



Official Newsletter for the Michigan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

# MICHIGAN MEMO

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▲ Mikelle served as camp evangelist at Camp Au Sable this summer.

**“It’s definitely very daunting to think that I would be the camp evangelist... Like, my only qualification is that I’ve experienced the grace of God.”**

## Faithful Little FARMER

An Interview: Mikelle Wiles with Andy Im

I arrive at Camp Au Sable on a humid, summer afternoon and walk into the camp store. Almost immediately, I hear my name reverberating aloud from the cheerful and enthusiastic Tammy Micheff.

I can’t resist smiling.

I’m here to write a piece on summer camp, and before long Tammy exclaims, “Mikelle! You’ve got to talk to Mikelle!” Suddenly she calls out on the radio for Mikelle to meet me at the camp store.

We connect shortly after and head over to Cedar Lodge for a sit-down.

**So tell us a little about yourself, what you’re studying, what you want in life?** Well, I grew up in Yellowknife,

Northwest Territories, Canada. I have one brother, and my parents still live up north. I’m a senior this year at Andrews University and studying social work.

My dream is to do foreign missions, but we’ll see. Sometimes He calls us to our hometown, so I’m available if that’s the case also. I want to serve God. I want to serve people. I’m young and unattached. It’s the perfect time.

**How did you end up at Camp Au Sable?** The camp I really wanted to work at [last year] was Timber Ridge because I knew a lot of people there. There was such conflict in my heart. Then the day came when I had to call Pastor Ken to inform him of my decision. Even as the phone was ringing, I was really wanting


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- EDITORIAL -

# Pursuit of Unity

By Jim Micheff

MICHIGAN CONFERENCE PRESIDENT



**“If we have a weak understanding of our message, then we will struggle to accomplish our mission. But if we fully understand our message, then our mission will be clear.”**

Man-**M**ankind has searched for peace and unity since the beginning of time. Many have tried to obtain it by force, trickery, bribery, or through “peace talks.” The history of the human race is full of examples of attempted peace through negotiation, such as the civil war, WWII, and the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel that ended a 30-year war between the countries.

All throughout time, man has tried to gain peace and unity through agreement, but the truth is, unity that is negotiated just doesn't last. If someone can talk us into something, then someone else, or a changing circumstance, can cause us to change our minds. God makes it very clear that He wants His children to dwell in unity! The Bible says in Psalm 133:1, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” So, why is it so difficult to achieve what man so desperately seeks? Could the answer be, before we can be at peace with others, we must first be at peace with God? William Ewart Gladstone shared some wisdom about obtaining peace when he said, “We look forward to the time when the Power of Love will replace the Love of Power. Then will our world know the blessings of peace.” It all boils down to this: real peace and unity comes from a heart of love, not selfishness and greed – and since God is love – without Him, you simply cannot experience peace!

What is it then that draws us into this love relationship with God? When sin entered the world, it became the barrier between man and God. Instead of people running to God, they ran away from Him. Love for God was replaced by fear, and communication with Him was impaired to the point where His voice was no longer heard. But because of God's great love for man, He formed a plan of salvation to restore the broken relationship with Him. This great plan is also referred to as the Gospel. Paul tells how to have unity and peace with God in Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Take a moment and think about the Day of Pentecost. Imagine what it was like for the Holy Spirit to be manifested in such a powerful way. It's reassuring to know that this level of anointing is available to each of us today. But please know that although we may desire the results of Pentecost and want the outpouring of the latter rain, we must not overlook the preparation that is necessary to receive it. Luke tells us in Acts 2:1, “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.” This unity was directed first toward God and then toward others.

All sin is a sin against God. Joseph understood this when he was asked to violate the seventh commandment. His response was, “How can I sin against God?” He recognized that to break the

commandments was to be, first and foremost, unfaithful to God. When the Holy Spirit brings us under conviction and we confess our sins against God, two things take place. First, we accept the repentance and forgiveness from Him, and secondly, we are brought back into unity with Him. As a result of the repentance God gave us, we are also led to seek the forgiveness of those individuals we have sinned against. In this way, God also restores unity between individuals.

