



WILL THE CHURCH BE ONE OF THOSE VOICES?

Lizbeth Geary, Children's Ministry Coordinator

One moment they're wrapped in swaddling blankets, eyes full of wonder, adjusting to a brand-new world. Then suddenly, they're sounding out their first words, tying their shoes, asking big questions about God and the world.

Childhood is precious – and fleeting. We blink, and the wonder years are gone. If you've ever watched a toddler wobble through their first steps or heard a child sing "Jesus Loves Me" with their whole heart, you've seen how quickly those moments pass.

The voices that speak into those early days have the power to shape a lifetime. And the question before us is simple: will the church be one of those voices?

The Battle for Young Hearts

We are living in a time when the noise of the world is louder than ever. Children are constantly being shaped by media, culture, and competing worldviews that often leave God out entirely. And the enemy is not passive – we are in a spiritual battle for the hearts of our littlest ones.

Studies show that 60–70% of kids leave the church during their youth years. That is not just a statistic – it is a wake-up call. These are children who once sat in our Sabbath Schools, who colored Bible story pictures, who sang songs about Jesus.

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► Meet a Pastor, Page 3

"At the core of my calling is a simple mission, to live and lead so that people encounter Jesus as present and alive" - Pastor Tom Nicholas

► "Fear Not!" Page 4

Montana Conference Pathfinders learn the secrets to defeating their fear by living a life with Jesus at the foundation during the 2025 Pathfinder Camporee in Fairfield, MT

HEALTH TIP



"Regular exercise can help protect you from heart disease and stroke, high blood pressure, noninsulin-dependent diabetes, obesity, back pain, osteoporosis, and can improve your mood and help you to better manage stress. Study shows that those who exercised intensely at least two times each week during middle age had a significantly decreased risk of dementia development."

"Did you know for every hour of television teens watch, their risk of developing obesity increases by 2%? Decreasing television viewing by 1 hour per week could cut the number of obese teens by almost one-third."

HEALTH TIPS Over 500 Tips for Your Health - By Rod Stone

(CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE)

The spiritual foundations we lay now—during these tender, forming years—can make all the difference. The time to reach them is not later. It's right now. All are needed on the front lines of this sacred work.

Our Mission and Our Growing Support System

The mission of the Children's Ministries Department for the Montana Conference is simple yet powerful: to inspire, educate, and empower the next generation to shine brightly for Christ—by equipping the leaders who serve them.

Whether your church is large or small, you are not alone. We know children's ministry can feel overwhelming, especially when resources or volunteers are limited. That's why we're here: to offer support, training, and encouragement for every step of your journey.

We're working toward building a shared network of resources that churches across Montana can access, including VBS kits, some backgrounds/props, Bible-based teaching materials to help bring your programs to life, and digital resources soon available on our website.

To make support more accessible, we now have two regional leaders: Cheryl Des-Jarlais from the Ronan Church for the Western Region, and Deborah Kyle from the Billings Church for the Eastern Region. These experienced leaders are here to encourage, guide, and support you as we grow together. . . .

(To read the rest of this article and find contact information for these Children's Ministries leaders, visit our website at this link, scroll down to this article and click the link: <https://www.mtcsda.org/newsletterstories2025q3>).

HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

Kobi Anderson, Billings

**How does your garden grow?
With rich soil, because of who you
know?
With seeds that realize their need?
Watered from the moisture in the sky
And from a spring that never runs dry.**

**Sprouts that turn towards the Son
Then buds of blossoms come**

**Without a bit of try
Flowers burst open that testify**

**To the Creator
Who lavishes us with His favor.**

**By seeing to our needs
Making sure there are no weeds**

**A few plants that grow there
For you to share**

**Are Love, Joy, Peace, and Patience
Reflections of His radiance!**

GOD IS STILL ALIVE!

Response to the Lizabeth Geary Article

Carla Lefebvre, Conference Communications Team

Sometimes, when we see our young people "slipping away" it drives us to despair! Of course, like Liz Geary has appealed, we need to refocus as a church on how to keep our precious youth because they are the future of the church. But when we see one drifting off, our hearts ache and fear grips us: what if we never see them in church again? What if the world claims them permanently?

Scary thought! But God is still alive and He is working overtime, through every means He can, to reach these precious ones. *In the next issue, we will cover a real-life miracle story right here in our own conference. Stay tuned!*

COMING UP!

