



Ann Arbor

## The Mission Field Comes to Ann Arbor

One chilly afternoon, Ann Arbor member Karen Yang saw Vincent, an Adventist Rwandan teen, walking with a friend to the bus stop. She pulled over to offer a ride, which they happily accepted. Vincent's friend had just arrived from a refugee camp in Rwanda. She took them to their temporary home, a hotel, and met the new family.

The family appeared anxious and worried. Yang invited them to church on Sabbath and offered them a ride. They brightened at the invitation and quickly agreed to go. Since most Christians don't attend church on Saturday, their response seemed a little too favorable. Yang asked if they were Adventists? Yes! They were.

The Ann Arbor church warmly welcomed the family. Other Rwandan families embraced them and the church provided the family with winter clothing, shoes, blankets, and more. Through the generous sponsorship of a church member, the youngest son enrolled in the Ann Arbor Adventist Elementary School.

Yang began to visit the Rwandan family more frequently at the hotel and met other refugees who noticed the Rwandan family seemed less distressed. Some of the Afghani refugee families were exasperated, trying to keep their children occupied for a month or two, with nothing for little ones to do in a cramped hotel room.

*"The Ann Arbor church warmly welcomed the family. Other Rwandan families embraced them and the church provided the family with winter clothing, shoes, blankets, and more."*

A few days before Thanksgiving, Daniel Rodriguez, the new pastor of Ann Arbor, suggested that the church provide a meal for the refugee families staying at the hotel.

Fifteen Rwandan and 17 Afghani refugees came for the Thanksgiving dinner.

Provisionally, God sent translators for each group to understand what the pastor said in his short talk and prayer in the school gym. The Afghani families were incredibly grateful their

By Joel Nephew,  
Director, Planned Giving &  
Trust Services



*“Friends, like Babe Ruth, we can stand with complete confidence and point with certainty, not to the bleacher of a ballpark, but to the constellation of Orion in the night sky and say that, as we trust in Christ Jesus and His word, on that great day when Jesus returns, He will take us there!”*

## FREEDOM FROM THE TYRANNY OF DOUBT

Some say February is the coldest month in Michigan, and I think they may be right. As a pastor, there was many a Sabbath when church leaders called me early, wondering if we should cancel services on account of the ice, bitter temperatures, or a freak blizzard. Yes, February is mighty unpredictable in these parts.

But, far away, in other climes, flowers bloom and zephyrs caress.

Take Florida, for instance. As we speak, baseball enthusiasts from all over are making plans to gather for what’s become known as Spring Training, set to take place later this month. Even my father loved in his later years to sit and watch a good game of baseball and would often talk of the good ol’ days, when players were top-notch

athletes, instead of million-dollar idols gathering money from commercials and endorsements. [Caveat: the older we get, the better things were.]

Babe Ruth was one such legend. From humble, highly rambunctious beginnings in Maryland, where he learned to play baseball in a boys’ home for delinquents, George Herman “Babe” Ruth rose steadily to greatness by sheer skill and incurable optimism.

The story is still debated in some circles but, in the World Series of 1932, he pointed toward the center field bleachers and then proceeded to blast the ball out of the park at that very spot. After the game a sportswriter asked, “Babe, what if you missed? What if you failed?” “You know,” Babe said, “I never thought of that.”

“I never thought of that”—no room for doubt, disbelief, or uncertainty in his mind. What about you? The opposite of doubt is faith, trust, confidence. Doubt is a fearful foe. An adversary that once submitted to is very hard to get rid of. Doubt is a tyrant of such extreme strength that it is almost impossible to be freed from his grasp. Doubt comes in many shapes and sizes, flavors, and colors, but in the end, it always leads us to the same place, despair. Doubt, if left to control our thoughts, will lead us to complete hopelessness.

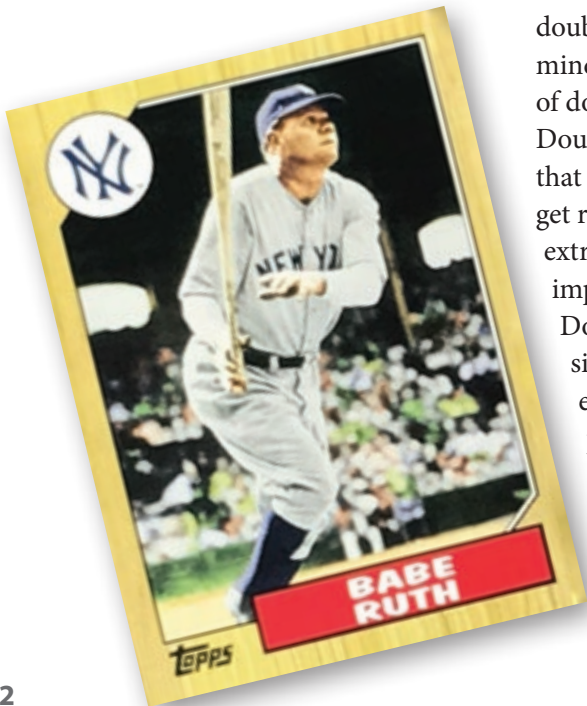
This reminds me of that great allegory written by John Bunyan while imprisoned in

