

MID-AMERICA SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST NEWS & INSPIRATION

SIX VIBRANT  
CONGREGATIONS  
IN MID-AMERICA

# OUTLOOK



Building Healthy  
Churches P. 5

**JUNE**2018  
outlookmag.org



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### DEAR MID-AMERICA,



**PABLO COLINDRES MORENO**  
digital media manager

When I was hired, I was told I should tell your story.

It dawned on me, dear reader, that I don't actually know most of you. Your favorite color and secret haystack ingredients remain a mystery to me.

We decided that a road trip in search of Mid-America was the best option.

There was a vision to meet and share with you, so that we could tell your story with all the quirks and nuances that make you *you*.

In March, I visited the eastern states in our union, stopping in St. Louis, Columbus, Centralia and Kansas City, Missouri; Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Hutchinson, Minnetonka and Saint Paul, Minnesota; and Guthrie Center, Iowa. Plans for a western leg are underway.

Everyone I've met over the first 2,000 miles has given me more kindness and wisdom than I deserve.

"...We don't take a trip," said John Steinbeck, "a trip takes us."

Thank you for taking me on this trip.

## OUTLOOKmag.org

NEWS AND INSPIRATION



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Cedric  
Belcher

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### ON THE COVER

This family was among the many worshipers attending the Saint Paul Karen Church on Sabbath, March 24.

More on p. 5

Photo by Pablo Colindres Moreno



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# So What Makes a Church Healthy?

Hint: It isn't necessarily numerical growth

Most folks don't think about their health—until they lose it. It's easy to think of good health as the absence of health problems. But we know better. Good health requires active choices and habits on our part. Good health isn't an accident.

Church health is not an accident, either. Healthy churches require proactive choices and habits to become and stay that way. While there is no biblical outline, description or prescription for what constitutes a healthy church, it seems to me that Scripture does describe an environment in the church that received God's blessing.

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking

of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:42-47 NIV).

## Four foundational factors

Of course, 2018 is a different time and place than first-century Palestine; but even so, there are principles we can glean from this passage that might be helpful:

**1. They were devoted to the apostles' teaching.** They listened to those who had been with Jesus and knew Him firsthand. A lot of voices clamor for attention these days, including many who claim to be speaking the *real truth*, but who are really campaigning for *their* version

of truth. When churches listen to the wrong voices, they get off track theologically and health immediately suffers.

**2. They were devoted to fellowship.** They loved being together! They went out of their way to be together, and especially seemed to enjoy opening their homes to one another and eating together. They were unselfish and giving. They did more than just say they loved each other—they proved it by giving tangible gifts.

**3. They were devoted to the breaking of bread together.** Some only see an allusion here to a simple meal, but many see in these words a description of the celebration of the Lord's supper right in their homes. So precious was the celebration of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus that this special meal became a staple part of every meal. I see in this a special focus on the life, person and work of Jesus. He was central to their way of life.

**4. They were devoted to prayer.** Prayer was as natural to them as breathing,

and evidently they were praying a lot. So important was it to them to stay close to the heart of God that they devoted themselves to these frequent conversations with the Almighty.

What I like most about this passage is the blessing found in the last sentence: "And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

Because the early church was about the business of staying devoted to true teaching, fellowship, celebration of Jesus and to prayer, the Lord deemed them to be a safe place where He could bring in new people.

Could it be that the Lord is willing to be our evangelist if we will model the healthy choices and habits of the early church? That could just turn our world upside down!

### MIC THURBER

is ministerial director for the Mid-America Union.



# Building Healthy Churches

OUTLOOK's digital media manager Pablo Colindres Moreno recently set out on a road trip to visit Adventist churches and schools in Mid-America that were recommended by local conference officials for their spiritual health and vibrancy. In the following pages we feature the five congregations he met with, plus the Colorado Springs Church visited by Rocky Mountain Conference communication director Rajmund Dabrowski. (Watch for the school stories next month.)

*To read the full length stories and see more photos, visit [bit.ly/road-stories](http://bit.ly/road-stories)*

Photos: Pablo Colindres Moreno



# Saint Paul Karen Church

Photos: Pablo Colindres Moreno



Elder Kyaw Pae and Eh Moo stand at the door, where their first duty on Sabbath morning is welcoming members to Sabbath school.

In a quiet neighborhood in Saint Paul, Minnesota, an overcrowded parking lot is the first sign you're in the right place. The second sign you've made it to your destination is the actual sign by the building that reads "Saint Paul Karen Seventh-day Adventist Church" in two languages.

There are actually three languages spoken inside, representing two different ethnic groups from Myanmar, formerly Burma. The vast majority are Karen (pronounced kah-REN), but a sizable group of Bamar have also joined. The two groups speak distinct languages—Karen and Burmese. English, mostly spoken by the youth, is the only common tongue in the building.

Over 98 percent of the

members are refugees displaced by ongoing civil war, and some have spent 10 years or more in refugee camps around the world.

At the door, two greeters extend their hands and offer beaming smiles. Quickly, they summon a young deacon to translate. "Welcome. Happy Sabbath!" he says and then becomes the unofficial tour guide.

Down a flight of stairs and to the left—in the largest room—the youth meet. "The youth here range from eighth grade to college age," he says. "But the best part is when they sing at the end."

There are at least three more classrooms filled to the brim with children, all in different stages of arts and crafts or learning new songs,

only stopping to smile for the camera.

"Before we acquired the building, we all met in the fellowship hall of another church," a deacon explains. "This building allows us to keep the noise down."

Although this building was acquired only recently, it is already overflowing with people. The Barma meet for Sabbath school in the fellowship hall, where the customary potluck meal will be enjoyed later.

## MAKING A BEAUTIFUL NOISE

Senior pastor See Nay, wearing a black suit, white shirt and red tie, offers more insights into the life of this church community he has served for seven years. "I

think the unity in this church is the key thing that makes me happy to be here," he says. "Everyone works together toward a shared goal. In Saint Paul there are many Burmese," he continues, his smile wide. "That is a potential for spreading the gospel."

Armed with this knowledge, the church has set an ambitious goal to plant three new churches in Minnesota by 2019. "We look forward to growing, and that is exciting," says Pastor See Nay.

They are also launching 10 small groups in the coming months. See Nay states that 90 percent of the members attend every week. "When they miss, we assign small groups to visit them," he says. "If a young person misses church, the youth group visits them and holds the worship service at that person's house." Unconventional? Maybe, but it forges relationships.

According to Pastor See Nay, part of the magic that keeps the youth active is the skills they possess. "I can't imagine what [the apostle] Paul would do if he were alive today," he chuckles. "How the youth use their social media to share the gospel—I am really proud of them."

At that moment, the youth group starts singing. Three guitars and over 50 voices fill the air as the other classrooms dismiss and all three languages meld with the music from below. What a beautiful noise. -PC **O**

# Northside St. Louis Church

About 15 miles from the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, Missouri, is a sign by a large brown church that reads:

BIBLE BASED  
POWERHOUSE PREACHING  
EVERY SAT 11 AM  
WED 7 PM

Cars fill up parking spots 15 minutes before Sabbath school begins. There will be a greeter at the door until the church closes six hours later. At Northside Adventist Church, hospitality is poured out on every guest and member. Entering the lobby, one can expect at least 10 handshakes and hugs, along with invitations to stay for the fellowship meal following the service.

Today Pastor Cedric Belcher is out of town, wearing one of the many hats required of his profession, and Elder Kenneth Howard is overseeing operations. Children who attend the attached elementary school during the week are inspecting their spring project: newly hatched chicks, chirping their hunger. Soon Sabbath school starts in earnest and groups engage in lively discussion.

Once divine worship begins, there is almost uninterrupted piano music in the background. The choir pulls out all the stops, their energetic and emotional singing paving the way for the sermon,



The deaconess duo greets worshippers at the door of the sanctuary, forming part of the army of friendly faces at every door.

which is about current trends in Christianity. The message turns from dire to hopeful, though, and the call to building stronger community inside and outside church walls is met with praise.

The church seems a little empty today and Elder Howard notes that their youth are in Kansas City with other youth leaders from across the Central States Conference for AY training. “The church is much more lively when they’re around,” he adds.

This congregation greatly values their youth. A youth elder is nominated and serves on the elders’ committee. Community rallies across the city involving service trips, Pathfinders,

drumline parades and sports are commonplace.

## FOCUSING ON MISSION

Northside Church has identified five key points that they believe denote a healthy community of believers: vibrant worship, concern for the lost, fellowship, vision and connectivity to God. At the beginning of each service, the whole church repeats their mission statement in unison. “It helps us stay focused on the mission and vision—that we’re here not just as a church *inside*, but as a church *inside and outside*,” Elder Howard explains. “There is a lot of pain in the community and we need to be there for the people who

are hurting.”

At community fests, the church sets up booths for meeting people’s needs including food, prayer and game stations for interaction with members. The church also assigns members to visit those who have not been attending regularly. Contact information for shut-in and sick members is included in the bulletin so other members can reach out to them.