Elder's Training

Monday, October 6 @6:00 pm

Conference-Wide Prayer Meeting

Wednesday, October 15 @6:30 pm via Zoom

Music Jamboree Outreach

Saturday, October 18 @4pm

"The Whitehall church is . . . hosting a gospel jamboree. Musicians who are interested in joining us for an hour and a half of gospel music (and/or can provide a song or two) can email or call me at jonathanchitwood@montanaadventist.org, or call (406) 616-3858."

MEET A PASTOR: TOM NICHOLAS

My name is Tom Nicholas, and it is a joy to be stepping into ministry here in Montana. My wife Sarah and I, along with our three children, are grateful for the opportunity to make this state our home. We are a family that leans into homesteading and the rhythms of ranching life – gardening, raising animals, working the land – and we see those practices as deeply spiritual, shaping us to live simply, depend on God, and stay rooted in community.

Before pastoral ministry, my journey included working as a ranch hand, training horses, shoeing horses as a ferrier, and serving in the U.S. Navy. Sarah brings her gifts from the world of business and health care, having dedicated much of her career to senior in-home care. Together, we carry both practical and pastoral experience that keeps us grounded in everyday life and service.

At the core of my calling is a simple mission: to live and to lead so that people encounter Jesus as present and alive, and to equip His church through the Spirit to walk faithfully in discipleship, community, and hope. I believe the pastor is not the head of the church – Christ alone is – but one of the Spirit-gifted leaders called to nurture, equip, and encourage the priesthood of all believers. That conviction shapes how I serve, teach, and lead, always pointing back to the King who walks with us.

We look forward to joining hands with you in ministry – strengthening prayer, building community, and seeking fresh ways to share God's love with our neighbors. Just as working the land takes patience, trust, and steady hands, we believe God is cultivating something here in Montana through His church. Our family is thankful to be part of that story, and we are excited to see what God will do among us in the Montana Conference.

Blessings,
Tom, Pastor, Bridger & Billings



CAMPMEETING WORKSHOPS

Emily King, Campmeeting Workshop Coordinator

Many people received a blessing from the 40 different Wholistic Living Workshops that took place all across the MEA campus. Ranging from topics of interest such as hobbies, spiritual growth, marriage and family, life skills, and wellness, there was quite a variety to choose from. Some of the new workshops this year included living off the grid, map reading, needle felting, prison ministry, a history of Montana, and even knife and hawk throwing!

We had an amazing number of teachers (~28), quite a few pastors and other lay people from all across Montana leading out in the various workshops, based on their individual interests, skills, and expertise. There were about 500 spots filled among the different workshops, averaging about 10 people per class, with Friday morning having the highest attendance of 123 people!

People who attended the workshops provided some great feedback about them . . . either that they learned a lot of good information, were inspired, or were ministered to in a personal way. If you weren't able to attend a workshop this year, we hope that you will try to attend one (or several of them) next year. You will be blessed!



FEAR NOT! PATHFINDER CAMPOREE 2025

Joshua Holloway, Conference Pathfinder Leader

Montana Conference Pathfinders began the new Pathfinder year with a camporee near Fairfield, Montana on the campus of the new Teton Junior Academy. "Fear Not!" – the theme for the camporee (and for the entire Pathfinder year ahead) – was based on Isaiah 41:10.

The camporee began Thursday evening with a worship taught by Pastor Nathan Cranson from the Kalispell/North Valley district. Through the course of the weekend he provided evening and morning worships on six tools to defeat fear, reminding the Pathfinders that "perfect love casts out fear" and that the Bible tells us to fear not 365 times – one time for every day of the year.

Friday, after worship, the Pathfinders tackled some community service projects on the campus of the school, including sanding and painting a wooden entry ramp to the school, fixing a sagging backdrop on the ballfield, and weeding the playground. After lunch the Pathfinders built wooden wren houses and worked on the Birds honor. Finally, as part of the evening vespers, the new Choteau club was inducted into Pathfinders.

During Sabbath School, the Pathfinders worked on the Sabbath Appreciation honor followed by a church service led out again by Pastor Nathan. After a potluck lunch of



haystacks, the entire crew headed for the Freezout Lake Wildlife Management Area to do some bird watching and identify more birds to add to their bird lists which were started the previous day.

While they really enjoyed seeing and identifying various birds they cut the birdwatching event short to go to a local assisted living home to sing. It really felt like the angels were singing along and the music was thoroughly enjoyed by the residents.

