

## Celebrating Recovery

**R**ecovering from personal injury is challenging no matter the cause. However, when it comes from within the church, the challenge is often greater. We are all human and struggle with many issues and sometimes we are either hurt by or cause hurt to those around us. It is how we respond to those hurts that determine whether we will be bitter or better. I would like to share with you a story of recovery.

A number of years ago, a couple received a brochure in the mail inviting them to a Bible seminar. After attending almost all of the lectures and believing what they heard, they decided they wanted to get baptized. During their visit with the pastor shortly before their baptism, the woman was shocked by the way the pastor explained the symbolism of the wedding ring. Her reaction resulted in the couple being refused baptism. The visiting evangelist quickly arranged for the couple to attend and be baptized at another congregation near by. Although this was quite challenging, the couple decided to continue attending their new church.

After settling into their new congregation, the woman began serving in offices in the church. After many years of faithful service in various capacities, she came to attend a regular board meeting and, to her total surprise, found out that one item on the board agenda was a concern someone had with her. The elder with the “concern” proceeded to yell at her in front of the other board members and pastor, accusing her of attempting to undermine his authority. Then another person on the board pointed directly at her and added, “People like you should be put out of the church.” The shock of the accusations (which later were shown

to be a misunderstanding) resulted in her deciding to not return to that church. The hurt was so deep that it took many years for her to feel comfortable even being in the same room with those who made these accusations.

The question comes to mind, why do people in the church hurt other people in the church? If the Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance, why do we experience hurt? Church members are people. People are human, and humans have issues. Everyone has a past, all are broken or wounded in some way large or small. Whether it is addiction, fear, worry, anger, desire to control, co-dependence, workaholism, pride or...fill in your own struggle... we all deal with our own issues. All are on a journey of being transformed into the image of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Along the way, people make mistakes. People get hurt and then often hurt other people.

Another question comes to mind, how do we welcome the fruit of the Spirit back into our churches? I’m happy to tell you the rest of this story.

God had been good to this couple over the years. He had given them understanding and compassion regarding their previous experiences. And now, they were about to discover something more.

In the summer of 2019, Pastor Kevin Kuehmichel, of the Chippewa Valley Seventh-day Adventist Church (CVSDA) in Altoona, WI, offered to show his church a different method of public outreach. This method, called “Celebrate Recovery”, was



Marcia Harycki and Lynn Amundson

a 12 Step Bible based, Christ centered program of recovery from life’s hurts, habits and hang-ups.

Through this program, the church would learn how to lead out in weekly lessons and the small group discussions on each week’s topic. The program would be open to anyone in the community or local church who needed recovery from addictions, trauma, abuse or other habits and hang-ups.

The woman and her husband decided to attend the Celebrate Recovery program offered at CVSDA and see what it was all about. They discovered the meetings began with music and prayer, then a reading was given of either the 12 Steps or the 8 Principles which are based on the Beatitudes found in Matthew 5. Next the lesson was presented, followed by a closing prayer, a little social time and then the ladies and men separated into their small groups to discuss the day’s lesson.

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## From the President's Desk

# Strategic Plan for 2022-2026

**Vision:** Advancing the Adventist Mission in Wisconsin

**Mission:** The Mission of the Wisconsin Conference is to develop a culture of transformational and intergenerational discipleship whereby Jesus is multiplied in the life of every member

**Core Values:**

- We value God's Word and His wonderful message of the saving grace of Jesus Christ and His ability to change our lives to reflect His character
- We value the people in our churches that God develops as His disciples in Wisconsin
- We value the charge given us to share the good news of Jesus to the people of Wisconsin in preparation for His soon coming

**1. Revitalization and Discipleship**

- Promote a culture of the revitalization
- Foster a positive environment for welcoming and integrating new members
- Provide intergenerational discipleship opportunities
- Increase the rate of retention/reclamation
- Encourage Biblical stewardship

