

"The of the Matter"

A Monthly

Source of Information for the Church

Our Most Important Goal For 2021!

"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables Him to bring everything under His control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body." Philipians 3:12-14 & 20, 21 NIV

When we attempt to run the race of life by our own efforts, we often become frustrated and forget to ask for God's help. "Forgetting what is behind" includes anything that impedes the singular pursuit of Christ as we press on toward the goal of knowing Christ as our Savior, letting Him prepare us for our heavenly Home. When this becomes our life ambition, we will be like the Olympian runner whose intent on reaching the goal consistently stays laser-focused.

Here's another gem from the pen of Ellen G. White in *Desire of Ages*, p. 307. "The consistent life, the holy conversation, the unswerving integrity, the active, benevolent spirit, the godly example—these are the mediums through which light is conveyed to the world."

God has called each of us to great and noble efforts, honoring and glorifying His name. We have been summoned by our heavenly Father through the gospel of our Lord Jesus to inherit a glorious eternal future with Him. Don't let yesterday's failures derail you from the goal of your divine calling. Press on for the prize until you meet your Lord Jesus at the finish line.

Father God, Thank You for going before us and smoothing our way! Thank You for sending Jesus, Your Beloved Son, to take our place on the cross. We know we won't attain perfection until Jesus comes, but we want to thank You for the Holy Spirit who continually helps us to become more like Him.

May we seek and treasure Your wisdom from day to day! May we be surrounded with Your peace as we claim Your promises to keep us strong and faithful. May we keep our focus to ask You to daily re-create us in Your likeness and use us in Your service. May this singleness of purpose pervade our thinking and actions.

We humbly ask these things in the wonderful and blessed name of Jesus and for His sake. Amen and Amen!

By Donna Faye Anderson

Here's a story we received in 2000 from an unknown author. It illustrates the devotional with a real-life experience. Enjoy.

Achieving God's Perfection

In Brooklyn, New York, Chush is a school that caters to learning-disabled children. Some children remain at Chush for their entire school career, while others can be main-streamed into conventional schools.

At a Chush fund-raising dinner, the father of a Chush child delivered a speech that would never be forgotten by all who attended. After extolling the school and its dedicated staff, he cried out, "Where is the perfection in my son Shaya? Everything God does is done with perfection. But my son cannot understand things as other children do. My son cannot remember facts and figures as other children do. Where is God's perfection?"

The audience was shocked by the question, pained by the father's anguish and stilled by the piercing query. "I believe," the father answered, "that when God brings a child like this into the world, the perfection that He seeks is in the way people react to this child." He then told the following story about his son Shaya:

"One afternoon Shaya and I walked past a park where some boys Shaya knew were playing baseball. Shaya asked, 'Do you think they will let me play, Dad?' I knew that most boys would not want him on their team. I also knew that if my son was chosen to play, it would give him a comfortable sense of belonging. I approached one of the boys in the field and asked if Shaya could play. The boy looked around for guidance from his team-mates. Getting none, he took matters into his own hands and said, 'We are losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning. He can be on our team and we'll try to put him up to bat in the ninth inning.'

"As Shaya's father, I was ecstatic as Shaya smiled broadly. Shaya was told to put on a glove and go out to play short center field. In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shaya's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three. In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shaya's team scored again and now with two outs and the bases loaded with the potential winning run on base, Shaya was scheduled to be up. Would the team actually let Shaya bat at this juncture and give away their chance to win the game? Surprisingly, Shaya was given the bat. Everyone knew that it was all but impossible because Shaya didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, let alone hit a baseball with it. However, as Shaya stepped up to the plate, the pitcher moved a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shaya should at least be able to make contact. The first pitch came in and Shaya swung clumsily and missed. One of Shaya's team-mates came up to Shaya and together they held the bat and faced the pitcher waiting for the next pitch. The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly toward Shaya. As the pitch came in, Shaya and his team-mate swung the bat and together they hit a slow ground ball to the pitcher. The pitcher picked up the grounder and could easily have thrown the ball to the first baseman. Shaya would have been out and that would have ended the game. Instead, the pitcher took the ball and threw it on a high arc to right field, far beyond the reach of the first baseman.

"Everyone started yelling, 'Shaya, run to first. Run to first!' Never in his life had Shaya run so fast. He ran down the baseline wide-eyed and startled. By the time he reached first base, the right fielder had the ball. He could have thrown the ball to the second baseman who would tag Shaya who was still running. But the right fielder understood what the pitcher's intentions were, so he threw the ball high and far over the third baseman's head.

