



Official Newsletter for the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

MICHIGAN MEMO

OCTOBER 2018, VOLUME 30, NUMBER 8



▲ Police officer, Mike, with Grandma Herzberg

Police Officer FINDS HIS WAY

By Debbie Fechik
MEMBER, CLIO CHURCH

“I watched as tears were streaming down his face and heard him say, ‘I know Grandma, I promise I will be ready!’ What a bittersweet moment!”

And I heard a voice from heaven saying, write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord henceforth. Blessed indeed, says the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them” (Revelation 14:13, RSV).

I have seen these words fulfilled twice in my life. Once 22 years ago when my dad died unexpectedly due to an unfortunate accident. To say the least, my life, as well as the lives of my family, was shattered. My dad’s death brought me closer to God because I began to appreciate Jesus’ sacrifice more than ever before. Several years later I saw the verse fulfilled again, but this time in the lives of my son and nephew.

I have a son named Mike. As he grew into his late teens and early twenties he began searching for that special someone he could share his life with. In time he met a beautiful young woman that had a sincere desire to serve the Lord. She was raised in the Baptist faith but had wandered away from God. Their new friendship gave them both the desire to put God in their life and relationship. Mike shared his understanding of Biblical topics which made sense to her, and she even attended church with him. However, he took the next step prematurely, and asked her to marry him before they were on the same page spiritually. This would end up causing major heartache in both of their lives.

(continued on page 6)

- EDITORIAL -

Are You Hungry?

By Jim Micheff

MICHIGAN CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



“Can you imagine having a desire for Christ’s righteousness that is stronger than physical hunger for food?”

When I was a young boy, I attended a two-room church school in Columbus, Wisconsin. Each year, our teachers let us choose Pathfinder honors that we would complete together throughout the school term. During my 6th grade year, we chose the Cycling Honor, partly because one of the requirements was to ride 25 miles. We were thrilled at the idea of spending one whole school day riding bikes. After we had completed all the other requirements, we made plans for the special biking day. The plan was to ride 13 miles to a small park using the back roads and then after eating lunch we would retrace our path. Before class was dismissed that day, my teacher stressed the importance of bringing a hearty lunch, as we would need energy for the long ride.

That night, my sister and I eagerly shared the details with our parents, not forgetting the part about the lunch. Mom told us she would take us to the grocery store and we could each choose one item to add to it for the special event. After we had finished packing them, my sister told me we should do something to make sure they wouldn’t be forgotten. I couldn’t imagine forgetting something so important as my lunch, so I told her that wasn’t necessary as I was quite sure I wouldn’t forget. She insisted, but I resisted to the point where she said, “Well fine, but when you forget your lunch don’t ask me for any of mine, because I warned you!” I assured her that I would rather starve to death than ask her for anything.

The next morning, I loaded both bikes into the trunk of the car. It took longer than expected to fit them in and then secure them with rope. I had just started eating my breakfast when my sister realized that we were running late and announced that we needed to leave immediately. I was still trying to swallow my last bite of food as I raced for the car.

When we arrived at school, all the other students had lined their bikes up and were in the classroom getting final instructions. After adding our bikes to the lineup, we waved goodbye to Mom and joined the rest of the students. The teacher concluded her remarks by instructing all of us to put our lunches into the trunk of her car. That was the first time I had even thought about my special lunch. I remembered taking it off the kitchen counter, but then a terrible feeling came over me as I realized I had left it in the back seat of our car. I remembered my sister’s warning, which made me determined not to let her know. I couldn’t bear to hear her say, “I told you so.” Besides, I reasoned, *I’ll only miss one meal, so how bad could that be? I’m tough.*

With great excitement, I turned my attention to the task at hand. I was proud of my bike. It didn’t have gears, but it had high handle bars and a long slender seat that some referred to as a banana seat. After our teacher prayed for our safety, we were off. And, oh, what fun we had! We just couldn’t believe how lucky we were to spend the entire day just riding bikes.

The morning passed quickly as we made our way to the small park. But by the time we reached the halfway point, my stomach was empty and grumbling with hunger pangs. Everyone was talking about how hungry they were and how much they were looking forward to lunch. When everyone ran to get their lunches from the teacher's trunk, I slipped away so no one would notice my lunch was missing. I immediately began thinking of a possible solution to satisfy my hunger. *I'm a 6th grader, I can figure this out*, I told myself.