**2. Leadership Development**

- Promote a culture of excellence
- Cultivate and implement intentional pastoral training and leadership development
- Support pastors for advanced education
- Enhance and expand the Volunteer Lay Pastor Program
- Offer mentorship and coaching resources
- Conduct training sessions focusing on spiritual gifts

**3. Educational Excellence: Mentorship, Growth, and Service**

- Conference-wide vision and support
- Promote educational and spiritual excellence
- Foster professional and academic development

- Make Adventist education possible for every Adventist child
- Expand the number of Adventist schools in Wisconsin
- Create an environment for practical service and love for the community

**4. Wakonda: WI Conference Youth Evangelism**

- Provide impactful leadership training
- Create a youth ministries communication program
- Develop an environment for growth Engage the youth and young adults
- Establish and bolster Adventist Christian Fellowship

**5. Proclamation Evangelism and Community Involvement**

- Engage every ministry and member
- Provide training, resources, and inspiration
- Offer financial support
- Conference-wide direction and vision
- Hold evangelistic campaigns in every church
- Distribute outreach literature in communities without an Adventist presence
- Develop methods and ministries to reach emerging immigrant populations

As we prepare for the coming of Jesus, let us reflect on God's holiness and contemplate on His providence as presented in Isaiah 6:1-8. Despite all uncertainties of the present, God is still on His throne, "lofty and exalted," holding our future in His hands. Let us allow the vision of love and purity of God's character to transform our lives and purposes as we become His ambassadors for a lost world.

May every member of the Wisconsin Conference respond with an attitude of service saying, I WILL GO, as we reach our communities with Jesus' love.

*Titus Naftanaila*  
Wisconsin Conference President

## Sabbath Schedule

**November**

- 5 Lena
- 12 Exec. Com. Retreat
- 19 Portage

**December**

- 3 Rice Lake
- 10 Reedsburg
- 17 Monroe

**January**

- 14 Beaver Dam

**February**

- 11 Milwaukee Central
- 18 Beloit
- 25 Discipleship Training @ Wakonda

To request speaking appointments contact Titus Naftanaila at: [titusn@wi.adventist.org](mailto:titusn@wi.adventist.org)

## 39th Constituency Elects Officers and Directors



Elected Officers and Directors: Brian Stephan, executive secretary/treasurer; Titus Naftanaila, president; Bill Ochs, planned giving/trust services; Adam Case, ministerial director; Zack Payne, youth director; Sue Nelson, superintendent for education

On the morning of October 16, 2022, over 270 delegates and delegates at large from across the state of Wisconsin came together to attend the 39th Constituency Session of the Wisconsin Conference.

President Titus Naftanaila gave a short devotional thought from Isaiah 6, calling the delegates to contemplate the holiness of God more fully. He welcomed all delegates and guests and said "Today is our turn to respond to God's call to do business."

Following the official opening of the session, Naftanaila gave the President's Report beginning with an overview of the past 4 years and how the Wisconsin Conference has followed its mission and service initiatives. In his report, Naftanaila also shared what God has been doing in each of the departments of the Wisconsin Conference.

He shared his thankfulness for the leadership of those who have come before us including Mike Edge, former Wisconsin Conference president; Juanita Edge, former Communication Director; Linda Rosen, former Superintendent for Education; Cindy Stephan, former Planned Giving and Trust Services Director; and Eric Chavez, former Youth Director.

Naftanaila also gave recognition to all department directors, ministry coordinators, members of the Executive Committee and other committees across the conference

and said "We do not work alone, we work together." He gave special recognition to Brian Stephan, conference executive secretary/treasurer by saying, "If wisdom is at the conference, it is here," referring to Stephan.

Ken Denslow, Lake Union president called Becky Ziesmer, committee secretary, to share the recommendations from the Nominating Committee. All six names recommended by the committee were elected by the delegates to serve for the 2022-2026 quadrennium. The names of those elected were, Titus Naftanaila, president; Brian Stephan; executive secretary/treasurer; Adam Case, ministerial director; Sue Nelson, superintendent for education; Zack Payne, youth director; Bill Ochs, planned giving and trust services director.

