



Palm Trees, Cedars of Lebanon, and a Sycamore

by Terry Koch



In our backyard is a messy, but enormous and majestic, sycamore tree. Its exact age is 37 years. I know this because the ancestor of that tree, likewise fairly large, was there when we moved here in 1986.

One day during the winter of the first year of our residence, that sycamore came crashing down during a fierce wind storm, landing in our yard, as well as our neighbor's yard, and taking part of our fence with it.

We were stunned. How could a tree so sturdy in appearance suddenly come down without warning?

The answer to our question was provided by the person from a lawn and garden maintenance service who came to dispose of the fallen tree. He found the core of the sycamore had rotted over the years due to freezing rain and snow that filled the crack at the apex of the tree. Time and again the water and snow apparently would turn to ice and expand in that crack between two huge limbs which were connected together like the letter Y. Eventually, as decay set in, the center of the tree weakened, causing it to give way during one of those notable wind storms that occasionally scour the Walla Walla Valley.

After the debris was cleared away, just a stump remained in the yard. It seemed as if that fallen tree had left a last will and testament to perpetuate itself, for during the spring following its demise, many shoots began to grow out of the stump. Intrigued by this persistence of the former tree to reassert its



presence, I decided to cut away all the shoots except the one that appeared most vigorous.

It was quite interesting to observe the trunk of that sapling as it grew, gradually engulfing the old stump that was its parent. That singular shoot matured into the present massive tree that, 37 years later, more than fills a corner of our back yard, hanging over the fence into our neighbor's yard and the field behind us, providing a huge umbrella of cooling shade during our torrid summer season.

A family member leaning on the sapling 1991



In Psalm 92, verses 12-14, is this passage: “But the godly will flourish like palm trees and grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon. For they are transplanted to the Lord’s own house. They flourish in the courts of our God. Even in old age they will still produce fruit; they will remain vital and green” (NLT).

The sycamore in 2023



However, that flourishing is dependent on a solid core of strength like a rock, built over the years through the infilling of the Holy Spirit, and feeding on

God’s Word which will keep us sturdy and strapping through the winters and winds of life.

There is a hymn* titled “As a Tree Beside the Water” written and composed by Alfred Ackley in 1906. The first stanza contains these lyrics:

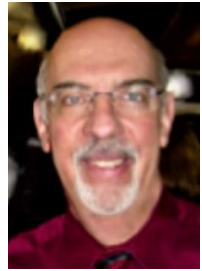
“As a tree beside the water,
Has the Savior planted me;
All my fruit shall be in season,
I shall live eternally.
Refrain: I shall not be moved,

I shall not be moved.
Anchored to the Rock of Ages,
I shall not be moved.”

Whether we are a palm, a cedar, a sycamore,
or whatever kind of tree God has ordained us to
be, may we grow strong and vital, unmoved
through life’s storms, flourishing in the strength
provided by God’s Spirit and His Word.

*hymn is in the public domain

Terry Koch



Valued Volunteers

SPOTLIGHT ON SABBATH SCHOOL

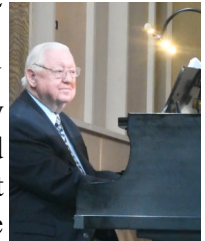
by Pastor Jeff Kinne

This month’s volunteer feature highlights more vibrant Village volunteers—those leading out in the Adult Sanctuary Program and the Primary 1 and 2 Sabbath Schools.

Since January, I’ve enjoyed and been richly blessed by the Adult Sabbath School sanctuary program at Village Church. For 12 years I heard wonderful stories about the great programming that happened in the sanctuary before dividing for the lesson study. Now I am a witness. And it is GOOD!

Song service is always well planned, prepared, and performed by a cadre of talented musicians. What an inspiration! The superintendent’s remarks are creative and encouraging. Special

Bill Dickerson



Ruby Stafford



features are always special! Joe Braley has given several insightful lessons from the Gospel of John. Duane Anderson and Bill Parson testified about the blessing of prayer. Bill Dickerson invited three generations of his family to inspire us with testimony and music. Amazing!! James McCoon and Ricky Kearns collaborated on a report about the recent gathering of 4000+ youth and young adults at GYC in Portland. Milo Jones’ story about his recent “deliverance” from prison and invitation to become a staff writer



Marlene L.

for Amazing Facts Ministry brought hearty amens from all in attendance. God abounds in lovingkindness.

