

A Year of Baptisms

Over the last five years, we have been blessed to see the Watertown church grow from 10-15 to 40-50 attending weekly. I give God all the glory for that. Being a lay pastor was not on my radar. I am grateful and thankful to the Lord Jesus for calling me to serve at Watertown.

Initially, we came here to help another lay family who was leading out. When they moved on, our whole family was involved in the worship service - preaching, music, children's stories, discipleship, and lifting up Jesus. We were joined by the Lake Mills church plant, which gave us many leaders to fill much needed positions in the church.

We had a number of Adventists join us, but no baptisms. Early this year, the Lord impressed me that 2018 was a year for baptisms for our church. So, at our leadership team meeting, I mentioned a few names of adults who were possibilities and asked if there were any young people who might be ready for baptism. That got people on our church board thinking, many of whom had young children.

The first baptism was for Grace, Joah, & Shaphan Mertins on March 31. They are the children of Dan & Sarah Mertins. Their parents had taken the initiative to prepare them for baptism. I sang "Jesus, Rose of Sharon" and presented them each with a red rose, a tradition I am continuing from my father, who was a pastor.

The next baptism was for Bill Barnes and



Thom Foll, pictured left, is a bi-vocational lay pastor serving the Watertown church while running his own graphic design and printing business. He and his wife, Jane, have two daughters, Sarah and Anna. Pictured to his right are Mike, Bill, and Adel.

Mike Krueger. I was blessed to baptize them and they both gave a personal testimony of how Jesus worked miracles in their lives to prepare them for baptism.

Bill and Adel were attending our church in 2013 when we first came to Watertown. I asked Bill if he would like to do Bible studies and he said yes. He chose to study with me rather than on his own and we completed 27 Amazing Facts Bible Studies together. I praise God for how he is working in Bill and Adel's lives.

Mike's conversion and baptism was a result of friendship evangelism. Brett Murphy, a member of our church, took a job at Walmart. He became friends with

Mike there and shared Jesus with him. They spent a lot of time together and over the years they started a gospel music group call D2L (Dying to Live) with a theme of dying to self and being raised to a new life in Christ, writing their own music and lyrics.

Mike had already given up drinking and drugs earlier in his life. The Lord was preparing him for ministry. But he still took smoking breaks while attending our church. He was rationalizing that it was OK. However, he came to realize that he could not be a good example being up front and doing concerts in their music ministry because of his addiction to cigarettes. The Lord worked in Mike's

continued on page 8



From the President's Desk

Connecting to Serve

At the recent constituency session delegates overwhelmingly voted a new strategic plan for the next four years entitled “Connecting to Serve.” This new plan focuses on our overall mission, “to grow passionate disciples of Jesus prepared for Christ’s soon coming.” Three initiatives and goals follow.

INITIATIVE & GOAL ONE

Cross-Connect is the Wisconsin Conference initiative for integrated discipleship. The focus of the initiative is to call and develop every member – from birth to old age – to be an active, growing, disciple of Jesus, and a center of influence for the kingdom of heaven.

What is the Goal? The goal of Cross-Connect is to connect ministries in building up individuals, homes, schools, and communities, in relationship with Christ. More specifically, the goal of the initiative is to:

1. Connect people cross-generationally to provide mentoring that will facilitate members of all ages to more effectively reach out into their communities.
2. Increase engagement among all members, ministry leaders, and organizational employees by uniting and integrating ministries, resources, and efforts toward this end.

INITIATIVE & GOAL TWO

Education-Connect is the Wisconsin Conference initiative for students both within our Adventist schools and in other educational institutions. The focus is to bring together in mutual support our homes, churches and schools to prepare students to reflect Jesus clearly, experience the joy of service, and be prepared for the soon coming of Jesus.

What is the Goal? The goal of Education-Connect is to reach our young people within the educational context and by word, action, and role-modeling, guide them so they will grow up to be positive, influential citizens in their communities, who reflect the love of Jesus in all they do.

INITIATIVE & GOAL THREE

Community-Connect is the multi-year Wisconsin Conference initiative to encourage and empower churches across our conference to reach into their communities to make connections that will advance the kingdom of God.

What is the goal? The goal of Community-Connect is to have each church “reach in” to their community to provide services that will alleviate personal and community needs. It is also to “reach out” and provide annual evangelistic meetings to engage and impact their communities with the gospel message. All efforts are aimed at making connections that will lead to vibrant relationships and ultimately to connect people to Jesus in preparation for His return.

Please join us as we connect across our conference to serve our Lord, and those entrusted to our care.

