

"The of the Matter"

A Monthly Source of Information for the Church Family

No Greater Love!

"But Christ demonstrated His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, He died for us." Romans 5:8

Most of us think we have a good understanding of what love is, but far too often, we use the word loosely or we take love for granted. The truth is, none of us earthlings can even begin to understand the depth of Christ's love for each one of us! While we were still our Father's disobedient children, unwilling to acknowledge His divine authority, incapable of comprehending, much less appreciating His infinite sacrifice, He loved us and bought our salvation by His blood!

The love of our Savior never changes. Jesus Christ died voluntarily on an old, rugged cross, bearing the sins of the entire world, so that you and I might have the opportunity to accept His incredible gift and gain the victory over sin!

"He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed." Isaiah 53:5

While this salvation offer is a free gift, it will never be forced on you. You must choose to accept it in order to partake of it! Because of Jesus Christ's love, every man, woman, boy, and girl can know Him as their personal Savior! No one else loves us the way that He does! Love beyond compare! There is no greater love! Hallelujah!

"I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace." Acts 20:24

Because of Christ's love, you and I can be assured that we are and will be able to withstand whatever comes our way through His power and grace! His love is unfailing and always there!

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:35, 37-39

By Donna Faye Anderson

"By Our Love"

When You traded Your throne for the strength of a womb
Without power yet revealed by a star.

You drew near us to serve,
Though we gave You no room
As You showed by Your love who You are.

Love is stronger than fear;
Love is louder than hate.
Love's a healer that carries the scar.
Love is the light that the night cannot overtake;
As You show by Your love who You are.

We have traded Your grace for an empire's throne;
In our pride we have fallen so far.

Bring us back to the justice
And mercy You've shown,
May we know by our love who we are.

Love is stronger than fear;
Love is louder than hate.
Love's a healer that carries the scar.
Love is the light that the night cannot overtake;
May we know by our love who we are.

Where there's love, there is room to welcome all of us.
Where there's love, there is grace we know will be enough.
Where there's love, there's a kingdom where the last are first.
Where there's love, there is justice; there is peace on earth.
You Who laid down Your crown to grow new life with us,
In a Kingdom that death cannot bar.
May Your Good News be water that can transform our dust.
May we show by our love who we are.

Love is stronger than fear;
Love is louder than hate.
Love's a healer that carries the scar.
Love is the light that the night cannot overtake;
May we show by our love,
As we show by Your love,
May we know by our love who we are.

Music by Adriana Perera; Lyrics by Nicholas Zork
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We learned a new song this Christmas season as we listened to the Candlelight Concert at the Loma Linda University Church and we were compelled to share it.
You can listen to "Light from Heaven, Peace on Earth" the Candlelight Concert on [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com).

Church News

COVID Vaccinations

On Monday, January 18, 515 community members received COVID vaccinations at our church in a united effort between Adventist Health Ukiah Valley and Mendocino Community Health Clinic. Providing the vaccines at the church helped to reduce crowding and traffic at the medical centers. Ten church members helped with the event, including five hospital employees and five volunteers.

"There was a sense of relief, happiness, and thankfulness among the people who came to receive their vaccines," said Pastor Eric. "Some of the senior citizens were jumping up and down with excitement. Others commented about the efficiency, helpfulness, and compassion they found at this location. It is such a joy that we could serve our community this way. We're all in this together."

The previous Monday, 163 people were vaccinated at the church as part of a community-wide effort to distribute more than 800 vaccines after a freezer malfunction at Adventist Health Ukiah Valley.



Our Church Gets A New Look

The church has had some much needed projects done; namely, the removal of the overgrown vines on the chapel, the trimming of the four palm trees, and the replacement of the wooden benches on the patio. Great jobs accomplished!



Photos above by Marshall Merklin
Photographer of left photo unknown

Friday Night Zoom Vespers

Zoom Vespers at 7:00 pm on Friday evening continues to be a favorite time for our church family to connect with each other during the pandemic.