the Bedford County jail for his faith, *Pilgrim’s Progress*. In the story, Christian and his traveling companion, Hopeful, decided that the straight and narrow way had become too difficult. So, they left the narrow way over a stile in the fence to a pathway that looked easier to travel and more pleasant to their feet, but the problem was it placed them firmly in the land of doubt.

Eventually they found themselves in the grip of a giant named Despair who placed them in Doubting Castle’s dungeon where they were tortured and brought to complete despair, in the hope that they would become so hopeless that they took their own lives. Only after Christian remembered the key of promise given him earlier on his journey and they decided to put their whole trust in it, did they escape from the dungeon of doubt and Giant Despair and get back on the narrow way that leads to life.

It is the same with each of us. If we start to distrust God’s Word; His leading in our past history; His directions for the future; or when our pathway becomes difficult and tiresome, we also will become prisoners of despair. If we doubt Christ’s ability to accomplish what He says He will do for us and in us, then we will become completely imprisoned in uncertainty.

If God is who the Scriptures say He is, then all His promises are true, as true as if they have already come about. What of 1 John 1:9 . . . “If we confess







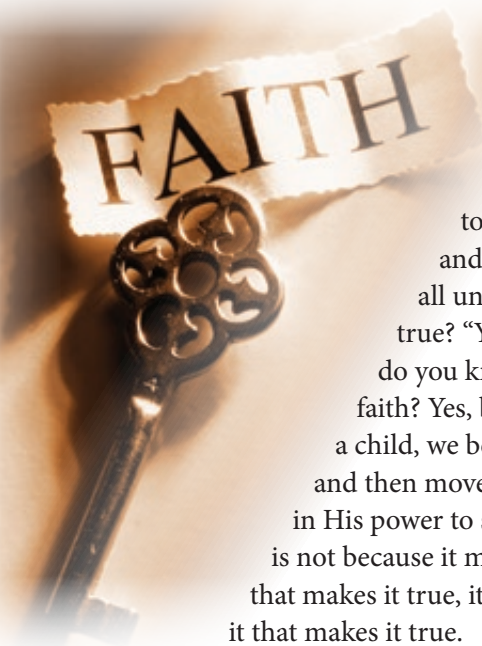
**Every Monday morning**, the Michigan Conference staff meets for worship and prayer. Here is the list for the following dates. Please join us as we pray for these churches and ministries.

**FEBRUARY 1**  
Boyne City/Central Lake/  
Gaylord  
**Pastor Chris Ames**  
Boyne City ACS  
Cadillac 13th/Manton/Mesick  
**Pastor Bob Benson**

**FEBRUARY 8**  
Grayling/Houghton Lake/Mio  
**Pastor Jay Clough**  
Houghton Lake ACS Center  
Grayling SDA Elementary  
Mio ACS Center  
Kalkaska/Traverse City  
**Pastor Ben Garcia**  
Kalkaska ACS Center  
Traverse City Elementary  
Traverse City ACS Food Pantry

**FEBRUARY 15**  
Carp Lake/Cheboygan/  
Petoskey -  
Carp Lake ACS  
Petoskey ACS Center  
Frankfort/Irons/  
Manistee  
**Pastor Mac Mills**  
Irons Food Pantry

**FEBRUARY 22**  
Alpena/Onaway  
**Pastor Paul Ratsara**  
Cadillac/Lake City  
**Pastor Ariel Roldan**  
Northview SDA  
Christian School  
Cadillac ACS



our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Is it true? “Yes,” you say. How do you know it is? Isn’t it by faith? Yes, by the simple faith of a child, we believe what He says and then move forward trusting in His power to subdue all things. It is not because it makes us “feel” good that makes it true, it is because God says it that makes it true.

What about Hebrews 4:14-16? “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* confession.

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” True or not? Absolutely true! We act upon this promise because God said we can.

What about John 14:1-3? “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.” True? Trustworthy? For sure, without a doubt! And thus we call Jesus’ return the “blessed hope.”