"Everyone yelled, 'Run to second, run to second.' Shaya ran towards second base as the runners ahead of him deliriously circled the bases towards home. As Shaya reached second base, the opposing short stop ran to him, turned him in the direction of third base and shouted, 'Run to third.' As Shaya rounded third, the boys from both teams ran behind him screaming, 'Shaya, run home!'

"Shaya ran home, stepped on the home plate and all eighteen boys lifted him on their shoulders and made him their hero, as he had just hit a "grand slam" and won the game for his team.

"That day," said the father softly with tears now rolling down his face, "those eighteen boys reached their level of God's perfection."

Church News

The Community Service building sustained significant damage last summer. After being closed down for months due to Covid-19 restrictions, the discovery was made that a valve in one restroom had been leaking. It is unknown for how long the condition had existed, but water damage occurred through the entire length of the building.

To dry the floors and walls which had absorbed water, all floor covering had to be removed and many sections of drywall. Kitchen cabinetry and built-in shelving throughout the building was removed, as was insulation in sections of walls and under the entire floor. Needless to say, this left a pretty big jumble inside the building including the store of clothing that had been so neatly organized. Fortunately, there was virtually no loss to the supply of clothing.

Bids to repair the damage have finally been received and funds from Adventist Risk Management (church insurance) and the Conference office have been promised. The church has only been left with about \$2500 in expenses for deductibles.

Because repair is being done by several different contractors whose work must be coordinated, even parts of one contract needing to be inserted between jobs finished by other contractors, it is not practical for much volunteer labor to be of help. However, if any church member has skills that could fit in, it just might be useful. Contact Marshall Merklin to work out details.



Our Mission
 To Know Jesus
 To Share Jesus
 To Follow Jesus
 Changing Lives Today
 And for Eternity

The Christmas Program

With all that has transpired this year to cause us to feel shaken and uncertain, we were so ready for the beautiful music of Christmas and to have an opportunity to reflect on Jesus' love and how He came to this earth to be our Savior.

On December 19, we celebrated the real "reason for the season." The worship service was filled with glorious music, both vocal and instrumental, and different families read from Scripture about the birth of Jesus. There was a wide range of ages who participated, from infants to the white-haired, and Marty Robbins shared a meaningful sermonette.

It is our prayer that each one who heard this program were drawn closer to Jesus. Thank you, Margie, for putting it together.

Friday Night Zoom Vespers

Zoom Vespers on Friday evening has become a favorite time for our church family to connect with each other during the pandemic. I encourage you to join us in welcoming the Sabbath with music, a devotional, a time to express thankfulness for God's faithfulness and to request intercessory prayer, as well as sweet fellowship.

It will be resuming on January 8, 2021, at 7:00 pm. If you need the Zoom logon and password, please call Allison Kurtz or the Andersons.

Family NewsAdventure Update with the Maddox Jrs.

It has been almost two months since Randy, Ellie, and I arrived in our new home in Waianae, Hawaii. What an unexpected adventure God planned for us! Each day we are reminded of God's provision, wise leading and grace as we look around at our new home and the big, beautiful mountains surrounding it. We think, "Wow, we never would have dreamed this!"

When we knew it was time to start looking for new opportunities, Randy asked some of his close friends to spread the word that he was looking for a new position. Shortly after, Randy received a call from the Hawaii Conference's Youth Director, our boss. It wasn't a position or career change that we were even considering, but all the pieces seemed to fit. After some clear answers to prayer, we accepted the position of Camp Manager.

Life at Camp Waianae is busy. Randy and I make up the crew looking after and managing the camp. With the long list of work that needs to be done to maintain and upgrade our camp, we are quickly realizing how much we need and depend on volunteers to help us. Already we have had some great volunteers who have been helping us. Our boss also dedicates a lot of his time working at the camp, and we love getting to work with him.

On any day, Randy may go from mowing the lawn, maintaining the pool, painting, putting on garage doors, hauling large rocks on his tonka toy, showing potential clients our camp, and installing new kitchen equipment. The work is varied, but it gives him a real sense of purpose and fulfillment. I enjoy working alongside him, supporting him with administrative work like organizing files, updating contract documents, cleaning facilities and gardening. (As you can see, my work is also varied.) If you are ready for a change of scenery, and you feel safe enough to come, we would love to have you visit us.