Please join us in welcoming the Sabbath with music, a devotional, a time for thanksgiving and prayer requests, as well as sweet fellowship. If you need the Zoom logon and password, you may call Allison Kurtz or Dave Anderson. 707-234-9233

Church News continued:

Pathfinders: Luis Pastor, the club's director, reported that Pathfinder meetings have not been traditional during COVID. The club has met via Zoom and a few times in person per county Department of Health guidelines when working on honors and volunteering at Plowshares.

Currently, the Ukiah Pathfinders are fulfilling the requirements for the Dutch Oven cooking honor. The last Sabbath afternoon in January, they were at Plowshares, helping to make sack lunches for the homeless. In January, Luis Pastor, taught the Street Art honor for all the NCC Pathfinder clubs via Zoom. This involved creating art with spray paint.



Photo by Luis Pastor

Update on Repairs to the CSC

Marshall Merklin reports: Repairs to the Community Service Center are progressing. (See January's newsletter for a report on the damage sustained.)

Permits for construction were not issued until early in January, but now work can proceed. New insulation was the first work to be finished. All outside walls with dry wall removed for water damage have been re-insulated, and insulation under the floor for the whole building has now been replaced.

With insulation in the walls complete, an inspection has been made, and work on hanging new dry wall is currently underway.

Plowshares; “God is just; He will not forget your work and the love you have shown Him as you have helped His people and continue to help them.” Hebrews 6:10

Plowshares leaders and team members are seeking volunteers to serve food to our local homeless community every Sabbath. Our request is that you contact a team leader if you could assist with this important service opportunity.

If you are unable to help physically, please remember Plowshares with your donations. Food donations are also gratefully accepted. Thank you for your faithfulness. For more information or to volunteer, please contact one of the following leaders: Heidi Veness, 707-339-0668 or Wendi Olivera, 707-391-8427.

Financial report for 2020:

Received for budget	\$508,453.67	Budget	\$505,422.68	Over budget	\$3,030.99
Expenses paid	\$514,929.84	Budget	\$507,154.68	Over budget	\$7,775.16
				Ended the year under budget	(\$4,744.17)

Funds for tithe were in excess of 1,500,000.00, plus funds given for other ministries.

The Glenn Miller Golf tournament raised more than \$100,000.00 after expenses for scholarships at Ukiah Junior Academy. It is my pleasure to give this astounding report of your faithfulness and generosity. May God be praised! Dave Anderson, Treasurer

Family News

New Adventist Health president appointed (Excerpts taken from the Ukiah Daily Journal)

Judson Howe has been named president of Adventist Health in Mendocino County. He will lead the three Adventist Health hospitals in Fort Bragg, Ukiah, and Willits, as well as medical offices and other services throughout the county.

Judson has been serving as the finance and strategy officer for the three hospitals in Mendocino County for the last year, after leading finance and strategy for Adventist Health Howard Memorial since 2016.

Under Judson's leadership, Adventist Health improved access to care by bringing in new physicians, enhanced coordination of care and synergy across the three hospitals and invested in much-needed equipment and facility upgrades.

He is honored to lead the exceptional Adventist Health team and expand the organization's mission of inspiring health in Mendocino County. Community wellness is also important to Judson Howe. He says, "The pandemic has really highlighted the health disparity and inequities in our community and how it affects overall health. Beyond caring for our community members when they are sick, we recognize that overall health is about addressing the social determinants of health and providing access to resources beyond the walls of our hospitals. We will need to partner with organizations who have expertise in these areas to amplify our impact." He looks forward to looking at wellness through this lens to focus on how we can address these needs as a community.

Judson Howe fills the position vacated by Jason Wells, who has been named chief consumer and innovation officer for Adventist Health systemwide. Jason will continue to support Mendocino County as he will serve as the board president for the three hospitals in the county.



"Mendocino County is our home, where my wife, Diana, and I have chosen to raise our family, Sylvia and Ethan," Judson declared.

Photographer unknown

OUR MISSION

To Know Jesus

To Share Jesus

To Follow Jesus

**Changing Lives
Today**

And For Eternity

Family News continued:**Holbrook Indian School triplex project**

By. Dr. Randal Schafer



Dear Ukiah church family,

It's been just over a year now since we broke ground for the Triplex Project at Holbrook Indian School. This involves building two triplexes that are desperately needed for staff housing.

