries with him, shaping how he leads in the classroom, how he responds in moments of crisis, and how he serves in the community. Over time, that belief has guided a career that stretches across education, law enforcement and public service.

Burnett, a licensed psychologist in the state of Michigan, is a professor of psychology and chair of the School of Social & Behavioral Sciences at Andrews University. He is also the chief of police for the city of Buchanan and has spent nearly three decades on the city’s Board of Education, including years serving as its president. Each role carries its own responsibilities, but Burnett does not see them as separate paths.

“I look at my roles as one larger calling, to be true to God and serve Him by serving others,” he said.

His path into that calling was not carefully planned. After completing seminary, Burnett

entered law enforcement out of necessity, looking for stable work to support his family. What began as a practical decision gradually took on deeper meaning as he encountered people facing trauma, loss and crisis. Those experiences led him to pursue a doctorate in counseling psychology at Andrews University, building on earlier studies in psychology at the University of Michigan-Dearborn and theological training at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

Over time, the lines between his roles began to blur. His background in psychology informed how he approached law enforcement. His experience in policing shaped how he engaged students. His work in both spaces influenced how he approached leadership within the community.

“The roles overlap in leadership...working with a diversity of individuals and meeting the needs of the community,” he said.

“

I LOOK AT
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BY NICHOLAS GUNN
PHOTOS BY DAVE SHERWIN



“I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO OUTRIGHT EVANGELIZE,” HE SAYS, “BUT I CAN BE CHRIST TO OTHERS IN HOW I TREAT THEM.”

INSIDE THE CLASSROOM

On the campus of Andrews University, where Burnett has worked for over 20 years, that overlap becomes visible in the way he leads. Stacie Hatfield, an assistant professor at the School of Social & Behavioral Sciences, said Burnett’s leadership is defined by reliability, especially during times of uncertainty.

“His consistent leadership, his calm, steady demeanor in the face of a great deal of change, has been an inspiration to me,” Hatfield said. As a mentor, she adds, “His breadth of understanding and administrative experience have been beneficial to helping guide our department.”

That same presence extends into the classroom. Ava Gruia, a sophomore psychology major, says Burnett’s ability to draw from real-world experience makes his classes feel different.

“He’s been able to use those experiences and apply that to the classroom,” she said.

Students often ask him about his work outside the classroom, she adds.

“We always ask him about being a cop and how that applies to what’s going on,” she says. “He’s very open about those things.”

That openness, she says, helps connect what students are learning to what they see happening in the world around them.

Gruia said Burnett’s faith also shapes how he interacts with students. “I think it definitely plays a big part in how he approaches everything,” she said. “He just makes the classroom feel real.”

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Outside the University, Burnett’s work continues in a setting where decisions often carry immediate consequences. As chief of police in Buchanan, he leads a department while also serving in roles that connect law enforcement to the broader community.

Patrol Officer Philip Huang, a school resource officer, says Burnett’s experience gives him a perspective that goes beyond standard procedure.

“He has his hands in a million roles,” Huang said. “It’s kind of cool to have a chief that just knows the ins and outs of the community.”

That perspective, Huang said, changes how officers approach situations.

“You can always ask him how to approach a situation, and he’s opened my mind to look at things from different perspectives,” he said.

Huang said Burnett’s leadership is especially evident when people need help, as he connects families with resources through relationships built across the community.

“Anything that he can do with volunteering or any community thing that he can do, he does it,” Huang said. “Sometimes all someone needs is a little help.”

SCHOOL BOARD

Burnett’s connection to the community also runs through his long-standing work with Buchanan Community Schools. Serving 27 years on the Board of Education has placed him at the center of critical decisions that shape the district.

Superintendent Patricia Robinson said his presence has been steady over time. She described his leadership as calm and thoughtful, particularly in situations that require clarity and perspective.

“He shows up with a very calm demeanor and a lot of insight into helping students and staff, especially with mental health,” she said.

Robinson said his approach reflects something deeper than professional experience.

“You can definitely tell that it is spiritually led and comes from a faith-based background,” she said. “His suggestions are always helpful and give people strategies to move forward.”

FAITH: THE DRIVING FORCE

Across each of these spaces, Burnett does not separate faith from responsibility. Instead, it becomes the foundation for how he approaches his work.

“I look at my roles as one larger calling,” he says, “[to] be true to God and serve Him

by serving others just as He has done for us, especially dying on the Cross in my place for my sins.”

“Being on the frontlines” for God’s kingdom can look like many things for Burnett: helping students integrate their faith with what they’re learning; reflecting God’s love in interactions, even amid opposition; and caring for personnel and community members.

Burnett’s understanding of faith has been shaped through personal loss. More than a decade ago, the death of his youngest daughter forced him into a season where belief was tested in deeply personal ways.

“I was angry at God and felt that He let me down,” he shares.

The experience did not resolve quickly, and the answers he sought did not come easily.

“Although I was angry and hurt, I kept holding on to Him,” he says. “I had to be honest with God and doing that helped me find resolution and peace. Now it is my testimony how a loving God understands and helps one through a tragic time in life.”

Over time, that experience reshaped how he understands faith, not as something that removes hardship, but as something that remains present through it.

Burnett’s days remain full, filled with teaching, meetings, mentoring and community responsibilities that often extend beyond a typical schedule. Across classrooms, patrol work and school board meetings, what sustains him, he said, is not simply routine, but a steady reliance on faith. Prayer, his community, Bible verses and Christian music keep him grounded.

Burnett understands that not every space allows for direct conversations about faith. Still, he believes it can be seen in the way a person lives. The roles may change from one moment to the next, but the direction does not.

“I may not be able to outright evangelize,” he says, “but I can be Christ to others in how I treat them.” ■

Nicholas Gunn is a digital communication major at Andrews University.



A Fortress for the Family



▲ JASMINE FRASER

“A DAILY RHYTHM OF READING AND PRAYING SCRIPTURES RETUNES THE MIND FROM FEAR’S WHISPER TO GOD’S DECLARATIONS.”

“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10)

Fear is an ancient human phenomenon that has often adversely affected individuals’ and families’ well-being. It is little wonder the Bible is replete with exhortations such as “fear not” or “do not fear.” In contemporary times, fear and anxiety seem to be the ambient temperature as individuals worry constantly. Fear has enlisted powerful allies (e.g., relationship fractures, social unraveling, political upheaval, economic instability, environmental crises, etc.) that converge simultaneously, eroding individuals’ capacity to thrive.

Scripture shows that fear and doubt are the devil’s primary strategies, wielded directly against the family. Research shows that fear wears down the nervous system,¹ exhausts the spirit, and potentially renders an individual paralyzed. Families gripped by fear stop trusting, stop serving one another and their community, stop moving forward in faith, and are often tossed about by winds of doubt. This is precisely the enemy’s aim: not merely to generate fear, but to render the family dysfunctional.

It is heartening to know that, amidst fear, doubt and anxiety, every family can find a fortress in the One who created the family. Scripture tells us that God does not give fear (2 Timothy 1:7), yet being the all-knowing, compassionate God, He intervenes in moments of fear. The declaration in Isaiah 41:10 did not promise a fear-free life. It promises something better: a God who meets individuals and families in their fears — a God who is ever-present, active and committed to meeting the needs of every family in His care. Jesus echoed the essence of this promise throughout His ministry, saying, “Do not be afraid,” not because life holds no danger, but because He is greater than every danger. While He

does not always fence out the dangers of life, He is a sure fortress, a strong tower (Proverbs 18:10) in every danger. This assurance of God’s presence in all of life’s circumstances is comforting.

As families traverse daily life, the world will not stop producing reasons for fear. But the Creator of families has not changed. He still strengthens. He still upholds with His righteous right hand. To every struggling family, His invitation stands: run to the fortress. He is not merely a comfort in fear — He is the stronghold fear cannot breach. Begin today to find a fortress in God by anchoring yourself daily in His word. A daily rhythm of reading and praying Scriptures retunes the mind from fear’s whisper to God’s declarations. Additionally, seek out nurturing, supportive communities. Individuals and families embedded in honest, caring and praying communities are less likely to be overcome by fear. Finally, cultivate an attitude of gratitude and worship. Hearts that engage in active thanksgiving cannot simultaneously be dominated by fear, and worship repositions the heart before God’s majesty, making every threatening circumstance smaller by comparison. ■

1 <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10433239/>

Jasmine Fraser is associate professor of discipleship and religious education in the Department of Discipleship and director of its PhD program in the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University.