Suddenly, I had an idea. My stomach was empty, and it needed to be filled. I didn't have food, but there was a hand pump for water at the park. I could fill my stomach with water. I went and stayed at the drinking fountain, intermittently drinking water until I couldn't hold any more. I remained there until my teacher announced that it was time for us to start our journey back to the school.

I got on my bike and began riding with my friends, but I soon discovered I was having a hard time keeping up. It wasn't too long before I realized something else. When you drink a lot of water, there is an urgent need to make frequent stops. As the afternoon wore on, between the slow speed due to lack of energy and the numerous stops, I found that all the other students were way ahead of me and out of sight – including my sister. The entire trip back, all I could think about was food, especially my delicious lunch that was probably still sitting on the back seat of our car.

My teacher asked me multiple times if I was ok, and each time I assured her I was fine. I was determined not to let anyone know I had forgotten my lunch. My teacher had a wonderful trait that I didn't appreciate at the time. She was meticulous in following the rules and since the requirement for the Cycling Honor was to ride 25 miles, *everyone*

had to pedal all 25 miles in order to receive the honor. By the time we arrived at the school, all my classmates had already left with their parents. To my horror, my mom had even picked up my sister, leaving a message that she would be back to get me.

When Mom arrived, I looked for my lunch in the back seat, but it was not there. She asked me what I was looking for, but being too proud to tell her, I just shrugged my shoulders and climbed into the front seat. Then she told me she had a surprise. I looked at her hoping it had something to do with food, but instead she told me that she needed to visit a friend and that I could watch TV at her friend's house while I waited. We didn't have a TV, so it was very rare that we were allowed to watch anything. The thought of watching TV was exciting and made me think that maybe I could wait a little bit longer to eat.

But after only a few minutes of watching, I realized that I was more interested in food than entertainment. In fact, I couldn't think of anything else but my need for food. I tried to concentrate on the program, but because of my increasing hunger pangs, I had lost all interest in TV. So, putting my pride aside, I went over to where my mom and her friend were visiting and just blurted out what happened. Without me even asking, my mom's friend jumped up from the table and gave me a box of crackers from the cupboard. Wow! I can still remember how good they tasted!

Looking back, I wonder why it was so hard for me to admit my need for food. Truly, the power of pride is strong. I didn't want to admit I had done the very thing my sister had warned me about. I was determined to get through in my own strength – I didn't need any help. It wasn't until my need for food became greater than my pride that I reached out for help.

In the *Sermon on the Mount*, Jesus pronounces a blessing on a class of people who hunger for a specific thing. In Matthew 5:6, Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for **righteousness** for they shall be filled." But Jesus specifically encouraged us to pursue it more than food, water, or clothing. And then He added, in Matthew 6:33, "Seek first the kingdom of God and **His righteousness**, and all these other things shall be added to you."

Can you imagine having a desire for Christ's righteousness that is stronger than physical hunger for food? A desire so strong that it would consume our thoughts and overcome the resistance from pride or selfishness and help us to realize our great need for the righteousness of Jesus? That kind of desire doesn't come naturally. **We must ask for it, plead for it, expect it – because God promised to give it to us.** But we must continue asking *until* we receive it – with the same determination and persistence of the widow in Luke 18 or the neighbor in Luke 11. When our desire for His righteousness is strong enough that we will appreciate the gift, we will receive it.

David came to the point where his heart's cry was, as he described in Psalm 27:4, "One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple."

Ask yourself today, *do I want a close relationship with God more than anything else or is my pride standing in the way from recognizing my need? Am I tired of being spiritually empty?* God has prepared a spiritual feast for you that will fill you up to overflowing. The banquet is ready, the invitations have gone out, and the question is this . . . Are you hungry?



▲ God's creation was the theme of VBS.

Family Vacation Bible School

By Elvy P. Rolle

MEMBER, CHIKAMING CHURCH

PRAYER FOCUS

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

OCTOBER 1-5

Fremont/Muskegon
Pastor Jason Sliger
Muskegon Community Services

OCTOBER 8-12

Alma/Edmore/Lakeview
Pastor Daniel Jean-Francois
Lakeview Community Services

OCTOBER 15-19

Grayling/Houghton Lake/Mio
Pastor Jay Clough
Grayling Elementary School
Mio Community Services

OCTOBER 22-26

Glennie/Tawas City/West Branch
Pastor Josiah Hill
Tawas Community Services
West Branch Community Services

OCTOBER 29 - NOVEMBER 2

Jackson/Bunker Hill
Pastor Moise Patsra
Jackson Community Services

The theme for this year's Vacation Bible School (VBS) at the Chikaming Church was "The Creator is my Friend," and focused on Creation week.