We are very thankful for the extra time COVID has given us to get familiar with our roles and to work on special projects to upgrade our camp. We do hope, however, to be able to open camp sometime next year, restrictions allowing.

As for our little sweetheart, Ellie, she is loving each day as she explores and discovers her new surroundings. As a family we have been exploring the island. We love to go to the beach. We need to teach Ellie to swim and surf, because she LOVES the water and runs as fast as she can towards it, exciting her parents' reflexes each time.



We do want to say how much we are missing you all. We value how wonderful the community is in Ukiah, especially now being away from you. COVID does make it hard to meet new people and make new friends, so we are praying for God to lead us to a community of people here. Our first answer to that prayer has been living near one of Randy's longtime friends and his family. They are our little Hawaiian family and they are giving us a taste of home.

So, that is our update. We hope you are all doing well, keeping safe and healthy and trying to stay connected as much as you can. We enjoy keeping up with what is happening through the monthly Heart of the Matter. Thank you for your prayers and friendship.

Happy New Year. Praying that as you reflect on the year past, you will be able to see God's grace and leading in your life. And in the new year to come, may we cling tighter to Jesus and draw closer to Him. Love from the Maddox Jrs. - Randy, Krystle and Elizabeth

UJA NEWS**School Resumes**

January 4 is the first day back to school after a much deserved Christmas vacation.

The Roster Has Continued to Grow

Two more students have been attending UJA, bringing the current enrollment to 79 students. Praise and gratitude goes to our great God for each student, parent, teacher and staff person! Please continue to pray for the Holy Spirit's presence to be a vital, energizing dynamic every day at UJA! We know He is leading us.

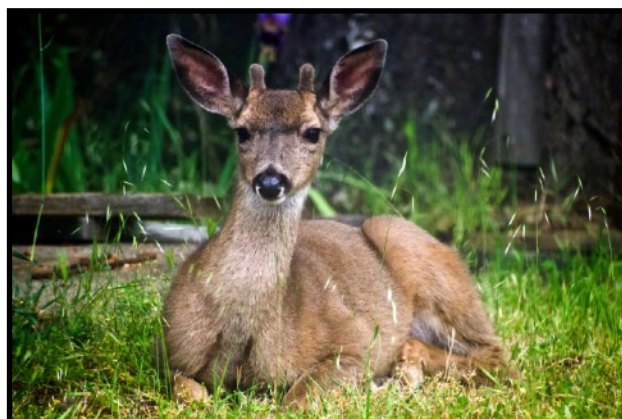
Margie Rice Updates Her String Program at UJA

Music has filled the halls at UJA with Christmas carols. The students in grades 3-10 have learned to play Jingle Bells and Joy to the World. Grades K-2 are learning various rhythms using wooden sticks, shaker eggs, and colorful scarves, as well as learning rest position, playing position, and Twinkle Little Star.

I'm looking forward to the new year and what music can bring to each of our students' lives.

Animal Facts That May (or May Not)
Surprise You
(gleaned from the Treehugger website)

1. Octopuses have three hearts.
2. Dolphins call each other by name.
3. Humpback whale songs spread like "cultural ripples from one population to another."
4. Horses use facial expressions to communicate with each other.
5. Elephants have a specific alarm call that means "human."
6. Owls do not have eyeballs. They have eye tubes.
7. Animals with smaller bodies and faster metabolism see in slow motion.
8. Dogs' sense of smell is about 100,000 times stronger than humans, but they have just one-sixth our number of taste buds.
9. A group of parrots is known as a pandemonium.
10. Polar bears have black skin.
11. Reindeer eyeballs turn blue in winter to help them see at lower light levels.
12. A human brain operates on about 15 watts.
13. Honeybees can flap their wings 200 times every second.
14. A single strand of spider silk is thinner than a human hair, but also five times stronger than steel of the same width. A rope just two inches thick could reportedly stop a Boeing 747.
15. Butterflies can taste with their feet.



“Healthy You”**Boosting your immune system**

What better time to think about our immune systems. It is the one thing we can do to protect ourselves from the dreaded COVID-19 virus. This is not comprehensive but just a brief outline of what we should be doing. For more detail, please listen to Dr. Wes Youngberg on audioverse.org. (Optimizing Our Immune System)

Focus on Healthy Food. Our diets need to be 80 to 90% whole-food, plant-based. Cut back on calorie-dense foods and avoid altogether sugar, white flour, junk food or processed food. I realize this is a lofty goal for some, but we are living in a time where it is so important to do all we can to avoid these viruses.