Since many of the Pathfinders still hadn't finished their bird list they went right back out birdwatching after singing and before returning to campus for supper, worship, and an evening of games.

Sunday morning the camporee wrapped up with a final worship and a couple of "fear factor" style challenges. The Pathfinders and staff first faced their fears by blindly sampling wasabi and extra-hot horse radish before going outside to tackle the "trust fall." The trust fall involves climbing up on a six-foot ladder and then falling backwards into the arms of their fellow Pathfinders.

While it was easy for some and harder for others, all were reminded that we must put our trust in God and Fear Not!

HOW ARE WE SAVED?

Christ's first words to the people on the mount were words of blessing. Happy are they, He said, who recognize their spiritual poverty. . . **The proud heart strives to earn salvation**; but both our **title** to heaven and our **fitness** for it are **found** in the **righteousness of Christ**.

The Lord can do nothing toward the recovery of man [woman] until . . . stripped of all self-sufficiency, he yields himself to the control of God. Then he can receive the gift that God is waiting to bestow."

Desire of Ages p. 299-300

VBS IN ROUNDUP

Norma Trent, Conference Communications Team

The story of Noah and the flood was brought to Roundup. The Roundup church again hosted this past summer's Vacation Bible School, one of two VBS programs this year in Roundup. As a note, Vacation Bible Schools are becoming a rarity throughout our country. Churches find the programs "too expensive" and cannot find members to support them. Many get paid organizers to run the program.

"Rescued: Safe in Jesus" was hosted by the Roundup church, funded by the church members, and run by church volunteers. Children learned that there is rock solid evidence that supports the Biblical flood. They also learned that the eight people willing to board the ark were saved from the flood. Also the fact that we can be saved by accepting the salvation that Jesus offers us today.

During the week, the children and volunteers were introduced to Noah and his family, as portrayed by church members. The family answered questions from a moderator, as well as questions from the children. Noah, Noah's wife, Shem and Wifoshem (Shem's wife) "appeared" on stage!

Nineteen children attended the week-long event, with a final program on Sabbath. The Sabbath program hosted families of children participating during the week.



BAKED OATMEAL MUFFINS

Great for a Special Breakfast!

SERVINGS: 4-6

PREPPING TIME: 10 MIN

COOKING TIME: 20 MIN

INGREDIENTS

1/4 c. oil
2/3 c. sugar
(or blended dates)
1 mashed banana
1/2 t. salt
2 t. baking powder
3/4 c. yoghurt or applesauce
(or 1/2 c. milk)
2 c. oats
(1/2 quick oats & 3/2 rolled)

DIRECTIONS

1. Mix thoroughly but quickly.
2. Spoon into greased muffin tins.
3. Bake in pre-heated oven for 15-20 minutes.
4. Remove from oven and let cool for five minutes before gently removing from the pan.
5. Eat with milk or your favorite fruit smoothie.

From the Cookbook "Wildboar on the Kitchen Floor" © SIL International 1991

"EACH ONE REACH ONE"

It Doesn't Have to Be Hard!

Carla Lefebvre, Conference Communications Team

I listened intently as Pastor Rene Marquez shared an amazingly simple success story.

Last year, he placed a Walmart order and had it delivered to his home – twice in fact - and BOTH times it happened to be the same driver. He felt impressed to become friends with the guy, Luis, so they started playing basketball together and doing other things, which grew into a spiritual interest.

Pastor Marquez eventually invited Luis to church and he came. Luis started studying, and then invited his cousin, Johanny, and she was so excited she invited her daughter Angie. By Campmeeting time this last summer, they were ready to take the next step and so Sabbath morning, all three were baptized. They are active in church life: Angie helped with a local VBS during the summer, and Luis is taking an active role in church leadership as well as helping mentor MEA students.

And all from one reaching one. . . . Pastor Marquez passionately said, "God can use the simplest things, and if we are open to His moving, we can see amazing things happen. *People nowadays need to meet REAL people with REAL lives, and to know that they care in a personal way.* Sometimes we think we have to use fancy methods or get a big-name preacher to reach people, but God will use the simplest means if we are open to His leading."

"Each One Reach One" – let God show you who that one is, then just reach out simply and personally. You never know what might happen!



LITTLE TOWN, BIG RESULTS!



Eden Marcoe, Conference Communications Team

In the small town of Heron, Montana (population 200), nearly 40 Seventh-day Adventists gather weekly to study and worship. The building they meet in is the most unassuming of all; the sign outside is labeled "United Methodist Church." However, the removable letters below boldly declare, "Services Saturday, 11am."

