
FRIDAY 05/29/2026

NEWSLETTER

PRESENTED BY COMMUNICATION TEAM

MIDDLETOWN SDA CHURCH

PREPARED HEARTS FOR A COMING KING





MIDDLETOWN SDA CHURCH NEWSLETTER



WELCOME TO OUR

Monthly Newsletter

Message from your Pastor

I pray that this message finds you blessed and encouraged in the Lord. As we continue through this year together, I am deeply grateful for the faithfulness, dedication, and spirit of service shown by our church family. It has been a joy to witness the many ways God is working through each ministry, program, and individual within our congregation.

God has placed before us. Through upcoming ministries, outreach efforts, and fellowship activities, we pray that lives will continue to be strengthened, encouraged, and drawn closer to Christ. I encourage each of you to remain actively involved as we labor together in service for God and our community.

Thank you for your continued prayers, unwavering support, and commitment to the mission of this church. May the Lord continue to guide, strengthen, and richly bless you and your families.

Warm regards,

Dorrage Stephens
Pastor, Middletown SDA Church

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ISSUE #4

MAY 29, 2026

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This newsletter was edited by the Communications Department!

May 29, 2026

PREPARED HEARTS FOR A COMING KING

Written by Reneé Russell

Awake and Ready

When the work of investigation shall be ended, when the cases of those who in all ages have professed to be followers of Christ have been examined and decided, then, and not till then, probation will close, and the door of mercy will be shut. Thus in the one short sentence, "They that were ready went in with Him to the marriage: and the door was shut," we are carried down through the Saviour's final ministration, to the time when the great work for man's salvation shall be completed. GC 428.2

The Lord is Coming, Are you Ready?

Let not your heart be troubled,
Ye believe in God and in Me;
In my Father's house are many
mansions,
I go to prepare a place for
thee.

The Lord is coming, are you
ready?
The Lord is coming, are you
ready?
Would your heart be right if
He came tonight?
The Lord is coming, are you
ready?

Why will you wait my brother?
Promises of God all are true;
Jesus bought your life on
Calvary's mountain,
And soon He will come again for
you.

The Lord is coming, are you
ready?
The Lord is coming, are you
ready?
Would your heart be right if He
came tonight?
The Lord is Coming, are you
ready?

Key Points:

- Preparation is necessary for Christ's return.
- Faith must be lived, not professed.
- Daily Communion with God keeps us ready.
- We need the Holy Spirit in our lives to guide our way.
- Jesus is coming soon- let us be prepared.



Prepared Hearts for a Coming King: Awake and Ready

Welcome back to the Middletown SDA Church Newsletter. We pray that each issue has been a source of encouragement and spiritual growth for you. In this issue, we will reflect on the Parable of the Ten Virgins and the preparation needed to receive our Bridegroom, Jesus Christ.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins contains many important principles that apply to our lives. Today, however, we will focus specifically on readiness for God's Kingdom. From the beginning of the parable, we see two classes of watchers: the wise and the foolish. The foolish virgins were characterized by the lack of oil in their lamps, while the wise virgins ensured that they had sufficient oil in their lamps and were fully prepared.

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept; however, at midnight, the cry rang out that the bridegroom was coming. Hearing this call, all the virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. The foolish virgins, however, realized that they did not have enough oil. While they went out to buy more, the bridegroom came. "And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut" (Matthew 25:10). Afterward, the five foolish virgins returned, crying, "Lord, Lord, open to us," but it was too late. The Lord answered them, "Verily I say unto you, I know you not."

Let us now unpack this parable...

The term virgin represents the pure faith Christians profess to have and symbolizes the two classes of believers waiting for Christ's return. Contrary to what many may think, "The foolish virgins do not represent those who are hypocritical. They had a regard for truth, they advocated the truth, they were intending to go forth to meet the bridegroom. They are attached to those who believe the truth, and go with them, having lamps, which represent a knowledge of the truth". COL ch 29 According to Matthew 25, all ten virgins awaited the coming of the bridegroom; all had lamps, and all possessed a measure of oil.

What, then, distinguished the two groups? The difference was the oil. The foolish virgins did not have an adequate supply of oil to keep their lamps burning, while the wise virgins were fully prepared. The oil, as we know it, represents the Holy Spirit. The foolish virgins failed to fully surrender themselves to His leading. As a result of their lack of spiritual preparation, they were unready when the bridegroom arrived. Preparation is a principle we practice in every aspect of life to ensure that we are equipped for the challenges ahead. Consider the preparation required for a test. A student who desires to succeed does not wait until the last moment to study. They review their notes, spend time understanding the material, ask questions, and apply themselves diligently over time. The more effort placed into preparation beforehand, the more confident and ready they are when the test finally comes.

However, the student who neglects preparation often enters the test anxious, uncertain, and unready. Though they may have attended the classes and heard the information, they failed to take the necessary steps to truly prepare themselves

The same principle applies spiritually. Many profess to know Christ and may regularly attend church, hear sermons, and read Scripture occasionally, but preparation for Christ's return requires more than outward profession. It requires daily surrender, earnest prayer, consistent study of God's Word, obedience to His will, and complete dependence on the Holy Spirit. Spiritual readiness cannot be borrowed from someone else, nor can it be developed at the last moment.