Deborah Hilliard, our VBS leader's guiding principle that sustained her prior and during VBS was, "Commit Thy way unto the Lord, trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass" Psalm 37:5 (KJV). She also expressed, "It was heartwarming to see the church body come together as a cohesive unit to make the dream a reality."

Deborah was supported in the development and execution of the program by her two enthusiastic co-leader daughters, Rebekah and Hannah, as well as her husband, David.

The program ran from 5:30 PM - 7:45 PM, Monday – Friday, July 23-28. At registration, each child was given a group assignment and a colorful bag to collect all of their nature objects, crafts, and take-home materials for the week.

We began with varied supper meals as a way to get acquainted, moved to the opening program that introduced Jesus as the Creator, featured each day of the creation week, and encouraged participation by rewarding the children with nature gifts. These natural treasures included sand dollars, gem stones, and miniature life-like animals.

The theme song "Jesus, the Light of the World," accompanied by hand motions,

was enjoyed by both children and adults. Following each night's opening program the groups were rotated among the assigned stations, which covered Bible, health, nature, crafts, and play.

The children experienced, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," through cognitive and sensory activities. These experiences were facilitated by the production of nature-oriented crafts, interactive Bible stories, related science experiments as object lessons, organized outdoor romps and meaningful games, healthy living nuggets, and sampling God's bounties. In addition, the children were engaged in nature presentations that focused on thinking about God's creative acts, and brought nature to life through the imagination, as well as listening to nature sounds, identifying seeds, and observing live animals.

The closing program each evening included a review of the day's topic, and an opportunity to earn tickets to trade in for eatable prizes. The sought after prizes were dispensed from a large nature-decorated surprise gift box by an older child hidden inside. Naturally, this was a highlight at the end for the children.

The Sabbath program rounded out the series with a condensed version of the creation theme. As reflected in the events of the week, the children's portion of the presentation included recitation of memory verses set to music, and of course, the theme song.

(continued on page 6)

The Faithful Man

By Jeff Akenberger

PASTOR, KALKASKA AND TRAVERSE CITY CHURCHES



▲ Michigan men gather at Great Lakes Adventist Academy for camaraderie and spiritual rejuvenation.

There is something special about rising in the darkness of Sabbath morning, lunches packed and the car gassed up from the day before, headlights on, my six-year-old son Judah in the front seat next to me because, “That’s how men ride,” and also because he said, “Daddy, you’ll need my help to look for deer.” We’re making our yearly pilgrimage to Great Lakes Adventist Academy (GLAA) for what Judah calls “The Great Men of Faith.”

We watch the sun rise while eating blueberry muffins and drinking soy milk. We listen to “Pathways of the Pioneers” as we drive, recalling our people’s history. We can’t help but have our faith strengthened and our resolve fortified as we, too, determine to put our trust in the “Faithful Man.”

Arriving at GLAA, we discern a special sense of God’s Spirit causing Judah to say, “It feels like camp meeting.” Just like camp meeting, men gathering from all over the state of Michigan recognized there was a battle going on. We would be confronted with the reality that men are not just part of the fight but are the ones under attack. Shoulder to shoulder, the Michigan Men of Faith sang hymns, opened the Bible for study, prayed, heard God’s word preached powerfully, and responded to calls from the Holy Spirit. A call to be leaders in purity, humility, and integrity; to extend a hand to help, not a finger to condemn; to claim God’s forgiveness and to forgive others; and a

very special call to be covered with the righteousness of Christ.

It was decided that if we would be faithful men, we must keep our eyes on the faithful Man, Christ Jesus. Furthermore, “We are not to be anxious about what Christ and God think of us, but about what God thinks of Christ, our Substitute. We are accepted in the Beloved” (*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 32). We may “give ourselves to Christ and know that He accepts us” (*Christ Object Lessons*, p. 155).



As Elders Micheff and Ringstaff brought our time to a close, this thought was impressed upon the men: “It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God’s law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot per-

fectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ’s character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 62).

Man and boy alike, responding to the call, pressed forward, falling to their knees with arms around one another, pleading and claiming Christ and His righteousness. Not their own righteousness, but Christ’s. Many, with tears, had for the first time a sense of the fullness of love and acceptance that is ours in Jesus.