Elder Howard says he loves how almost everyone who attends becomes involved in an active role, no matter how far back in the church they sat when they first joined. “The church was built thinking about family,” he says, with a smile. “This is a family.” -PC **0**

# Sioux Falls Church

Photos: Courtesy Sioux Falls Church



The Sioux Falls Church is committed to growing their youth, placing their elementary school squarely at the front of community outreach efforts. They graduated their first student in May.

**The Church:** Hovering around the 300-member mark, the Adventist church is located just east of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and operates a radio station and a school with eight students. A portion of the regular attendees drive in from 35-45 miles away, which can impact church activities. Both the city of Sioux Falls and the Adventist church are quite ethnically diverse—unusual for the Dakotas.

**The Panel:** Church leaders Chad Spanos (elder), Mark Blackburn (elder), Colette Doss (head elder), Larry Christensen (elder), Dragos Profir (pastor) embark on a candid, deeply reflective round-table conversation with *OUTLOOK*'s Pablo Colindres Moreno.

**The Initial Question:** How do the measures we use to

describe “what a healthy church should be” apply to a realistic church journey?

**Mark Blackburn:** I think a healthy church is one that has great community; we feel like we belong here. I can come here and know my kids will be looked after. We have a lot of genuine people who care for one another. It's more than just “church on Sabbath.”

**Colette Doss:** A healthy church is one where everybody feels safe—safe to worship, safe to speak with one another.

**Larry Christensen:** It's important to be aware of our problems to be a healthy church. We are looking for a more complete and better picture of what God is like.

**Doss:** We are working on becoming healthy here, and the healthier we are

inside the more work we can do in the community.

**Pablo Colindres Moreno:** Like a magnet effect. How does that fit into the mission of your church?

**Chad Spanos:** I think it's critical. If you do not have a safe space, you can reach people outside, but if you invite them in, it doesn't work.

**Dragos Profir:** Our purpose is to help people on their life's journey to grow closer to God. A “one size fits all” is not going to work.

**Colindres:** Our theme this year at the *OUTLOOK* is “Building the Body of Christ.” I like to think that means “building community.” How is your church doing that?

**Profir:** To me, the most amazing thing is when a Sabbath school group has

a hard time ending their study in time for worship or people fellowship in the sanctuary long after worship—because there is community. Church here doesn't end at 12 or 12:30.

**Christensen:** I think the key to outreach is not necessarily *Can we make Adventists out of everybody?* but *Can we help them be better children of God?*

**Colindres:** What about this church keeps you coming back, and what gives you hope?

**Blackburn:** I like to say excellence is a habit, not an action. Here, the warm and welcoming environment has led some of my secular friends to start attending out of the blue.

**Profir:** Going back to the theme of safety, like the cities of refuge in the Bible, we want to be a church of safety, of hope. God brought us here not out of what we can bring, but because this is home. The congregation is in good hands because of everyone who is here. -PC 0

Read the full interview: [outlookmag.org/sioux-falls-interview](http://outlookmag.org/sioux-falls-interview)

# Guthrie Center Church



Photos: Courtesy Guthrie Center Church

“We get along with each other,” says Pastor Shafer. “So many churches are pastor-driven where the pastor says what to do—but this church, they just do it.”

One hour west of Des Moines, Iowa, 12 people meet in the basement of a small white building at the top of a hill to eat haystacks and homemade cupcakes. Only a couple of church members are missing during this Sabbath afternoon rendezvous. The church is busily planning to host the town of Guthrie Center at their church twice over the next few days.

The Guthrie Center Adventist Church is one of 11 churches serving a population of just over 1,500. Soon after his arrival, Pastor Steven Shafer joined the local association of churches, giving the congregation a chance to become more involved in the town’s social life.

This year, for Holy Week celebrations across town, the association arranged open-to-the-public prayer breakfasts each morning at different churches, and Guthrie Center Adventist

Church was on the list for Tuesday. “Everybody has to help—you can’t hide as in a big church,” says head elder Steve Bascom, “and I appreciate that I have a job and that everyone helps.”

The underlying mission of the church has been its community involvement. Ten years ago several members attended a town hall meeting hosted by the Iowa-Missouri Conference. There, Elder Dean Coridan challenged attendees to take on “evange-living,” or evangelizing not with words, but with actions.

Consequently, the Guthrie Center Church decided to form an evange-living committee and changed their evangelistic approach to “friendship ministry.”

The first activity they planned was an agape feast, which was so successful that they still hold them regularly. In fact, they’re hosting one the next day. Other projects include

working closely with the community food bank, practicing a Something Else Sabbath School, community baby showers for needy mothers, Financial Peace seminars, depression seminars, baking and giving every household in Guthrie Center a loaf of bread, a cooking school, and the list goes on.

## SERVING UP LOVE

“I feel like this church always errs on the side of love,” says Emily Shafer, Pastor Shafer’s wife. “A visitor can’t come here and not have several people come up to them and say, ‘I’m so glad you’re here today!’”

There is, however, a slight challenge over which the Guthrie Center church has no control. In fact, many of the communities in the Mid-America Union territory have this problem, and it’s not a spiritual issue. It’s a demographic issue.

Guthrie County is the second oldest county in Iowa—not by date of establishment, but by age. Guthrie Center’s population has been on a downward trend and is now equal to the population count in the 1910s. Simply stated, this town is disappearing.

The church acknowledges that reality. “Our goal is that if there’s one more person in Guthrie County searching for the truth, we need to find that person,” says head deacon Del Rochholz. “Whether they end up coming to church here is not the goal. The goal is to get them ready for the second coming.”

The next day is business as usual. Healthy food is set on tables with simple decorations, ready to receive the community. In the end, 80 people, most of whom are not members of this church, attend the agape feast. And it is truly a feast of love. -PC **O**

# Iglesia Hispana de Garden City

Fotos: Cortesía de la Iglesia Hispana de Garden City



Pastor Ruber Álvarez (black jacket) records a weekly sermon broadcast. Pathfinder Sabbath at the Garden City Church is a lively event. *Read the English version of this article at [outlookmag.org/garden-city-hispanic-church](http://outlookmag.org/garden-city-hispanic-church)*

La iglesia hispana de Garden City, Kansas, está a punto de dedicar un nuevo templo.

Bueno, no se trata de un templo propio para la iglesia de Garden City. Más bien, esta nueva congregación en un pueblo lejano es el fruto de los esfuerzos de Garden City.

“Nos sentimos muy felices por colaborar en la causa de Jesucristo y aportar un granito de arena en la gran playa de la salvación,” nos cuenta el pastor Ruber Álvarez. “Nuestra filosofía la resumimos en una sola palabra, *vivangelismo*, o sea predicamos con nuestra vida y ejemplo, también que todo lo que hacemos y programamos tiene que oler y saber a evangelismo.”

La iglesia se dedica a proveer servicios a la comunidad, con un enfoque en la juventud y la demostración de compasión por los que sufren.

“Nos conectamos con

la comunidad a través de varios ministerios,” dice Álvarez. “Tenemos un club de matrimonios mensual. Nos reunimos con parejas de la comunidad y celebramos los aniversarios, ofrecemos clases de consejería y comemos juntos.”

También realizan ferias de salud para ofrecer servicios gratuitos a la comunidad.

Quizá la mayor oportunidad del vivangelismo proviene de la ciudad. Garden City es uno de los centros más importantes de medios de comunicación en el suroeste de Kansas. “Cada domingo predicamos en la emisora de radio más potente de la ciudad y muchos son los que dan testimonio de la ayuda que Cristo les brinda a través de nuestro programa.”

Todo esto lo llevan a cabo el equipo de grupos pequeños de la iglesia. “Nuestra visión es una iglesia triunfante que se fortalece y multiplica a través

de los grupos pequeños,” dice Álvarez. “Nuestra misión es predicar el evangelio para ver crecer el Reino de Dios, siendo un faro que ilumina y guía a todos a los pies de Cristo Jesús.”

Con esto en mente, han formado varios grupos pequeños para jóvenes liderados por los jóvenes. Al mismo tiempo, crearon la federación J.A., para que los jóvenes puedan planear y realizar congresos, actividades y desarrollar los clubes de aventureros, conquistadores y guías mayores.

“En la iglesia tenemos también el club de discípulos, donde cada familia tiene a su cargo a una familia nueva en la fe o una que está débil,” relata el pastor. “Y el objetivo es que una vez fortalecidas estas puedan atender a otra familia, mientras sus mentores pasan a tomar a una nueva familia.”

Aunque el crecimiento no siempre es cómodo, Álvarez

considera la iglesia un grupo saludable.

“Consideramos que una iglesia saludable es la que crece, se desarrolla, mantiene vivos y activos a todos sus miembros, sintiéndose importantes y útiles en la causa mientras comparten su fe con otros,” dice Álvarez.

Ha sido una jornada larga, pero el 21 de abril 36 miembros nuevos se reunirán por primera vez para dedicar un nuevo templo. Esto viene, como dice el pastor Álvarez, “Como fruto de todo ese esfuerzo de Dios al cual nos unimos.”

