



Official Newsletter for the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists:

# Michigan Memo

December 2013, Volume 25, Number 10

## New Beginnings

—Tom Schram  
Alpena Church Member

What a difference God can make in your life when you turn it over to Him. If I had only realized that sooner, my life would have been very different. Ever said that to yourself, “If only?”

As a child, I was raised Catholic. I attended the Catholic Church and went to the Catholic school. As I grew older, I began to question what was being taught; maybe it was what was not being taught. I had many unanswered questions. I went to the elders, the priests, and others with my questions. One particular question was “How do you know when you are saved?” I received so many different answers that it was confusing, and I felt more lost than ever. I never did find the answer that rang with truth.

Still, I faithfully attended the Catholic Church until the age of 30. But not having a solid faith foundation, my life started going in the wrong direction. I ended up in the prison system because of a horrible mistake I made when I was a Registered Nurse. I even dug that hole deeper by trying to lie my way out. Yes, you can tell the rest of that story yourself.

I had a lot of time to think about the direction my life had gone and where I would like it to go. I spent almost all my free time searching for the truth. Someone asked me a question

one day, “Why do you go to church on Sundays?” I wanted to be able to answer that question. So I started to search for the answer and it just lead me into a deeper study of God’s Word. Jesus is the God of another chance, of a new beginning. He fights for you when others have counted you out. He offers restoration when others offer only condemnation. He refuses to give up on you even when you’ve given up on yourself.

I learned there were volunteers, from many different denominations, that go to the prisons and hold services. As my study deepened, I learned about the Sabbath. I started to attend the

Adventist services and I started to find my answers. I eventually was moved to another prison where no services were held. So, I began to start teaching services myself. Although I was still learning, I felt I just had to spread God’s message. I learned that the prisons have a budget for religious services, so I was able to



*Pictured left to right are Everett Kittleson  
Tom Schram, and Pastor David Austin.*

*(Continued on page 6)*



# Guest's Perspective

## Serious Times Demand Serious Trust

—Leroy Bruch  
Conference Treasurer

A poor widow went up to Temple to worship God. The Scriptures reveal that Jesus was in the Temple congregation that day. He was sitting in the Court of the Women where the Temple Treasury was located. While watching the rich donate their tithes and offerings, this poor widow caught His eye. Unfortunately the Inspired Word is mostly silent about the widow's life. We do not know whether there were children or aged parents at home who were dependent upon her for support. We do know that her husband was dead. As for her occupation and income potential, we also know that she was one of the working poor in Israel based on Luke's usage of the Greek word *pennes* to describe the widow's poverty.

In today's society, the widow would have probably worked at or below the minimum wage level. Being a widow in Israel probably meant that the wages she received from her marginal employment were all that stood between her and possible starvation. Nevertheless, as poor as she was, the widow had come into the Court of the Women to give an offering to God. All she had in her possession were two *mites* which equaled a *quadrans*. Now the value of the two *mites* or one *quadrans* would equal about one fourth to three eighths of a cent in her day. In today's currency and relative to today's wages and standard of living, she would have had the equivalent of about \$20.

As Jesus fixed His gaze upon her in the Temple, she quietly slipped up to the designated offering receptacle located on the Temple wall. After depositing the two *mites*, she quickly turned to leave. Understanding the sacrificial offering she had just made, Jesus directed the attention of His disciples toward the widow saying, "Truly I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all, for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had." (Luke 21:3-4 NKJV)

Christ's words revealed that He understood the sacrificial giving that had just taken place. As the widow turned to leave, we are told that her eyes met Christ's eyes. She understood that her offering had been accepted and that her sacrificial giving was known and appreciated. Jesus understood that the widow had made a serious sacrificial gift in the Temple that day. She only had two *mites*, or one fourth to three eighths cents, to her name. Only two *mites* stood between her and total insolvency. Yet she gave all the money she had as a love gift to God. She definitely had a serious trust in God's ability to provide. Otherwise she could not have put everything she had on the altar to the Lord.



The widow also made a serious sacrificial contribution to God's work while there was still time to give. Leaving the Temple compound that day, she probably was not aware that time was running out for the Jewish nation. Within a year, Jesus would be crucified by the Romans. After Christ's resurrection and ascension to heaven, God's mercy would still linger over the Jewish nation for almost

forty years. But time ran out in AD 70, when Jerusalem and its magnificent Temple were destroyed and the Jewish religion was outlawed. As the widow left the Temple that day, the door of mercy for the Jewish nation was slowly beginning to close. Time was running out. Soon the Temple would lie in ruins, its altars broken down, and its Temple treasury ransacked and empty. Soon no one would be able to give offerings to God there. By God's grace however, the widow was able to develop a serious trust in God while mercy still lingered.