Driving home, I looked over at my boy Judah. With blueberry muffin crumbs on his face, staring out the window at the sun descending into the western sky, he said, “Daddy, this was a good day. I like being a man of faith.” Reaching over to wipe the crumbs from his face, I said, “Me, too, son. A Michigan man of faith.”

POLICE, cont'd

Mike was married in 2012, and their marriage didn't go as planned. The God they both desired, became the subject of constant conflict. Consequently, Mike began to work weekends to avoid conflict. However, it wasn't good for him not to be in church on Sabbath.

Mike was blessed with a family that loved and prayed earnestly for him. My husband and I prayed daily, and my mom and I prayed also. Grandma Herzberg was a prayer warrior, and she held a special place in Mike's heart. She would be the vessel that God would use!

In April 2016 my mom suffered a major stroke. I watched my son as he stood at his grandmother's bedside. She was unable to speak, but her eyes spoke loud and clear, as if pleading with him. I watched as tears were streaming down his face and heard him say, "I know grandma, I promise I will be ready!" What a bittersweet moment! My mom was dying, and my son was making her a promise that he would return to Jesus!

Like so many times in a person's life, sincere promises fall by the wayside as life returns to normal. That is exactly what happened. My husband and I started praying even more fervently for our son. After praying nightly for ten months, I

received a phone call from Mike. He was crying. He said, "Mom, I am miserable! I can't sleep anymore. I am exhausted." My first response was "Praise the Lord, your Dad and I have been praying. Mike, you know what you have to do; you need to come back to Jesus!" He said, "Mom, you don't know what this will cost. You don't understand what I will have to go through!" I shared with him that following Jesus always has a cost, but that Jesus would help him every step of the way. I informed him that the Brighton Church was beginning the 2016 *Unlock Revelation* series and that he should consider attending. He told me he was going to think about it, and praise God he ended up going! But not without a cost.

Without going into great detail, Mike invited his wife to attend also; and that's when the trials really heated up. But praise God for the Brighton Church family because they simply supported and loved him all the more! Mike was re-baptized on April 30, 2016, exactly one year and two days after my mom's death. He told me, "Mom, I wish Grandma was here so she could know!" I responded, "Son, someday she will!"

Eventually Mike's wife filed for divorce that was finalized in 2017. However, Mike did not allow the trials to stop him.

Instead he began sharing his faith. Mike sought out his cousin Jonathan. Jonathan had also stood by my mother's bedside with an unkept promise. Jonathan knew what Mike had been going through and saw the joy and peace that Mike now had.

Praise God Jonathan was re-baptized and is currently involved with CAMPUS Ministries. Mike is still a full-time officer and looks for every opportunity to share his faith. In fact, he has been preaching in different churches whenever asked, which is something he said he would never do!

Want to hear something amazing? Last summer, Mike and Jonathan were able to share their testimony together a few times from local church pulpits. In the past, their grandmother would say to them both, "God has something very special for you, you would make a good preacher." When Jesus returns, and she is raised, she will discover her heart's desire was fulfilled. Both her wayward grandsons are now actively witnessing for Jesus!

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. . . They may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them" Rev. 14:13, (RSV).

VBS, cont'd

Snippets from the children's perspective:

Annie, an eight-year-old VBS participant, remarked that she enjoyed the games, crafts, stories, and surprise box, in that order.

In one family, twelve-year-old Timothy commented, "So, I liked the surprise box because you never know what you'll get, and you always wanted to come back and find out what you're going to get...I also liked the nature because I found out a lot of new facts...I liked when you got a prize for answering a question, I liked that too." Four-year-old Matthew said, "I liked the song." Ten-year-old Elizabeth stated, "Well, I liked the games, and I also liked when you had to guess what it was on the screen, and you got prizes for

it...and the butterfly was really pretty." However, seven-year-old Stephania, was hard-pressed to single out any one thing she enjoyed about VBS...She simply gave a heartfelt smile and exclaimed, "Everything!" What a testimony!

Another extraordinary event reported was the observation that children from a different family took seriously the encouragement to learn their memory verses. They helped each other by one of them reading the passage and another repeating the words, all while riding in the car!

The recurring theme expressed by the dedicated VBS staff was the joy of seeing the children's faces light up as they absorbed the Bible with open, eager minds.

The children were attended by parents, grandparents, and other relatives. These guardians observed the rich discoveries to which their children were responding.

One young mother indicated that this was a new experience for her children. She was inspired that it was time to start bringing them to church consistently.

We at the Chikaming Church were blessed with 32 children for our VBS program. The children ranged in age from 2-12.