No es difícil encontrar iglesias que parezcan exitosas. Pero cuando una iglesia huele y sabe al evangelismo—perdón, vivangelismo—sus frutos son abundantes. **0**

Pablo Colindres Moreno maneja las redes sociales y contenido digital para la Unión de América.

# Colorado Springs Central Church



Photos: Courtesy Colorado Springs Church

Re-establishing church fellowship, valuing diversity and empowering their laity has made Colorado Springs Central Church a healthy congregation.

A weathered stone plaque on the corner of Colorado Springs Central Church reveals that its beginnings date back to 1890. In those early days, James and Ellen White, among other Adventist pioneers, visited the area. Church history lists Susan Bysong Shaw as the first Adventist in Colorado and one of six charter members at Colorado Springs.

From the small nucleus of that first congregation, today's church on Union Boulevard, built in 1966, is the congregation's third home. Mike Maldonado, who has pastored there nearly 10 years, says average Sabbath attendance is currently around 300.

However, before Pastor Mike arrived, the church had experienced several years of declining health. "Morale was very low and attendance was very low," he recalls. "There was a lack of trust and people weren't

doing stuff together. My wife and I took the approach that what the church needed more than anything else was tender love and care."

They started establishing relationships, hosting meals and creating social activities. Little by little, people began to get reacquainted and trust one another.

Pastor Mike believes that re-establishing community and creating a safe place was key to today's healthy church. "In fact, that's our vision statement—to create a safe environment for seekers and disciples, a place to grow in their relationship with Christ," he states.

## EMPOWERING THE DIVERSE LAITY

Maldonado notes that many churches sink into a pattern with labels such as "middle-aged" and "Anglo-Saxon." But Pastor Mike says instead of sending

people to the Black church, the Spanish church, or the Korean church, he tells them, "We want you here as part of our family."

To celebrate their diversity, the church instituted an annual International Sabbath, which is their largest service of the year with nearly 450 attending. People wear their native clothing and the service is conducted in multiple languages.

Local leaders also made the decision not to target the young or the old. Instead, they experimented to see if all age groups could worship together peacefully. Maldonado says that with at least 40 percent of the congregation being young adults and youth, leaders have been very intentional about making it an inclusive church.

Consequently, the church is consistently growing. Their philosophy of evangelism is connecting with people at every possible event.

Each Sabbath is an evangelistic outreach, with the pastor and elders connecting with visitors in the hallways, pews and classrooms.

Pastor Mike's associate, Marcia Armstead, asks for names and email addresses of those who visit and follows up the next day, inviting them to another program. In addition, partnerships with service organizations and feeding the poor and homeless bring people to the church.

Maldonado points out, with a broad smile on his face, that the biggest factor in their church growth is "just trusting my leaders without micromanaging and without having to dictate. Lay leaders are put in charge and that is really what has grown the church." **O**

Rajmund Dabrowski is communication director for the Rocky Mountain Conference.

## Pastor Claval Hunter Inducted into Morehouse MLK Board of Preachers

**C**ongratulations to **Claval Hunter**, director of Adventist Community Services for the Central States Conference and senior pastor for Tabernacle of Praise Church in St. Louis, Missouri. On Thursday, April 5, Hunter was inducted into the distinguished Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. International Board of Preachers in Atlanta, Georgia.

Pastor Hunter commented, "It is an honor to be

recognized for the work God has commissioned me to do; to serve my community, be a voice for the voiceless, and bring hope by spreading the gospel of Christ, as Dr. King and many great leaders did before me. I pray to not only continue in that legacy, but to also inspire the generation that will come after me."

### Following the ideals of a great leader

The Martin Luther King

Jr. College of Ministers and Laity was established in 1985 by **Dr. Lawrence Edward Carter Sr.**, dean of Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel and **Dr. Hugh Gloster**. It is intended to honor individuals whose life and work exemplify the ethical ideals promoted by the college's most prominent alumnus, Martin Luther King Jr.

The Board of Preachers is comprised of ordained clergy from the Christian tradition

as well as faith leaders (rab- bis, imams, priests, minis- ters) from a wide array of global spiritual and ethical traditions. These diverse individuals have exhibited a commitment and prom- ise for using their religious positions of leadership to promote peace, tolerance, interfaith understanding, healing, reconciliation, nonviolence, moral cos- mopolitan social progress, agapeic justice and care for the ecosystem.

Photos: Courtesy Central States Conference



Claval Hunter, who pastors the Tabernacle of Praise Church in St. Louis, was inducted into the Morehouse College MLK Jr. International Board of Preachers on April 5. The goals of this group include promoting peace, interfaith understanding and caring for the ecosystem.

## Inspiring leadership by serving

Pastor Hunter, who holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in ministerial theology from Oakwood University and a Master of Divinity degree from Andrews University Theological Seminary, says his ministerial purpose is to give spiritual

and inspirational servant leadership to the church. He accomplishes this through challenging preaching, biblical teaching and meaningful worship so people will be moved to apply their faith to their everyday lives.

Hunter possesses a pastoral heart filled with compassion, empathy, wisdom, understanding

and Christ-like love, eagerly desiring to visit and pray with and for God's people. He is committed to being a person of prayer, a servant leader, a community activist, a team player, a visionary leader and is committed to the truths of the Bible.

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Brittany Winkfield is communication director for the Central States Conference.

Claval Hunter shakes hands with Dr. Lawrence Edward Carter Sr., dean of Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel, after the induction ceremony.



## Thompson Delivers Bananas Weekly to Local Homeless Shelter

Photos: Jacquie Biloff



**Thomas (Tommy) Thompson** of Bismarck, North Dakota, has been delivering fruit to the Ruth Meiers Hospitality House for so many years he is now known as the “banana man.” It began when the Bismarck Church, where he is a member, sold fruit to the community. They purchased semi-loads of fruit

Tommy Thompson, also known as the banana man, delivers 20 pounds of bananas every Friday to the Ruth Meiers Hospitality House in Bismarck, North Dakota.

from Texas or Florida at a discounted price and sold them to earn money for the church school.

At that time, Thompson helped load and deliver fruit. If there was fruit that did not sell, he would deliver it to the homeless shelter in town, the Ruth Meiers Hospitality House.

“When the fruit program ended, I wondered what I could do for the homeless

shelter,” says Thompson. “I called them and asked if they could use bananas. They said they could so I have been delivering 20 pounds of bananas once a week ever since. It has been ...” Thompson pauses, “I don’t know how many years.”

It is not a coincidence Thompson chose bananas as the fruit to deliver. While attending Union College years before, Thompson worked in a distribution plant in Lincoln, Nebraska. “Two or three times a week they would send me and two or three other college students into the basement to unload bananas that came in by train,” he explains.

The train car was full of 140-150 pound stalks of

bananas. Thompson and his coworkers would throw the stalks on their shoulders and carry them to a location where “hands” of bananas were broken from the stalks and put in 40 pound boxes. These were stacked four high and shipped to different store locations around the Midwest.

“I wish I could carry that much now,” Thompson says with a smile. At 89 years old, he no longer carries whole stalks of bananas, but the banana man does faithfully deliver bananas to the Ruth Meiers Hospitality House every week.

Stories on this page were written by Jacquie Biloff, communication director for the Dakota Conference.

## Werth Receives Distinguished Service Award

The North Dakota Crop Improvement Association recently honored **Sandy Werth** with a Distinguished Service Award. An article by Tony

Bender published in the *Ashley Tribune* and *Wishek Star* explains, “The award is presented to an individual who has given her time and service to the State Seed Department and to her community.”

Werth and her husband **Marlow** of Lehr, North Dakota, have been in the certified seed business for over 40 years, besides farming “on the side.” Werth has

also held a number of local positions, including currently serving on the North Dakota State University Carrington Research Extension Center Advisory Board, previously serving on the McIntosh Farm Service Agency Board, on the Lehr city council, as the president of the North Dakota School Food Service Association, as head cook at the Lehr public school, and dedicating numerous years as

fire chief in Lehr.

Even this tells only part of her story. Ten years ago Werth was told she only had a 20 percent chance to live without a stem cell transplant. Fortunately, though, her brother was an exact match.

“Having cancer was horrible,” says Werth, “but it brought me much closer to Christ. I look at each day as a gift. I just ask Him to use me for whatever He would like.” With the heart of a servant, Werth is still asking Christ, “What would you have me to do?”



Sandy Werth (left) received the Distinguished Service Award from Blake Inman, president of North Dakota Crop Improvement Association.

# DAA Students Lighten the Load on Community Service Day

High school students often want to do something big—something that provides recognition that they are able to step out and take on the world. Sometimes the focus is so much on making an impact that the importance of little things is overshadowed.

But my grandma always said, “Many hands make light work,” and how true this is. Dakota Adventist Academy’s community service day was all about the little things that add up to something big.

United Way owns an emergency shelter in downtown Bismarck, North Dakota, that helps families get back on their feet. DAA paired up with United Way to give

this facility a spring cleaning: doing laundry, scrubbing, and organizing and inventorying supplies.