Balanced Living

My familiarity with Andrews University started when our oldest son went to college there. There was an awesome (and a little scary) bike trail that my son loved to ride on. He even convinced me, one time, to ride with him. It was both beautiful and challenging. But my son, who worked at camp for several years in the bike department, really loved the trails around the University. He also participated in Gymnics for several years and really enjoyed that, too.



▲ LEE WHITMAN

Then our second son joined his older brother, and he, too, found plenty of opportunities to run and play in-between studies. I often found him with a football in hand, ready to play catch with anyone who would join him.

There was plenty of studying going on too, but it was nice to see there was a balance in their lives between study and exercise.

This reminds me of a statement Ellen White made, in the book “Education,” where White addressed the importance of exercise, even at school. She said:

“The whole body is designed for action; and unless the physical powers are kept in health by active exercise, the mental powers cannot long be used to their highest capacity. The physical inaction which seems almost inevitable in the schoolroom. ... “Children should not be long confined within doors, nor should they be required to apply themselves closely to study until a good foundation has been laid for physical development. For the first eight or 10 years of a child’s life the field or garden is the best schoolroom, the mother the best teacher, nature the best lesson book. Even when the child is old enough to attend school, his health should be regarded as of greater importance than a knowledge of books. He should be surrounded with the conditions most favorable to both physical and mental growth.”

We often focus on book learning and the spiritual side of life but often fall short of making sure our body receives attention, too.

Maybe that’s why John, in 3 John 1:2, wrote the following: “Dear friend, I hope all is well with you and that you are as healthy in body as you are strong in spirit.”

Maybe I need to ask myself: “Am I as healthy in body as I am in spirit? Both are important, for one, without the other, means that we are not healthy at all. Maybe we should be like my sons at Andrews, who found time to focus on the physical, as well as their studies. If we do, we would fulfill John’s wish for a balanced life. ■

Lee Whitman was the health ministries director for the Indiana Conference.



Cute Critters and Adventist Health



▲ DENIS KAISER

“James White could not have eaten squirrels,” my friend insisted. There must have been a squirrel infestation, he reasoned, and James was simply trying to reduce their numbers.

In September 1866, Ellen White had written to their son Edson that “we have killed one wild black squirrel per day,” adding that, “he [James] enjoys it much.”¹

I wondered what evidence supported my friend’s claim, and how killing one squirrel per day would have significantly reduced the squirrel population near the hamlet of Olcott, New York. His reasoning was theological and chronological: Ellen White had made this remark more than three years after her “Comprehensive Health Reform Vision” of June 5, 1863, in which she had been shown the benefits of vegetarianism. Moreover, he could not imagine that the Whites would have eaten an unclean animal. My question, however, was different: What evidence is there for the alleged squirrel infestation and James’ supposed effort to help eliminate that “evil?”

In the next sentence, Ellen White stated, “We have all the fruit we could desire.” Her comment about squirrels therefore appears in a context concerned with food. Seven years later, the Whites vacationed in the mountains of Colorado with their other son W.C. White and Charles S. Glover. They met two travelers who “had nothing to eat but squirrels and pork,” and so they shared bread with them. A few days later, “Willie shot two grey squirrels to make broth for Brother Glover.”² Both statements identify squirrels as food. Further, the *Review* and *Herald* and contemporary cookbooks corroborate the practice of hunting and eating squirrels.³

Finally, the remark must be placed within the development of Adventist understanding and Ellen White’s own experience. Although her 1863 vision emphasized the health benefits of vegetarianism and warned against eating pork,⁴ it did not address

clean and unclean meats. Adventists did not come to a clearer understanding of the continuing relevance of Levitical food laws until the 1880s and 1890s.⁵ From 1863 to 1893, Ellen White was a habitual vegetarian; she refrained from eating meat, but she also adapted to exceptional circumstances, including travel, illness or lack of suitable food. The squirrel remark belongs to this transitional period. When she became a strict vegetarian in the 1890s, it was primarily for ethical reasons.⁶

This closer investigation shows that we need not imagine James and Ellen White shooting one cute critter per day for amusement. The evidence points instead to food, circumstance and a developing understanding of health reform. ■

1 Ellen G. White to James Edson White, Sept. 21, 1866, Lt 3, 1866, EGWE.

2 Ellen G. White, Diary entries for Sept. 18 and 26, 1873, Ms 11, 1873, EGWE.

3 See, f.e., “Knowing the Time,” *Review and Herald*, Dec. 1, 1874, 179; “The Champlain Valley Book of Recipes” (Plattsburgh, NY: Munro and Warren, 1875), 30; “The Home Cook Book: Tried and True Recipes” (Toledo, OH: T. J. Brown, 1876), iv, 25, 47, 52.

4 Ellen G. White, “Spiritual Gifts,” vol. 4a, “Important Facts of Faith: Laws of Health, and Testimonies” Nos. 1–10 (Battle Creek, MI: Steam Press of the Seventh-day Adventist Pub. Assn., 1864), 124, 126, 129–131, 146–148, 153–154.

5 Jiří Moskala, “Clean and Unclean (Leviticus 11),” “*Encyclopedia of Seventh-day Adventists*,” Nov. 27, 2021, accessed March 10, 2026, <https://encyclopedia.adventist.org/article?id=GFRG>.

6 Theodore N. Levterov, “Ellen White and Vegetarianism,” in “*Understanding Ellen White: The Life and Work of the Most Influential Voice in Adventist History*,” ed. Merlin D. Burt (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2015), 201–05.

Denis Kaiser is an associate professor of church history at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University.



Forgive Yourself?

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:31–32)



▲ PAULETTE TAYLOR

Do we live our lives as if our sins have been forgiven? Or are we holding on to those things that so easily hold us back?

A story that was shared with me some years ago, while conducting outreach at an abuse shelter, involved a dear lady who was living in regret of not listening to her mother and not forgiving herself. Specifically, she was warned to be cautious of the kind of people she kept company with. But she did not listen. The short version of the story — the woman became involved with the wrong people, drugs and a man she was romantically interested in. He had physically abused her and pushed her down a flight of stairs, which broke her ankle and her spirit. She was in a wheelchair healing from the injury and trying to get clean from drugs. Her mother had been

praying for her through all of this. The lady was now working to put her life back together. Looking back, she had regrets but discovered a God who was watching out for her all along. Praise God!

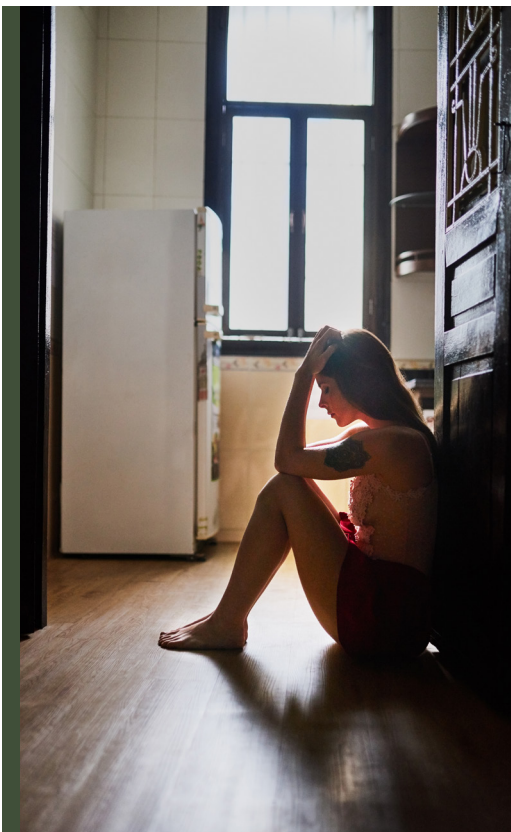
When we surrender to the will of God, He takes on the pain and difficulties of this life. He knows our human nature and forgives us anyway. Oh, what an amazing, merciful and loving God we serve!

Ellen G. White writes, in “Christ’s Object Lessons,” Chapter 19, last paragraph, “We are not forgiven because we forgive, but as we forgive. The ground of all forgiveness is found in the unmerited love of God, but by our attitude toward others we show whether we have made that love our own.”

Forgiving others is one thing, but we also need to forgive ourselves. Regrets and discouragement held because we did not do or say one thing or another can keep us from clearly seeing God’s plan. It’s like a blindfold keeping the light of God’s love and His direction and guidance for our lives out of sight. Why would we inhibit ourselves that way? From time to time, we may all have done this. But Jesus tells us, “He is the way, the truth, and the life.” (John 14:6).