In previous issues, we learned about developing a closer walk with God, the practical ways in which we can build a relationship with Him, and the faith required to trust His Word. All of these principles are part of the preparation needed to receive Christ.

The question now becomes: Will we fully submit to the leading of the Holy Spirit and allow Him to transform our lives, or will we resist the work He desires to do within us?

As the songwriter asks:

"The Lord is coming, are you ready?
Would your heart be right if He came tonight?"

Do you have the full measure of oil needed to wait upon the Bridegroom? Do you have enough oil in your lamp to endure through the darkness until He comes?

The parable of the Ten Virgins reminds us that preparation for Christ's return is both personal and intentional. It is not enough to simply profess Christianity outwardly; we must daily seek the presence and leading of the Holy Spirit. The wise virgins were prepared because they cultivated their relationship with God before the crisis arrived.

Today, Christ is still calling His people to readiness. May we not wait until midnight to seek the oil that can only be obtained through prayer, surrender, faith, and obedience. Instead, let us prepare our hearts now, so that when the Bridegroom comes, we may be found watching, waiting, and ready to enter into His kingdom.

*The Lord is Coming.
Are you Ready?*

Health Nugget Dr. Dummett

Safe Internet Use by Children

1. Before you give your child(ren) a phone, tablet or laptop, establish rules for its use. There should be terms for use and consequences when the guidelines are broken.
2. Cellphones and tablets should be used in "common" areas of the home - not in the child's room for easy monitoring of content.
3. Teach your child not to disclose their passwords to friends.
4. Monitor the sites that they visit and games they play.
5. Monitor for cyberbullying.
6. No screens 90 minutes before bedtime.



*"Digital citizenship means using the internet in a legal, safe, respectable, and responsible way."
-Raising Children Network*

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN THE HOME AND FAMILY BY CLAUDIA DOUGLAS

On May 16, our church family embarked on a vital journey with the launch of our Renewed Series. We began with the sobering narrative of Genesis 3:1–15, which contrasts God’s perfect design for humanity with the immediate, fracturing aftermath of the Fall. This passage vividly reveals the severing effect and deep brokenness that enter our lives and families when the Law of God is broken. Yet, to fully appreciate the impact of sin, we must look back to the majestic standard set in Genesis 1. In the beginning, God spoke order into chaos, declaring of His handiwork that “it was very good” (King James Bible, 1769/2026, Genesis 1:31). It was a world built on perfect harmony, where humanity was crowned in the divine image to operate in complete moral freedom. As our series moves dynamically from the Fall, the dark shadows of moral brokenness, toward the brilliant light of redemption, healing, and unity, we are compelled to look more closely at the foundational principle: Christ must be the center of the home, and true freedom of choice (liberty of conscience) is a gift from God that can only flourish when rooted in His Divine Love.

The Christ-Centered Home is the Wellspring of Choice.

True religious liberty is not merely a legal right granted by governments; it is a living principle that flows directly from the Heart of God, a home built on, guided by, and fully reliant on the foundation of God’s love. When the seed of Divine Love takes root in the family, it transforms the household into the ultimate nursery of freedom. In *The Adventist Home*, Ellen White writes that the atmosphere of the household plays a definitive role in shaping a soul’s understanding of liberty: “The home may be a sunshine home. If the love of God is there, there will be peace and rest and joy” (White, 1952, p. 429). Conversely, she counsels parents that an overbearing, restrictive environment destroys a child’s capacity to freely choose God, noting that “harsh, overbearing words and actions create a spirit of rebellion” (White, 1952, p. 269). Commenting on the very nature of God’s government, she reminds us that “God never forces the will or the conscience; but Satan’s constant resort—to gain control of those whom he cannot otherwise seduce—is compulsion by cruelty. He seeks to restrict liberty of conscience” (*The Ministry of Healing*, White, 1905, p. 131). If we are to experience true redemption in our homes, we must reject the enemy’s methods of domestic tyranny. True faith and repentance must be chosen freely. When a family relies entirely on the drawing power of Christ, they establish a haven where the human conscience can grow without fear or restriction. We cannot force a spouse or a child to love God; we can only cultivate an environment where Divine love naturally inspires voluntary devotion.

Healing Requires an Atmosphere of Liberty

For deep emotional and spiritual healing to take root after a period of alienation, the home must become a miniature version of God’s kingdom—a sanctuary of grace where individual identity is respected. True forgiveness mimics the government of God, which operates strictly on voluntary love. Sister White beautifully noted that “the exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God’s government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority” (*Christ’s Object Lessons*, White, 1900, p. 235).