Michael H. Edge

Wisconsin Conference President

The President's Sabbath Schedule

November

- | | |
|----|--------------------------------|
| 3 | NAD Year End Meetings |
| 10 | WI Executive Committee Retreat |
| 17 | LUC Sabbath School Training |
| 24 | Vacation |

December

- | | |
|----|--------------|
| 1 | Sturgeon Bay |
| 8 | Rice Lake |
| 15 | Lena |
| 22 | Vacation |
| 29 | Vacation |

January

- | | |
|----|-------------------------|
| 5 | Tomahawk |
| 19 | LUC Presidents' Retreat |

February

- | | |
|----|------------|
| 16 | Evansville |
|----|------------|

To request speaking appointments contact Mike Edge at: mgedge@wi.adventist.org.

Wisconsin's 38th Constituency Session Conducts Business, Elects Leaders, and Lays Out Mission for the Future



Constituents from the Wisconsin Conference met at Wisconsin Academy Church Sunday morning, October 7, 2018, worshipping God together before conducting the business of the day.

Worship began with congregational hymn singing led by Bruce Rasmussen, Wisconsin Academy music director, and the academy choir performing, "Now Sing We Joyfully Unto God." Mike Edge, Wisconsin Conference President shared a devotional emphasizing that each of us are called to be the hands of Jesus, connecting people to Christ through our personal touch.

With a church full of 350 delegates, the business of the day began. President Mike Edge shared a video presentation of who we are as the Wisconsin Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, which may be viewed on the Conference website wi.adventist.org. Then President Edge highlighted our constituency which is made up of 63 churches, 13 companies and 24 mission groups & plants. These include 7 Spanish churches, 5 Spanish companies, and a growing number of Spanish mission groups. Recently two Hmong and two Karen language groups have also begun. In the past four years 738 people have become a part of the Wisconsin Conference through baptism and profession of faith, bringing our membership number to 7,753.

Our Executive Secretary/Treasurer, Brian Stephan shared that our conference continues to grow through baptisms, professions of faith and transfers in. When other factors, such as deaths, apostasies, and



transfers out of the conference, are taken into account, our conference has grown by 228 members during the past four years. Brian Stephan also reported that while the conference continues to be challenged financially, members continue to be faithful in returning tithes and offerings. Over the four years tithe has increased by 9.41% and members have donated \$1,224,725 to the Wisconsin budget. Rising expenses have kept pace with increased income, as God continues to provide needed funds to keep our conference solid and growing.

Elder Valentine, Lake Union President, gave a brief introduction to the structure of the Seventh-day Adventist church, and the process of selecting leaders of conferences. He also chaired in the election of our conference leadership. All seven, who were recommended by the nominating committee, were re-elected by the delegates in session with strong support. These included Mike Edge, president; Brian Stephan; executive secretary/treasurer; Adam Case, ministerial director; Linda Rosen, education superintendent; Juanita Edge, communication director; Cindy Stephan, planned giving and trust services director; and Eric Chavez, youth director.

Other items addressed in the session included: voting two churches that were organized in the past four years, and some wording change in the bylaws for the sake of clarity. The changes were adopted with strong support. Joseph Njau, General Conference auditor, indicated that audits had been done and the conference received a "clean audit" in



its policy and financial management. An update on Wisconsin Academy was given by Principal Rosalie Rasmussen. Enrollment at the academy is growing and currently is at 72. The school continues its strong spiritual emphasis with four weeks of prayer each year. Also, the student success center offers personalized help for those struggling academically, and is proving quite successful in strengthening student academics. She also shared that the dedicated faculty and staff are committed to Wisconsin Academy's mission of preparing students to be productive citizens in the near future, and for an eternity with Jesus.

An update on the Lighthouse Thrift Store by manager Jim Parish showed it as a beacon of hope for many in our community, providing much needed food, clothing, and outreach classes.

The final report was a look to the future by President Mike Edge. Delegates voted overwhelmingly to adopt the mission and goals for the next four years, entitled, "Connecting to Serve." More on the mission, vision and goals may be viewed at wi.adventist.org.

In closing, President Mike Edge challenged us each to not only prepare ourselves to be ready for heaven, but also lead neighbors and friends in our communities to an eternal connection with Jesus.



Juanita Edge
Communication Director

Milwaukee Central Hosts First Joint Conference Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Sabbath



Sabbath afternoon, September 22, was a wonderful celebration of the total prophetic heritage of Seventh-day Adventists. Together, members from the Greater Milwaukee area congregated at the Milwaukee Central Church to participate in a Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) presentation and panel discussion led by the Lake Union Conference in partnership with Lake Region Conference.