Upon being elected Wisconsin Conference President, Titus Naftanaila said, "I am humbled. My wife and I are honored to respond to God's call and this responsibility. We pray and hope that God won't be disappointed and the great Conference of Wisconsin will be satisfied. It is not about me; it is about a team. We are here, together, by God's grace. We are called for such a time. If everyone responds to God's call, 'Here I am; send me,' we will have wonderful things happening in Wisconsin."

Brian Stephan, next gave reports regarding the Constitution and Bylaws Committee, conference membership as well as the

financial reports. Upon sharing how God has blessed the conference he said, "God still has a work for this church to do. God is preparing us for whatever the future will bring."

Stephan then talked about what he called "another miracle from the Lord" when earlier this year, a large maturity came in that benefited the conference, Wisconsin Academy and Camp Wakonda. He concluded by saying that "no matter what comes, God will continue to bless us in Wisconsin."

The Auditor's Report, was given by Joseph Njau, auditor from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He was pleased to give a "clean, unmodified opinion" of the financial statements and congratulated the team on a job well done.

Brian Stephan finished his reports by saying that the auditor gave Wisconsin Academy a "clean opinion" of their financial statement.

Next, Ken Smith, interim principal for Wisconsin Academy, gave his report. He shared that God has blessed them with great students attributes much of their success to great faculty that work well together and support one another. He shared his dreams of improving the physical plant and enhancing curriculum, with special focus on the Computer, Art, Tech Ed. and Music departments. Smith also shared a list of development projects that is available on their website: [wisacad.org](http://wisacad.org) and asked for support in helping to accomplish these projects

The final report was given by President Naftanaila who shared the strategic plan for the Wisconsin Conference over the next 4 years which you will find on page 2. In conclusion, Naftanaila presented a plan for making needed renovations at Camp Wakonda. "Great work has been done in the

## Cover Story Continued

In attending this program, the couple found how to better share the healing and recovery they had already experienced through God's goodness. Today, they are excited for what God is doing in the church and community through Celebrate Recovery.

You may wonder why people would attend a 12 Step recovery program. One attendee said it has really helped him communicate better with his wife. Another said that as she has gotten more honest with her own failings, she can look at the hurtful behaviors of other people and just think to herself, "Well, they sure don't have very good people skills." Another attendee commented about Step 6 of the 12 Steps, which reads: "We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character" and then referenced the Spirit of Prophecy quote from Sons and Daughters of God, pg. 361 which reads, "The character which we now manifest is deciding our future destiny. The happiness of heaven will be found by conforming to the will of God, and if men become members of the royal family in heaven, it will be because heaven has begun with them on earth." This attendee then went on to comment, "This class is really helping me a lot, to become more patient and kind. God is really using this class to change me from the inside. I want to be ready for Heaven!"

So, how do we welcome the Fruit of the Spirit back into our churches? We all need to start by looking into our own hearts first!

The Celebrate Recovery program at CVSDA will be entering its third year this fall (with the required break due to public health). Both members of the community and local church have been in attendance. Meetings are held on Tuesdays nights from 6:30-8:00 pm. All sinners are warmly welcome to join in learning more about how to practically manifest the Fruit of the Spirit in their lives, and get their character ready for both the soon coming final conflict as well as our future lives in heaven. No reservations necessary, come as you are, you will be among friends!

Marcia Harycki  
Assist. Communication Director for Chippewa Valley Church

## Constituency Continued

past by those who came before us", stated Naftanaila. "We have to continue the work."

Highlights of the plan were shared by Brian Stephan:

- The large maturity gave \$322,000 to Camp Wakonda
- Conference is offering a dollar for dollar matching challenge
- Every dollar donated toward Wakonda projects will have double the impact!
- If Wisconsin members can match this amount, the camp could have a total of nearly \$650,000
- Maranatha is coming to Camp Wakonda next spring

There was a strong spirit of unity amongst the constituency session members in support of Wakonda.