Remember, no one’s life is perfect. Replace regret with gratitude. Continue preparing for Glory, by God’s grace. Strive to give God your best in all things. If we keep that mindset, after asking forgiveness and forgiving others, we’ve set ourselves free. We know the very best is yet to come — Heaven! ■

Paulette Taylor serves as the prayer ministry coordinator for the Indiana Conference.





▲ Chaplain Dan Sietman serves at UChicago Medicine Advent Health GlenOaks.

When Music Becomes Ministry

CHAPLAIN BRINGS WHOLE-PERSON CARE TO PATIENTS

What began with a donated guitar and a simple question has grown into a meaningful way to bring whole-person care to behavioral health patients.

When Daniel Sietman joined UChicago Medicine AdventHealth GlenOaks as a chaplain resident in June of 2023, there was nothing in the job description about singing and playing music. But after meeting with Chaplain Renante Gomez, chapel manager at the time, that quickly changed.

While being shown the office he was going to use, Sietman noticed a guitar in the room. Gomez told him it had been donated and asked Sietman if he played the guitar.

"I said yes, I do," recalls Sietman. "He told me, 'Well, we'd love to have you play it.'"

That was the humble beginning of what turned into the Clinical Pastoral Music Group (CPMG) in which Sietman plays the guitar and sings to foster spiritual engagement and encourage wellness through weekly 30-minute group encounters.

"I had plenty of theological training and a whole lot of life experience, but I'd never done anything remotely close to this, so we just sort of made it up as we went along," says Sietman, a self-taught guitarist. Sietman began CPMG sessions in July 2023 in the Geriatric Treatment Unit at the

hospital. With a positive reception by patients and staff, the program expanded in 2025 to include other Behavioral Health Units in Hinsdale, Bolingbrook and the outpatient clinic in Westmont, Illinois.

"What I'm trying to do is create a space for spiritual experience and healing," says Sietman.

He does that using a variety of themes, including recovery, redemption, self-reflection, worship, catharsis, encouragement, introspection and even humor, using an eclectic mix of musical genres.

"I've had people rolling on the floor, laughing so hard that they could hardly get up."

One of the clearest signs of the CPMG's impact came months after a patient had left UChicago Medicine AdventHealth GlenOaks.

In the spring of 2025, Sietman stopped at the grocery store to pick up an order when the person loading the bags asked, "Are you the chaplain who sings?" After Sietman said yes, the man shared that he had been a patient at the GlenOaks hospital two months earlier.

"He told me, 'You came in and sang and that was probably the turning point of my experience there. What you did really, really helped me. When I need to process, I grab some music. I now have an apartment, a girlfriend and a job.'"

Moments like that remind Sietman why the work matters — and why whole-person care reaches far beyond a hospital stay. ■

Keith Hartenberger is senior manager for external communications at UChicago Medicine AdventHealth.



UChicago Medicine

Advent Health

Horticulture Renewal Initiative Takes Root

The Andrews University Department of Sustainable Agriculture is developing a multi-phase horticulture renewal initiative designed to expand hands-on student learning, strengthen sustainability education, and create new wellness-centered green spaces on campus.

The initiative includes the renovation of an existing greenhouse into a structure designed to support crops during colder seasons, continued use of the department's smaller winter greenhouse and the planned construction of a new energy-efficient teaching greenhouse. Together, the facilities will provide students with year-round applied plant science education and expanded opportunities for experiential learning.

According to Katherine Koudele, chair of the department, the project builds on the department's existing experiential learning model already used in its Animal Science Program.

"When the dairy closed in 2018, we were able to convert a number of those buildings into an Agriculture Education Center where students rotate through caring for different species of animals," says Koudele. "Students gain hands-on experience, but they also learn teamwork, responsibility and problem-solving. We want to extend that same model to the plant side of the department."

Koudele explains that the renewal initiative seeks to revitalize the Sustainable Horticulture Program while creating facilities that allow students to work year-round. The department's existing greenhouse will be converted into a cold-frame structure for overwinter crops such as root vegetables, brassicas and leafy greens. A smaller greenhouse currently used for plant propagation and introductory horticulture courses will continue serving students while the department pursues plans for a larger teaching greenhouse.

The proposed teaching greenhouse will feature four climate-controlled sections, including temperate, tropical and desert-growing

environments, along with a visitor and sensory garden space. Each growing zone will allow students to learn how crops respond to different climates and environmental conditions.

"Our students have gone all over the world working with agriculture and plant production," shares Koudele. "This greenhouse would allow them to gain experience working in different kinds of climates before they leave campus."

The facility is also intended to support interdisciplinary collaboration and student wellness initiatives. One section of the greenhouse is planned as a conservatory-style green space. "We're hoping this can become a place where students can come and enjoy a green environment during the darker winter season," Koudele says. "There's growing interest in the idea of nature as medicine and the positive effects green spaces can have on mental well-being."

The greenhouse design also incorporates sustainability-focused technology, including triple-wall polycarbonate insulation, full-spectrum LED lighting powered by solar energy, drip irrigation systems and integrated



World Changers Made Here.

pest management methods with minimal chemical inputs.

Koudele says the project aims to continue strengthening Andrews University's mission of stewardship and sustainability. "Our department motto is 'Educating Earth's Caretakers,'" she explains. "Students today are deeply interested in sustainability, creation care and learning how to work more harmoniously with nature. We want to provide them with opportunities to do that here on campus."

The department has already begun preliminary work on portions of the project, including plans to convert the existing greenhouse and prepare the site for future construction. Faculty members are currently seeking additional donor support and partnerships to help complete the initiative. "We have the land, the facilities and the vision," Koudele says. "Now we're looking for partners to help make it possible."

For further insight into the horticulture renewal initiative or to ask questions, please contact Katherine Koudele at koudelej@andrews.edu. To support the initiative and its future development, please visit the Andrews website. ■

Oscar Güity is a student writer for the Office of University Communication.





▲ Lay members from across the Motor City committed themselves to nightly courses designed to equip them for Bible instruction and outreach ministry. This answered a growing need not only in Detroit, but throughout our conference territory.

Detroit Center Graduates 29 Bible Instructors

The Detroit Center church held a graduation ceremony on May 23 for 29 Bible instructors trained to lead Bible studies and support outreach efforts.

Steve Bramwell, Detroit Center pastor, led the training, which brought together lay members from churches across Detroit. Over several months, participants attended evening classes focused on Bible instruction and community outreach.

Lake Region Conference President Abraham F. Henry delivered the sermon during the ceremony and thanked Bramwell for organizing the program.

“What Pastor Bramwell has done here is a wonderful endeavor, and we thank God for his leadership,” Henry said.

He also called the graduates to use their training in service.

“We’ve got work to do together,” Henry said. “This is our season to rise to the occasion and serve God.”

Following the presentation of certificates, Bramwell recognized Katelyn Nieman, principal of Flint-Fairhaven School, for developing a Bible study guide the instructors can use in their ministry.

The graduates also recognized Bramwell and his wife, Shyenn, for their work in leading the training program. ■

Lake Region Communication

Digital Evangelism and Discipleship Deepens Across Southern Illinois

God is opening new doors for outreach and the Thompsonville church is stepping forward in faith to walk through them.

More than a year ago, the Thompsonville church began using the OneAccord platform, a tool that helps churches manage websites, public events and Bible study interests. While OneAccord offers many features, the church has especially embraced its ability

to connect with individuals requesting Bible studies through BibleStudyOffer.com.

But the members wanted to do more.

Burdened by a desire to reach their communities, especially in Carbondale and the surrounding region, church members



▲ From left, Terri and Madison Stanley, members of the Thompsonville church



▲ Paul and Barbara Lubinski, members of the Thompsonville church



▲ Ricky Carter, elder at the Thompsonville church



▲ Jonathan Babb, head deacon at Thompsonville church, and his wife Elizabeth, principal of the Thompsonville Christian Junior Academy

began asking a simple question: What if we offered free Bible studies to anyone searching for truth?

On March 1, that vision became reality.

The church launched a Facebook advertising campaign promoting free Bible studies throughout Carbondale, Thompsonville and surrounding communities within a 40-to-50-mile radius. The campaign ran through the end of April, and the response exceeded expectations.

So far, 84 individuals have signed up for Bible studies, including 29 from

the Carbondale area and 55 from the Thompsonville region.

The outreach quickly became larger than one church alone.