Nicholas Miller, PARL Director for the Lake Union, was the main presenter and moderator for the evening. Dr. Miller spoke on the importance of embracing the entire prophetic message of our church and not falling for the false dichotomy that would divorce divine revelation and personal salvation from community concerns.

Later in the program, Dr. Miller moderated a panel which included fellow PARL directors Edward Woods III from the Lake Region Conference and Bria Grant from the Sharon Seventh-day Adventist Church, in Milwaukee. In addition, Bria serves as the Executive Director of Unite MKE, a non-profit that works to use data management tools collected around the social determinants of health as a way of increasing health services to vulnerable populations while reducing health care costs to governments. Also on the panel was Elder Carmelo Mercado, General VP of the Lake Union Conference with responsibilities for Multi-Cultural Ministries, Jonathan Fetrick, pastor of the Wisconsin Academy Church and PARL Representative for Madison, and Allen Ruppel, a community member

who is the Founder and Executive Director of Unity in Motion, a non-profit based in the Central City segment of Milwaukee, creating a steady pathway to success through relationally relevant interventions for at risk African-American youth.

Each panelist brought an interesting perspective to the discussion that helped the many church members in attendance to broaden their vision of the scope of the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty mandate of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. “The work that I do has put me in a position where ministry and career merges. There is no greater work than doing work for the least of these.” echoed panelist, Bria Grant, as she shared how her non-profit was instrumental in addressing the healthcare outcomes and economics of Milwaukee.



Allen Ruppel, stressed the importance of building relationships that bridge barriers. “(Milwaukee) really is a tale of two cities. Milwaukee is the most segregated city in the United States. And what that really means is that two or three miles away, we really don’t know what’s going on with our neighbors.”

Pastor Fetrick spoke from the perspective of lobbying activities of the Adventist Church. He shared how lobbying is an interesting arena. We tend to be well liked in legislatures because we are very centrist: we don’t line up with the Religious Right and we don’t line up with the so called Liberal Left: we believe in Religious Liberty for all people.”

Elder Mercado spoke about the humanitarian crises that affect people groups within the US especially in light of a skewed view of Scripture. “I hear the stories... It broke my heart to hear the stories of these unaccompanied children and separated children who are separated from their families all in the name of security... When I hear that and see that, I don’t see that as biblical. I don’t see that as truly scriptural.”

Finally, Edward Woods III stressed the evangelistic opportunities opened up by the ministry of the PARL department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. “We have an opportunity as a church to use our PARL ministry as a dynamic tool to evangelize the world... by showing that we actually care about people. We might not agree with them, but we fundamentally care about people.”

To add to the presentation and discussion, the Wisconsin Academy Chorales, under the directorship of Bruce Rasmussen, blessed the gathering with inspiring music. Sis Joyce Smith, from the Sharon Church sang from deep down a reminder that we will be known for the love we show the world. The gathering was blessed by Elder Mike Edge, president of the Wisconsin Conference.

Pastor Sheldon Bryan of Central and Southside Churches welcomed the gathering and Dr. Richard Sylvester of the Sharon and Hosanna SDA Churches dismissed with the benediction. Over 200 members from the greater Milwaukee and Racine areas were hosted by the Hospitality department of the Central Church.

Sheldon Bryan
Pastor Milwaukee Central District



Hispanic Womens Ministry Meets Need



A car accident damaged my life and changed the life of my family. I was in the hospital for many surgeries for a month and a half. When I woke up it was terrible. I was

not able to speak or walk for days. I did not understand what had happened or why.

When a friend came to visit me, I wrote on a piece of paper asking if she knew someone who would pray for me. She suggested Hilda Reyes of the Seventh-day Adventist Hispanic Women's Ministry group.

The next day, a group of women came to visit me at the hospital. They prayed for me and told me about Job, the love of God, and His purpose for my life. My mind and my heart were filled with wonderful faith. I understood that everything comes for some reason. God is never wrong.

God worked a miracle in my life and gave me the faith and certainty that He would lift me up and strengthen me. Thanks to all the Adventist people who have helped me, especially the Central Seventh-day Adventist Church who have supported me ever since that time, they are always there for whatever I need. Thank you! Silvia S. Romero Landeros

Submitted by Noemi Miranda
Hispanic Women's Ministry Director

Rice Lake Invests in Their Community



The Rice Lake church, responding to the growing Hispanic needs in their area, invited Pastor Javier Molina to help jump-start their Hispanic outreach. Pastor Molina has served the Adventist church for 20 years in Costa Rica. He is now self-supporting and came to the United States to service the Rice Lake church and community for the next six months. His wife, Martha, and one of their three children, Joel, will be assisting with the Hispanic outreach.