Titus Naftanaila adjourned the session with a word of thankfulness to everyone and their dedication to God's work.

You can read the full report on the conference website: [wi.adventist.org](http://wi.adventist.org)

Laurella Case  
Communication Coordinator

## President Earns DMin Degree



Wisconsin Conference president, Titus Naftanaila, recently received his Doctor of Ministry degree, with an emphasis in Discipleship and Biblical Spirituality, from Andrews University in Berrien Springs, MI. His dissertation is titled, Developing and Implementing a Community-Based Hospitality Awareness Program in the Green Bay Seventh-day Adventist Church.

He is grateful to God, his family, friends, professors, colleagues, and the many others who have supported him in achieving this goal.

We praise God for enabling our president to further his education and complete this journey!

Laurella Case  
Communication Coordinator

## Hispanic Camp Meeting



Hispanic Camp Meeting 2022, was held at Camp Wakonda from August 3-7 with the theme "Me Amas". The guest speakers for the week, Dr. Karol Mantilla, and pastors Roger Hernández and Elvis Diaz, captivated young people as well as adults with their messages. As a result, there was a beautiful baptism of seven precious souls on Sabbath at noon.

Pastor Evelio Miranda  
Hispanic Ministries Coordinator

## WI Master Guides Make History



The first Master Guide Camporee in Wisconsin took place September 2-4 with seven clubs in attendance! Pastor Paulo Tenorio, Youth Director from the Texas Conference, was the guest speaker.

Patricia Antoine-Norton  
Women's Ministries Coordinator

## 45 Attend Women's Fall Retreat



Over the weekend of September 23-25, 45 ladies attended the annual Wisconsin Women's Ministries Fall Retreat held in Lake Delton, WI.

"Wow!" was one of the statements given about the weekend retreat with Dr. Hyveth Williams. Other words expressed included, "This is just what I needed," "I experienced healing this weekend, I was definitely encouraged by the messages," "Understanding the culture and traditions added deeper insights into God's word," and "Wow! Awesome. I was truly blessed."

Over the weekend, Dr. Williams, shared her insight on several stories from the Bible including, Tamar, Joseph and Jacob.

The ladies also were able to enjoy learning about Kintsugi - the Japanese art of beautiful repair of broken pottery.

Thank you to all the committee members who helped to make this weekend possible.

## FINANCIAL UPDATE

As I shared at our recent constituency session, I praise God for how He has blessed our conference even through COVID. We saw a tithe decrease in 2019, but through multiple blessings, we are now in a better financial position than before COVID began.

These blessings include your faithfulness, as we have seen an increase in tithe over the last two years. We also qualified for the government PPP loans which allowed us to cover payroll and we have been able to pay off the revolving fund debt to the Lake Union.

I am also happy to report that the General Conference auditors gave the conference and Wisconsin Academy a "clean opinion" on our financial statements.

Another miracle from God is that a large maturity came in that benefited the conference, Wisconsin Academy and Camp Wakonda.

From this maturity \$322,000 was given to Camp Wakonda! We are excited to offer a dollar for dollar matching challenge to make some needed improvements at Camp Wakonda. Every dollar given to this challenge will have double the impact!

The main focus of this project will be to replace the existing children's division tents, used during camp meeting, with permanent structures. Would you prayerfully consider joining us in this challenge to continue the ministry of Camp Wakonda?

God still has a work for this church to do. He is preparing us for whatever the future will bring. No matter what comes, God will continue to bless us in Wisconsin.



Brian Stephan  
Executive Secretary/Treasurer

**BUILDING OUR FUTURE**

**HELP**

**MATCHING CHALLENGE**

- Dollar for Dollar up to \$322,000
- Your gift has double the impact!