The West Frankfort church joined the effort by creating its own free OneAccord account and receiving 30 of the Thompsonville-area interests for follow-up ministry. The partnership has allowed both congregations to actively participate in outreach while strengthening unity in mission across the district.

Yet perhaps the most exciting development has not been the number of interests,

but the number of members becoming involved in ministry.

What began as a digital outreach effort has become a church-wide witnessing movement.

Children as young as 10 now work alongside their parents preparing and mailing Bible study lessons. Young adults personally deliver materials to homes. One 91-year-old church member and her spouse have enthusiastically joined the effort as well, faithfully helping deliver studies to new contacts throughout the area.

Their involvement has inspired the entire congregation.

To encourage continued participation, the church has introduced a “Bible Study Offer Spotlight” during select Sabbath services, where members share testimonies and experiences from connecting with people in their communities. Those stories have sparked even greater interest, leading more members to volunteer for the growing ministry. The church is also prayerfully preparing for the future.

As Bible study interests continue progressing toward decisions for Christ and baptism, Thompsonville plans to guide new believers through a structured discipleship process using the “Discipleship Handbook” from the General Conference’s GROW Your Church initiative. Members hope the process will not only strengthen new believers but also help current members grow as they mentor others in their walk with Christ.

The Thompsonville church family believes this model could extend far beyond Southern Illinois. Their prayer is that more churches across Illinois will embrace tools like OneAccord to expand their outreach and disciple-making efforts. ■

Ricky Carter is an elder at the Thompsonville Seventh-day Adventist Church.



▲ Wisconsin President Titus Naftanaila, Lake Union Vice President Carmelo Mercado and Wisconsin Conference Hispanic Coordinator Evelio Miranda are pictured with some of the original members who started the first Hispanic mission group at the Central American Seventh-day Adventist church back in October 1975: Ramiro Álvarez, holding his granddaughter, Salvador García, Hector Santiago, Emma Santiago-Spears and Perla Santiago

Wisconsin Commemorates 50 Years of Hispanic Ministry

Nearly 1,350 members and guests gathered May 30 at Alverno College in Milwaukee to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Hispanic Seventh-day Adventist ministry in Wisconsin.

The anniversary brought together Hispanic congregations from the Wisconsin Conference and Lake Region Conference for a day of worship, fellowship and gratitude. The event, held in Pitman Auditorium, also served as the annual Hispanic Brotherhood Day and marked the conclusion of a statewide evangelistic caravan.

Additional seating was brought in to accommodate the crowd, which exceeded organizers' expectations.

The celebration centered on the theme "Don't Give Up, There Is Still Hope" and featured international evangelist Alejandro Bullón and Christian recording artist Felipe Garibo. Bullón presented biblical messages throughout the caravan while Garibo shared

concerts focused on hope and spiritual renewal.

The caravan began May 22 and 23 at Madison East church before continuing May 24 and 25 at the Sheboygan Hispanic church. Meetings were held May 26 and 27 in Eau Claire before the final gathering in Milwaukee.

By the end of the evangelistic initiative, 65 people had publicly committed their lives to Christ through baptism.

The statewide effort was supported by months of preparation in local churches. Evangelists from Wisconsin Hispanic Adventist Youth, known as JAHWI, participated alongside guest speakers and 14 theology students from Peruvian Union University. Local campaigns helped prepare

individuals for the meetings and the decisions that followed.

The Milwaukee program also recognized the people who helped establish and strengthen Hispanic ministry across Wisconsin during the past five decades.

Carmelo Mercado, general vice president of the Lake Union Conference, was honored for 50 years of pastoral ministry and for his longstanding support of Hispanic congregations in Wisconsin. He attended the celebration with his wife, Rosanne.

Wisconsin Conference President Titus Naftanaila and his wife, Rozina, also attended the anniversary program.

Evelio Miranda, Hispanic ministries coordinator for the Wisconsin Conference, described the celebration as evidence of God's continued guidance and blessing.

Drawing from 1 Samuel 7:12, he summarized the anniversary with the words, "Thus far, the Lord has helped us." ■

Evelio Miranda with Herald staff



▲ At the Chippewa Valley church, Pastor Asael Sánchez (right) baptizes Henry Velázquez in the baptistry, as Alejandro Bullón looks on.



▲ On Sabbath, May 23 at the Madison East church, a Hispanic worship team led out in the evangelistic caravan.



▲ Pastor and filmmaker Christian Smith produced a documentary on the sanctuary with Andrews University Professor Richard Davidson, as well as Clayton Leineweber, director of the Messiah Mansion.



Sanctuary Comes to Life in Documentary

INDIANA PASTOR AND FILMMAKER CHRISTIAN SMITH CREATES DOCUMENTARY FEATURING ANDREWS UNIVERSITY SCHOLAR RICHARD DAVIDSON

Visitors to Indiana Academy's 2025 camp meeting walked through Messiah's Mansion, a life-size replica of the biblical sanctuary, while learning how its furnishings and services pointed to God's plan of salvation.

Indiana pastor and filmmaker Christian Smith recognized an opportunity to preserve that experience and make it available to a wider audience.

With support from the Indiana Conference, Smith produced a documentary featuring Richard Davidson, an Andrews University scholar known for his study of the biblical sanctuary. The nearly hourlong film follows Davidson through the replica as he explains the sanctuary's meaning in biblical times, its application to personal faith and its connection to Christ's ministry in heaven.

"Having Messiah's Mansion and Dr. Davidson here at the same time [for camp meeting] was a great opportunity to do a walk-through film," Smith said. "A recording like this had never been done before."

Davidson is a senior research professor of Old Testament interpretation at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University and has written and taught extensively about the sanctuary. Messiah's Mansion is a life-size replica of the Mosaic Sanctuary that God gave instructions to Moses to build in the wilderness. Through guided tours, people are able to see the plan of salvation and bring it to life with the visual aid of the sanctuary furniture.

Smith and his production team spent about six hours filming Davidson as he moved through the sanctuary explaining its furnishings, ceremonies and compartments, and connecting them to God's mercy and grace. He elaborated on what each part and furnishing meant at the time in the

earthly sanctuary, what it means in our personal lives, and how it relates to what God is doing in the heavenly sanctuary. The footage was later edited into a documentary, running approximately 54 minutes.

The completed film premiered during the 2026 Indiana Camp Meeting and conference leaders hope the documentary will become a teaching and evangelistic resource for churches, small groups and individuals around the world.

Indiana Conference President Vic Van Schaik said the film offers a practical introduction to the sanctuary.

"The sanctuary truth is one of those vital truths that we need to understand," Van Schaik said. "This film will help you to have a deeper knowledge and practical understanding of the sanctuary."

The video is slated for a wider release on Aug. 7. More information is available at indysda.org or https://www.youtube.com/shorts/isKgzzxGV_Iw ■

Debbie Michel is editor of the Lake Union Herald.

"THIS FILM WILL HELP YOU TO HAVE A DEEPER KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE SANCTUARY."

Adventist Educators and Medical Professionals Bring Wellness Support to Michigan Public School

Health professionals at the Lansing church were praying for opportunities to connect with their neighboring Lansing community.

The Employee Wellness Day at Waverly High School became an opportunity, breaking down barriers and opening doors for meaningful engagement through acts of care and service.

In 2025, the school hosted its first annual Employee Wellness Day, a required in-service designed to support staff well-being. What made the event unique was how it came together. Hilda, a member of the Lansing church who works as a nurse at Waverly High School, felt impressed to connect school administrators with Dr. Kimberly Azelton, a Lansing church member who runs a nonprofit ministry, Family and Lifestyle Medical Clinic. This opened the door for the clinic, supported by

volunteers from local Seventh-day Adventist churches, to participate in the wellness event and provide what many in ministry describe as an “entering wedge” through practical service.

The response from school staff was overwhelmingly positive. As a result, Waverly High School invited the clinic and its volunteers to return in 2026.

This year’s event expanded both in scope and impact. Jeremy Hall, education superintendent for the Michigan Conference, delivered a keynote address titled “Reframing Challenges in Education: From Burnout to Purpose-Driven Resilience.” His message addressed the increasing pressures educators face and offered a hopeful perspective on finding renewed purpose in their work.

Additional breakout sessions focused on practical tools for sustaining personal well-being. Girlie Aguilar, associate superintendent of schools for the Michigan Conference, and Ella Cousins, a retired principal from the Lansing School District and Lansing church member, led sessions on maintaining healthy work-life balance and building resilience in the demanding field of education.