The list goes on. All promises are given to us by the One who cannot lie. It is up to us to either be filled with optimism and confidence that these promises of the Bible are true and trustworthy, backed by the power of the Almighty, or doubt that they are true—doubt that the promises of victory are really for me.

In a day and time when we scratch our heads wondering who and what we can trust, Solomon says in Proverbs 25:19, “Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a bad tooth and a foot out of joint,” and David adds this in Psalm 146:3: “Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.” So, putting our confidence in humanity is faulty at best and honestly, trusting in yourself is not much better.

On the other hand, Psalm 118:9 tells where to put our confidence, “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes,” and in Proverbs 3:26 we read, “For the Lord will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from being caught.” Proverbs 14:16 says, “In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, and His children will have a place of refuge.”

So when it comes to being a faithful steward of the resources God has placed in your hands, will you simply believe what God says or will you question His ability to do as He said and choose a different path, the path of doubt?

Who do you believe in a world of lies? The media? Politicians? The father of lies, Satan, or the Father of Truth? I beseech you to put your confidence not in men, not in your own feelings, education, or life experience. Put your confidence in the One that will never let you down and will always be faithful and true. Put your trust in Christ Jesus and His word!

As we stand in this great day of reckoning, know that we can stand before the world and point confidently to the Word of God with all confidence.

Friends, like Babe Ruth, we can stand with complete confidence and point with certainty, not to the bleacher of a ballpark, but to the constellation of Orion in the night sky and say that, as we trust in Christ Jesus and His word, on that great day when Jesus returns, He will take us there!



Shannon Trecartin served as the photographer for the Oct. 30 event.



The volunteers distributed 1,500 cases of water to the community.

# Harbor of Hope: How One Church Lived Up to Their Name

By Judy Klein

In 2018, health officials in Benton Harbor began noticing an alarming rise in lead poisoning cases. After performing multiple tests, the city discovered that the water system was tainted due to corrosion in the original lead water pipes.

The city reached out to partner with local agencies immediately—one of which was the Adventist Community Services Center (CSC): Harbor of Hope. Once a month, says Terri Trecartin, director of Adventist Community Services (ACS), in Benton Harbor, residents came to designated places such as the health department, library, and the Harbor of Hope CSC, to receive water filters and information on how to use them. When the filters turned yellow, a replacement was available.

The water filter solution only worked for so long, and city officials began purchasing bottled water. Trecartin says, “[the city] contacted our church again to see if we could be a site for water distribution.” Of course, the Harbor of Hope agreed and Trecartin credits secretary Jharony Gibbs with rallying everyone together.

Harbor of Hope immediately enlisted volunteers, partnering with United Way so that anyone, even if they weren’t part of the church,

could volunteer. The state delivered the water bottles and they arranged for any leftovers to be picked up.

On October 30, 2021, in just one day, the church and their volunteers handed out 1,500 cases of water. Trecartin remembers how thankful people were. Some told him they were on their last case of water and were wondering what they were going to do when it ran out.

Harbor of Hope went above and beyond their required duties, ensuring that everyone who needed water received it. Some people were homebound. Trecartin stated that “if people couldn’t get out and get the water, we... took it to them.”

Over the last three years, the city has realized how challenging it is for residents to figure out which location

to get their supplies, so they picked a centralized location: the local high school. All citizens go to the high school to get what they need on specified days, and local charities (including Harbor of Hope), assist them.

Harbor of Hope has established itself in the community—an important and trusted Adventist presence. ACS director, Chelli Ringstaff, also adds that one connection can lead to another. At first, it’s just a water filter, distributed at the CSC. Afterward, it’s 1,500 cases of delivered water. The city has come to trust Harbor of Hope because they have proven themselves.

But it’s not just the city officials that can depend upon the Adventist church. Trecartin explains that over the summer of 2021, student literature evangelists worked in the Benton Harbor area. Every time the colporteurs identified themselves as Adventists, people lit up with recognition, “because they knew where the church was,” Trecartin says. The church and its organizations have been so influential in the community that “Adventist” isn’t just a name: it’s associated with a positive experience. Would your community be able to say the same?



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Women's Ministry leaders for the Michigan Conference.

“Next year I’m planning on getting a hotel room close to the venue and will invite a couple of friends to attend with me over the Sabbath! Such a spiritual blessing!”  
– Kimberly, Attendee

## The One Day Getaway!

Sabbath, October 23, was a special day for over 100 women who attended the Michigan Women's Ministries One-Day Retreat held at the beautiful Meadow Brook Hall in Rochester, Michigan. The day was brisk and occasionally rainy, but inside the large, white event tent, everyone was comfortable and anticipating the music and speaker for the day.