Pastor Molina and John Redlich, pastor of the Rice Lake church, are beginning their outreach efforts by making friends with the local Hispanic community. Tutoring in Spanish grammar, marriage counseling, as well as social events like soccer, volleyball, and basketball, are planned as starting points to get acquainted and build trust. An evangelistic series in Spanish is planned for this November.

"My only desire is to work for Jesus here," said Pastor Molina. "I am open to putting in the time necessary to see His will fulfilled in Rice Lake."

Juanita Edge
Communication Director

FINANCIAL UPDATE

The harvest is going strong all around us as we close our financial records for September. I am happy to report that through the month of September we have a year to date tithe gain of 6.70%.

We also have a 5.10% gain for Wisconsin Budget year to date. Thanks goes to our Father in heaven for providing work for our members so they are able to support His church. And thanks to you our members for being faithful in returning an honest tithe to Him.

You may remember we have also had an appeal that we started at camp meeting to raise \$60,000 for each of the next three years so we could have a full time evangelist for our conference once again. Through September we have raised \$50,000 of the necessary funding. I know many of you individually as well as some churches corporately have given strong support to this special offering to make this happen over the last several months.

With three months to go in our fiscal year 2018, I believe we will reach our \$60,000 goal with the level of support we are receiving from our churches the past several months.

We are therefore beginning the process of hiring an evangelist with the goal of having him start January of 2019. We ask that you continue to remember this offering for "Conference Evangelist" on a monthly basis and pray that as a result of this special effort, many may be brought to a decision to join God's family.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

	2018	2017	% Change
Sept. Tithe Income:	\$560,500	\$546,114	2.63%
YTD Tithe Income:	\$5,057,899 (39 wks)	\$4,740,403 (39 wks)	6.70%
Sept. Wisconsin Budget:	\$22,964	\$22,144	3.70%
YTD Wisconsin Budget:	\$207,261 (39 wks)	\$197,207 (39 wks)	5.10%



F. Brian Stephan
Executive Secretary/Treasurer



WISCONSIN ACADEMY



from the principal's desk:

An Exciting Start

We are off to an exciting start here at Wisconsin Academy! God has blessed and entrusted us with 72 fine young people. One can almost hear the sound of learning while walking through the hallways observing the students as they soak up the instruction of their teachers. We have had the opportunity to participate in numerous outreach activities and outings already this year.

Students led out in our Fall Week of Prayer. Morning and evening meetings were each delivered by a different student, sharing what Jesus has done for them in their lives. It was an inspiring experience as we grew closer to Jesus and closer to each other as a school.

Students had the opportunity to take a field trip to Appleton, where they attended P.A.R.T.Y. at the PAC, an event geared towards encouraging teenagers to drive safely. They talked about driving sober, avoiding distractions such as texting while driving, and the importance of seatbelts for passengers and drivers.

Our school was also blessed to be able to take a History field trip to Peshtigo and the EAA Museum. While at the Fire Museum in Peshtigo, the students were reminded of the story of Horatio G. Spafford, who lost many family members around the time of the great Chicago Fire which took place the same day as the Peshtigo Fire.

As a school, we sang "It Is Well With My Soul" from the steps of the museum. This was a beautiful witnessing opportunity for the students as passersby and the docents from the museum were watching and listening to our students, remarking on how well mannered they were.

As we transition from Fall into the Winter months, our desire for our students to have a closer relationship with Jesus remains unchanged. Please continue to pray for us as we pursue this goal throughout the year.

Rosalie Rasmussen, principal
Wisconsin Academy

Faculty Host First Home Activity Night



A few Saturday nights ago, faculty invited students to their homes to learn a variety of skills and hobbies.

Students at maintenance director Doug and nurse Joella Show's home learned to tie-dye shirts and worked on the tie-dye honor. Students at science teacher Kelly McWilliam's home learned to knit with the help of English teacher Sara Gardner. Math teacher Brandon Baptist, assistant men's dean Enrique Serna, and assistant to the business manager Chris Miller led soccer on the field. Music director Bruce Rasmussen supervised the construction of wooden boxes to transport organ pipes. Principal Rosalie Rasmussen, assistant women's dean Heidi Rasmussen, and administrative assistant Harriet Synder helped students make pizza from scratch. IT services director Dan Show and Center for Student Success coordinator Janine Show supervised Lego construction projects.

Evenings like this help students and faculty build positive relationships while having good, old-fashioned fun. We hope to have more home activity nights soon.