This is the preparation that was taking place before the Day of Pentecost. It wasn't until this work was completed that the Holy Spirit could have the entire hearts of the believers. Without realizing it, by drawing close to God and allowing Him to reveal those things in their lives that were separating them from their heavenly Father, they were not only drawing closer to God, but were also drawing closer to their brethren.

The work of the gospel is to bring about unity with God. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 5:19 that God is reconciling the world to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is the message God wants us to give to the world, for it not only unites us, but gives us the reason and focus for our mission - which is to take the gospel to the world. We must recognize that message drives mission. If we have a weak understanding of our message, then we will struggle to accomplish our mission. But if we fully understand our message, then our mission will be clear.

Our world church is currently struggling in many ways. Although membership is growing (we are recognized by secular entities as the fastest growing protestant denomination in North America), many of our churches are shrinking. We have the second largest Christian educational system in the world, but only around 30% of our own children are attending Adventist schools. This is challenging

leaders at all levels in our church as world, division, union, and local conferences are struggling to find a solution. Our schools are closing, and roughly 70% of our students are enrolling in either public or Christian schools of other denominations. God led the Seventh-day Adventist church to establish schools to fortify our children in biblical truth and to equip and train them to take the gospel message to the world, but parents don't seem to recognize any major differences between our Adventist schools and any other private school. Is it possible that our educators at all levels need to refocus on our message?

**“If we are not in unity with the heart of God, we will not be able to cooperate with God in giving the third angel’s message.”**

More than ever before, there is a need for unity within our church. Unfortunately, there are some who think that church policy is what is uniting the church and are reluctant to allow changes for fear the church will not stay together. On the other hand, many are unhappy with the restrictions of policy, but it's important to remember that it was never intended to hold the church together in unity. Church policy was established so that a growing organization could work together to effectively accomplish our mission of spreading the gospel to the world. It is the Gospel message of Jesus Christ that brings unity with God and man.

If we are in unity with God, we will not have to work at striving for or maintaining unity in the church. Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that you are My disciples if you have love for one another.”

It is God's love as conveyed through the Gospel that our hearts respond to. And the response of our heart is not just to love God - but to love Him supremely!

If we are not in unity with the heart of God, we will not be able to cooperate with God in giving the third angel's message. This same message is given to two different groups. In Revelation 3:14-22, this message is directed to the church. In Revelation 14:6-12, God empowers those in the church who have responded to the message to give it to the world. This last message is too precious and important to be entrusted to mortal men to give with words or even actions alone. This message is coming from the heart of God Himself - delivered through the hearts of His servants to the hearts of the world. This is a message not only conveyed with words of warning, but with God's love intertwined in it. It is the ultimate and last message this world will ever receive.

God's amazing plan of salvation was achieved when He gave His only Son to die on a cross so that we might have eternal life with Him, and it is His deepest desire that all His children be saved and none should perish (2 Peter 3:9). God is allowing us the privilege of working to hasten His soon coming. But to answer His call, we first must be united. As the apostle Paul tells us in Ephesians 4:3, “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” Time is short and more than ever before, God's people need to be in pursuit of unity.



▲ Traverse City Church

# Dedication and Renewal

By Pat Hutchins

MEMBER, TRAVERSE CITY

## PRAYER FOCUS

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

### SEPTEMBER 4 -7

Cherry Hill/Detroit NW  
Pastor Steve Conway  
Oakwood Academy  
Detroit Oakwood Community Services

### SEPTEMBER 10-14

Iron Mountain/Iron River  
Pastor Jim Nephew

### SEPTEMBER 17-21

Grayling/Houghton Lake/Mio  
Pastors Jay Clough  
Grayling Elementary  
Houghton Lake Community Services  
Mio Community Services

### SEPTEMBER 24-28

Rogers Heights  
Pastor Eric Del Valle  
Grand Rapids Adventist Academy

Our Traverse City Church was recently dedicated during a very special Sabbath celebration. The service was attended by several Michigan Conference officers and wives while the congregation was filled with current and former members and friends.