Then there is the special music offered in praise to God as part of the adult program. Young Clara Vixie and grandpa Sherrick Hiscock joined their clarinets for a heartwarming duet of Jesus Loves Me. Guest Josette McDonald presented a vocal solo

of *Trust His Heart* that captured my heart . . . and still resonates in my mind. It was powerful!

A hearty THANK YOU to Sabbath School Superintendents, Bill Dickerson, Joe Braley, Thomas Knoll, Marlene Lovenguth, Calvin Rick, Ruby Stafford, and their leader, Pat Williams. God bless you each one for creating an environment of inspiration and growth for every person who enters the sanctuary for Sabbath School at 9:30 a.m. (song service starts at 9:20 a.m.)

Now to Primary 1 and 2. From my arrival at Village Church in 2011 through December, 2023, I circulated among the children's classrooms on Sabbath morning. I was continually amazed and deeply appreciative of the dedicated and talented adults who lead out in the children's Sabbath School program. Each Sabbath, children grades 1-2 and 3-4, gather in the attractively-decorated

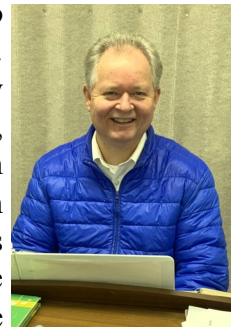
Becky T. with students



Primary 1 and Primary 2 classrooms. It's a life-growing time of singing, prayer, mission stories, Bible lesson and crafts. From the first Sabbath I entered the Primary 2 room (and who knows how many years before) until today, Karl and Becky Thompson have given leadership to this important ministry.

Karl Thompson

Similarly, assistants Carolyn Gaskell and Tracy Schwarz have been the faithful support team, year-in and year-out, teaching the Bible lesson and mentoring children in Jesus' way. Such dedication has enabled the Village Children's Sabbath School to powerfully implant Bible lessons in kids for generations. Just down the



hallway, first and second graders gather in Primary 1 Sabbath School classroom, led by Tara Rosaasen and Sherry Magers. What a God-honoring environment these two dedicated women provide! Every week, without fail, they organize, decorate, prepare, sing, share, and teach God's goodness and love. Sherry's mission stories accompanied by felts are historic! These two fine leaders are assisted by faithful songster and guitarist Jesse Campos, and teachers Jon Travis and Linda Toretta.



L to R: Sherry, Tara, Jesse

God bless you, Sabbath School Leaders in the Primary 1 and 2 classrooms. God bless you, adult Sabbath School superintendents. The lives of adults and the hearts of scores of children are being molded in the gracious and compassionate ways of Jesus Sabbath by Sabbath.



Jeff Kinne

Thank you for your dedicated ministry.

More Valued Volunteers!

On February 3, the church was blessed by the music of the Upper Columbia Academy orchestra and choir. Susan Maxted prepared lunch for them all. And who did the camera capture in the kitchen afterward, cleaning up and scrubbing pots and pans? Thanks Wafia, Pattie, Pastor Steve, and Pastor Jeff!



Kindergarten Sabbath School Room Receives Carpet Upgrade



With the supervision and efforts of Pastor Steve Reasor, the worn carpet in the Kindergarten Sabbath School room was removed. This task went smoothly compared to the three-hour cardiovascular workout achieved by the team of volunteers as they scraped up the glue layer.



Finally, the floor was ready for new carpet to be installed by Tim Greenlaw.

By Sabbath, the carpet was beautiful and the Sabbath School items were back in place. Thank you, team, for all your hard work!!



My Early Morning Prayer Meeting Experience

by Wilma Slusarenko

I want to tell you about a blessing I have been experiencing in the early morning prayer meeting.

It begins with singing, along with music from piano, trumpets, violin/viola. Then Pastor Reazor opens up scripture in a way that helps me understand the word of God and how to make it a part of my life.