As we watched the “Need For Revival In The Marriage” video, we saw the rebuilding of the marriage and family from the ashes of brokenness. In that moving narrative, we witnessed the rebuilding of a marriage and family, God’s favor, a surrendering, and restoration. A profound illustration of healing at the intersection of the freedom to choose. The foundation of love and freedom, revealing that God operates through voluntary devotion, not coercion, Joshua 24:15 famously emphasizes choice: “Choose you this day whom ye will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

True Unity is the Harmony of Free Souls

As our Renewed series points us toward ultimate unity, we must remember that biblical unity is never synonymous with uniformity or the erasure of personal freedom. A unified family is not one where one person’s conscience has been submerged or dominated by another. In *Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 8, White directly links true spiritual unity to the preservation of individual liberty: “We are to center in Christ. But while we do this, our individual identity is not to be submerged. God does not require any man to surrender his personality to another” (White, 1904, p. 212). The ultimate goal of a restored home is to become a living, breathing object lesson of God’s love to the world. When a family respects freedom of conscience within its own walls, gathering daily around the family altar by choice rather than compulsion, it becomes an unshakeable fortress.

Standing Firm for Freedom.

As we seek to be renewed, restored, and revitalized, let us surrender our homes to God through daily prayer, praise, and worship. As we do this, we anchor the “sacred circle” under His divine protection, living out the very religious liberty we advocate for in society (White, 1952, p. 177). By honoring the freedom of conscience God has given to each of us, extending patient grace, and drawing closer to Christ, our families will find the deep healing and unshakeable unity that only the Prince of Peace can provide.

Middletown SDA Church
Presents

GIFTED HANDS



Sunday, 7 June, 2026
11AM-3PM

- ✓ Clothes and Food Distribution
- ✓ Healthy Food and Pastries
- ✓ Live plant-based meal preparation
- ✓ Health Checks
- ✓ Literature Distribution

Free

GIVEAWAY!

Fun Activities
for kids




70 Highland Ave,
Middletown NY 10940

GIFTED HANDS Family- Focused Revival Series

Join us for Gifted Hands, a special community outreach event where we use the gifts God has placed in our hands to serve and uplift others. This day of service will include health screenings, clothing and food distribution, and more as we come together to make a positive impact in our community.

Free

Location: 70 Highland Avenue, Middletown, NY 10940

Date: Sunday, June 9th

Time: 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Come experience the love of Christ through service, compassion, and community support.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS – UPCOMING EVENT – MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Community Food Pantry Drive

Join us for our upcoming food drive and help make a difference in our community. Let's work together to fight hunger and provide support to those in need. Here are the details:

- Date: First Sunday of each month
- Time: 12pm-1pm
- Location: 70 Highland Avenue, Middletown NY 10940
- Register for gift bags using the QR Code located on the flyer.
- Donations include non-perishable food items, fruits and vegetables.
- Let's make a positive impact in our community and help those in need.

MIDDLETOWN SDA CHURCH

**COMMUNITY FOOD DRIVE
HELP US SERVE OUR COMMUNITY**

Donate non-perishable food items to support individuals and families in need. Every contribution makes a difference.

1ST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH
12:00 PM TO 1:00 PM

Scan the QR Code below to sign up




@MSDAC.ORG
70 Highland Ave, Middletown NY
10940

DEPARTMENT HIGHLIGHT

WORLD ADVENTURER DAY- MAY 16, 2026 WALKING WITH JESUS



On **May 16th**, our church was blessed to celebrate World Adventurer Day under the theme **“Walking With Jesus.”** This special program reminded both children and adults of the importance of developing a personal relationship with Christ from a young age. Through songs, presentations, and interactive lessons, the children learned that Jesus desires to walk with them daily, guide their steps, and be a part of every area of their lives. The program encouraged our young Adventurers to trust Jesus, pray faithfully, and grow in His love as they continue their spiritual journey. It was truly a blessing to witness the children using their gifts and talents to glorify God.

THE TEN VIRGINS

HIDDEN PICTURE GAME

ANSWER KEY

Here are all 15 hidden pictures and where to find them!



THE 15 HIDDEN PICTURES

-  Crown
-  Key
-  Scroll
-  Heart
-  Fish
-  Dove
-  Coin
-  Leaf
-  Feather
-  Star
-  Cup
-  Book
-  Lamp
-  Bag
-  Watch

HOW TO PLAY (or Review)

Find all 15 hidden pictures in the scene. Use this answer key to check your answers!
Talk about how the wise virgins were ready, and the foolish ones were not.

ABOUT THE STORY

Five wise virgins were prepared and had oil in their lamps. Five foolish virgins did not have enough oil. When the bridegroom came, the wise virgins were ready and went in with him.



WHAT DOES THIS TEACH US?

We should always be ready for Jesus.
Fill our lamps with the oil of the Holy Spirit by praying, reading the Bible, and obeying God.
Then we will be ready when Jesus comes again!






DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What happened in this story?
2. Why do you think the foolish virgins were not ready?
3. How can we keep our lamps filled with oil every day?
4. What does "being ready" mean for us?



Be ready, because Jesus is coming!
Matthew 25:10

Thank you for reading!

MIDDLETOWN SDA CHURCH NY	  
www.msdac.org/newsletters	70 Highland Avenue, Middletown NY 10940