After the presentations, staff members were invited to participate in individualized wellness services. These one-on-one sessions included nutrition coaching, stress



▲ Maia Hall, a senior at Great Lakes Adventist Academy played the harp for the massage ministry happening in this room.



▲ Dr. Kim Azelton, physician at Lifestyle Family Medicine in Holt, Michigan, and Jeremy Hall, vice president of education, Michigan Conference



▲ Tom Owiti, undertreasurer of the Michigan Conference and head elder at the Lansing church



▲ From left, Mona Hickman, assistant director of Planned Giving & Trust Services and Association Properties at the Michigan Conference, Melissa Sharley, member at Lansing church and part of the Lifestyle medicine clinic, and Cheryl Bernard, Lansing member. They helped teachers who had scheduled coaching sessions for stress management and other things that were being offered.

management counseling, chair massages, physician consultations, blood pressure screenings, and financial coaching.

Nearly 70 volunteers joined the clinic team to make the day possible. Participants came from several area churches, including Lansing, Lansing Spanish, Bethel and Holt, with additional volunteers traveling from as far away as Indiana and Cadillac to assist.

In total, the team completed 252 individual wellness appointments, offering encouragement and practical support to more than 200 school employees. For many participants, personal attention was both unexpected and deeply appreciated.

Several educators shared their reflections following the event:

“These are my angels.” “This was a real wake-up call. It felt more like a conversation and less like someone pointing fingers about what needed to change.” “I’ve never experienced anything like this. It was so personal.”

The impact of the wellness day continues beyond the event itself. Sixty-four individuals requested follow-up appointments, and clinic staff have already begun connecting with them. One Bible study that began after last year’s wellness event is still going strong, and volunteers have noticed that many returning participants seem even more open to continued connection this year.

Through simple acts of compassion and service, doors are opening in a community that had previously been difficult to reach. By meeting practical needs in a respectful and supportive environment, the clinic and supporting churches are building trust and relationships that extend far beyond a single day.

If you would like to learn more about the Family and Lifestyle Medicine Clinic, visit familyandlifestylemedicine.org. ■

Brianna Kittleson serves as the administrative assistant for the Michigan Conference Communication department.



▲ Micaiah Shimpango, National Junior Honor Society member, receives a monetary gift from Pastor Martin Hanna for his achievement.

Courtesy of Victor Khaula

All Nations Church Highlights Educational Excellence and Eternal Purpose

At 19, when most teenagers are graduating from high school, Vivienne Dyer was just beginning her studies. Financial hardship and periods of homelessness delayed her education, but they never defeated her determination. Fueled by faith and hard work, she not only completed high school in two years but did so with honors.

Life would later cause her to pause again, but Dyer never lost sight of the dream God had planted in her heart. Four years after high school, she enrolled in college.

A single mother, hit hard by divorce and illness, Dyer earned her bachelor’s degree the same day as her daughter. Balancing coursework with a full-time job once again, she went on to earn an MBA and a post-graduate diploma.

But on Sabbath, May 9, that dream came full circle.

Standing before the congregation at All Nations church in Berrien Springs, Dyer testified to God’s faithfulness — a journey that culminated in one of the greatest milestones

of her life: a Doctor of Philosophy in higher education administration from Andrews University. Across five grueling years as an international student, the Jamaican native maintained a perfect 4.0 GPA, supported by sponsors, mentors, friends and family.

“The journey didn’t begin with an acceptance letter,” said Dyer, “but with a barefoot girl who walked to elementary school hungry. A girl who took 12 years to earn a bachelor’s degree, not because I lacked ability, but because life demanded perseverance ... But God had already gone ahead of me.”

Dyer was one of more than 20 students celebrated during the church’s first-of-its-kind graduation ceremony. Rather than honoring



Courtesy of Vivienne Dyer

▲ Vivienne Dyer received her doctorate from Andrews University.

only the graduating Class of 2026, leaders also presented certificates of academic engagement to continuing students at every stage, from cradle roll (the youngest, less than 18 months) to doctoral studies. They chose this structure to recognize the proven benefits of staying educationally engaged.

Recognition was not restricted to church membership but included students from the wider community, reinforcing All Nations' mission of inclusion and community building, and its belief that education is a transformative force that nurtures spiritual growth, strengthens families, and contributes to economically thriving communities.

Four students were recognized for membership in the National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society, organizations that honor scholarship, leadership, character and service.

Leading the recognition ceremony, Joseth Howell, joined by her husband, Orville Howell, reminded the congregation that excellence is rooted in the very character of God. She pointed to the biblical account of Daniel and the three Hebrew boys, who were found to be "ten times better" than their Babylonian counterparts because of their faithfulness to God.

"Because God is a God of excellence," she said, "He desires His children to pursue excellence in every area of life."

Among those recognized was Gabrielle Gittens, whose achievements garnered widespread attention. The Berrien Springs High School graduate became the first in her school's history to be accepted into four Ivy League universities — Yale, Princeton, Brown and Columbia. A former vice president of the National Honor Society, she was one of only 150 students nationwide, selected from more than 107,000 applicants, to receive the highly competitive \$20,000 Coca-Cola Scholars Scholarship. She is now a Yale freshman studying mechanical engineering on a full scholarship.

Caps and gowns, decorative seating, a performance by the Andrews Academy Choir,

and a shared fellowship meal all accentuated the day's warmth and elegance.

Lead pastor Martin Hanna pointed the congregation toward what he called the greatest graduation of all. Preaching from 1 Corinthians 15:51–54, he described the moment believers will be transformed "in the twinkling of an eye" and urged worshipers to live with eternity in view, anticipating Christ's return, when suffering and death will be no more.

Later that afternoon, Andrews University Seminary professor Hyveth Williams reminded graduates that education isn't meant for personal gain alone, but as a vehicle to serve God and humanity.

From Vivienne Dyer's journey out of homelessness to a doctorate, to Gabrielle Gittens' historic path to Yale, the day's celebration underscored one message: Education means living a life of excellence and service today, while looking ahead to the greatest commencement of all, the graduation from earth to eternity in heaven. ■

Joseth Howell is public relations officer for the All Nations Church.



Courtesy of Victor Khaula

▲ Lead Pastor Martin Hanna delivers the keynote sermon "You Can Get There From Here."



Courtesy of Dionne Gittens

▲ Gabrielle Gittens is pictured after her graduation from Berrien High School.



▲ The administration team was re-elected by an overwhelming margin. Left to right: Elden Ramirez, president, with his wife Jenny; Ted Huskins, secretary, along with his wife Cynthia; and Glynn Scott, treasurer, with his wife Donna-Mae.

Lake Union Delegates Re-Elect Leadership at Constituency Session

On May 31, 2026, delegates to the 24th Lake Union Constituency Session re-elected the current slate of administrators to serve another five-year term.

More than 300 representatives from the Illinois, Indiana, Lake Region, Michigan and Wisconsin conferences, Andrews University and UChicago Medicine AdventHealth met at Pioneer Memorial Church in Berrien Springs, Michigan, to receive reports and determine the Lake Union leadership.

Election Results

President Elden Ramirez initially assumed the role in May 2025, after serving four years as executive secretary in Lake Union. “Thank you for the vote of confidence. It’s a team effort,” he said in brief remarks after the vote was announced. “The leader of the church is Christ and Christ alone. Keep us in your prayers as we seek to do His will on a daily basis.”

Ted Huskins, who joined the Lake Union in July 2025, was voted to continue as executive secretary. Huskins previously held the same position in the Atlantic Union.

Treasurer Glynn C.W. Scott will continue in the role he’s held for more than 20 years.

Delegates also voted overwhelmingly to reappoint departmental and administrative leaders in Communication, Education, IT, Human Resources and Treasury.

Several departmental leadership positions were referred to the Executive Committee for further review as part of an ongoing evaluation of organizational structure and ministry leadership models. In some cases, the positions affected are coordinator roles that are ordinarily filled by Executive Committee action rather than constituency session election. The action reflects broader organizational and strategic considerations and should not be interpreted as a reflection on the faithful and valued service of the individuals currently serving in those areas.

NAD President G. Alexander Bryant was on hand to facilitate the vote on the nominating committee’s report.



▲ Elden Ramirez and his wife Jenny are congratulated by North American Division President Alexander Bryant.