This poses a very important question to those of us who are part of God's Remnant Church today. Have we also learned to have a serious trust in God while mercy still lingers? Or put another way, do we have a trust factor with Jesus that is serious enough to put everything we have on the altar for Him? If you have been alive during the last six years, you have probably learned

two things. First, we are living in serious times; and second, financial prosperity can be very fickle. Looking back the statistics are staggering:

- 28 million workers unemployed or underemployed
- 452 banks failed and no longer in business
- 53% decline in the value of the stock market - trillions of dollars of retirement funds evaporated
- 16 million+ homes in some stage of foreclosure proceedings - trillions of dollars of home equity lost
- Blue chip companies including the world's #1 automaker declare bankruptcy
- State and local municipalities insolvent and/or declare bankruptcy
- National debt increases from \$10 trillion to \$17 trillion+ as the government uses debt to combat the Great Recession

These frightening financial statistics only begin to reveal the depth of the financial meltdown now known as "The Great Recession." Surpassed in severity only by "The Great Depression" which ravaged this nation just prior to World War II, both "The Great Recession" and "The Great Depression" should signal a warning to God's Remnant Church that time and prosperity on planet earth are both limited commodities. Scripture clearly reveals that our lives are limited by time. We only have so much time to bring our gifts to God. Scripture also

Every Monday morning, the Michigan Conference staff meet together for worship and prayer. Each week, different churches, schools, literature evangelists, and community service centers are remembered in prayer. Here is the list for the month of December. Please join with us as we pray for these ministries.

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|-----------|--|
| Dec 2-6   | Alma/Ithaca/St. Johns<br>Pastor Fred Dana<br>Community Service - Virginia Pfeifle<br>Ithaca Elementary<br>Rebecca White, Principal,<br>Jessica Goodrich  |
| Dec 9-13  | Carp Lake, Cheboygan, Petoskey<br>Pastor Jason Sliger<br>Literature Evangelist - Ron Knapp<br>Community Service<br>Carp Lake - Ruth Nestle<br>Cheboygan - Renta Joy Gauthier<br>Petoskey Elementary<br>Lorene Yount, Principal |
| Dec 16-20 | Covert/Maranatha Bible Fellowship/<br>Pullman<br>Pastor Bill Richardson<br>Community Service -<br>Debra Rice-Gordon  |

## Adventist Giving Through Your Local Church Website

Giving Tithe and Offerings Online is Easy

1. Follow the link to "Online Giving" from your church's website. (Ask your pastor about Adventist Giving if your website doesn't have this link.)
2. Create an account. Click on the "First time users..." link. Fill in your email and provide a secure password to create your online account.
3. Log in and select the offerings and amounts you wish to contribute.
4. Provide your payment information.

For more information, visit [www.adventistgiving.org](http://www.adventistgiving.org)

clearly reveals that there will be an end to this world as we know it now. Soon the time for giving will be past. Before long, those who seek to remain faithful to God will not be able to either buy or to sell (*Revelation 13:16-17*). Soon the time for learning to trust God seriously with all that we have will be gone. It is now, while mercy still lingers, that God has given His people time to learn to trust Him seriously.

But how will serious trust reveal itself in God's Remnant Church today? The answer is simple. Serious trust will be revealed in the faithful stewardship of God's Remnant people just like faithful stewardship was revealed in the widow's life. God's tithe will be returned to Him and freewill offerings will flow from a heart of love and trust. God's stewards will redeem the time making sure that tithe and offerings neglected in past times find their

*"It is now, while mercy still  
lingers, that God has given  
His people time to learn  
to trust Him seriously."*

way to church. God's stewards will daily seek His direction as they seek to glorify Him when spending or returning back to Him the funds He has lent them in trust. A serious trust in the promises of God's Word will be revealed. God's faithful stewards will seriously trust Him to open the windows of heaven and pour out His special blessings (*Malachi 3:8-12*). Thus they will understand by experience what it means to "...taste and see that the Lord is good" (*Psalms 34:8*) Like the poor widow, God's Remnant Church will then also know by experience what it means to trust God seriously with everything they possess.