Jane Harris, Women's Ministries director for the Michigan Conference, warmly welcomed everyone and Lansing members Donna, Olivia, Sofia, and Maia Hall led an enthusiastic song service. Dee Clements, Women's Ministries board member, read a scripture passage and prayed, followed by a thought-provoking monologue by Wendy Pletcher.

Pletcher is also a member of the Women's Ministries board. Her brief monologue focused on Luke 10:40 when Jesus and His disciples were guests at the home of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary. Pletcher portrayed Martha and what she might have been thinking as she attended to the guests.

As the monologue came to a close, guests understood how easy it can be to get caught up in working for God

and how to “choose what is better.” There are definitely times when it is better to be doing the work we've been called to do, but there are also times when work can wait, and we need to sit at the feet of Jesus, as did Mary.

Jenifer Daley, administrative pastor of Pioneer Memorial Church was the main speaker. In her presentations, Daley posed the question, “How do we journey through the seasons of life well so as to flourish amid change?” Like Naomi and Ruth, guests learned that we flourish better together when we live grace-flavored lives—when we acknowledge our need for grace and when we extend to others the grace they need.

We can see through grace-filled eyes, speak grace-filled words, and live with an attitude of grace. In a cold,

calculating world, we are often blessed more than we realize because God weaves His grace into the tapestry of everyday life to meet our needs, give us hope, and guide us to flourish. God's grace propels His peculiar people to flourish as we live His peculiar purpose supported by His peculiar promise.

Just prior to a short break, Harris and board member Sarah Canada shared the blessings of hospitality and friendship evangelism. They provided excellent ideas to reach neighbors, colleagues, and friends who may not know Jesus intimately.

Lisa Jardine, member of Pioneer Memorial Church, followed Daley's second presentation with a lovely concert, including a number of her own compositions. It was a beautiful way to end this portion of the day.

Participants were treated to a delicious vegetarian meal before the return drive to their various homes across the state. The weather cooperated so those who were interested took self-guided tours of the gardens on the estate.

This was the first time Michigan Women's Ministries has hosted a one-day getaway. Based on attendance and comments received by attendees, it was a well-received and much appreciated event.

**By Deb Montcalm,**  
Member, PMC





“Pastor Joel Nephew was the speaker for the anniversary Sabbath, reminding every member not to hold onto the past but to move forward in the power of God!”

## Looking Back and Moving On

The 50th Year Anniversary of the First Flint Seventh-day Adventist Church became a homecoming Sabbath for many members, new and old. One hundred and twenty-five people attended the anniversary Sabbath on October 2, 2021. Most of the guests also stayed for a delicious and bountiful potluck served afterward by church volunteers.

Many past members of First Flint live locally and now attend various Adventist churches in Genesee and Shiawassee counties. But others live much farther away, including Detroit, South Branch, Cadillac, Ann Arbor, and also in the upper peninsula. Some, like Richard and Karen Kelly, traveled from Colorado to be able to be with their church family again.

Church members and guests were blessed by the ministry of three pastors

during this anniversary Sabbath—Joel Nephew (who served from 1998-2003), Tony Messer (who served from 2019-2021), and the present pastor, Malcolm Douglas. Pastor Messer led in an introduction to the book of Deuteronomy during Sabbath School. Pastor Douglas shared letters from two other previous pastors: Pastor Jonathan Chitwood (who now serves as a missionary pastor to the Navajo nation in Arizona) and Pastor Justin Ringstaff, now serving as the Executive Secretary of the Michigan Conference.

Pastor Joel Nephew was the speaker for the anniversary Sabbath, reminding every member not to hold onto the past but to move forward in the power of God. Repeatedly, he pointed to the church that “the best is yet to come,” for Jesus is coming soon.

“I’m here to tell you,” he said, “that at the First Flint church, the best is not in the past. The best is yet to come.” The same is true for our denomination as well as our individual lives. “The best is yet to come if we remember God’s leading in our past,” explained Pastor Nephew, “if we commit our past to Jesus in faith, if we submit to the following of His Spirit, in His leading in our present, and we surrender to His leading in our future.” He also emphasized accepting Christ’s righteousness and His vision as our own.

Pastor Nephew then ended with the words of Paul: “Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that Day, and not only to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:8). His question to every member on that day was, “Do we love His appearing?” For Jesus is coming soon.

**By Sue Gillmore,**  
Member, First Flint Church



The First Flint church in the late 1800s, around the period the church community was formed.