Other Items

The Lake Union administration took time to honor Carmelo Mercado, general vice president and director of multicultural ministries. President Ramirez thanked Mercado for 50 years of faithful service as a pastor and administrator and acknowledged his wife Roseanne for her partnership and prayers. Mercado expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve God in the Lake Union and his eagerness to spend more time with family. “God is doing great things in this union,” he said in a final exhortation. “Jesus is coming again. That’s the blessed hope that we have. May we share that with all the world. Let them know that God is love and that he wants his people to be ready for his kingdom.”

Leaders shared departmental reports to convey the state of the union. The president’s report was a video presentation highlighting a series of testimonies from members and ministries throughout the region.

In the secretariat’s report, Huskins shared that membership in the Lake Union Conference is nearly 92,000, up from around 88,000 in 2020. Baptisms have increased year over year since 2020, while the numbers of members leaving due to death, absence or transfer are decreasing.

Lake Union received a clean financial audit from auditors at the General Conference.

Delegates reviewed and voted on a series of proposed changes to the Lake Union Conference Constitution and Bylaws,



Dave Sherwin

▲ From left to right: Associate Communication Director Ruben Casabona, IT Director Sean Parker, Associate Education Director Laura Frary, Education Director Nicole Mattson, HR Director Vicki Thompson, Associate Treasurer Richard Moore and Communication Director Debbie Michel.

with most amendments passing by vote. Delegates engaged in thoughtful discussion regarding proposed language addressing the relationship between the Lake Union, the North American Division, and the General Conference. Following discussion, the section was referred back to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for further study and recommendation.

A new group of executive committee members was also elected to serve for the next five years:

- **Lake Union:** Ted Huskins, Glynn Scott, Elden Ramirez
- **Andrews University:** John Wesley Taylor V
- **Indiana:** Jimmy Arnett, Mark Eaton, Onias Muza, Vic Van Schaik
- **Illinois:** Marcia Bedney, Michael Campos, Eva Cruz, Jon Grys, Doug Reeves
- **Lake Region:** Eddie Allen, Jin Choi, Christopher Clark Sr., Harold Cleveland, Deidre Garnett, Abraham Henry, Gary Loster, Floyd Mathis, Rijenna Murray, Kent Nichols, Pamela Wright-Daly
- **Michigan:** Sarah Canada, Michael Bernard, Sim Clemens, David Fernandez, Jermaine

Gayle, Nereida Martinez, James Micheff Jr., Lori Randall, Israel Ramos

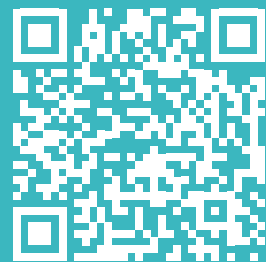
- **Wisconsin:** Bill Dudgeon, Gerardo Medina, Titus Naftanaila, Justin Perrone
- **UChicago Medicine**
AdventHealth: Monica Reed

The Lake Union holds a constituency session every five years to conduct the official business of the church. Delegates elect leadership, receive reports from union and department leaders, and vote on church business items. The state of the union is shared through various reports on finances, church membership, audits and other statistics. Session programming also highlights stories of mission, evangelism and the accomplishments of union departments and lay members.

You can follow more highlights from the constituency session on the Lake Union Adventists social media pages. ■

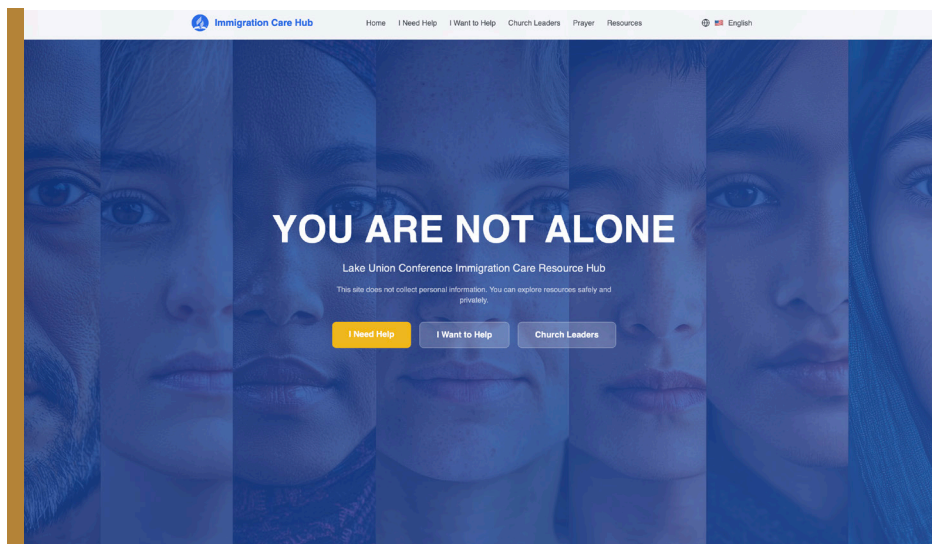
Kaara Baptiste is assistant professor of communication at Andrews University; **Debbie Michel** is editor of the Lake Union Herald.

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NEWSLETTER





Lake Union Launches Immigration Resource Website to Support Members and Churches

The Lake Union Conference has launched a new immigration resource website to support members, pastors and churches seeking guidance during a time of uncertainty for many immigrant communities.

The website, immigration.lakeunion.org, was developed as a centralized hub for immigration-related resources. The site offers practical tools for individuals and families, as well as resources for churches and members who want to provide support.

“We are really concerned about how we can support those going through crisis because of the immigration situation that exists here right now in our country,” said Carmelo Mercado, Lake Union vice president for Multicultural Ministries.

Among the resources available are “Know Your Rights” cards, which summarize basic legal rights when dealing with police or immigration officials; emergency planning materials, including family checklists, child-care and document guidance, and downloadable emergency plans; and legal help links to organizations such as the American Immigration Lawyers Association, World

Relief Immigration Legal Services, USCIS and Welcome.US.

The site also includes resources for families experiencing separation due to detention, along with emotional and spiritual support, including Scripture, short prayers, and pastoral encouragement for those facing fear or disruption.

A confidential prayer wall allows individuals to submit anonymous prayer requests.

“Our immigrants really need our support, even among our own members, who are going through uncertainty about whether they will be here or be deported,” Mercado said. “We’re hoping through this resource that we can provide the kind of support and engagement [needed] for pastors and members both.”

The resource hub is now live at immigration.lakeunion.org. ■

Debbie Michel is editor of the Lake Union Herald.

NAD 2026
RESEARCH
CONFERENCE

**The Remnant
and the Republic**

October 14-17
**Union Adventist
University**

MILEPOSTS

OBITUARIES

BABIENCO, Kathleen L., age 66; born Dec. 20, 1958, in Ukiah, California.; died Sept. 5, 2025, in Mombasa, Kenya. She is survived by her husband, Frederick Odinda; son, Michael Dowling; daughters, Elizabeth Asher, Jennifer Pierce; father, Bruce Babienco; brother, Steve Babienco; sister, Cyndi Caballero; and five grandchildren. A funeral inurnment was conducted on Sept. 22, 2025, in Kenya.

GROLEAU, Michael “Mike” J., age 70; born July 25, 1955, in Escanaba, Michigan.; died May 21, 2026, in Wilson, Michigan. He was a member of the Wilson Church in Wilson, Michigan. He is survived by his wife, Debra (Lanaville) Groleau; sons, Curt (Angie) Groleau, Tim (Brandee) Groleau; daughter, Shannon

(Bryan) Castle; brother, Jonathan Groleau; sister, Susan (Ed) Jenkins; and four grandchildren. A memorial service was conducted by Pastor James Hakes on May 31, 2026, and interment at the Wilson Seventh-day Adventist Church Cemetery in Wilson, Michigan.

LANE, Lorraine, age 91; born Jan. 12, 1935, in Manhattan, New York.; died June 10, 2026, in Plymouth, Michigan. She was a member of the Metropolitan Seventh-day Adventist Church in Plymouth, Michigan. She is survived by her husband, Richard “Dick” Lane; daughter, Cherie Loomis; and sons Glenn and Kevin Bell; six grandchildren. A memorial was conducted by Pastor Bob Stewart on Aug. 9, 2026, and interment at the Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly, Michigan.

Within the Lake Union, the officiating pastor or church communication leader is responsible for submission of information to this column. Forms are available in print format, or they can be filled out and submitted directly online. Milepost forms are available at www.lakeunionherald.org. Conference addresses and phone numbers are listed in the masthead on the inside front cover.