Currently, we are reviewing the Greatest Commandment, "And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30 NKJV). The weeks I have been able to attend, Pastor Reazor gave an in-depth study of the words Love, Heart, and Soul. He goes into the writing of the Hebrew language and shows how the word was used originally. It helps me go beyond knowledge and theory of the truth, strengthens my faith, and gives me greater understanding for how my life is to be lived for God and His will.

Plus, Pastor Reazor shares his notes for us to follow along and uses a microphone for those of us who are hard of hearing.

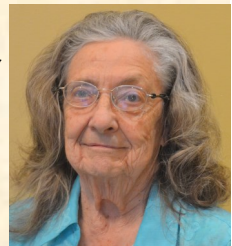
We are able to make comments, ask questions, and share our ideas, and we become more unified. We pray for each other's concerns and find joy in each other's praises which draws us closer in brother and sisterhood.

So come and join us in the chapel, Wednesday mornings at 10:30, and have an

uplifting experience to carry you through to Sabbath when you will have another spiritual refreshing.



Wilma Slusarenko



Family Matters

A feature by Bev Donahey especially for parents of young children

The Things We Say!

In a Family Circus cartoon, the youngest is crying while sitting on the floor in his pajamas, holding his blanket, and his brother says, “Come on, PJ! Stop actin’ like a BABY!” PJ IS a baby! It’s a cartoon because it is “funny” to tell a baby to stop acting like a baby.



But how many of us have said the same type of thing to our children? To a 10 year old: “When are you going to grow up?” What should the answer be? “In 11 years when I’m legally an adult?” It wasn’t a question. It was a put-down. Of course, it may be true that he should have known better, at his age, than to do what he did.

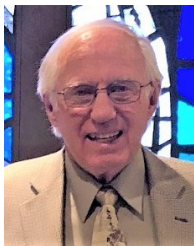
It’s always a good idea to whisper a prayer before we respond. When we take a moment before answering we have some time to let God guide us. We could quietly say, “I’m surprised you did that.” Or we can ask gently why he did it. Sometimes the reason makes sense.

Kind, polite statements, with eye contact, help families be happier. That is how we want our children to talk, isn’t it? Sarcasm hurts and builds resentment and causes low self-esteem. Like adults, kids are likely to behave better when they are spoken to respectfully.

Smile often. Make requests and corrections politely. It’s okay to say, “I’m disappointed that you didn’t do your chore like you said you would. It’s harder for me to make dinner when you haven’t emptied the dishwasher. Will you plan to do better in the future?” Instead of a frown, how about following that by a hug and “I love you”. With God’s help, we parents can handle the daily ups and downs of family life.



Bev Donahey believes that one of the best things on earth is a happy family. She has a college degree in psychology and a master’s degree in Applied Behavioral Science. Her work experience includes providing services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, therapy with children and teenagers who have behavior problems and mental illness, and adults with addictions. She shares tips that she picks up from her experiences, friends, and research.



From the Library

by Marcel Grondahl



Our first book for the month of March is “Meek & Mighty the Man Moses” published in 2005 by Teach Services. This book is a compilation on what Ellen G. White wrote about Moses. It was taken from a series on the life of Moses published in The Signs of the Times in the 1880s along with excerpts from her book Patriarchs and Prophets. It is inspiring to read. Check it out!

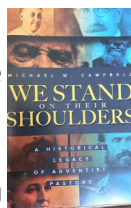
Our second book comes from the provocative pen of Clifford Goldstein who tackles the concept of “The Remnant.” He presents a picture of the Adventist Church that calls into question the idea that a church with documented problems such as incest, adultery, theft, prejudice and murder can possibly be the church ready for the Second Coming! With passion and sincerity, he examines the church he loves. He asks: “Does the idea of a ‘remnant within a remnant’ have any merit?” Read it and find out.



Philip W. Dunham in 2010 wrote a book titled “Blessed Are the Unlikelies.” This title fits the 15 biographies of unlikely folks that God has used in unlikely situations to bring about unlikely results! You will enjoy reading chapters such as: Manasseh, King of the Unlikelies, Ishmael, a Son of Promise? Samson, the Party Boy, Rahab the Harlot, Gideon, a Good Man. Then in chapter 16 he brings the lessons home with modern day Unlikelies. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23) Read the book and see if you fit in with the Unlikelies.