Some students and staff spent the day working at the laundromat. Customers commented that even after a full day the group was still smiling and enjoying working together. It would have taken the few who work at the Sunrise Shelter weeks to do the same amount of work.

At another site, DAA’s construction class students used their skills to help **Jeana Eszler**, the academy’s registrar, who has chosen to stay home with her newborn son next school year. Since she has given so much of her time to DAA’s students,

they wanted to give back by helping her and her husband get their new home ready to move into. Plaster and lath had to come down, and walls were braced and taken down, then rebuilt to configure to the new layout. DAA students loved being part of building Eszler’s future with her family.

Sometimes it is not about

stepping out and taking on the world, but rather about working to create a collaborative impact. The many hands of students and staff were able to lighten the workload on community service day, creating an impact together.

Tracy Peterson is a recruiter for Dakota Adventist Academy.

Students work with United Way to wash sheets and organize and clean the laundromat (top and bottom right). The construction class prepares the former DAA registrar’s new home for move-in (below).



Photos: Tracy Peterson



# Running the Race Even When Our Feet Don't Work

I met Trent Dubberke at camp meeting two years ago.

He was about to participate in the annual 5K run/walk. He rolled up to the starting line in a manually powered wheelchair and enthusiastically sped off down the road.

The route takes participants up and down several small hills. One-by-one I watched the runners cross the finish line. Then the walkers. Then finally—eventually—Trent. His arm strength had long been spent, yet he had somehow willed himself to push on with a determination that nearly catapulted his slender frame out of the chair with each thrust of the wheels. It didn't matter to him that he had finished last. What mattered was that he had finished.

It wasn't always like this.

Trent grew up in Beaman, Iowa. He had what most would consider a normal childhood. He was outgoing, active and enjoyed sports. In high school Trent participated in hockey, football, wrestling, track, dance, speech and musicals. He dreamed of being a professional hockey player and had even been invited to try out for a USHL hockey team.

## The night everything changed

On June 14, 2004 while watching a movie at his grandparents' house, Trent's right shoulder started to cramp. The pain grew more



Randy Hamdleris

Trent crosses the finish line at the 5K run/walk during the 2017 Iowa-Missouri camp meeting.

intense until what felt like electricity shot down his arm and across his chest. Thinking he was experiencing a heart attack, Trent's grandparents rushed him to the emergency room. Because his heart seemed fine, the doctors were convinced it was an anxiety attack and sent him home with something to help him sleep.

A few hours later, however, Trent was back in the ER. He could feel his limbs growing heavy and numb, and within minutes he lost feeling and movement throughout his body. An MRI confirmed that Trent, at the age of 17, had suffered a spinal stroke.

"I was fully paralyzed from the neck down," he said.

"Doctors had no idea how much movement I'd get back, if any."

## The long road to recovery

Trent spent two weeks in intensive care, followed by six months of physical rehabilitation. He regained some movement in his arms and hands, but not enough to care for himself.

"My parents had to help me with everything," he said. "Dressing, getting in and out of bed and my chair, driving me places, going to the bathroom, showering, cooking—everything. I honestly thought it was going to be like that for the rest of my life."

In 2010 Trent was

encouraged by his mom and doctors to attend a Christian wheelchair sports camp in Minnesota. Though he had some reservations, Trent agreed to go.

"For the first time since my injury, I didn't feel like a minority or out of place," he said. "I met people who were close to my age who had similar experiences. What separated them from me, though, was that they never let that stop them from living life and being active."

Trent had been convinced he would not see any further improvement at that point, but at the wheelchair camp he found encouragement to push himself to live a fuller, more independent life.

“During those five days my life took a turn toward a brighter future,” he said. “I did things I never thought were possible: water skiing, scuba diving, playing softball, paintball, [hand-powered] biking, rope climbing, horseback riding, tennis, dodge ball and so much more!”

This newfound determination led to other improvements at home. Trent, who had previously been confined to his power wheelchair, began using a manual chair full time. He worked on transferring in and out of the chair until he perfected it. He figured out how to dress himself and do other tasks and eventually decided to live on his own.

Trent returns to the wheelchair camp each year with a whole list of improvements and has become a source of hope and encouragement for others there.

### Beyond the physical

Trent believes God allowed this trial to come into his life to save him.

He grew up in a Christian home but struggled to make his family’s faith his own. Like many teenagers, he experimented with drugs and alcohol. As he grew older, Trent became convinced that God didn’t exist.

In 2014 his mom learned about an Adventist prophecy seminar being held at Marshalltown Community

College in Marshalltown, Iowa, where Trent was then a student. She asked Trent to go with her, but he wasn’t interested. When she couldn’t find anyone else to go with her, however, Trent agreed to go.

“The first study was on Daniel 2, and I was blown away!” he said. “I’m a huge history buff, so I was familiar with the four kingdoms. I also knew that no man could possibly predict the future with that much accuracy on his own.”

Trent and his mom kept coming back night after night, and God began to change him. He gave up drugs and alcohol, and he made other significant changes to his diet and lifestyle. Trent and his mom began attending the Marshalltown Church after the series was over and were both baptized on June 28 of that year.

Trent now regularly preaches at his church and has been a guest speaker at several other Adventist churches in the area. He plans to attend Southern Adventist University to obtain a theology degree.

### New possibilities for a full recovery

When I reconnected with Trent at camp meeting last year, he again lined up to compete in the 5K run/walk. This time, however, he was using a hand-powered recumbent trike and finished far from last place.

He introduced me to his wife of just over a month, **Suzy**. They met online a couple years earlier and, after studying the Bible together, had started dating. Suzy has helped Trent push himself even further, and for the first time in 14 years there are signs of hope of a full recovery. Through the power of prayer and sheer determination, Trent has regained limited use of his legs.

There’s an intensive physical therapy program in Minnesota that Trent hopes to participate in this summer. It’s being headed up by the physical therapist Trent had when he was first injured, and she believes she can help him. Trent has started raising funds so he can participate.

“I truly believe it will greatly improve my lifestyle, further my independence and increase my strength,” he said. “It will also allow me to take the gospel forward into places that would otherwise be inaccessible to me.”

Please keep Trent in your prayers. He may or may not experience a full recovery this side of heaven, but in either case I’m confident I will see him at camp meeting once again as he takes his place at the starting line for the 5K run/walk. Trent is an example to all of us to always keep striving—physically, mentally and spiritually—until, like Paul, we can say “I have fought the good fight, I have

finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Tim. 4:7, NIV).

Randy Harmdierks is communication director for the Iowa-Missouri Conference.

If you would like to connect with Trent, contact him at 641.751.5408 or [trentdubb@gmail.com](mailto:trentdubb@gmail.com).

To help Trent with his therapy goal, visit [bit.ly/TrentFund](http://bit.ly/TrentFund).

## Save the Date

Ladies, mark your calendars! The IA-MO Conference Women’s Ministries department invites you to attend a Women’s Leadership Training Weekend.

**When:** July 13-14

**Where:** Kansas City Central Church

**For more info** call the conference at 515.223.1197 x2116 or visit [imsda.org/women](http://imsda.org/women).

# SEVEN: A Community Striving to Love God and People More



What began as a small group Bible study in youth pastor Kyle Smith's home has grown into about 80 people from the community bringing in the Sabbath together weekly.

It began as a small group Bible study at our home in Kansas City. My wife **Annie** and I invited young adults into our home for food and fellowship with the goal of being a place to meet other young adults and live life with a community. However, due to scheduling conflicts, attendance began to wane, and we decided to take a break from the Bible study and relaunch in the summer of 2017.

When we started the Bible study again, people poured in, not just from New Haven, where I pastor, but from other Kansas City churches. There were soon too many people for our home, so we began meeting in the chapel at New Haven. Thirty people attended on a weekly basis and soon it was apparent the small group Bible study format wouldn't work any longer. We needed to find a new way to keep our community together.

A member at our church, **Kyla McAuliffe**, reached out to me and shared her vision for starting a Friday night worship service open to the community. Her words were an answer to our prayers. We built a team and recruited people of all ages to lead the different areas such as the worship team, speakers, hospitality and greeters.

### Love more

The name SEVEN was chosen because we want to focus on bringing in the Sabbath together. The vision of SEVEN is simple: Love more. We want to be a community striving to love God and love people more, finding ways to build community that focuses on keeping Jesus' commandment in Luke 10:27: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart...and love your neighbor as yourself."

SEVEN began on Jan. 5,

2018, and God has done amazing things. About 80 people attend each Friday and a glance at the audience shows people of all ages, people from almost every Adventist church in Kansas City and people from other Christian churches as well. There is even a pastor from the Church of God (Seventh Day) who brings his family of five each week to welcome in the Sabbath with us. It has been amazing to see the reach SEVEN has had in our community.

SEVEN isn't perfect—we are still learning how to love more. Yet I am hopeful for the future and know that if we stay faithful to the vision Christ has given us, He will use us for great things.

Kyle Smith serves as youth pastor at New Haven Church in Overland Park, Kansas.