Think Good Thoughts. Yes! This is not easy with isolation and loss of jobs, etc. We have a heavenly Father who loves and cares for us and He will never leave us or forsake us. Count on Him!

Exercise. At the very least, take a walk after each meal for 10 to 15 minutes. If you can't walk, then move your arms or your legs, bounce a ball, etc. Don't compare yourself with anyone else. Improve on what you are doing now. Do aerobic exercise, strength training, intermittent training. Be active every hour. Get up and MOVE!

Get Fresh Air and Practice Deep Breathing. Moving and breathing are what stimulates white blood cells in the lower lobes of your lungs to go do their job of attacking viruses.

Get Your Sleep. One hour before midnight is worth two after. Go to bed at the same time every night. If you stay up two or three hours after your normal bedtime, you can suppress your immune system by 50% the next day.

Stay Hydrated. Drink 16 to 20 ounces of warm water when you first get up. Then 2 hours after each meal. Don't drink with your meal and don't rely on how thirsty you are. If you don't get to drink between meals, go ahead and drink with the meal because you will need the hydration. You need a total of 8 to 10 cups/day.

Vitamin D is Essential. Have your D level tested. Between 50 and 80 mg/ml is where you should be according to Dr Youngberg. Do not rely on being in the sun. It will not be adequate. I won't recommend, but will say I take 5,000 IU/day. Dr. Youngberg takes 10,000. He has great stories of how taking a bolus of D has helped with the corona virus. It takes time to build up your D levels, so keep in mind that if your levels are low, your immune system is compromised.

There are other supplements that you can take: Vitamin C, Oregano Oil, NAC or N-acetyl/ cysteine - recommended by Dr. Neil Nedley, and Zinc lozenges.

One of the most helpful treatments, when you feel a sickness coming on, is to take hot and cold showers. Focus the water on your throat and chest—hot first for 3 minutes, then 30 seconds of cold. Do this cycle 3 times and then take a 20-minute nap, or do it just before bedtime. You can do this 3 times throughout the day. It really works.

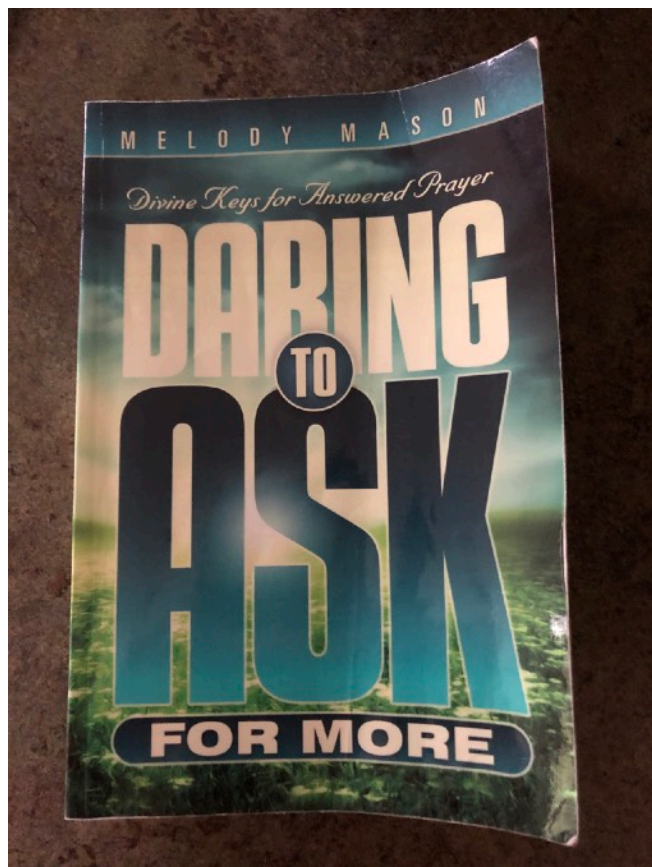
I know this sounds like a full time job! Let's encourage each other in this and remember that our health is precious!

For a simple meal that's great for your immune system: Roast sweet potatoes. Cut them in half lengthwise and roast them on a cookie sheet @400 F. Top with black beans. For one can of black beans, saute 1 cup of onion, 2 cloves of garlic. Then add 1/4 t. chili powder, 1/4 t. ground cumin, salt and pepper to taste plus lime juice. Layer the potato and the beans and top with avocado, green onions, and a tofu sour cream sauce.