# Ready.

—By Craig Harris  
Pathfinder Director

I loved the campfires!”  
“My favorite part was... the activities on Sunday, well wait, no, the flag raising in the morning, and oh yeah, the campfires and food!”

“It was the best!”

This was just a glimpse from three out of 1,134 Pathfinders and Pathfinder staff that were in attendance at this year’s Michigan Pathfinder Camporee. The camporee was held in the Northwoods of Camp Au Sable on September 13-15.

The theme for this Pathfinder year is “Ready. (period)” The programming this year was geared around the second Pathfinder Law, “Do My Honest part,” which means we will be *ready* to sacrifice, *ready* to serve, *ready* to represent Christ. By God’s grace, we will be *ready* for Jesus to come!

A few items of interest from the weekend were:

- Dr. Gordon Atkins, our main speaker, taught how God the Creator created the ears and eyes to help us be *ready* (period).
- Area Coordinators Dave Christensen and Ken Neal led daily flag raisings and lowerings conducted by the Pathfinders.
- Pathfinders shivered in 29 degrees temperature Friday night.
- 71 campfires (much appreciated with the above bullet)
- Camporee quiz Sabbath afternoon
- Nature identification trail
- Frozen T-shirts, large puzzles, A-Frame crawls, 4x4 balances, and many other activities teaching the importance of teamwork within each club
- Great singing led by Scott Kabel
- Campsite entrances depicting the theme *Ready*.
- Haystacks! And more haystacks!
- Worship at the campfire bowl
- 129 TLT’s inducted
- Five Master Guides invested
- Two people received their PLA certification



- Hotdogs, chips, s’mores, and pancakes
- Clean outhouses
- The Pathfinder Song!
- Visiting campsites Sabbath afternoon
- Au Sable Sandy Skidaddle - the annual 5k run Sunday morning
- Much, much more fun
- Oh, one more thing! 144



Pathfinders took a stand for baptism at the Sabbath vespers at the church bowl!

When you see your Pathfinder Director, Deputy directors, and TLT’s at your church, why not give them a heartfelt “thank you” for helping disciple our young people!. They deserve it!

Our Camporees are more than just cool camping trips. The Michigan Camporee has three main missions to accomplish each year:

1. Inspire the clubs and Pathfinders for excellence in their Pathfinder program.
2. Teach the Pathfinders of Jesus and His love and provide hands-on opportunities for developing solid Christian young people.
3. Develop friendships within their club and other clubs in Michigan.

We currently only have 38% of our churches that have an active Pathfinder program. The youth department wants to move that to 50% of churches in the next three years! If you have questions on the importance of Pathfinder Ministries, or want to know how to start a club, we can help! Just call or email Pastor Craig Harris at 517-316-1573 (charris@misda.org) or Alanna Knapp at 517-316-1570 (aknapp@misda.org).



# UpLIFT Retreat Focusing on Choices

—By *Jeremy Hall*  
*Associate Superintendent of Education*

Young people today are bombarded with a media blitz like none seen before in history. Through music, movies, video games, and more, Satan is peppering them with enticing

alternatives to the Christian lifestyle and Jesus' call for their lives. Never before has a program such as LIFT (Lifestyle Improvement For Teens) been more relevant and needed to combat these influences.

Academy sharing from their perspective about lifestyle choices related to entertainment as well as choosing to be drug-free.



LIFT is a seventh and eighth grade retreat at Camp Au Sable that has been running concurrently for decades.

It is a retreat that attempts to present to young people

meaningful and lasting lifestyle choices that run contrary to what the world is offering. Through keynote messages as well as intentional breakout sessions and activities, the LIFT program works to help young people see that choosing Jesus as their personal Friend is the most meaningful and joyous decision they will ever make!

These presentations were incredibly powerful and impactful. Our keynote speaker was Pastor Michael Taylor, who serves in the Kalamazoo area. He based his practical messages on 1 Corinthians 12:1. Pastor Taylor did more than just preach for our main meetings. He and his wife were actively engaged with young people throughout the week in a number of activities.

LIFT 2013 saw about 200 young people from all over the Michigan Conference come to Au Sable on October 6-9. It was a wonderful time as students interacted with presenters, friends, sponsors, and most importantly, Jesus Christ. From interactive recreational activities to breakout sessions on spirituality, LIFT provides wonderful opportunities for young people to make positive choices in a difficult world.



Many young people made decisions for Jesus at the end of our time at Au Sable and we praise God for these decisions!