CALENDAR OF OFFERINGS

SEPTEMBER

- 5 Local Church Budget
- 12 World Budget: Radio Ministries (GC)
- 19 Local Church Budget
- 26 Local Conference Advance

CLASSIFIEDS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Notice of the 40th Regular Quadrennial Session

Notice is hereby given that the 40th Regular Quadrennial Session of the Wisconsin Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and the Wisconsin Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists will convene at Wisconsin Academy, Columbus, Wisconsin, on Sunday, October 18, 2026.

The Organizing Committee will meet at 8:30 a.m., followed by the first business session at 10 a.m. Duly accredited delegates and delegates-at-large will elect conference officers, department directors, members of the Executive Committee, Constitution and Bylaws Committee, and Nominating Committee, as well as the corporation trustees for the ensuing quadrennial term.

The delegates will also transact such other business as may properly come before the session. Each organized church is entitled to one delegate for the church organization and one additional delegate for every 25 members or major fraction thereof, based on the official membership records.

Titus Naftanaila, President
Justin Perrone, Executive Secretary

EMPLOYMENT

Adventist Heritage Ministries is seeking to immediately fill

two salaried positions at the Historic Adventist Village in Battle Creek, Michigan — Village site director and maintenance manager. Both positions have denominational benefits and service records. Go to the website www.adventistheritage.org for details, job descriptions and applications forms or contact Donella Andersen at dandersen@adventistheritage.org or 616-291-2632.

Andrews University Seeks Qualified Applicants: Andrews University is seeking qualified Seventh-day Adventists who may fill open roles in fulfilling our mission to Seek Knowledge, Affirm Faith, and Change the World. If this is of interest to you, please check out our current openings at: andrews.edu/jobs (<https://www.andrews.edu/admres/jobs>)

Union Adventist University is seeking qualified applicants for controller. The controller is to direct and coordinate Union Adventist University accounting operations to include disbursements, accounting data, accounting records, payroll, general accounting services, and accounting operations system. They are to develop and administer accounting business policies and regulations. Please see the full job description and apply at <http://uau.edu/employment>.

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100

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President, General Conference



Pavel Goia

Evangelist, Adventist World Radio



Dr. Norman McNulty

Neurologist & Author



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For 100 years, the Battle Creek Tabernacle has stood as a beacon of faith, community, and spiritual growth in the heart of Battle Creek, Michigan. Since it was built in 1926 to replace the Dime Tabernacle, this building has been a gathering place where generations have come to worship, grow, and serve.

For more information, visit: tabernacle100years.com



Union Adventist University seeks qualified candidates for a Business Program professor. This is a full-time opportunity with excellent benefits. A professor in the Business Program participates as a member of the team preparing professionals for Christian service in the business world by providing a quality, student-oriented education that emphasizes ethics and balances practice and theory. See the full job description and apply at uau.edu/employment.

Union Adventist University seeks qualified candidates for the Art and Design Program director. This is a full-time opportunity with excellent benefits. The program director provides effective leadership for and oversees all aspects of the program, including responsibility for communication, program assessment and planning, fiscal management, and faculty evaluation/professional development while carrying a regular teaching load. See the full job description and apply at uau.edu/employment.

Union Adventist University seeks qualified candidates for a computer technician in Information Systems. This is a full-time opportunity with excellent benefits. The computer technician is responsible for all hardware and software on

desktop computers and other end user devices including security. See the job description and apply at uau.edu.

EVENTS

Andrews Academy invites alumni (those who attended/ graduated, and/or worked at EMCA/AUA/AA) to a reunion from Oct. 16–17, 2026 (third weekend in October). Honor classes this year end in 1 & 6. The honor classes in 2027 will end in 2 & 7, and in 2028, they will end in 3 & 8. Honor classes: 1946, 1951, 1956, 1961, 1966, 1971, 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2021. The class of 1976 will celebrate their golden (50th) reunion. The class of 2001 will celebrate their silver (25th) reunion.

Sharon Seventh-day Adventist Church, Inkster, Michigan — 95th church anniversary on Oct. 17, 2026. Speaker is Dr. Marcellus Robinson. For lunch, please RSVP to Daphne Springer at kimmey4@gmail.com or text 248-766.1644 by Sept. 15, 2026. For more information call Daphne 248-766-1644 or church 734-722-2313. All welcome.

14-Day Great Controversy Tour: A transformative journey through four European countries and 60 historic cities — exploring

the powerful story of faith, reformation, and God's leading through history. Destinations: Italy | Switzerland | Germany | France. This is more than a trip — it's a spiritual experience. Contact: gctours@naver.com or call 202-714-8751

SERVICES

Smarter Kids — Research shows excessive TV causes kids to have trouble paying attention and thinking clearly. But when they listen their imagination is actively engaged. So fuel their imagination! Kids grow better with radio. Encourage them to listen at: LifeTalkKids.net

Don't just retire... Live with purpose at Fletcher Park Inn. A Christian independent living retirement community, located on the campus of Fletcher Academy near Hendersonville, North Carolina. Join our family, take part in the many opportunities for staying active, volunteering, making new friends and living with a purpose. Call our marketing department at 828-209-6930 to find out more about our apartment and villa homes or visit fletcherparkinn.org

National Agricultural and Homestead Conference is coming to Camp Kulaqua, Florida, Jan. 19–24, 2027. If you are planning or would like to transition to country living, a homeschooler, a church or school with an agricultural program, farmer or homesteader—this is the conference for you! Four days of practical classes, demos and hands-on learning

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Were you or your children influenced by Bedtime or Bible Stories? I am looking for stories from your childhood or about your children I can publish complimentary and to the Glory of God for the children of the world. Stories that develop moral characters and draw them closer to Jesus Christ. Please send to: mailto:dbneuhauser@gmail.com, and we will edit them together for possible publication.

Correction:

In the July/August issue of the Lake Union Herald (p. 31), Pastor Ashley Daniels was inadvertently included among the candidates approved for ordination. The official action of the Lake Union Executive Committee was to approve Daniels for commissioning. We are pleased to provide this correction so that our published record accurately reflects the official action. This action was taken in harmony with the North American Division Working Policy and the General Conference Working Policy.

The Lake Union Herald cannot be responsible for advertisements appearing in its columns, and reserves the right to edit ads in accordance with editorial policies. The Lake Union Herald does not accept responsibility for typographical errors. Submission eligibility guidelines are listed at <http://www.lakeunionherald.org>.

September

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY

GENERAL EVENTS

- Sept. 10–14:** Thrive Mental Health & Lifestyle Medicine Symposium, Buller Hall
Sept. 16–19: Cardinals High School Invitational Volleyball & Soccer Tournament
Sept. 17–21: SciFEST
Sept. 24–27: Alumni Homecoming Weekend
Sept. 25, 12:30 p.m.: Industry Lab Summit

HOWARD PERFORMING ARTS CENTER EVENTS

For more information on the following events and to purchase tickets, call 888-467-6442 or 269-471-3560, or visit howard.andrews.edu.

- Sept. 13, 4 p.m.:** Sunday Music Series: Carla Trynchuk and Elena Braslavsky
Sept. 19, 8 p.m.: Howard Center Presents: Zariah
Sept. 26, 8 p.m.: Alumni Gala

ILLINOIS

- Sept. 13:** Adventurer Fun Day, Location TBD
Sept. 19: World Pathfinder Day, Camp Akita

INDIANA

- Sept. 4–7:** Hispanic Camp Meeting, Timber Ridge Camp

- Sept. 11–13:** Adventurer Fall Family Weekend, Timber Ridge Camp
Sept. 18–20: Brown County Blowout Mountain Bike Weekend, Timber Ridge Camp
Sept. 18–20: Public Campus Fellowship Retreat, Timber Ridge Camp

LAKE REGION

- Sept. 3–7:** Hispanic Camp Meeting, Camp Wagner

MICHIGAN

- Sept. 1–13:** Adventurer Family Camp, Camp Au Sable North Woods
Sept. 11–13: Public Campus Ministry Fall Retreat, Camp Au Sable
Sept. 11–13: Upper Peninsula Camp Meeting, Camp Sagola
Sept. 13–17: Golden Years Retreat, Camp Au Sable
Sept. 18–12: Men of Faith, Camp Au Sable North Woods
Sept. 18–20: Mother-Daughter Retreat, Camp Au Sable
Sept. 20–26: Emmanuel Training, Conference Office

- Sept. 25–27:** Family First Retreat, Camp Au Sable
Sept. 25–27: Upper Peninsula Women's Retreat, Camp Sagola

WISCONSIN

- Sept. 4–6:** Adventurer Family Camp, Camp Wakonda
Sept. 4–6: Hispanic JAHWI Youth Retreat, Green Lake Conference Center
Sept. 7: Conference Office Closed
Sept. 7–12: NAD Hispanic Advisory
Sept. 9–11: Outdoor Education, Camp Wakonda
Sept. 12: El Ceninela Day, Local Church
Sept. 18–20: Hispanic Marriage Retreat, Green Lake Conference Center

LAKE UNION

- Sept. 24–27:** Pathfinder Camporee, Berrien Springs, Michigan

Events listed were scheduled to proceed at press time. Please call ahead or check event websites before making plans to attend.