Or, make an Avocado Cilantro Crema as an alternative topping. Ingredients: 1/2 cup fresh cilantro, 1 small clove garlic, 1 medium avocado, 4 t. lime juice, 1 T. water, 1/4 t. sea salt. In a food processor, process the cilantro and garlic until minced. Add the rest of the ingredients and process until mostly smooth. Enjoy!

By Ruth DeBooy

A Book Review: By Shari Kim



"The Battle which we have to fight—the greatest battle that was ever fought by man—is the surrender of self to the will of God, the yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love."

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing pg 74

When Joshua was going to war against the Amorites and needed additional time for battle, he prayed boldly in Joshua 10:12 when he said "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, moon in the valley of Ajalon." He did not pray as many of us pray by ending his prayer with "if it be Your will." Joshua already knew that his prayer was according to God's will because he had spent significant time seeking God's will prior to making his bold request. We too can pray bold prayers like Joshua when we spend time in God's word and seek to know His will.

"Daring to Ask for More" by Melody Mason goes through several practical principles that will challenge you to pray bold prayers like Joshua and go deeper in your relationship with Christ. Some principles and topics she covers include putting away distractions, safeguarding our time with God, evaluating spiritual breeches keeping us from God, and recognizing counterfeit revivals in Christianity today. The subject matter covered by Melody shed light on principles that can help us finish the work and prepare for Christ's soon coming.

Not only does Melody share practical principles for a bold prayer life, but she tells of several amazing stories of answered prayers. Some of these stories include: a conference evangelism offering growing from \$100,000 to two million dollars, a mafia gang leader in Vietnam giving his life to Jesus by a DVD series, and a group of staff/students from Wales College whose answered prayers influenced the course of World War II.

Do you long for a revival with your prayer life? Do you want to pray prayers that you can see results like in Biblical times? Do you long to go deeper with your best friend Jesus? "Daring to Ask for More" by Melody Mason is a practical book on prayer that will provide insight to these questions.

Celestial Calendar for January

JANUARY 2 and 3 - The Quadrantids Meteor Shower: This is 2021's first major meteor shower, an above average shower, with up to 40 meteors per hour at its peak. The best viewing will be from a dark location after midnight. Meteors will radiate from the constellation Bootes, but can appear anywhere in the sky.

JANUARY 13 - The New Moon: The New Moon occurs when the Sun and Moon are aligned, with the Sun and Moon on opposite sides of the Earth. Now, the Moon and Sun have the same ecliptic longitude, this being the first lunar phase. As this phase, the lunar disk is not visible to the unaided eye, except when silhouetted during a solar eclipse. This is the best time of the month to observe faint objects such as galaxies and star clusters because there is no moonlight to interfere.

JANUARY 24 - Mercury at its Greatest Eastern Elongation: In astronomy, a planet's elongation is the angular separation between the Sun and the planet, with Earth as the reference point. The greatest elongation of a given inferior planet (Mercury or Venus) occurs when this planet's position, in its orbital path around the Sun, is at tangent to the observer on Earth. The planet Mercury reaches its greatest eastern elongation of 18.6 degrees from the Sun. This is the best time to view Mercury since it will be at its highest point above the horizon in the evening sky.

JANUARY 28 - Full Moon: The full moon is the lunar phase when the Moon appears fully illuminated from Earth's perspective. This takes place when Earth is located directly between the Sun and the Moon. More exactly, the ecliptic longitudes of the Sun and Moon differ by 180 degrees. This means that the lunar hemisphere facing Earth - the near side - appears as a circular disk (being completely sunlit), while the far side is dark.

The January Full Moon was known by early Native American tribes as the Full Wolf Moon, because this was the time of year when hungry wolf packs howled outside their camps. Other names for this Full Moon have been Old Moon, Ice Moon, the Moon After Yule, Difficulty Moon and Black Smoke Moon.

How many of you were observing the night sky during the Geminids Meteor Shower last month? Fortunately, it was a beautiful, clear night and Dave and I were on our deck at 12:20 am. We positioned ourselves against the railing for support as we tilted our heads back and gazed at the heavens. Just as we did this, a glorious, huge meteor streaked across the sky and brought shouts of wonder and awe from us. Oh God, how great Thou art! This was just a preview of the wonders that are waiting for us to exclaim about when we reach our heavenly Home!