Last month Michael W. Campbell spoke here at the Village Church and left several books for our library. Our fourth book this month is his and is titled “We Stand on Their Shoulders.” In the book Michael has chosen to profile 9 Adventist pastors you have never heard of! Examples: Lulu Wightman, Marcial Serna, Minnie Sype and 6 others. What they have in common is that they are all different, diverse and unique but used of God in Adventist ministry. Read it for a different view of Adventist ministers.



With Love; Gen Z (Part 7)

Thanks for listening and walking with me through this journey of explanation. I've appreciated the opportunity to share a little of my experience with you. I'll miss talking with you, but this is the last letter. I hope you haven't minded me writing to you like this, and maybe it's opened your eyes a little to my experience, my world, and my struggles. I appreciate that you've listened, and I hope to meet you and talk with you soon.



So, who am I? I'm a young professional, still finishing school, or working toward a certification. I'm gay, lesbian, asexual, bi, trans, or straight. I'm religious, spiritual, non-religious, or still searching. I'm atheist, Protestant, Catholic, Buddhist, Hindu, or Jewish. I'm rocker, punk, goth, or e-girl. I like rock, metal, pop, indie, jazz, EDM, trance, trap, folk, or alternate.



I know you have your own opinions about who I should be and have your prejudices toward the titles and descriptors I've chosen for myself. I know it is easier to tell me who I should be and treat me based off your perception of the titles I've chosen.

I deal with depression, anxiety, trauma, and grief. I've faced abuse and bullying. I cut, overdose, drink, jump, hang, shoot, and drown because facing the dark alone is too hard. Would you believe me if I told you that I look for a hand in the dark to help me out instead of fingers pointing at my faults?



I know, it's easier to condemn than help, because it means you don't have to face your own demons.

I know it feels easy to ask the wrong questions, to feel like you're interfering, or being invasive. But the hardest question to ask is "why?" (after suicide). I hope you never have to ask that about me. So, here's an idea of how to start an easier conversation.



“Hey, are you okay? Do you need to chat?”
“I’m always here for you.” “Just wanted to let you know that I’m really proud of you.” “You mean the world to me. I hope you always know I’m here for you.” “I’m listening.” “I believe you.” “We’re in this together.” “I love you.” “It’s okay to feel inadequate. I love you and we can figure this out together.” “I’m here for you.” “It’s okay to feel depressed. I’m here if you need to talk.”

So, who am I? I’m strong. I’m healing, rebuilding, recreating, and learning. I’m building community, relationships, finding health and hope. I’m learning how to see the light in front of me, to find the truth even when it isn’t easy, to protect and love even when it hasn’t been modeled for me. I’m finding myself, finding my style, my hobbies, my passions, my purpose, my voice, and my joy. I’m learning to find God for myself, not just the creed or the church I’ve been taught, but truly finding Him. I’m proud of myself. I’ll be okay.



And you know something else, we’re in this together. It’s okay if you’re still figuring it out too, and I hope you know that we’re here for you too, listening, caring, and believing in you.

Signing off, Gen Z

Editor’s note—A number of people have asked me, “Who writes the Gen Z articles?” The authorship is intentionally left anonymous so the reader can consider the Gen Zers within his or her own circle of influence. The Jan/Feb 2024 issue of Gleaner includes an article called Understanding

Generational Differences and lists this overview of generations:

- 1901-1924 Greatest Generation**
- 1925-1945 Silent Generation**
- 1946-1964 Baby Boomers**
- 1965-1980 Generation X**
- 1981-1996 Generation Y**
- 1997-2012 Generation Z**

Footprints in the Sand—Easter Cantata

by Elizabeth Travis

Music can be an incredible gift and blessing, especially when it is used in God’s honor. Village Church, and the members of Violin Praise in particular, have always endeavored to honor God in the music they perform, and this upcoming concert will be no exception.

On Sabbath, March 16, the Violin Praise orchestra will perform an Easter Cantata in celebration of Christ’s life, death and resurrection and the incredible gift of salvation that He gives for every one of us. The orchestra will be joined by the Violin Praise choir, the children’s choir, and the handbells. The concert will begin at 5 p.m. and is called “Footprints in the Sand.”