## Reaching Out to Mothers in Colby, Kansas

Last fall, **Debbie Goff** approached the women's ministries group in Colby, Kansas, with a challenge: *Do you want to do something for your own growth or do you want to facilitate growth in the community?*

The answer came in the form of a basket. The group decided they wanted to minister to young moms and their children. **Mary**

**Lou Erwin**, a member of the group, suggested putting together baskets to give to new moms at the local hospital. Erwin obtained statistics on how many babies were born at the hospital monthly, and the group set the goal of maintaining 20 baskets at the hospital.

Each basket is filled with necessary items for a baby such as a onesie, a

thermometer and a bib, plus a small box of chocolates for the mom and a card from the group.

Through this ministry, the group has found that not only are they ministering to their community but they are growing personally in Christ as well.

Stephanie Gottfried is publications director for the Kansas-Nebraska Conference.



Photos: Courtesy Kansas-Nebraska Conference

## Beazley Ordained to Ministry

**J**oe Beazley was ordained to the ministry February 3 at New Life Community Church in Olathe, Kansas. Beazley joined the Kansas-Nebraska Conference in 2015 as pastor for the Olathe, Osawatomie and Ottawa churches after relocating to be closer to his children.

The majority of Beazley's formative years were spent in California, where he attended Pacific Union College Preparatory School until his senior year, when his father injured his back. Beazley quit school to work and support his father and step-mother.

At the age of 20, Beazley married his wife, **Ellen**,

Ron Carlson, conference president, presents Joe Beazley with his Certificate of Ordination.

and began working for the Central California Conference as a literature evangelist. In 2004 he joined Adventist Frontier Missions and served in Papua New Guinea and the Philippines.

After several years in the mission field, the family returned to the U.S. where Beazley became a lay pastor serving the Onalaska Church in the Washington Conference.

Stephanie Gottfried



In 2015, with their children grown, married and living in the Kansas City area, the Beazleys decided to relocate to be closer to their children. During the drive to Kansas

City, Beazley received a call inviting him to pastor the Olathe district.

Stephanie Gottfried is publications director for the Kansas-Nebraska Conference.



### Central Nebraska Camp Meeting

July 28, 2018

Camp Arrowhead | Lexington, NE



Speaker:

Esequias Perea  
Chaplain, Champion Academy

*Plan to enjoy worship, nature, campfires and our beautiful trail access to the Platte River.*

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To reserve a cabin or RV spot call 308.324.1956

## Learn About Simple Church at Minnesota Camp Meeting

Each year at Minnesota camp meeting, breakout sessions are planned that focus on various aspects of ministry including training, preparation and inspiration. This year, **Milton Adams** from Simple Church Global Network will be sharing what simple church is and offering training on how to begin a simple church.

### What is simple church?

Simple church is a global network of modern, missionary-minded people. They meet in homes on Sabbath, and all of these house churches are led by lay people—common people like you and me.

### Why do we need simple church?

Approximately 60 percent of the U.S. population is no longer willing to walk into a conventional church. Additionally, 104 million Americans have walked out of their local churches to “go find God.” We need simple church to reach these people.

This front-line missionary work focuses on reaching secular or unchurched people and introducing them to the everlasting gospel of Jesus (Rev. 14). This is done by fostering a casual, non-intimidating environment to welcome truth seekers and support them in their

individual spiritual growth.

While this type of church may feel different or new to those more familiar with traditional church, this model of fellowship and worship was responsible for the wildfire-like spread of the gospel message in the New Testament era. Simple church strives to go back to the New Testament model of discipleship, nurturing and church planting.

### How does simple church work?

There are other modern terms for this type of church, such as house church, home church, organic church and

home meeting. For this particular Global Network of house churches, the name simple church was chosen. Simple church trains CORE4 missionaries to reach the mission fields where they live. Just as the apostle Paul mentored others to become leaders and share the gospel in their own spheres of influence, simple church strives to train leaders to continue this proven method of discipleship.

While this idea may seem new, it is really quite old. House churches were the norm in early Christianity as believers shared the gospel of Christ within secular cultures around the world. Simple

church just brings the church back to the model of its earliest period.

Milton Adams, president of Simple Church Global Network, and Savannah Carlson, Minnesota Conference communication director, collaborated on this article.

Learn more at [SimpleChurchAtHome.com](http://SimpleChurchAtHome.com) or come to Minnesota camp meeting June 5-9 at 700 Main St. N. in Hutchinson, Minnesota.



Simple church strives to bring the church back to the model established by the New Testament missionaries. Many Americans are no longer willing to worship in a traditional church; instead they leave the church in search of God. Simple church offers a casual, non-intimidating environment to present the truth about Jesus' gospel message.

# Winterfest Uses Fun to Raise Funds and Awareness

Minnetonka Christian Academy’s gymnasium was crowded with kids-at-heart of all ages—community and church members alike—seeking fun, fellowship and an opportunity to donate to a good cause this past January for the 2018 Winterfest. In just one night, the approximately 300 attendees used fun as an excuse to raise about \$4,000, which will enable local schools and churches to enhance their ministries.

“Winterfest is a great opportunity to network and create new friendships across the metro area,” said MCA

principal **Andy Carlson**. “It creates a sense of unity and brings an awareness to others whose goals are the same as ours.”

Attendees enjoyed the many booths, games and food at this year’s event. North Star Camp’s zip-tie jail booth, sloganized “North Star Keeps You Connected,” was especially popular. For a small price, an “officer” would zip-tie two people together for five minutes. Some used this mischievous opportunity to play a joke on friends. Others chose to add a challenge to other booth activities or even to share a

slice of cake, like one woman who used it to take her husband on an impromptu date.

The food included the sweet taste of pure sugar in the form of cotton and the color of candy, the rich flavor of homemade chocolate truffles, the spicy variety of Hispanic dishes offered at three different booths, and even the unique, savory aroma of African entrées.

At the face painting booth, participants experienced the feeling of a cold brush artfully smoothing paint on their faces in different shapes and designs. The event also included maneuvering through an obstacle course, uncontrollably soaring around a bouncy house, carefree laughter, friendly reunions,

supportive conversation, and the touching sight of families sharing quality time or church members deepening relationships.

The event wasn’t without its share of music as well. Moving musical pieces were performed by students and alumni of MCA, which raised awareness and funds for The Edge Christian Worship Center’s former pastor, **Udo Sokolovsky**, who is currently fighting stage 4 prostate cancer. Donations for his intensive and costly medical treatment were collected onsite, and are still accepted at [www.gofundme.com/udo-sokolovsky-cancer-battle](http://www.gofundme.com/udo-sokolovsky-cancer-battle).

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Brenda Beenken is a freelance writer living in Portland, Oregon.

Photos: Mindy Salyers



Dr. Ken Dedeker, member of the Minnetonka Church and conference Health Ministries coordinator, supports MCA through face painting (left). Brinley and Elliot enjoy cotton candy from Winterfest (below).



## Unity Communion Service Brings Together Four Colorado Springs Churches

Church members from Rocky Mountain Conference and Central States Conference came together for a joint communion service March 23. The gathering took place on the campus of Springs Adventist

Academy and brought together members from four Colorado Spring congregations: Central Church, South Church, Colorado Springs Spanish Church and Palace of Peace Church.

“It was a historic event,” said

**Mike Maldonado**, pastor of the Colorado Springs Central Church. The initiative for the joint worship service came from **Jaden Miller**, pastor of Palace of Peace Church, who approached Maldonado about the need for churches to do more together and to find an avenue to foster spiritual unity across conference, church and racial lines.

Retired pastor **Jack Bohannon**, a member of the South Church, remarked, “I was happy to see people from different churches and different conferences come together

in unity at the Lord’s Supper.”

The evening was a success with 115 members in attendance. “Many responded that an event like this was long overdue and wanted to make sure this worship service becomes an important annual event,” said Maldonado. He added that in the future, the churches plan to do a pulpit exchange and a combined men’s ministry.

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RMCNews with Mike Maldonado

Ted Bauer



## Rocky Mountain Ghanaian Adventist Group Officially Organized as a Church

On April 7, a group of more than 120 believers celebrated the official organization of the Rocky Mountain Ghanaian Church—the newest church in the Rocky Mountain Conference.

Visitors came for the Sabbath celebration from as far away as Indiana, New

Jersey, and from their sister church in Dallas, Texas.

**Elder Eric Nelson**, RMC vice president for administration, welcomed the new church to the Rocky Mountain Conference alongside **Esteb Pierre**, pastor of the congregation.

“We are celebrating with

you two significant milestones that occurred for you as a body of believers,” Nelson told the congregation. He listed the two milestones: “Organizing this body of believers as an official church and celebrating the wonderful provision of a house of worship.” Nelson continued by saying, “God has and will

do great things in this body of believers.”

During the service, the official members came forward to sign a book registering their names as charter members of the church. The registry was signed by over 100 church members, baptismal candidates and children.

Started in 2005, today the Ghanaian congregation is meeting in their newly purchased church in Aurora, Colorado, at 3600 Helena Street.