Discover More

There's more on Facebook:
search for "wisacad"



Wilkinson New Dean of Men



We are pleased to announce that Kevin Wilkinson has accepted the position of Dean of Men at Wisconsin Academy. Kevin and his wife, Karla, join us from the Fox Valley area where he enjoyed a long career in public service, working extensively with leadership training. He has a passion for working with young people, helping lead them to Jesus. In their free time they enjoy the wilderness, canoeing, and time with their five children. Welcome, Kevin and Karla as you work to further God's mission at Wisconsin Academy.

Miller New Assistant to the Business Manager



We are excited that Christopher Miller has accepted the call to serve as Assistant to the Business Manager! Miller comes to us from Michigan and is well-versed in higher level finance. Miller graduated from Southern Adventist University with a BBA Finance degree. In his free time, Miller enjoys exercise and playing sports, especially basketball and tennis. He also enjoys reading and learning new things. "It's not the wise that don't make mistakes," he says, "It's the wise who learn from their mistakes." Welcome to Wisconsin Academy! We are blessed to have you here!

Students Lead Week of Prayer



Each morning before classes begin and each evening before study hall, the entire school gathered in the chapel during our first Week of Prayer. We were blessed with messages from ten of our students, explaining the personal impact Jesus has made in their lives and the impact He wants to make in every life. The students listening were very engaged and have appreciated hearing from their peers. Thank you once again for your continued prayers as God continues developing leaders at Wisconsin Academy who will walk with Him into eternity.

First Quarter in Pictures



The WA Chorale sing for over 6,000 Adventist educators on the opening night of the NAD Teacher's Convention in Chicago. They sang "Thy Will Be Done" and "Behold He Cometh" under the direction of Bruce Rasmussen.

Students old and new greet each other during our traditional Student Association Handshake. We were excited to begin this semester with 72 students, an upturn in enrollment compared to last year.

Senior Abel Vega trustingly falls into the arms of his classmates during Senior Experience. The class of 2019 took a weekend retreat to chart a course for the coming year at High Cliff State Park on the shores of Lake Winnebago.

Students join Columbus residents for their annual CROP Hunger Walk to raise funds to end hunger at home and around the world. This is just one way Wisconsin Academy is helping students discover the joy of service.

Wisconsin Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists
PO Box 100
Fall River WI 53932

Return Service Requested

Calendar of Events

November

- 1-3 Lay Pastor Cohort
- 1-6 NAD Year End Meetings
- 5 Science Fair - WA
- 9-11 Executive Committee Retreat
- 11-13 LUC Departmental Meetings
- 16-17 LU Sabbath School Training
- 18 Hispanic Women's Banquet
- 18 Hispanic Lay Seminary
- 21-22 Office Closed for Thanksgiving
- 27 Pastors Meetings
- 28 New in Ministry

December

- 1 JAHWI Youth Rally
- 4 Hispanic Departmental Training
- 24-1/1 Office Closed for Christmas & New Years

January

- 2 School Begins
- 11-12 JAHWI Leaders' Retreat
- 18-20 Winter Youth Retreat
- 21 Office Closed
- 25-27 Men's Conference

February

- 1-2 Lay Pastor Cohort
- 2 Pathfinder Bible Experience
- 6 New in Ministry
- 7 Pastors Meetings
- 8-10 Public Campus Ministry Retreat
- 9 Hispanic SAL Graduation
- 12 Board of Education
- 13 Executive Committee

- 17 Education Fair - WA
- 18 Office Closed
- 22-24 Hispanic Children's/Women's Ministry Certification
- 22-24 Office Retreat
- 28 Holy Land Tour Begins

**Walk for Life
begins January 1**
Learn more at wi.adventist.org

Cover Story Continued



Mertins siblings were baptized together.
Left to right: Shaphan, Joah and Grace.

life by giving him victory over cigarettes and opened the way for blessings in their music ministry.

What a joy it was for me to baptize these friends. I praise God for a year of baptisms. And the year isn't over yet!

Thom Foll
Lay-Pastor, Watertown SDA Church



Abraham Swamidass, pastor of the Madison Community District has transitioned to pastor the Janesville District.

Myoung Kwon, pastor in Superior District is now pastoring in the Waukesha District.

Rowell Puedivan, pastor in Eau Claire District is now pastoring in the Madison Community District.

Andrew Easley, teacher at Bethel Elemenrary is now serving as Assistant to the Superintendent of Education.

Cindy Stephan, Planned Giving and Trust Services Director, has accepted a position with It Is Written beginning Jan. 2019. She and Brian, plan to continue living in WI.

Sandy Magray has resigned as Wisconsin Women's Ministries Coordinator.

**Our Conference
has a new
website.
Check it out at
wi.adventist.org**