Former Traverse City Pastor David Yeagley gave the childrens' story and the sermon. He was responsible for initiating the sale of the former small church building at 442 West 7th St. in downtown Traverse City.

Elder Wes Peppers, also a former pastor, here lead the congregational prayer. He had encouraged the rapid payoff of the mortgage, which was accomplished in 15 months.

We were also blessed to have Elder Jay Gallimore, former President of the Michigan Conference. He played a special role helping us secure funding during the various phases of construction.

The service was additionally graced by the attendance of the current Conference Executive Secretary Elder Justin Ringstaff. He made the call for tithes and offerings and spoke briefly regarding the need for offerings to the World Budget.

Elder Ringstaff's presence was especially timely for he is passionate about,

empowering every member to be a disciple of Jesus, fully embracing their call to personal ministry. Our church is currently experiencing a fresh sense of renewal. The membership is growing and we are excited about new projects and goals.

The school has a new direction and several young families with children anxious to be a part of fun, creative yet challenging learning experiences.

We also have programs to encourage individual and group Bible study. Our Sabbath School classes are dynamic, and we continue with individual study such as the Bible-In-A-Year program. All of this and more, such as joyful, yummy potlucks!

To be noted is the "newly baptized" syndrome. The more love and energy we show the Lord, the more likely we are to encounter obstacles, which is convincing evidence we are on the right track.

We are grateful for the blessings of our church building. It provides a gathering place for fellow believers and is a beacon of light to the community. Our prayers are for every child of God. May our network of churches, schools and various institutions stay the course, demonstrating the love and joy to know Christ and His beautiful plan of salvation.

# Holland Hispanic Graduation



By Jorge Mata Cerdas  
BERRIEN SPRINGS

▲ The graduates of Laymen Adventist Seminary.

On Sabbath, July 7th, the graduation of SAL (Laymen Adventist Seminary, for its acronym in Spanish) took place. Thirty-two church members, including brothers and sisters from Holland Spanish, Pullman Spanish, Grand Rapids Northwest Spanish and Kalamazoo Spanish, received their Small Group Leadership certificate from Andrews University.

Andrews University Theological Seminary offers this possibility, at no cost to the church, to instruct the membership in areas of interest for gospel service (Small Group Leadership, preaching, how to give Bible studies, etc.). The course lasts seven months, with classes once a month imparted by different instructors authorized by Dr. Ricardo Norton (founder and director of SAL and professor of AU SDA Theological Seminary).

At the end of this first certification in these churches I can see that my expectations were surpassed. Some aspects that have changed for good are:

1. Self-esteem. The members feel that they achieved something important in their lives. That gives value and motivates them to work in the church.
2. Unity in the congregation. I have seen how the course has made them look for union and harmony.

3. The desire to seek souls. They have developed an awareness of the responsibility we have before God in the fulfillment of the mission.

4. A willingness to help the pastor fulfill a very important part of the ministry: train the members. Sometimes we concentrate on reaching goals that present us as a “star pastor,” and we put aside this work that is going to benefit the church for a long time, because our brothers and sisters will continue to use the tools we give them once we leave.

“Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. Its members should be taught how to give Bible readings, how to conduct and teach Sabbath school classes, how best to help the poor and to care for the sick, how to work for the unconverted. There should be schools of health, cooking schools, and classes in various lines of Christian help work. There should not only be teaching, but actual work under experienced instructors. Let the teachers lead the way in working among the people, and others, uniting with them, will learn from their example. One example is worth more than many precepts” (*Ministry of Healing*, 149).

5. They feel that their contribution is useful, and they feel that they are an important part of the ecclesiastical machinery.

I am grateful to God for the opportunity to contribute in something that will be of benefit to the church and to the members for the rest of their lives.

Go ahead, my dear brothers and sisters, continue to serve the Lord ... “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine... But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (II Timothy 4:2, 5).

to say “No!” But, I just gave it to God and ended up saying “Yes.”

Afterwards, I felt such peace. Like, honestly, indescribable. I just knew for sure that it was the right place. That realization, right at the beginning of last year, was so motivating all through my experience last summer.