.....  
RMCNews with Eric Nelson

Jerene Nelson



The Sabbath festivities included presentations by two choirs, one from the sister church in Dallas, Texas.

## Campion Sabbath School Class Reaches Out to Non-Attending Adventists

There are people in every community surrounding our Adventist churches who hold in their hearts the truths of God's Word, but who have become disconnected from the church or discouraged in their walk with God. It is possible some of these non-attending members are not even sure what they believe anymore, but they were once—maybe not that long ago—part of a community of faith called the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The reasons for their disconnection could fill an old-time dictionary volume, but what they hold in common is that they are absent from our congregations.

### Acting out the purpose of Sabbath school

The Bible University Sabbath school class at Campion Church has decided this situation is not acceptable. Taking a hint from the *Church Manual* (which points out that while the purpose of a Sabbath school class is, of course, to study the Bible, it is also to create community and do outreach) the Bible University Sabbath school class has decided to reach out to the members who are no longer attending.

Last fall, class members stayed after fellowship lunch to hand write notes of encouragement to every

non-attending member on the church books.

Class member **Dick Stenbakken** said, "We've been able to see members who haven't been attending come back and worship with us again. We've established connections and friendships with a wide variety of people."

This is not something that can be done once and moved on from, though. "We plan to continue doing this as it's very rewarding," said Stenbakken.

In preparation for this past Easter, they again met. This time they met before Sabbath school to address, stamp and stuff envelopes, all with the goal of extending an

extra invitation to this same non-attending group. The class invited them to come to the church's interactive Journey to the Cross and Beyond Easter celebration.

The invitations will continue, and other Campion Sabbath schools are beginning to join in as well. Best of all, a few of those absent members have started to poke their heads back in.

Michael Goetz is senior pastor at the Campion Church in Loveland, Colorado.

The Bible University Sabbath school class at Campion Church has decided to reach out to members who no longer attend and give them handwritten notes of encouragement and invitations to upcoming events.



Michael Goetz

# Preparing to Become a US Ambassador

**S**enga Rutebuka, a senior international relations major, has always wanted to work for the United Nations. After representing Union College at the United Nations Association USA Leadership Summit last June and then founding a chapter of the United Nations Association Club at Union last August, Rutebuka believes he is two steps closer to his goal.

Rutebuka was born and raised in Berrien Springs, Michigan, but when his father was named president of Ethiopia Adventist College, Rutebuka transferred to Maxwell Adventist Academy in Kenya. There he made friends whose parents held high ranking positions in their countries' governments, sparking his interest in international relations.

He chose Union College as the place to pursue this dream. "I came to Union mainly because Union's recruiting team exposed us to all the great things about Lincoln—I really wanted to live in the capital and an actual city."

He also believed Union's program would put him in a great position to realize his calling.

## The chance of a lifetime

When Union's international relations program director **Christopher Banks** was contacted by the United Nations Association U.S. chapter in Washington about sending a representative to their 2017 leadership summit, he knew exactly whom to send.

The UNA-USA Leadership

Summit is a huge, three-day networking event for chapter leaders from schools representing 40 states. The first two days of the 2017 program involved presentations from high-ranking U.N. officials, policy workshops, skill building, and learning sessions on topics ranging from human rights and peacekeeping to the role of the U.N. in addressing global pandemics. On the final day of the summit, attendees visited Capitol Hill to meet face-to-face with members of Congress and their staff and petition for full U.S. funding and support for the U.N.

In addition to the information sessions and education, Rutebuka also had the chance to be starstruck. "I got to personally meet so many influential people including His Excellency **Peter Thomson**, the president of the U.N. General Assembly; **Andrew Gilmore**, assistant secretary-general for human rights; and **Samantha Ware**, a Lincoln native who acted in *Hamilton* and *Glee*."

The trip gave Rutebuka a glimpse into his future and the value of his studies at Union.

After representing Union College at the United Nations Association U.S. Leadership Summit last July, Senga Rutabuka founded a chapter of the organization at Union.

"I learned about the importance of my international relations degree," he said. "This major blends the business, economic and political fields all into one. No other major could prepare you to take on foreign policy better."

## Building experience

When he returned to Lincoln, Rutebuka founded the Union College chapter of the United Nations Association. The nonprofit organization works closely with the United Nations to promote U.N. goals and enhance the relationship between the member states.

The new Union College chapter has 40 members and is a part of the larger Nebraska chapter, headquartered in Lincoln.

"It's a very vibrant chapter,"

said Banks, who sits on the Nebraska board. "The members do a lot of good work." The Nebraska chapter is currently working to send clothing and school supplies to the 3 million refugees in Lebanon through Middle Eastern University. This is part of a larger initiative for the U.N. to assist refugees.

Rutebuka, who graduated in May, believes his experience at Union and with the United Nations Association are vital stepping stones in living out his God-given calling. "My next step is to get a law degree from Georgetown University and work towards my dream job: United States Ambassador to the United Nations."

Yvonne Kanyi is a freshman communication major at Union College.



Courtesy Union College

# A Path to a Guaranteed Nursing Career

Imagine graduating from college with the guarantee of a job at a prestigious organization—and getting a \$10,000 signing bonus.

For Union College nursing graduates, that scenario is now a reality, thanks to a new partnership between Union College and the Kettering Health Network. Starting with the class of 2018, nursing graduates who pass the NCLEX-RN exam, have strong references and agree to work within the Kettering system for at least two years are guaranteed a job at a Kettering Health Network hospital. In addition, they will receive a signing bonus of \$2,500 for each year they attended Union as a pre-nursing or nursing major, up to \$10,000.

**Aaron Snelgrove** is one of the first graduates to benefit from this partnership. His initial experience at Kettering was a three-month paid

internship in the summer of 2017. His Union professors encouraged him to apply, and he found the experience even better than he'd expected.

"I met godly people there who value me as an individual," he said. "For me, the best thing is how they view Union nursing students. They hold us in such high regard that they go out of their way to work with us, make us happy and help us get the careers we want."

After returning to Union for his last two semesters in the nursing program, Snelgrove began to plan for his final preceptorship. He wanted to work in a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, but he found that placement difficult to secure. However, **Dr. Nicole Orian**, chair of the Division of Nursing, had a plan.

"She talked to Kettering and told them I'd be a fantastic addition," he said. "They

offered me a preceptorship in the NICU as a trial run to see how I'd do as an employee." Not only did this solve his preceptorship challenge, it also put him on a career track.

"The NICU can be a hard place to be, since we're dealing with sick children. But the unit manager told me to give it a try. If it wasn't exactly what I wanted, they offered to find me a job in another area," he said.

In addition, they extended a job offer to his fiancée, **Rachel Jorgensen**, also a Union nursing graduate. Snelgrove was blown away by the twin offers. "For them to do that speaks volumes," he said.

## A beneficial partnership

In an era of career instability, the promise of a job and signing bonus are huge assets for students preparing to enter the workforce.

"It's not uncommon for

hospitals to offer signing bonuses, but they're not this generous, at least not for new graduates," Orian said. "This is significant. Kettering has chosen Union as a preferred nursing school, and that's good for our graduates, good for Union and good for Kettering."

Orian explains that the partnership comes with added assurance for students. "Along with our small class sizes, spiritual approach and top quality program, this shows incoming students and their parents a way to a guaranteed career in four years," she said. "It's the beginning of a wonderful career with the guarantee of a job at a well-known hospital network with a high retention rate for new graduates, a supportive new graduate nurse residency program and excellent patient outcomes."

The partnership between Union and Kettering was carefully crafted over time, according to both Orian and **Tim Dutton**, vice president of human resources at Kettering Health Network. "Union's graduates are very prepared for the nursing profession," Dutton said. "The faith-based connection and students' pass rates, clinical skills and level of preparation when they come to us were even more reason for us to explore this partnership. It wasn't born out of hope; it was born out of the consistent track record we've had with Union College and the experience we've had with their graduates."

Lauren Schwarz is a freelance writer based in Bozeman, Montana.

Aaron Snelgrove (left) will be one of the first to benefit from Kettering Health Network's guaranteed job and signing bonus for Union College nursing graduates. Union College's nursing graduates can now take advantage of a job at Kettering Health Network along with a signing bonus of up to \$10,000—\$2,500 for every year attending Union.



Steve Nazario/Union College



Courtesy Union College

## Men's Health Month

### Time to get your health in check

June is Men's Health Month, which is a perfect time for men to evaluate their personal health and become more proactive if necessary. Celebrated throughout the United States, Men's Health Month offers the opportunity to promote wellness among boys and men.

Eating healthy and being active through regular exercise are two of the most important decisions a man can make to live healthy. Not only do these initiatives lower the risk of health problems like heart disease and diabetes, but men who maintain a healthy lifestyle also tend to have less stress, more energy and a higher level of optimism.

Although some men are very proactive about their health, others seem to benefit by receiving a little push from the women in their life. According to **Dennis M. Jensen**, a medical doctor at Shawnee Mission Primary

Care—Prairie Star in Lenexa, Kansas, women play a key role in helping men stay healthy.