The little congregation did, in fact, meet on Sundays until only a few years ago. But this winter will mark three years since the congregation decided to go "Back to the Bible" with Pastor Donavon Kack . . . and the rest was history.

The story was so amazing that a video was produced and featured at the 2025 General Conference Session – click on the link to watch!

[Heron Church Plant Report: GC](#)



"BUT YOU WOULD NOT"

A Warning for Our Time

Kirsten Holloway, Conference Communications Team

"For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: 'In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength'" (Isaiah 30:15).

Returning and rest. Quietness and confidence. Those terms seem quite the opposite of the happenings in our world as of late. This verse in Isaiah was originally spoken against God's people because of their haste to rush off and trust in other men and kingdoms to save them instead of trusting in Him.

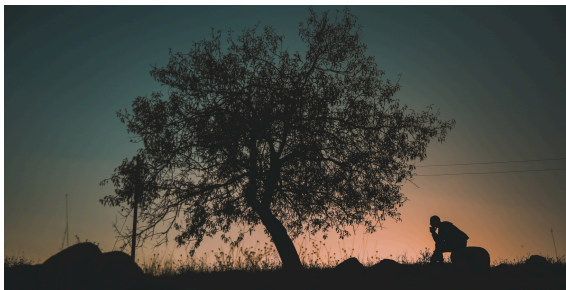
The verse ends: "But you would not." Can't you hear the sadness in His voice? What a stinging rejection of God by His people! He wanted them to remember Him and how He had come through for them time and again - and to bring to mind His promises of protection, love, comfort and rest. But they stubbornly refused and tried to solve problems in their own ways, trusting in their own strength.

How many times do we as Christians rely on our own wisdom and strength - or the wisdom and strength of earthly leaders - to solve our difficulties? It's one of the things that continues to give Christians a bad name among non-believers. We know this cycle is futile. We know all kinds of troubles will come, and increase as earth's history wraps up. We know the love of many will grow cold as a result (Matthew 24:12).

We have seen these things escalate over the past several years. Chaos, corruption, anger, and fear beget more of the same. Sinful, fallen humanity cannot save itself through its own wisdom or might, yet we keep turning to charismatic men (or women), seeking their leadership instead of God's. How long will we allow ourselves to be deluded?

I love this advice given a little later in the book of Isaiah: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:6-7). Jesus' second coming is very near and we must be wisely spending the time developing a trusting, confident relationship in God as our loving, all-knowing Father. It's the only way we can have the peace and quietness that He desires for us as He matures and prepares us to give the Loud Cry.

Psalms 20:7 says, "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we will remember the name of the Lord our God." Let David's prayer be ours, and let it not be said, "But you would not."



NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Jim Jenkins, Conference President

I was recently reminded of a scripture that felt especially appropriate for our time. The world around us feels more unsettling each day, leaving many of us grasping for something that will restore hope for the days ahead.

Jeremiah 29:11 offers just that: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." This verse is a powerful reminder that when we walk with God, we can live with hope and confidence, knowing that our future is secure in Him.

Here are a few reasons we can hold fast to this assurance:

- God is already in your future. Whether it's an hour from now or ten years down the road, He is there. Nothing surprises Him, and nothing is beyond His ability to guide you through.

(Continued on page 10)

TREASURER'S REPORT

Solomon Agdon, Conference Treasurer

An ancient story is told of a roadside beggar who asked for alms from Alexander the Great as he passed by. The man was poor and wretched and had no claim upon the ruler, no right even to lift a solicitous hand. Yet the Emperor threw him several coins. A courtier was astonished at his generosity and commended, "Sir, copper coins would adequately meet a beggar's need. Why give him gold?" Alexander responded in royal fashion, "Copper coins would suit the beggar's need, but gold coins suit Alexander's giving" (Unknown).