Liubov Brunton, the conductor of Violin Praise, chose this Easter Cantata in particular because she appreciated the way the composer incorporated well-known hymns into the songs and accompaniment. She also enjoyed the theme of the Cantata, focusing on Jesus as our Savior and the example of perfect love. As she puts it: “Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. With this acclamation, Jesus established for all people the pathway of faith. These sacred words have become our pillar of light and truth through the wilderness of this world.

His footprints in the sand of time are a golden trail that leads us into joy. Christ is the journey and He is the journey’s end. Come let us walk together and we will follow the footsteps that lead to faith and beyond!”

Liubov feels that this Easter message is an important part of the gospel that ought to be shared with everyone in

The children’s choir



Liubov (Luba) Brunton



Jim Edwards playing tuba



the community and eagerly awaits all those who will come to be blessed by this concert. She is also very excited as she sees how hard all the members of the orchestra and choir are working to make sure all the pieces are ready to be performed.

The members of the orchestra, choirs, and bells are all volunteers, dedicating hours of time each week to practice and making sure each piece of music turns out beautifully. They have come in, not just from College Place, but from as far as Pendleton, Yakima, and Spokane to lend their instruments and their voices to this joyful concert. Their music will surely be a blessing to everyone who attends.

During the Easter season, it is important that we remember and recognize Christ's time on earth and all the things He's done for us. So be sure to make time on March 16 to attend this musical celebration in honor of Christ's life, His resurrection, and His unbelievable gift of love. We hope to see you all there.

Beth Travis



“From the desert to Calvary, the storm of Satan’s wrath beat upon Him, but the more mercilessly it fell, the more firmly did the Son of God cling to the hand of His Father, and press on in the bloodstained path. All the efforts of Satan to oppress and overcome Him only brought out in a purer light His spotless character.”



—The Desire of Ages p. 759

Have you seen this MindFit event advertised and wondered what it's all about? Here's some info that might help. It comes from the website mindfitevent.com

Why You Should Attend *MindFit*

It's not "all in your head." Mental illness is a harsh everyday reality for millions of people. Many know someone affected, **but few understand what their friends and neighbors are really experiencing.** Or know **how to help.**

Join Alex Rodriguez on a journey to better understand the challenges so many face today. Along the way, you'll meet men and women who have grappled with depression, anxiety, and other common mental conditions—and the **skilled practitioners** whose methods are helping them find **encouraging breakthroughs.**

Their stories will educate, inspire, and provide hope to those struggling as well as to those who love them.



Alex Rodriguez

Documentary Host

Due to changes with the postal system, Village Voice will no longer be sent as a bulk mailing. A digital copy will be posted on the church website and the link sent out by email. Also, print copies will be made available at the information desk in the church lobby. And for those who are unable to attend, a team of volunteers is committed to delivering Village Voice to your place of residence.

For questions or comments, please contact the church office at 509-525-0882.

Thank you for your support as we attempt to make this transition as seamlessly as possible.

—your Village Voice team



Many thanks to all the volunteers who have faithfully served behind the scenes to prepare the Village Voice bulk mailing through the years. Special thanks to Kathy Hazen for coordinating the team! You are all greatly appreciated!



A REMINDER—ALL PROCEEDS FROM ITEMS SOLD ON EBAY AT VILLAGESDA GO TO FUND THE TUITION COSTS OF STUDENTS AT ROGERS SDA SCHOOL AND WALLA WALLA VALLEY ACADEMY





Flame of Jahweh

Richard Davidson, Senior Research Professor of Old Testament Interpretation at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University, will join Village Church, March 8 and 9, for a four-part Sabbath seminar titled, God's Design

for Sexual Wholeness in a Broken World.

This seminar will explore what the Bible says about human sexuality, tracing God's original design in Eden (Genesis 1-3), how Satan has counterfeited and corrupted each facet of God's design, and how we may return to the Edenic plan for wholistic sexuality even in a broken world, as illustrated in the Song of Songs. On Sabbath afternoon the focus will be upon current controversies regarding sexuality, especially LGBTQ+ issues. Dr. Davidson will examine the basic biblical principles and perspectives, summarize common arguments of LGBTQ+ "affirmative theology," and provide Scripture-based responses. This will be followed by practical suggestions of how to provide a "safe place" of compassion and love and healing in our churches and homes, for all of us who, as sinners, are seeking by the grace and power of God to move toward sexual wholeness.