This year I wasn't planning on coming back. But when the Au Sable team came to recruit at Andrews, Alex (program director) asked me if I was interested in being the camp evangelist. And you know, sometimes you just know it's God's voice. I pretty much knew when he asked, that this was where God was leading. So that's how I ended up here.

**What were some of the struggles you faced this summer as camp evangelist?** It's definitely very daunting to think that I would be the camp evangelist. I really experienced so much of God's grace in this position because I don't have any background to do this. Like, my only qualification is that I've experienced the grace of God; and you know, all I can do is, day by day, say, “Here I am, do what You want with me.”

It was really amazing to see how God answered that call. I know pretty well

what kind of things I struggle with and that I don't have it all together. And the title “camp evangelist” made me believe I needed to have it all together. And God showed me, “NO, you can't, you don't!” But that's why God is there, to fill in those holes. All He wants is someone who is willing and available.

**Is there an experience this past summer that really stands out?** Pastor Ken kept asking me to do crazy things. Like we'd be at a baptism, and pastor Ken would come over and say, “I want you to do an appeal,” and I was like, “What! Me? Can't YOU do it?” And he would say, “You're the camp evangelist!” He keeps throwing that at me. But, I was like, “I never made an appeal before!” And he just said, “Let the Holy Spirit use you.” So, I just prayed, went up there, and many kids came forward. That was really exciting.

**So, what are some of the spiritual and life lessons you are going to take with you from the experience at camp?** When we work for God it's never in vain. Oh yea, that's such a big lesson I learned! I realize I can't measure my success by what I see. You know? By whether or not people are baptized. Or if people say, “Wow you did a great job!”

Because my job is just to do faithfully what God has asked me to do.

One time a counselor came up to me on a Friday night, and she was like, “Man, I just think that it didn't get through to my cabin. They're just not responding, and I've been trying to reach them and none of them are Adventist!” And I told her, “Your work is never in vain. We just faithfully do the seed planting. We don't get to see it grow sometimes. But God waters it. God gives the increase.” That was really an important lesson for me because it's all about trusting God despite the results.

**I know everyone here worked really hard. Were you able to have some downtime?** Everything's really fun here. That's one thing I really appreciate about the summer actually. We're such a big staff. It's like a 110. I kind of thought that we wouldn't get to know each other. But something I've really appreciated is, it's so spiritually uplifting. If someone sees you grumpy they don't say, “Stop being grumpy!” They ask, “Can I pray with you?” And I really appreciate that. Just lifting each other up. It's kind of a place where we can be away from the regular temptations of life, and it's so restorative, and it's so healing to be here.

## Adventist Book Center



### Pre-order Canned Foods for Pickup @ Camp Au Sable

Canned food products are now available for pickup at Camp Au Sable! If you're attending a MI Conference event at Camp Au Sable simply call the ABC at 800-876-9222 to pre-order your choice items today! Please note: the cut-off date for pre-orders will be one week prior to the event you're attending.

Remember, we're **OPEN** on Fridays from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM.



MICHIGAN ADVENTIST  
BOOK & BIBLE CENTER



## ACS Fall Workshop September 21-23

**Speakers:** Derrick Lea, Dee Casper, Rebecca Gomez, & Merna/Delma Lee Hubbell

**Where?** Camp Au Sable

For more information and registration, please contact Julie Clark at (517) 316-1552

# The Faithful Man

**Date & Time:** September 8, 2018 and 9:30 AM

**Location:** Great Lakes Adventist Academy

**No Registration Fee:** The day will be funded by a freewill offering.

**Lunch:** Lunch will not be served this year. Please bring a lunch or plan to potluck with your church group.



### Main Speaker: Elder Samuel Thomas



Our keynote speaker will be Pastor Samuel J. Thomas, former pastor of City Temple Seventh-day Adventist Church in Detroit and currently serving as a pastor in the Allegheny West Conference.

In his 31 years in denominational service, Pastor Thomas has also been a contributor to *Ministry* magazine; founder of a media production company; lecturer at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary; television evangelist; and global revivalist.