First Flint church members transitioned to this building in the late 1930s when they had reached approximately 600 members.



*(The Mission Field Comes to Ann Arbor)*



Afghani family shopping for winter clothes with Karen Yang (not pictured).

children could run and play in the gym and shared a speech of thanks at the end.

Later, a group took the Afghani refugee women to purchase clothing and things from a second-hand store. Members took the children to go to the public library to borrow books and play at the playground. Yang and Rodriguez connected with the Plymouth Adventist Community Services to select items the families would need for their new place. An agency in Ann Arbor soon found apartments for the families.

A few events opened the door of trust between Yang and the refugee families. Through Google translate, Karen was able to take the Rwandan youth and the Afghani men to rake leaves at homes surrounding the Ann Arbor church.

Yang would knock on the door, introduce herself as a

member of the Ann Arbor Adventist church and explain that the refugees wanted to rake leaves on a donation basis. The neighbors not only gave generous donations but brought out jackets, suits, winter shoes, hats, gloves, and good wishes for their resettlement. The day was a blessing in many ways: the community became aware of the church's refugee ministry, and refugees earned money for needed items. Yang took the men out again when it snowed, and offered to shovel for donations.

The refugees were very happy to receive compassion from the community as they served them, plus the side blessing of making an income. Yang told the refugees that those who live by the Word of God, especially Adventists, want to be blessings to others, even those not of the same faith.

Yang says, "I rejoice in the refugee ministry. The new Rwandan family started a Bible study twice weekly. We open the Scripture and let the Holy Spirit move. If no translator is available, we use Google Translate. The seven young people have become enthusiastic and interested in the life of Christ Jesus. They said that their family is praying together every evening for worship now, and Jesus has become real to them. The Holy Spirit may not call us to go to Rwanda or Afghanistan as a missionary, but brought them close to our home to share the love of Jesus and the gospel to preach."

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**By Karen Yang,**  
Member, Ann Arbor Church

## PASTORAL TRANSITIONS



**Charles Stark** is the new pastor of the Bad Axe, Port Sanilac, and Unionville churches.



**Tony Ludwig** is the new pastor of the Glennie, Tawas City, and West Branch churches. He previously pastored the L'Anse, Marquette, and Munising churches.

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# MONTHLY CALENDAR

*Due to COVID-19, events on the schedule are subject to change.*

## FEBRUARY

- 4-6 Adventurer District Retreat – Camp Au Sable
- 5 PBE Area Level
- 18-21 CAMPUS Winter Retreat
- 20-26 Emmanuel Institute
- 21 Office Closed – President’s Day
- 22-27 GLAA Home Leave
- 25-27 Teen Bible Camp

## MARCH

- 1-15 Camp Meeting Registration
- 4-6 Evangelistic Training
- 5 PBE Conference Level
- 17-27 GLAA Spring Break
- 19 PBE Union Level

MICHIGAN MEMO is a monthly publication of the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists for its constituents. Andy Im, editor; Beth Thomas, acting assistant editor; **Seminars Unlimited**, layout, design, and print. Comments may be submitted by emailing [communication@misda.org](mailto:communication@misda.org).

# NATURE NUGGET

NATURE

## Green Jays

By Dr. Gordon Atkins,  
Camp Au Sable Naturalist



Photo By: Dr. Gordon Atkins

Here in Michigan, Blue Jays can often be seen at bird feeders, or you can hear their loud calls while you are hiking in the woods. They can bully other birds and even eat their eggs! In Texas, there are no Blue Jays, instead, they have a much bigger bird called the Green Jay!

They are similarly loud, travel in groups and take over feeders, or whatever patch of woods they are in, and eat just about anything that will fit in their mouths! They are, however, very beautiful! Their blue and black heads and yellowish-green bodies seem to glow in the sunlight.

They live predominately in Central America with some extending as far north as southern Texas. On our last birding tour to Texas in December 2021, we saw these magnificent Jays at many of the locations we visited. They

nest in tropical thorn forests, which was the topic of a recent video nature nugget posted online.

Further south in the Andes of South America, there are Inca Jays, which are essentially identical to Green Jays in color and behavior. Scientists are now beginning to recognize that Green Jays and Inca Jays are probably the same species—they are just isolated by several hundred miles of geography.

What is the lesson for us? While Adventists might be distributed in patches all around the world, hopefully non-Adventists watching us recognize that we are, in fact, all the same, because of our love for Jesus and for our love and compassion for every person we meet. That should be a challenge to us as we consider New Years’ resolutions!