Dr. Davidson has been a member of the Seminary faculty since 1979. He has authored numerous books including his most recent, *Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament*. He is married to Jo Ann Mazat Davidson who is also a Senior Research professor at the Theological Seminary. They have a daughter, Rahel, and a son, Jonathan. Davidson enjoys sharing the Word of God and helping to make it come alive in people's experience, whether in the classroom, at camp meetings or pastors' meetings, week-end

seminars in local churches or Bible conferences. His favorite outdoor activities include backpacking, mountaineering, cross-country skiing, and tennis.

GOD'S DESIGN FOR SEXUAL WHOLENESS IN A BROKEN WORLD

7 p.m., Friday night

The Divine Design for Sexuality: Genesis 1-3

10: 50 a.m., Sabbath morning

Back to Eden: Sexuality in the Song of Songs

3 p.m., Sabbath afternoon

A Biblical Perspective on Current LGBTQ+ Issues, Part 1

4 p.m., Sabbath afternoon

A Biblical Perspective on Current LGBTQ+ Issues, Part 2

5 p.m., Sabbath afternoon

Question and Answer Period



*“Higher than the highest human thought
can reach is God’s ideal for His children.”*

—Education p. 18

Broccoli Cashew Salad with Apples and Pears

This recipe from juliasalbum.com, shared by Terry Koch, is packed with nutritious, delicious, colorful fruits and vegetables for beauty and flavor!

Ingredients:

Salad:

- 5 cups broccoli florets chopped into small bites
- 1 apple cored and diced
- 1 pear (firm, not soft), cored and diced
- ¼ cup red onion diced
- 1 cup cashews toasted or roasted
- 1 cup dried cranberries

Creamy Salad Dressing:

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ½ cup sour cream or kefir or Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- ¼ cup honey, softened or warmed up
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Instructions:

1. In a large bowl, combine together chopped broccoli, diced apple, diced pear, diced red onion, cashews (toasted or roasted) and dried cranberries.
2. In a small bowl, stir together mayonnaise, sour cream (or kefir or Greek yogurt), lemon juice, honey, and salt. Note that honey should be soft and runny, warm it up if needed, so that it mixes easily. Whisk the ingredients until well combined and smooth. Add salt if needed.
3. Add the dressing to the broccoli salad and stir everything together. Serves 8.



Dear Village Voice readers,

As the days lengthen and temperatures rise, I watch with joyful expectation for signs of life in winter-dormant buds.

Past experience reminds me how glorious the dogwood tree looks covered in pink blossoms.



But what if I had never seen it? What if I'd only read about this reality in the Bible?

Could I look at seemingly-dead twigs and believe in flowers?

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1).

We cling tenaciously to dead twigs in our lives because it's all we know. But God gives to all a measure of faith (Rom. 12:3) and grows it in willing hearts. He longs to transform our carnal security into beauty unimaginable—the curse of sin removed forever.

The time is fast approaching.

Karen Ekkens



Let's trust Him, even if we can't imagine flowers. His plans are beyond our highest expectations!

God bless you!

Karen Ekkens, editor



VILLAGE VOICE

Is published monthly by the
College Place Village Seventh-day
Adventist Church, and is
distributed free to its members.

STAFF

Editor:	Karen Ekkens
Proofreader:	Carolyn Gaskell
Contributing Writers:	Terry Koch Beth Travis Marcel Grondahl Bev Donahey
Design/Layout:	Karen Ekkens
Distribution:	Jody Johnson



CREDITS

Clip art: clipart-library.com
Photography:
Terry Koch, p. 2
Dale Pettibone, pp. 3, 4, 12, 13
Jeff Kinne, pp. 3, 4
Curtis Anderson, p. 4
Steve Reasor, p. 6
Karen Ekkens, p. 6
Courtesy of Richard Davidson, p. 16

CONTACT

Village.Voice@villageadventist.org

College Place Village Church
715 SE 12th St.
College Place, WA 99324

509-525-0882