It was a privilege to serve our community by sharing the love of our Creator Jesus with young developing minds, pointing them to His kingdom, and playing a part in their eternal salvation.

FREE!

- 26 WELLNESS TOPICS
- VIDEO DOWNLOADS 5-7 MINUTES EACH
- MATCHING TRACTS AVAILABLE

PRESENTED BY
VICKI GRIFFIN, MS, HUMAN NUTRITION, MPA

Balanced Living

26 Video Wellness Topics

New! Balanced Living Video Series - FREE! - Download Below

The Balanced Living Series is now available in a graphic-rich, professionally produced, video version (English only).

- Produced in partnership with 3ABN (3 Angels Broadcasting Network), each of the twenty-six short 5-7 minute presentations is filled with practical, powerful, and compelling information designed to reach the heart as well as the intellect.
- Biblical, inspiring, truth-filled, and motivational.
- The series will be featured on Lifestyle Matters YouTube as well as 3ABN's new YouTube channel, 3ABN Spark.
- Matching tracts available at HOPESource.com

Balanced Living CD PowerPoints and Videos are perfect for use in:

- Health Education
- Supper clubs
- Cooking schools
- Health nuggets
- Personal Use
- Home sharing
- Evangelistic meetings

Access downloads: <http://bit.ly/vids7>

The Gospel Has No Boundaries

By Ellen G. White

During His earthly ministry Christ began to break down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile, and to preach salvation to all mankind. Though He was a Jew, He mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at nought the Pharisaic customs of the Jews with regard to this despised people. He slept under their roofs, ate at their tables, and taught in their streets.

The Savior longed to unfold to His disciples the truth regarding the breaking down of the "middle wall of partition" between Israel and the other nations—the truth that "the Gentiles should be fellow heirs" with the Jews and "partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel." Ephesians 2:14; 3:6. This truth was revealed in part at the time when He rewarded the faith of the centurion at Capernaum. . . Still more plainly was it revealed on the occasion of His visit to Phoenicia, when He healed the daughter of the Canaanite woman. These experiences helped the disciples to understand that among those whom many regarded as unworthy of salvation, there were souls hungering for the light of truth.

Christ sought to teach the disciples the truth that in God's kingdom there are no territorial lines, no caste, no aristocracy; that they must go to all nations, bearing to them the message of a Savior's love. But not until later did they realize in all its fullness that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:26, 27).

MICHIGAN CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

5801 W Michigan Ave

Lansing, MI 48917

PHONE 517.316.1500 FAX 517.316.1501

commdept@misda.org

www.misda.org

www.facebook.com/miconf

MONTHLY CALENDAR

October

- 7-10 LIFT - Camp Au Sable
- 12-14 Mother/Daughter Retreat -
Camp Au Sable
- 18 MI K-12 Board of Education
- 19-21 Lay Advisory Retreat -
Camp Au Sable
- 20 TLT Squared - Great Lakes
Adventist Academy
- 22 Teacher Inservice
- 23 MI Executive Committee
- 24 Camp Meeting Directors
- 26-28 Family First - Camp Au Sable

November

- 2-4 Public Hi-C - Camp Au Sable
- 4 Daylight Savings Time Ends
- 6-8 New In Ministry
- 9-11 Crystal Mountain Marriage
Retreat
- 9-11 Personal Ministries -
Camp Au Sable
- 13 District Superintendents
- 15 MI K-12 Board of Education
- 18-20 Education/Ministerial Summit -
Camp Au Sable
- 21-23 Thanksgiving Holiday -
Office Closed
- 22 Thanksgiving Day

THE BLESSING OF THE MYANMAR VBS PROGRAM

The 2018 Vacation Bible School (VBS) program, one of the projects of Myanmar Community Services (MCS) was recently completed. The program is funded by the Lake Union Youth Evangelism Congress and led by a staff of four from the Grand Rapids Myanmar congregation.



After the five-day event, 21 children had the opportunity to share what they learned with their local congregation. Due to some of the challenges in learning the VBS curriculum, the staff were able to adapt and utilize songs and games that the children were more familiar with.

The group also faced some challenges with lack of materials and classroom space, but again, they managed to work through it all, and the Lord blessed abundantly!

It's through such programs that the event leaders hope to strengthen and encourage many of the Adventist and non-Adventist children in establishing a relationship with Christ. And all along the way, the VBS program may end up being a witness to the parents of all the wonderful children too!