### Seminars with:

- Jim Micheff
- Justin Ringstaff
- Kameron DeVasher
- Nathaniel & Jacob Gibbs

## MICHIGAN MEN OF FAITH 2018

## Transitions

**Alexandra Barnum** will serve as new teacher for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades at Niles Adventist School.

**Aron Crews** is the new Bible teacher and chaplain for GLAA. He previously served as associate pastor in the Detroit area.

**Karon Davis** is the new principal and teacher for grades 3-8 at Kalamazoo Junior Academy.

**Brandy Gettys** is the new 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher for the Village SDA School.

**Emily Gibbs** is the new English teacher for GLAA.

**Tina Glenn** is the new assistant girl's dean at GLAA.

**Jessica Goodrich** is the new teacher for grades 5-8 at Adelphian Junior Academy.

**Emily Graham** is the new principal and teacher for the Grayling Adventist Elementary School.

**Nancy Hansen** is the new principal and teacher for grades 3-5 at Greater Lansing Adventist School.

**David Haus** is the new Geometry teacher for GLAA.

**Matthew Kohls** is the new 7<sup>th</sup> grade teacher for the Village SDA School.

**Jenny Kutzner** is the new teacher for grades 6-10 at Holland Adventist Academy.

**Stefanie Laughlin** is the new teacher for Adelphian Junior Academy. She will be teaching grades 9-10.

**William Merrill** will serve as the new assistant boy's dean at GLAA.

**Sarah Moravetz** is the new principal and teacher for the Marquette school.

**Tracy Morgan** is the new advancement, enrollment and alumni director for Great Lakes Adventist Academy.

**Alan Petersen** is the new principal and will also teach for Tri-City SDA School.

**Jill Simon** is the new principal and teacher for grades 6-8 at Metropolitan Junior Academy.

**Barbara Stowell** is the new 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teacher for Battle Creek Academy.

**Janelle Sundin** is English teacher at Battle Creek Academy.

**Benjamin Zork** is the new principal and teacher for Traverse City SDA School.

## 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

### September

- 1-2 UP Camp Meeting -  
Camp Sagola
- 3 Labor Day - Office Closed
- 6-9 Adventure Camp - Northwoods
- 8 Men of Faith - Great Lakes  
Adventist Academy
- 9-12 Seniors' Retreat -  
Camp Au Sable
- 14-16 Pathfinder Camporee -  
Northwoods
- 21-23 ACS Fall Workshop -  
Camp Au Sable
- 25 Camp Meeting Directors
- 30 Consitutuency Meeting -  
Cedar Lake Church

### 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

## COOKING CLUB OPENS DOORS

By Sue Gilmore  
MEMBER, FIRST FLINT

**H**ow can a cookie open the way to reach people with the love of Jesus? This summer the Flint New Start Cooking Club was invited to be a vendor for the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Edible Flint Garden Tour. A health fair was set up under the pavilion at Flint's Farmer Market and First Flint's cooking club was invited to be one of its vendors.

At the booth, the club set up a table with free samples of Banana-Date Cookies and a delicious fruit-rich cereal called Rise-n-Shine Muesli. Children and adults alike raved about the food and took home recipes, a club brochure and a flyer to the club's next free class in September. Sue Gilmore, coordinator for the club says, "We also set up a gift basket with *The Story of Hope*, which our church has been passing out this year. Almost every one of them was gone! We also gave away loads of *Balance* magazines."

Some visitors to the booth shared their struggles. Several people were experi-

encing cancer, a few were survivors and trying to get their strength back. The club was able to offer them encouragement and a *Balance* magazine that could help them use God's plan for total health.

Other visitors stopped by—representatives from Michigan State University and from the National Kidney Association. They both asked if the club would be interested in teaching food classes for



them in downtown Flint. Sue Gilmore explains, "This is an answer to my prayer! For two years I've been trying to find a way to expand our ministry. I've tried on my own to connect with the right people, but

I always hit some kind of roadblock. But God is far better at connecting people than we could ever be. I am just thrilled at what God is doing and can't wait to see how this is going to help us make more friends for Jesus!"

Health ministries is a powerful avenue to reaching people with God's love by giving them a new start to better health.