Sabbath Sunset Calendar

	Sept. 4	Sept. 11	Sept. 18	Sept. 25
Berrien Springs, Michigan	8:13	8:01	7:49	7:37
Chicago	7:18	7:06	6:54	6:42
Detroit	8:00	7:48	7:36	7:23
Indianapolis	8:10	7:59	7:48	7:36
La Crosse, Wisconsin	7:35	7:22	7:09	6:56
Lansing, Michigan	8:07	7:54	7:42	7:29
Madison, Wisconsin	7:26	7:14	7:01	6:49
Springfield, Illinois	7:24	7:13	7:02	6:50

Data procured from timeanddate.com. Error not exceeding two minutes and generally less than one minute.

My Deal with the God of “Yes”

When I was 10, the condition I had been dealing with since birth became critical. Eczema, which primarily had been affecting my skin, now was causing serious mobility challenges as well, particularly in my arms and legs. New medications, more medical appointments, and therapy sessions were required. I could no longer participate in all the activities that my friends did. My school attendance was suffering.

In addition to enduring physical pain and limitations, my spiritual life was spiraling downward. I found myself questioning God. I wondered, “Why is He allowing this to happen to me? If He is all-powerful and sees me as His child, why isn’t He healing me?”

My pastor, who is also a close family friend, asked me if I wanted to be anointed. He explained to me, “Sebastian, our God is a God of ‘Yes.’ He hears your prayer, and He will heal you. The ‘Yes’ may not come immediately, however. It may come later. But if God’s ‘Yes’ doesn’t come immediately, or even as soon as we would wish, it most certainly will come when Jesus returns and makes all things new — including your body. Our God is a God of ‘Yes.’”

Healing didn’t come immediately. The answers to my questions didn’t come right away either. Still,

I decided to make a deal with God. I said, “God, if You are who You say You are, I have two options — to be all in or all out. I choose all in. Please use me fully. Show me how You can use me.”

A few years later, one of my closest friends who was living in another state confided in me that he was experiencing severe struggles. He confessed to thinking, “Is life even worth continuing?” We stayed in touch, and I encouraged him each time

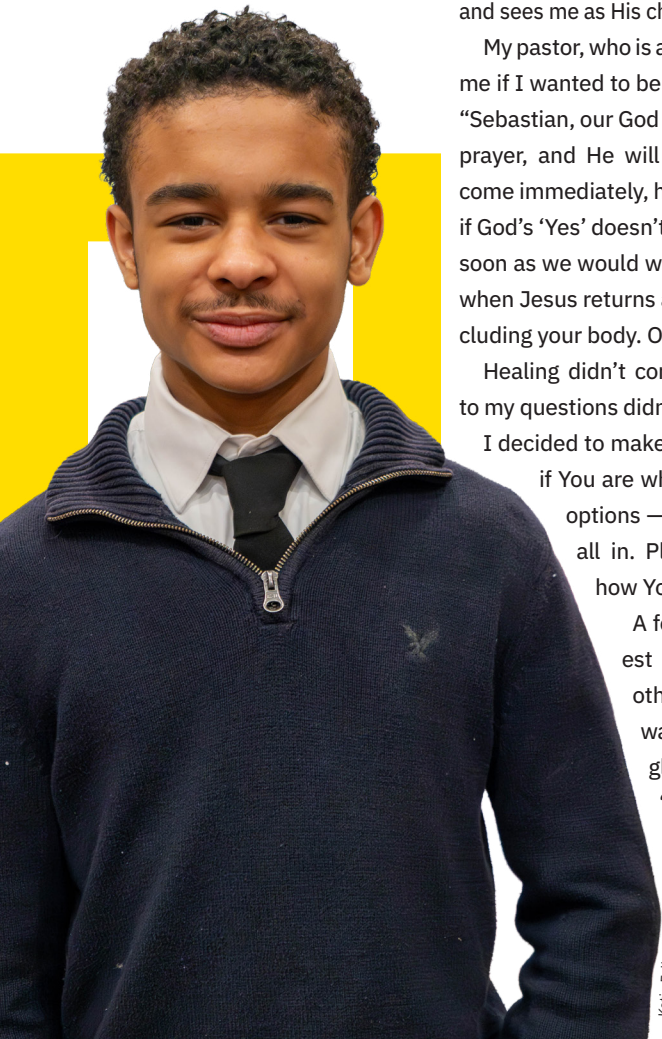
we talked. Later, he told me that witnessing my suffering and my acceptance of my condition helped him to find purpose and reasons to carry on.

My friend is doing so much better now. He loves God in a way that I never could have imagined for him before. Together, we made a pact to share our testimonies at our different schools. We ended up doing our talks very close to the same time. In our testimonies, we told our schoolmates that while we may look okay from the outside, things may be very different on the inside. This is the case for so many people. It is okay not to feel okay in this world. Everyone is dealing with something. But we don’t have to go through it alone. There is help available — from God, from friends, from those around us.

Now, as an Andrews Academy junior, it still surprises me to realize that I’ve been able to share my testimony publicly when I served as pastor of the student association. God has answered my prayer to use me.

My illness and my deal with God have taught me that I don’t have to wait until I am fully healed — physically or spiritually — to serve. I regularly remind myself that “Pain is access to testimony. It is not an excuse.” My ongoing challenges have led to renewed commitment and stronger faith. They have given me a story to share, a way of relating to others who are suffering, and a clearer picture of who my God is. My God is a God of “Yes.” ■

Sebastian Silie, as told to Beverly Matiko



God Has Shown Me Favor

Ciin Kiim is pursuing a Master of Arts in Religion with a concentration in Old Testament at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. She first studied theology but later changed her major to religion after realizing her call was to teach others about God and the Bible. That calling, and the inroads she's made within her Zomi community, were developed through both struggle and growth.

Born in Yangon, Myanmar, Ciin did not have access to formal education as a child. "We were just too poor to go to school," she said. When she moved to the United States at age 10, she had to start from the beginning. In college, her biggest challenge was writing. She failed English multiple times, but didn't give up, telling herself: "I don't care if I have to take it 10 times, I'm going to take it until I do better." Finances were also a barrier. Without scholarships, she relied on others' support. "God put people in my life to sponsor me," she said. As she prayed and reached out to others, she was able to study at Southern Adventist University before transferring to Andrews to complete her bachelor's degree.

While at Southern, Ciin started making videos about what she was learning in her classes. On Facebook Live, she began explaining biblical concepts clearly and accessibly. "I just love sharing what I've learned," she explained. Her mother shared her content on social media, allowing her videos to reach around 90,000 people. Many viewers reached out to tell her they had begun to enjoy reading the Bible because they could finally understand it thanks to her videos. Her calling to teach was clear.

Beyond online teaching, she has been involved in other ministry, speaking at churches, leading youth programs, and even participating in international evangelistic series. "What inspired me is knowing all these opportunities came because God wanted me to do it. And my involvement does make a difference — I see it."

Her journey has inspired other Zomi families to see the value of Adventist education and encouraged other women to pursue ministry as well. One woman, now enrolled at La Sierra University, told Ciin: "Seeing a Zomi woman doing theology ... it gives us the courage to start."

Though Ciin has encountered some who resist women sharing the gospel or leading, she perseveres, delighted by each preaching opportunity and sermon invite. "God is working!" She remains focused on her calling and encourages others to trust God. "Don't focus too much on what you can or can't do," she said. "God will provide a way."

Today Ciin is preparing for the future with a clear vision. After earning her master's degree, she plans to get a doctorate. She wants to reach as many people as possible, especially college students who are still forming their identity and beliefs. "I am confident in my calling because God has opened doors, given me opportunities, and shown me favor." ■

Laura Perez Hernandez is an English major at Andrews University.





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