**PROJECT FOCUS**

- Replacing Youth Division tents with permanent structures

Your gift today will help continue the ministry of Camp Wakonda

**CAMP WAKONDA**

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT			
	2022 (35 wks)	2021 (35 wks)	% Change
August Tithe Income:	\$652,306	\$693,941	-6.00 %
YTD Tithe Income:	\$5,005,799	\$5,294,847	-5.46 %
August Wisconsin Budget:	\$21,379	\$25,515	-16.21%
YTD Wisconsin Budget:	\$191,928	\$205,359	-6.54 %

## Week of Prayer with Pastor Dee Casper



Students were blessed with the messages of Pastor Dee Casper during week of prayer. He shared with us his testimony and how he came to know and work for the Lord. He made God more personable and really took time to answer questions from students. He did a Q & A session Sabbath afternoon and was often found around campus chatting with students.

He had worship, both in the guys dorm and women's dorm, to tackle the subject of relationships. He backed up his answers with scripture and shared his notes with students for further study if they wished.

## Vespers



After Friday evening vespers, students are able to participate in afterglow. They sing songs and have prayer. It sets a reverent tone that carries through Sabbath. Students really enjoy when the weather is nice and we are able to hold it outdoors as pictured above.

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.  
Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before his presence with singing."  
Psalm 100: 1-2

## Davina Fingerson New Music Director



We are happy to welcome Davina Fingerson as our new Music Director. She was a full time choir director in public schools before going to MSDA in Milwaukee where she was a teacher of Language Arts as well as music. She was set to start school at MSDA this fall but felt God leading her here to WA. Her passion is music and working with young people. She is excited that music fest will be happening again and hopes to bring energy and joy to the program.

## Daniel Lee New Cafeteria Team Member



We welcome Daniel Lee as a new cafeteria team member. Daniel is a WA graduate of the 2022 class. He spent the summer working at Camp Au Sable in their kitchen. He is happy to be back at WA and enjoying working in a Christian environment with other young people. Daniel enjoys music and playing guitar. His future goals are to travel and experience different cultures and to be a teacher one day.

## Hannah Fingerson New Cafeteria Team Member



We welcome Hannah Fingerson as a new cafeteria team member. Hannah is a WA graduate of the 2021 class. She moved from the Milwaukee area to work full time in the cafeteria. Hannah enjoys music, video games, sleep and traveling; Africa and Japan being 2 places she would love to travel to. She would like to go to school one day for music and solo performance.

## FALL PICNIC



The waterslide made it's annual appearance. It was so good that it was decided to have it twice this year!



Fall picnic was a great day with friendly competition between classes. Seniors did take the title of class champions.



Our Mission:

Developing leaders today who will walk with Jesus into eternity.

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

Return Service Requested

## Calendar of Events

### November

- 11-13 Exec. Com. Orientation
- 13-15 LUC Year End Meetings
- 20 Hispanic Women's  
Evangelistic Banquet
- 23-24 Conference Office Closed

### December

- 1 Pastor's Meetings
- 3 JAHWI Youth Rally
- 10 Hispanic Departmental  
Training in Waukesha
- 17 WA Christmas Concert
- 26-30 Conference Office Closed

### January

- 13-16 Winterfestapalooza - Wakonda

### February

- 4 Area Path. Bible Experience
- 6 Education Fair @ WA
- 9 Pastor's Meetings
- 10-12 Pathfinder Winter Retreat

### Hurricane Ian Relief



Financial gifts help where needed most or choose from the online wish list and your donation will be delivered directly.

Visit: [www.communityservices.org](http://www.communityservices.org) to give!



### Drew Weaver New Pastor for Marshfield District



**Laurella Case** is now serving as Communication Coordinator for the conference.

**Richard Bergeson** is now serving as the principal for Green Bay Adventist Jr. Academy.

### Marie Dow New Teacher for Waukesha Campus



## Pathfinders Attend LU Camporee



Over the weekend of September 15-18, 2022 our Wisconsin Pathfinder Clubs attended the Lake Union "Fearless" Camporee. Over 2,400 Pathfinders were present. Our Pathfinders earned honors, learned discipline, participated in ceremonies, marched in a parade, enjoyed fun activities, ran a 5k, made new friends, and responded to powerful Gospel messages about what it means to be Fearless in Christ.

### EDITOR

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