We are

grateful that God has continued to sustain programs such as LIFT and we look forward to continuing this program until He comes!

During main meetings, there were various features that included



nature nuggets as well as a focus on magabooks. Two of the evenings featured students from Great Lakes Adventist



*(Continued from page 1)*

purchase materials. I was able to get Bible lessons, DVD's, and other books on the Adventist beliefs.

It was not always easy trying to teach others the truth. I remember a time when two other prisoners were trying their best to give me a hard time about the messages I was teaching. I asked the Lord for strength to get through these times. If I would of let fear take hold, I would never have left my cell. The authorities finally stepped in and the issues were resolved.

I knew there would be a time I would be getting out and wanted to establish myself with a church. I am from Alpena, so I started to write to the Alpena Church. They gave me answers, Bible lessons, prayer, and more prayer. The previous Pastor Jim Howard started writing letters. Then Elder Everett Kittleson took over with the help of the current Pastor Dave Austin and other members. The many questions I had over the years were being answered. The confusion was waning away and understanding of God's truth was becoming clearer.

When all points started to line up, I was furious with all the past false teachings I had learned as a child and young adult. That being said, the blame starts at home; we are all responsible for our learning. God gives us all a portion of discernment. We need to use it or go with the crowd, which is so easy.

Once home, I was involved in intense studies of the Adventist truths, as found in God's Word. I was able to continue to study with Elder Everett Kittleson, Rod Thompson, and Pastor Dave Austin. These wonderful men of God were able to help me put it all together and lead me towards baptism and church membership.

I was baptized in the river at the Kittleson home, where I was able to go down into the beautiful water and rise up a new creation. The beach was packed with church members who have welcomed me with open arms, something that was so very special to me and continues to be. The people are so full of God's love. That day I truly died to old self and was raised a new creation in the Lord. Never to turn back to that old life is my prayer. How I know this is because God's Word tells me. If we continue to grow in and follow His Word, He is faithful to help us not to go back to the old life of sin. Even if we falter, He is there to take us back when we sincerely repent.

As it says in 1 Peter 5:7-10, "casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you."

As I have continued my studies and prayers, once again He has answered a long time prayer, where I prayed for an Adventist

woman that I could share my life with in His will. He has answered that prayer. We have committed our lives to our Lord and Savior and we will allow Him to direct our lives.

So you see, God is still in control. He continues to make our messes good all in His time. One thing we have been promised is that despite the various ways we sin and mess things up, God's steadfast love will never leave us. It is because of this unflagging compassion that we are not condemned.

My life's mission is to follow His will for me, to care for the person He has brought me, to tell others about Him, to help the church when called upon, and to live a life worthy of Him.

## Tips on How to Start a Local Prison Ministry

1. Each local church should choose a prison ministries leader.
2. The prison ministries leader should try to solicit the interest and help of other church members by announcing their plans in church, putting them in the bulletin, and calling on members individually.
3. All people involved in prison ministry work should be approved by the local prison ministries leader. It is important that all legalities/confidentiality procedures be followed in the selection of such persons.
4. Form an organizational council of interested persons.
5. Decide what types of prison ministry (Bible school, services in a prison, pen pal ministry, etc.) would be suitable for your church and work in the conference format for that particular ministry—check with your local conference for this information.
6. It is suggested that all persons involved in prison ministry attend a conference training workshop, which may be available to your church upon request.
7. The local organizational council should meet quarterly and annually to reevaluate goals and plans for their ministry.
8. Find out what guidelines your conference may have in regard to prison ministries and follow these guidelines. You may also contact the North American Division Adult Ministries Department for further guidance.

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# Transitions in Mission



Wendy Welch lives in St. Johns with her two daughters Paige and Hunter. She most recently was employed at the Summit Community Bank, but now serves the church as Administrative Secretary in the Conference Office. She loves gardening, photography, and geocaching.

Lisa Jensen has been working as an administrative secretary. She will be working as the new Assistant Treasurer for Risk Management/Employment Benefits.

Carol Thomas has been working as the Assistant Treasurer for Risk Management/Employment Benefits. She will be working as the new Human Resource Associate.

## Relevant.

—by Justin Kim  
Communications Director

While the church in Michigan has a outstanding Adventist education system, there are some Adventist students that attend public high schools and universities for a variety of reasons. Often subject to feeling excluded, peculiar, spiritually irrelevant, and even ridiculed, these students have difficult times finding encouragement and resources to maintain or even strengthen their faith.