"Often, women are the ones who plan meals and activities for their families, care for their aging parents and encourage their spouses to get to the doctor for wellness visits," said Jensen. "I have cared for numerous male patients who have had potentially life-threatening conditions diagnosed and treated at the prompting of their spouse or daughter."

As part of Men's Health Month, Shawnee Mission Health encourages men to schedule an annual exam with a primary care physician in order to obtain recommended annual health screenings. It's also beneficial to set aside time for rest, foster interpersonal relationships and keep a positive outlook on life—all principles of CREATION Health that can reduce stress

and lead to better health.

"I have been impressed with how many of my younger male patients in their 20s and 30s take charge of their health and get physicals, even when not required by their employer's insurance," said Jensen.

With most health insurances and Medicare covering the entire cost of annual wellness visits, it's tough to justify not seeing your doctor each year.

#### Four recommended screenings for men

One of the most important reasons to see your doctor annually is to stay on track with recommended cancer screenings. Many cancers can be treated successfully if detected early. Jensen recommends the following cancer screenings for his male patients:

- **Colorectal screening:** Men should begin screening at age 50 unless a parent or sibling has a history of colorectal cancer prompting them to start earlier. Screening should continue until at least age 75. While men only need colonoscopies every 5 to 10 years, colorectal screening tests like fecal occult blood testing should be completed annually.
- **Skin cancer screening:** Each year, men should have their primary care physician or a dermatologist do a complete skin exam to look for signs of skin cancer.

- **Prostate cancer screening:** Men who are experiencing prostate symptoms such as frequent nighttime trips to the bathroom, straining with urination, a weak urine stream or frequent dribbling at the end of urination should be screened annually.
- **Lung cancer screening:** Men over the age of 55 with a history of smoking may benefit from having an annual low-dose CT scan of the chest.

According to Jensen's experience with patients, men's top health priorities are weight control, boosting energy levels, keeping a positive attitude and maintaining a healthy sex life—all issues that can have a substantial impact on physical and emotional health.

"Many patients are reluctant to bring up these issues with their primary care physician because they are embarrassed or feel nothing can be done for their problem," said Jensen. "The truth is in the majority of cases your physician can help. Your physician wants you to have the best health possible, and that starts with taking the initiative to choose to live healthy."

Jackie Woods is a project manager/writer for Shawnee Mission Health.

Learn more at [ShawneeMission.org/menshealth](http://ShawneeMission.org/menshealth) or [CREATIONHealth.com](http://CREATIONHealth.com).

Regular health exams are an important part of achieving and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.



# Centura Welcomes Eric Shadle, New VP for Mission Integration

Centura Health warmly welcomes **Dr. Eric Shadle** to the position of group vice president for mission integration. This is an expanded role for Shadle, who has served as director of CREATION Health for Centura's five Denver-based hospitals in Adventist Health System's Rocky Mountain Region since 2015.

Shadle is uniquely qualified as a hospital mission integration leader. He studied theology at Andrews University and medicine at Loma Linda University and has worked as both a pastor and a physician. He is highly motivated when it comes to juxtaposing these two paths of service and is well-versed in concepts pertaining to whole-person health.

"I'll be shepherding four key areas in my new role," says Shadle, "**culture, spiritual care, community health and ethics.**"

**Culture** speaks to the benefits that an Adventist perspective on health brings to the workplace. CREATION Health serves as a foundation for that overarching health message. Additionally, it incorporates inclusion, warmth and love that come from understanding who we are as beings created by a loving God.

"It's how we extend the healing ministry of Christ—no matter what your religious worldview or faith background may be," Shadle says.

**Spiritual care** encompasses the traditional chaplaincy role in a hospital setting, serving the needs of patients

and families in crisis while also expanding to care for the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of employees and caregivers.

"We've come to the conclusion that meeting the spiritual needs of our employees is probably our highest responsibility," Shadle observes. "If our employees are spiritually nurtured and well cared for, they can better care for the spiritual needs of our patients."

The Mission Development team focuses internal efforts on providing employees with resiliency training and helping them to find love, joy and spiritual peace in the midst of daily challenges.

**Community health** is a significant component of the AHS approach to healthcare. When hospitals and communities are integrally involved, both are healthier on every level.

"When I was a pastor, I would often say, 'A church that isn't involved in outreach will stagnate,'" recalls Shadle. "The same is true for a hospital."

He observes that communities especially benefit when local organizations work together in coordinated health initiatives. Shadle's team actively seeks to identify ways God is already at work in positive, community-based programs and then to join forces for the strength and health of their shared neighborhoods.

**Ethics** is the term for principles that guide Centura Health in putting belief into action.

"It's more than just how we

make decisions in challenging situations," says Shadle. "We have ongoing opportunities to talk about how Adventist beliefs impact our policies as an organization."

Decisions made by hospital leaders are shaped by their perspectives concerning the sanctity of humans as children of God. They regard individual patients and community members as having supreme value as created beings. These principles guide their actions and analysis when faced with

challenging life-and-death circumstances.

Perhaps most revealing is Shadle's personal motto: "To listen, learn and love—each and every day." He seeks not only to live out this personal philosophy but also to model it for those he leads and interacts with on a day-to-day basis.

.....  
This article was written by Mark Bond on behalf of the Colorado Adventist hospital campuses that make up Rocky Mountain Adventist Health/Centura Health.

Eric Shadle, MD, has been chosen as the new group vice president for mission integration for the five Denver-based hospitals in Adventist Health System's Rocky Mountain Region.

Courtesy, Centura Health



**Baker, Sylvia E.**, b. May 17, 1934. d. Dec. 17, 2017. Member of Powell (WY) Church.

**Boyko, Stella**, b. June 10, 1926 in Dickinson, ND. d. Feb. 20, 2018 in Turtle Lake, ND. Member of Turtle Lake Church. Preceded in death by husband Arnold; 1 brother; 5 grandchildren. Survivors include children Glenn, Ardythe and Allen; 3 siblings; 8 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren; 3 great-great-grandchildren.

**Carter, Nancy A.**, b. March 24, 1940. d. March 8, 2018 in Fergus Falls, MN. Member of Detroit Lakes (MN) Church. Survivors include 2 brothers.

**Christensen, Gordon**, b. July 20, 1923 in Harvey, ND. d. March 11, 2018 in Harvey, ND. Member of Harvey Church. Preceded in death by 1 infant daughter; 2 sisters. Survivors include wife Lorraine; children Gary, Kelly and Connie; 2 sisters; 1 brother; 4 grandchildren; 2 step-grandchildren; 8 great-grandchildren.

**Corey, Daphne G.**, b. April 11, 1919 in Washington, D.C. d. Nov. 15, 2016 in Muscatine, IA. Member of Muscatine Church. Preceded in death by husbands Arthur Caulfield, William Allen Sr. and James; 5 siblings. Survivors include daughter Frances Lundburg; sons Art Caulfield and William Allen Jr.; 12 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; 1 great-great-grandchild.

**Davidson, Sarina C.**, b. June 22, 1976. d. April 2, 2018. Member of Springfield (MO) Church. Survivors include children Hayden, Jocelyn, Elle and Emry Smith; parents; 5 siblings; 1 grandmother.

**Gable, Norine N.**, b. Oct. 30, 1938 in Franklin County, OH. d. March 25, 2018 in St. Joseph, MO. Member of Three Angels (MO) Church.

Preceded in death by husband Donald; 3 siblings. Survivors include daughters Cynthia Windsor and Karen Fischer; son Stephen; 3 grandsons.

**Haney, Gloria J.**, b. April 17, 1938. d. Jan. 20, 2018. Member of Cheyenne (WY) Church.

**Hanson, Wayne H.**, b. Oct. 18, 1925 in Sioux Rapids, IA. d. March 19, 2018 in Spencer, IA. Member of Spencer Church. Preceded in death by wife Jane; son Dennis; 5 siblings. Survivors include daughters Kathy Bollinger, Carol Toay and Sue Harris; son Bruce; 7 grandchildren; 8 great-grandchildren.

**Harder, Ellen P. (Mattheis)**, b. May 17, 1915 in Ellendale, ND. d. Jan. 29, 2018 in San Diego, CA. Member of Paradise Valley (CA) Church. Preceded in death by husband Aaron. Survivors include daughters Marilyn Foster, Juanita Subriar and Renee; 1 sister; 5 grandchildren; 5 great-grandchildren.

**Koenke, Gail H.**, b. Sept. 29, 1946 in Independence, MO. d. March 5, 2018 in Bates City, MO. Member of Lee's Summit (MO) Church. Survivors include wife Emily; daughters Jandra Hancock and Suzanne Apel; 2 brothers; 4 grandchildren.

**McDonald, Nola**, b. Sept. 17, 1937 in Haxton, CO. d. Jan. 6, 2018. Member of Yuma (CO) Church. Survivors include daughter Sher Bottjer; sons Mike Gerst, Ben Gerst and Jeff Gerst; 1 sister; 8 grandchildren; 3 great-grandchildren.