I've been working at the site with several other volunteers ever since mid December when I retired from full-time general surgery. We are currently bringing in the underground utilities. Right now we are laying 700 feet of sewer line and 500 feet of water line. It's been challenging because of rock and we are having to rent an excavator with 4000 pound rock hammer to complete the job.

Triplex number one is now about 80% completed. The sheet rock is almost completed and we are about halfway done with the exterior siding. Final electrical work, plumbing and heating, flooring, interior trim work, painting and cupboards need to be completed. Cost will be about \$90,000 to complete this triplex.

Triplex number two has a foundation and concrete pad with underground plumbing in place and is ready for framing. I already have a contractor to lead out in this probably late March or early April. Hoping to have several additional contractors to help with framing, trusses and the roof.

God is so faithful and continues to send volunteers and provide funding for this project. Miracles continue to happen. Thank you all for your generous gifts, volunteer labor, encouragement and prayers as we move forward by faith.

You can watch progress on this project and get more information by looking at the Holbrook Indian School website holbrookindianschool.org and check out triplex project.

If you need additional information or would like to consider volunteering please call/text me on my cell phone at 509-675-2490

Photographer Randal Schafer

Family News continued:



Mike Wilson and Sylvia Stewart were joined in marriage by God's Blessing on December 30, 2020 in Forest Falls, California.

Your church family, Mike, is so happy for you and very eager to meet Sylvia.

May God's sweet presence and His unfailing love surround the home you make together.

The Heart of the Matter is edited and produced by David and Donna Faye Anderson. You may contact them at 707-234-9234 or online davendonnaa@icloud.com.

A Lesson in Nature:

By Shari Kim

The snow buttercup (also called the *Ranunculus nivalis*) is a bright yellow flower that grows primarily in arctic places like Alaska and northern Canada. These flowers display heliotropism meaning they follow the sun's movement as it passes from the east to the west. The arctic environment this flower grows in is cold and harsh; however, they are seen peaking through the snow to capture the rays of the sun's energy to allow them to continue to grow and flourish despite their surroundings.

I find the snow buttercup as an object lesson in nature. Just as the natural environment of the snow buttercup is cold and harsh, we, too, are surrounded by a cold, dark and often harsh spiritual environment as Christians in this world. God never promised us that the journey on this earth would be easy, that we would never experience sickness or loneliness, or that we would never face persecution or see a loved one die. Upon further reflection, it seems that this world is getting darker and darker and many are losing hope.

But just like how the snow buttercup turns to face the sun for its survival, we, too, must turn and look to the Son for our own survival. In John 8:12, Jesus said "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." When we turn our faces toward Him, we won't be left in darkness. We can have hope when we humbly seek Jesus. Jesus came into the world during a spiritually dark time. He faced rejection, persecution, and loneliness, and yet, He was a light, shining His bright rays throughout the world.

Let us be like the snow buttercup. Let us follow the Son as if our lives depended on it. Let us turn toward Him and trust Him to sustain us and give us life despite the cold, harsh environment that we live in. Let us bring hope to a hopeless world and stand in contrast to our surroundings.

UJA News

Congratulations are due to Benji Oliver !!

He just completed a Masters in Education online! He is UJA's 2nd. grade teacher and the staff helped him celebrate. Some congratulations have come from his family.

We, your church family, send our thanks and best wishes as you stand before your students. Awesome!



Photograph by Wendi Olivera

Benji,
We couldn't be prouder! It has been so inspiring to watch you these past months as you pushed through your masters program all the while pouring your heart into the kids and families you serve. We love you, always!
Jeff and Aimée

On behalf of the Vierra family we are proud of you, Benji, for your accomplishments and to see what a great teacher you are. We are excited to see where this next step will take you.
Jessica Rice Vierra

SO pumped for my big bro!
Congrats on another huge milestone. Proud of the journey you've taken into who you are and have yet to become.
Much luv,
Your little bruv, Timmy

So proud of what you've accomplished Benji!
Congratulations on this milestone and excited to see you evolve as an educator!

Patricia

I am so excited for you Benji! You are a stellar guy and making a positive impact in the lives of the boys and girls that you teach every day.