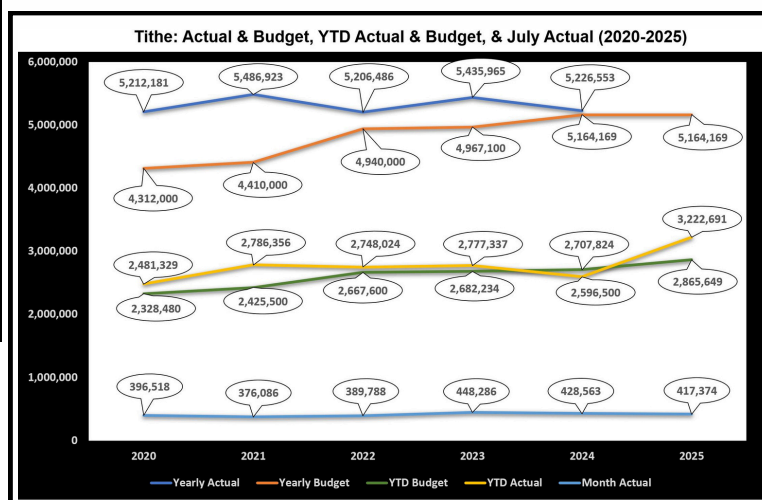
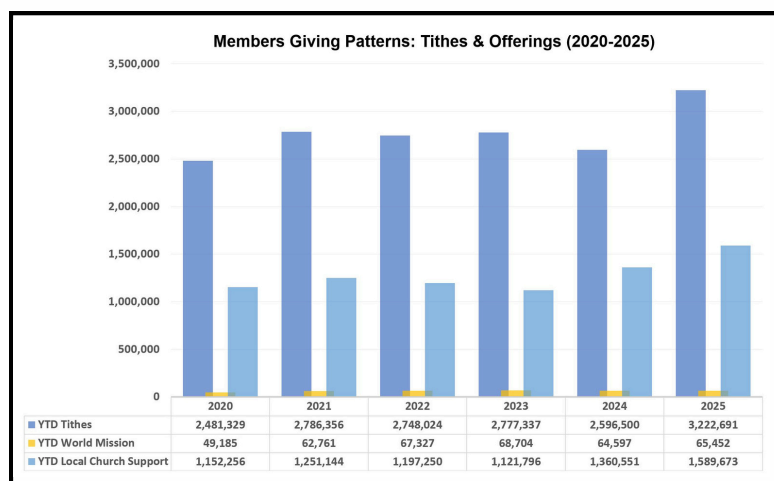
We serve a God who is so generous and always provides more than we deserve. Genuine generosity is a result of God's miraculous work for anyone who is constantly seeking God's kingdom first and His own character in which He richly promises to provide all things to enjoy (Matt 6:33). One of the manifestations of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is being generous. When believers embrace God's grace and internalize God's lavish generosity, their own lives begin to overflow by sharing all they have with others (Acts 4:32).

The Lord has admonished His people to "try Him" and believe His promise that faithfulness in giving tithes and offerings wouldn't make "room enough to receive" His blessing (Malachi 3:10). This transformation experience becomes a natural byproduct of living a Spirit-filled life. It defines the living connection with God where generosity is an act of worship. The calling clarifies our purpose to share our quality time, love, and resources in fulfilling the global mission field of the church (Matthew 28:19, 20) and meeting the needs of others (Hebrews 13:6).

How are we responding to God's call of being His co-laborers? The messenger of the Lord has given the imminent invitation: "God calls upon His people to awake to their responsibilities. A flood of light is shining from the word of God, and there must be an awakening to neglected obligations. When these are met, by giving back to God His own in tithes and offerings, the way will be opened for the world to hear the message the Lord designs it shall hear. If God's people had the love of Christ in their hearts, if every church member is thoroughly imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice, if all manifested thorough earnestness, there would be no lack of funds for home and foreign missions" (MMR, May 9, 1908, para. 9).

It is our hope and prayer that every church is like a "city set upon a hill, that it cannot be hidden" (Matthew 5:14) to give light to the people within the community. The Montana Conference invites each member to arouse and allow the working of the Holy Spirit to catch the eternal value of the vision **"Each One Reach One"** designed to reach a lost and dying world. Luke 14:23 admonishes us to answer the urgent call to "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."

In retrospect, we can praise God that the graphs below reflect the giving-pattern of the Montana Conference members over the past six years (and the year-to-date ending July 31, 2025).



Trailblazers Travel Back in Time

History Trip to Idaho and Washington

Maurita Crew, Teacher, Trout Creek Adventist School

Grades 5–8 students from Trout Creek Adventist School and Mountain View Christian School recently embarked on an unforgettable hands-on history adventure through Idaho and Washington. Their journey began at Treaty Rock in Post Falls, Idaho, where students took a short walk to view a historical signature on the rock—a powerful reminder of the treaty made with a native tribe in that region. . . . Next, the group traveled to Palouse Falls, where the roaring waters and rainbow mist offered not just breathtaking scenery, but a valuable lesson in geology. . . .