On November 15-17, the Youth Department coordinated with the Public Campus Ministries Department to help by convening these public students to the HI-C (High-school and Collegiate) Retreat at Camp Au Sable to be inspired under theme, “*Relevant.*”



With about 170 attendees, the program included sermons from Pastor Moise Ratsara from the Hartford Adventist Church. Seminar topics included Andrews University’s StandOut Director Andrea Jakobsons speaking about the Sanctuary, former college football player and convert James Erwin about the sanctified life, Pastor Justin Kim about how to increase intelligence through Scripture memorization, and Camp Au Sable’s Dr. Gordon Atkins

providing balanced answers to *relevant* questions regarding science, evolution, and faith.

During the Sabbath closing hours, an agape feast was served on the auditorium floor, where each had to serve one another. This set the scene for various testimonies about the relevance of faith, spirituality, God, and Adventism for young people. A large group of public high school students came from the Wyoming Church and some surrounding areas. They shared the testimony

of a 13 year old starting a program at the local school to study the Bible together. Today, the group is 35 strong and continues to seek different ways to spread the Gospel.

There was a marked change from Friday to Sunday, as spiritual fellowship and solid messages provided a foundation to charge



the students to live spiritually *relevant* lives. Young students pulled together several hundred dollars for the Sabbath offering to *Amazon Lifesavers*. Missions and evangelism was highlighted, especially in frontier areas of the Amazon, inspiring the attendees of God’s work abroad. Pastor Ratsara gave an appeal for baptism on Sunday, where 13 students made decisions. Some friends cried, others were surprised, but in the end, the whole group knew God was moving on hearts in a *relevant* way.

Programs like these set the scene for young people to strengthen their faith for the public square when adults, if not now already. Raising their spiritual confidence with fellowship, prayer, and the Word, this weekend has invested much and should expect much fruit. If you are or know of any public high school or collegiate students who would like to or needs to attend, mark your calendars for the next HI-C Retreat on November 7-9, 2014!

# MICHIGAN CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

PO Box 24187

Lansing, MI 48909

PHONE 517.316.1500 FAX 517.316.1501

jclark@misda.org

www.misda.org

## December

- 8 Lay Advisory Coordinating Committee
- 11-13 Office Staff Planning Retreat - Camp Au Sable
- 24-26 Christmas Holiday - Office Closed
- 31 New Year Holiday Eve - Office Closed

## January

- 1 New Years Day
- 1-2 Office Closed
- 1-5 GYC - Orlando, FL
- 6-9 Ministerial Retreat - Camp Au Sable
- 10-12 Teen Snow Outing - Camp Au Sable
- 12-15 NAD Adventist Ministries Convention - California
- 17-19 Pathfinder Area Coordinators Retreat - Camp Au Sable
- 20 Martin Luther King Day - Office Closed
- 21-25 LUC Presidents Retreat
- 23 K-12 Board of Education - Lansing
- 24-26 Father/Son Retreat - Camp Au Sable
- 28 MI Conference Executive Committee - Conference Room
- 29-Feb2 GLAA Home Leave

## What's Up

### APPLIED Personal Ministry

Apps are small programs downloadable on smart phones. Check out the following resources at your fingertips to enhance your personal ministry!

### Amazing Facts

- Download Amazing Facts audio and video sermons, Bible study guides, and daily devotionals
- Resources available in 10 languages
- App functions as a media player to stream sermons
- Available on iOS (iTunes) and Android (Google Play)
- Price FREE



### The Sabbath App

- Shows sunset times for your current location
- Can add additional locations
- Calculate sunrise/sunset times for any date of any location
- Bible studies on Sabbath
- Set reminders for approaching Sabbath hours
- Available on iOS (iTunes) and Android (Google Play)
- Price FREE



### International Disaster: Philippine Typhoon Relief

Donate for survivors at [www.ADRA.org](http://www.ADRA.org) or mark offering envelopes as "ADRA Typhoon Haiyan."



Donate for Adventist members and missionaries at [www.hope4.fundly.com/typhoon-haiyan](http://www.hope4.fundly.com/typhoon-haiyan) or mark offering envelopes as "Philippine Typhoon Relief."

### Domestic Disaster: Adventist Community Services in Midwest Tornado Relief



Donate at [www.communityservices.org](http://www.communityservices.org) or mark offering envelopes as "ACS Disaster Response."

### New Websites

Visit the new General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist website at [www.adventist.org](http://www.adventist.org).

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