**Mitchell, Rose Isabel**, b. July 7, 1930. d. Dec. 23, 2017. Member of Trinidad (CO) Church.

**Rexin, Emil J.**, b. March 9, 1931 near Sykeston, ND. d. March 1, 2018 in Willamina, OR. Member of McMinnville (OR) Church. Preceded

in death by son Douglas. Survivors include wife Rosemarie; daughters Donna Helein and Debbie Poupard; 7 grandchildren. Veteran of the Korean War.

**Reynolds, Bertha E.**, b. Nov. 18, 1925 in North Veta, CO. d. March 14, 2018 in Pueblo, CO. Member of Rocky Mountain Conference Church. Preceded in death by 3 sisters; 5 brothers. Survivors include daughters Jamie and Genie; sons Jack, Ernie and Jeff; 1 sister; 12 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren.

**Correction: Rudolph, Kathryn S.**, b. Nov. 4, 1923 in Deer Creek Township, MN. d. Nov. 12, 2017 in Perham, MN. Member of Wadena (MN) Church. Preceded in death by husband Donald; 5 siblings. Survivors include daughters Pamela Wilkinson and Shirley Luckiesh; son Kelvin; 8 grandchildren; 2 great-grandchildren.

**Seright, Berniece M.**, b. Feb. 11, 1922 in Muscatine, IA. d. March 31, 2018. Member of Muscatine Church. Preceded in death by husband Oscar; 9 siblings. Survivors include daughter Deborah Boyd; son Michael; 8 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; 5 step-great-grandchildren; 1 great-great-granddaughter.

**Shidler, Marilyn R. Ayres**, b. March 26, 1924 in Peetz, CO. d. Feb. 7, 2018 in Brighton, CO. Member of Brighton Church. Preceded in death by husband E. Joe; son Merritt; 1 brother. Survivors include daughters Jolene, Dianne and Shawn; sons Merrill and Merlyn; 7 grandchildren; 7 great-grandchildren.

**Sims, Wynona Faye**, b. Sept. 25, 1938 in Colburn, CO. d. July 15, 2017 in Brush, CO. Member of Fort Morgan (CO) Church. Preceded in death by husband H. Ray; infant brother. Survivors

include sons Tony and Chris; mother; 2 sisters; 2 brothers.

**Toay, Elizabeth "Betty,"** b. Jan 14, 1935 in Alfred, ND. d. March 31, 2018 in Jamestown, ND. Member of Edgeley (ND) Church. Preceded in death by 1 sister. Survivors include husband Don; children Barry, Brenda Johnson, Bryce, Bart, and Becky Hansen; 2 sisters; 12 grandchildren; 1 great-grandchild.

**Trujillo, J. Ray.**, b. March 26, 1943 in Cordova, NM. d. March 20, 2018 in Denver, CO. Member of Denver West Church. Preceded in death by 1 sister; 1 brother. Survivors include daughters Sharon, Renae, Della, Louise and Lacey Le; son Mark T.; 16 grandchildren; 2 great-grandchildren.

**Vigil-Rascon-Mitchell, Rose Isabell**, b. July 7, 1930 in Trinidad, CO. d. Dec. 23, 2017 in Trinidad, CO. Member of Trinidad Church. Preceded in death by 1 sister; 1 brother. Survivors include daughters Gale Martinez, Sandra Rascon Teague and Mary Gonzales; sons John Rascon and Martin Rascon; 12 grandchildren; 27 great-grandchildren; 3 great-great-grandchildren.

**Wolf, Dolores Bidwell**, b. Aug. 3, 1928 in Highmore, SD. d. March 20, 2018 in Madison, SD. Member of Sioux Falls (SD) Church. Preceded in death by husband Raymond; 1 sister. Survivors include children Greg, Richard and Juleen White; 3 grandchildren.

To submit an obituary visit [outlookmag.org/contact](http://outlookmag.org/contact) or email Brennan Hallock at [brennan@outlookmag.org](mailto:brennan@outlookmag.org). Questions? 402.484.3028.

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**Adventist Health System in Altamonte Springs, FL, is seeking a College Relations Manager** to work in their Human Resources department. This position provides the opportunity to create, execute, and deliver our campus Adventist recruiting strategy for all AHS regions and businesses. Five years in HR, healthcare, or education required. Bachelor's degree required. Relocation provided. Please send cover letter and resume to [Manuela.asaftei@ahss.org](mailto:Manuela.asaftei@ahss.org).

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**Walla Walla University is hiring!** To see the list of available positions, go to [jobs.wallawalla.edu](http://jobs.wallawalla.edu).

**EVENTS**

**40th Weimar Institute Anniversary:** We're celebrating 40 years of God's blessings at Weimar Institute this year! If you attended academy or pursued higher education here, join us Nov. 2-4, 2018 and reconnect with friends. More information: [weimar.edu/alumni/](http://weimar.edu/alumni/)

**Auburn Academy's class of 1969 is planning our 50 year reunion** with a seven day Alaska cruise. The invitation is for all members and friends from 1967, 1968, 1969 and 1970. We are missing many classmates from 1969. Please send contact information/questions to [jan69reinking@comcast.net](mailto:jan69reinking@comcast.net).

**Madison College Alumni Homecoming is June 22-24** on the Madison Academy campus. This will be our FINAL homecoming. For registration information: PO Box 1735 Madison TN 37116 or call 615.4151925.

**Standifer Gap SDA School (Chattanooga, TN) is celebrating its 70th Anniversary (1948-2018)** on Sept. 28 and 29. All Alumni and former staff are invited to attend our celebration. Festivities will be Friday through Saturday evening. Contact: 423.892.6013 or for further details visit: [sgsdaschool.org](http://sgsdaschool.org).

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## JUNE 2018

|                     | June 1 | June 8 | June 15 | June 22 | June 29 |
|---------------------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>COLORADO</b>     |        |        |         |         |         |
| Denver              | 8:22   | 8:26   | 8:30    | 8:32    | 8:32    |
| Grand Junction      | 8:34   | 8:39   | 8:42    | 8:44    | 8:44    |
| Pueblo              | 8:16   | 8:21   | 8:24    | 8:26    | 8:26    |
| <b>IOWA</b>         |        |        |         |         |         |
| Davenport           | 8:30   | 8:35   | 8:38    | 8:40    | 8:40    |
| Des Moines          | 8:42   | 8:47   | 8:50    | 8:52    | 8:53    |
| Sioux City          | 8:56   | 9:01   | 9:05    | 9:07    | 9:07    |
| <b>KANSAS</b>       |        |        |         |         |         |
| Dodge City          | 8:56   | 9:01   | 9:04    | 9:05    | 9:06    |
| Goodland            | 8:08   | 8:12   | 8:15    | 8:17    | 8:18    |
| Topeka              | 8:43   | 8:47   | 8:50    | 8:52    | 8:53    |
| <b>MINNESOTA</b>    |        |        |         |         |         |
| Duluth              | 8:55   | 9:00   | 9:04    | 9:06    | 9:06    |
| International Falls | 9:08   | 9:14   | 9:18    | 9:20    | 9:20    |
| Minneapolis         | 8:53   | 8:58   | 9:01    | 9:03    | 9:04    |
| <b>MISSOURI</b>     |        |        |         |         |         |
| Columbia            | 8:29   | 8:33   | 8:36    | 8:38    | 8:38    |
| Kansas City         | 8:38   | 8:43   | 8:46    | 8:48    | 8:48    |
| St. Louis           | 8:20   | 8:24   | 8:27    | 8:29    | 8:30    |
| <b>NEBRASKA</b>     |        |        |         |         |         |
| Lincoln             | 8:52   | 8:57   | 9:00    | 9:02    | 9:02    |
| North Platte        | 9:09   | 9:14   | 9:17    | 9:19    | 9:20    |
| Scottsbluff         | 8:23   | 8:28   | 8:31    | 8:33    | 8:34    |
| <b>NORTH DAKOTA</b> |        |        |         |         |         |
| Bismarck            | 9:30   | 9:35   | 9:39    | 9:41    | 9:41    |
| Fargo               | 9:14   | 9:20   | 9:23    | 9:25    | 9:25    |
| Williston           | 9:47   | 9:52   | 9:57    | 9:59    | 9:58    |
| <b>SOUTH DAKOTA</b> |        |        |         |         |         |
| Pierre              | 9:19   | 9:24   | 9:27    | 9:29    | 9:30    |
| Rapid City          | 8:29   | 8:34   | 8:38    | 8:40    | 8:40    |
| Sioux Falls         | 9:01   | 9:06   | 9:10    | 9:12    | 9:12    |
| <b>WYOMING</b>      |        |        |         |         |         |
| Casper              | 8:37   | 8:42   | 8:46    | 8:48    | 8:48    |
| Cheyenne            | 8:26   | 8:30   | 8:34    | 8:36    | 8:36    |
| Sheridan            | 8:47   | 8:52   | 8:56    | 8:58    | 8:58    |



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