Tuesday's visit to Fort Walla Walla gave students a vivid look into 19th-century life through period-style homes and businesses. The Trailblazers explored the fort grounds and gained a deeper understanding of what life might have been like for early settlers in the region. From there, the group moved on to the Whitman Mission, a sobering and informative experience where students helped set up a tepee and learned about the tragic events that unfolded there. . . .



The heart of the trip centered in Walla Walla, Washington, where students spent several days immersed in history and campus life. A highlight for many students was the engineering tour, which included an up-close look at the specialties within the field. One 8th-grade student was inspired to declare, "I think I would like to be a bioengineer," reflecting just how influential the experience was. After a delicious lunch, Professor Jefre Humbert from the Product and Design department led students through hands-on creative projects and showcased current university student work. . . .

Later, Professor Kraig Scott welcomed the group into his piano and organ performance class. Students were fascinated by the music and especially enjoyed a behind-the-scenes tour of the organ pipes. Crawling beneath the pipes to hear the deepest and highest notes was a moment of awe, filled with gasps and exclamations of "That is so cool!" The evenings offered more fun with rock climbing and swimming, capping off full days of learning and connection. . . .

From historic sites to university inspiration, this trip left a lasting impression on our Trailblazers—opening hearts and minds to the past, present, and future.

(Continued From Page 7, Note from the President)

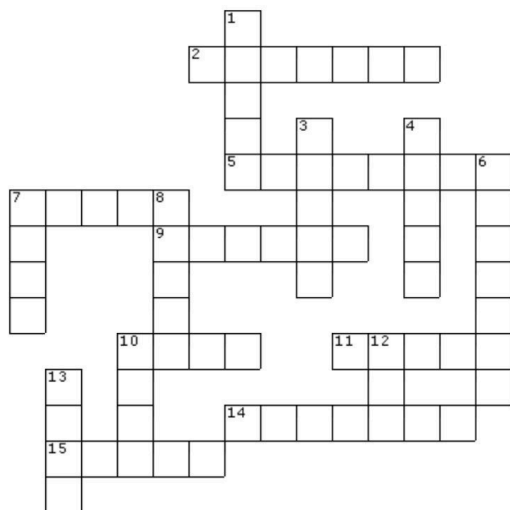
- God holds your future in His hands. Scripture affirms that God is sovereign over all of history. He is not distant or detached—He is intimately involved in your life today and tomorrow.
- God's promises extend into your future. As 2 Corinthians 1:20 declares, "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And so through Him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God." Every promise He has made is alive and active in Christ.
- God's best version of you is ahead. Even in seasons of hardship, God is shaping you into the person He has called you to be. Consider the man possessed by demons in the region of the Gerasenes—his life was marked by suffering and chaos, yet God had a plan to restore him, give him a new identity, and set him on a path of purpose. That same transformative power is at work in you.
- God has placed heaven in your future. Just as He promised to bring His people home in Jeremiah 29, Jesus assures us in John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you... that where I am, there ye may be also." Our ultimate home is with Him.

So, take heart. No matter what today looks like, no matter what tomorrow may bring—God is already there, working for your good.

The best is yet to come.

KIDZ CORNER!

(Answers on the Bottom of Page 5)



ACROSS

- 2 Food of John the Baptist
5 Therefore do not fear; you are of more value than many ____
7 Daniel was thrown into a den of ____
9 Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous ____
10 As the ____ pants for streams of water, so I long for you, O God.
11 First bird released by Noah
14 Before the ____ crows, you will

- disown me three times!
15 Most frequently mentioned animal in the Bible

DOWN

- 1 Jesus' parable of the sheep and ____
3 It is easier for a ____ to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God
4 White animal in Revelation
6 Eden tempter
7 The ____ of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
8 Do not give what is holy to

- the dogs; nor cast your pearls before ____
10 The Holy Spirit appeared at Jesus' baptism as this animal
12 Industrious insect of Proverbs
13 Jesus fed 5000 with two ____ and five loaves of bread



Seventh-day
Adventist Church

MONTANA CONFERENCE

This is an official publication of the
Montana Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

Chief Editor: Carla Lefebvre
Editorial Team: Eden Marcoe,
Kirsten Holloway, & Norma Trent
Design & Layout: Carla Lefebvre

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Conference. Please visit mtcsda.org/newsletters to:

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