Daniel

I'm so proud of all the hard work you've put in to reach this big achievement! You have worked so hard and have grown into such an amazing teacher and I'm so proud of all the good you are doing! I'm so lucky to be your wife.

Love you forever, Liz

Benji is so cool.
Benji is now a master.
Congratulations!

Haiku by James

UJA News continued:**Congratulations, Benji !**

We are so proud of you, Benji! You have worked diligently to complete your Masters in Education. You are an inspiration to all of your students and to your family! We love you, Benji! Geoff and Margie Rice

Dear Benjamin,

Your life has been a wonder to watch, and God has granted us, your parents, with a front-row seat. Your transformation from that little bundle we held so closely in the Phoenix Indian Medical Center to the man who now stands daily with confidence in front of an assembly of eager young scholars at Ukiah Junior Academy has been truly a miracle of God's grace!

You have been gifted with a gentle compassion that is not commonly found. You have a sense of humor that is laugh-out-loud funny, but at all times sensitive and sweet. You have always been tender and teachable, ready to learn, change and grow—even when this required effort and sacrifice on your part. You have never shied away from apology and shouldering blame when appropriate. You have learned to stand up and speak out with clarity against words or actions unjust or unfair, even if you risked popularity in taking that stand.

Now, as a result of much personal dedication, along with the undying love and support of your wonderful wife, Elizabeth, you have completed your Master's degree in Education. We could not be prouder! Being in your classroom often during the last three years, we have observed your joyful leadership and effective classroom administration. We feel you are now being conferred a degree you not only have earned, but have shown you already deserved.

May God bless you from this day onward, and ever more richly, as His Spirit guides you into all truth and you, in turn, faithfully feed His little lambs.

With our forever love, your parents.

Dan and Jenny Oliver

Student enrollment continues to climb. The roster stands at 82.

Praise the Lord!

Dates to Remember:

Feb 4 - Teacher Training - Noon Dismissal

Feb 15 - Presidents Day - No School

March 19 - End of Third Quarter

March 22-26 - Spring Break

Healthy Heart Month

In previous years of writing columns for school and church, I've always focused on the nutrition side of heart health for February. This month I've chosen to veer off to another angle of a healthy heart - our relationships with others.

John 13:34 "A new commandment I give unto you. That ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

John 15:12 "This is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you."

1 John 4:7 "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God."

For the past few years, a group of us have enjoyed the blessing of sharing words of encouragement and love to church members, friends, and family. These were called 'Love Notes'. We received so many positive responses and notes of God's timing being a part of receiving them.

Some of us have shared cards and Love Bags to church members during the past year. We used to use the term "shut-ins", but now we are all shut-ins to some degree. It has been fun to jot down verses from the Bible, poems, art, bookmarks, or messages of comfort and encouragement. We have baked goodies, casseroles, etc. for some members also.

I'd like to invite our entire church community to join us in sharing "love notes" in this new year, with those God puts on our hearts. I have been blessed with boxes of card-making supplies from my sister, who was an avid scrapbooker and card maker for years. I would love to share some materials and finished cards with those who would be interested in joining in, to reach out to people who need a message of love (doesn't that include all of us)? If you would like a packet of "cards and supplies" please contact me at 206-1755 and I would be happy to arrange a time and place to meet. Please pray that God will place names of those who need "His" love notes on your mind. If some people get a number of cards, they will enjoy the shower of blessings. May God help us as we focus on touching the lives of those in our family, along with friends in community, work, and church with HIS LOVE NOTES!

LOVE NOTES

I reached and touched a soul today,
And yet spoke not a word.
My pen did all the talking,
So not a sound was heard.

It spoke words of encouragement.
It spoke sweet words of hope.
It hugged it's readers closely,
As if tied with a rope.

It brought them many feelings-
Of hope, and joy, and peace.
It brought them smiles and even tears;
For many, a sweet release...

A sweet release from sadness,
From loneliness, pain, and fear;
From bitterness and anger,
That sometimes lingered near.

So reach and touch a soul today.
Show others that you care.
Spread happiness and joy around.
Do all you can to share.

-Debbie Merritt

HEALTHY VALENTINE TREATS...DIP STRAWBERRIES AND NUTS IN
MELTED DARK CHOCOLATE.