

# MAY 2024



## Connection

BY MYNDI CLEMENTS

Stagnant and selfish. That's how I was feeling in July of 2021. I knew I needed to get out of my comfort zone, serve others, and experience growth. So I prayed for an opportunity.

On July 30, I opened my email to find a message from my boss telling us that one of our sponsors wanted to send people from our team on an international, all expenses, mission trip to distribute water filters to people that had no access to clean water. We were given options of places to go and after choosing a country we wanted to serve

we were introduced to The Bucket Ministries out of Rockwall, TX who currently worked in the Amazon River Basin. The Bucket Ministries is a multi-denominational ministry whose mission is to "Share God's love through clean, safe drinking water."

Our journey to Brazil began on Thursday, February 17. After a couple flights and a few hours of sleep we arrived at the open air river boat that would be our home for the next 4 days. Going into the trip, I didn't know anyone other than my husband, but we quickly bonded with our 13 teammates. Bonding tends to happen when there are virtually no walls and you're sleeping in a hammock 3 feet from someone you just met!

We spent 2 days distributing filters and

**Rapid City Seventh-day  
Adventist Church**  
1636 Concourse Court  
Rapid City, SD 57703

✉ [rapidsda@gmail.com](mailto:rapidsda@gmail.com)  
📞 605-343-7369  
🌐 [rapidcitysd.adventistchurch.org](http://rapidcitysd.adventistchurch.org)

Saturday Morning Services  
Sabbath School: 9:45 am  
Worship Service: 11:00 am

---

## MAY SPEAKERS

May 4 - Wayne Morten  
May 11 - Stephen Wasemiller  
May 18 - Pastor Brian  
May 25 - Pastor Brian

the next 2 days doing follow up visits. Filter distributions included gathering the village, doing a presentation of how the filters work, teaching a member of each family how to use and care for the filter, providing recipients with anti-parasitic meds and sharing Jesus' love with them. Follow-ups consisted of going back to a village and spending one on one time with each family who received a filter. The follow-ups served 2 purposes - to make sure they understood how to use/care for the filter and to give an opportunity to have a spiritual conversation with the family.



I wasn't sure what to expect going into the houses on the follow up days. The thought of going into their homes made me uncomfortable. Due to our language and cultural differences, I thought that connecting with the people would be difficult and awkward. The first house we entered was spotless and organized (a woman after my own heart!) and a small, instant connection formed. Through one of our interpreters, I was able to converse with the woman and we talked about how everything needs its place and life is better with organization. We laughed and bonded through our similar personalities. My worries about language and cultural

differences began to disappear.

At another house we talked with a man who was concerned about his son who was on drugs. The family had moved from town back to the river village to try and save him from that lifestyle. We talked to another man who admitted getting depressed periodically. Another man shared his spiritual testimony with us and it sounded a lot like my own. With each house we entered, as the interpreters relayed the villagers' stories, our differences melted away and our similarities were all that remained.

Going into the trip I anticipated the growth I was longing for to be similar to what I had experienced on other mission trips. In the past, mission trips had caused growth through physical discomfort (bugs, heat, no shower, ect) and also through seeing how different the people's lives were than mine. I anticipated humility coming from feeling bad about how different my situation was from the people I met. I expected to be humbled by how much I had versus what they had. This trip was different. Instead of being humbled by differences, my humility came as I realized how similar we were and how narrow minded I had become. I didn't expect to connect with the villagers - I thought we were too different, but the truth is, no matter how different we feel from someone, the core of our humanity is the same. We all have the same desire to be safe and loved. We have the same fears, personality types, hopes, sadnesses, and joys.

It's so easy to look at people who are different politically, linguistically, culturally, religiously, racially, etc. and feel as if we have nothing in common. I think we do it as a way to protect ourselves from caring about others because caring brings with it a sense of responsibility and vulnerability.

*"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me."*

JOHN 15:4

---

## *May Birthdays*

1 - Chow, Irene  
3 - Few, Crista  
5 - Varney, Sandy  
9 - Lopez, Joaquin  
12 - Aldrich, Zachery  
19 - Fisher, Tom  
19 - Lopez, Erika  
25 - Garcia, Deb  
31 - Frank, Jan  
31 - Clark Nina

---

*"The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the grandest intention."*

*-Oscar Wilde*



If we convince ourselves that connection is not possible, it's easier to dehumanize people who are different. We will believe that we don't need to care about them, that we don't have any responsibility to help or even understand them. It's a much easier and comfortable way of living and thinking.

But when we feel a sense of responsibility towards something, we feel the need to give of our resources (time, energy, thinking, money) for it. Understanding people who are different takes time, effort, and an open mind.

In only connecting with people who are similar to us, we do ourselves a disservice. We lose open mindedness, we lose critical thinking, we lose empathy and we lose an opportunity to grow. We were different in some form

from every person we met on the trip. We were denominationally different from everyone from the states and we were linguistically, racially and culturally different from everyone else we met. If we had done the trip with people we shared more similarities with, we would have grown very little, and we would have gone back to our daily lives unchanged and unchallenged. Instead we left with shattered stereotypes about other cultures and denominations. We came back with a renewed sense of empathy and responsibility for others. But most importantly, we were reminded that no matter how different we may feel from someone else, there are similarities that connect us if we are willing to look for them and that growth occurs when we are open to engaging those who appear different.

## *Rapid City SDA Elementary Students Shine in Americanism Essay Contest*

In a remarkable display of persistence and effort, Rapid City SDA Elementary School students have made their mark in the prestigious Americanism Essay Contest, organized by the Elks' Grand Lodge Fraternal Committee. Geared towards students in 5th through 8th grades, this contest aims to instill a sense of national pride and civic responsibility among young minds.

Despite stiff competition from over 100 applicants all across South Dakota, the Rapid City SDA Elementary School students rose to the occasion, showcasing their exceptional writing skills. This year's theme was "What the Bill of Rights Means to Me." Brimming with insight and passion, their essays captured the judges' attention and admiration.

Among the standout achievers, Tristan, a 7th-grade student, not only clinched the top spot at the district level but also secured an impressive second place at the state level. In the 6th grade category, Damion emerged as a formidable contender, securing second place at the state level and snagging the top spot in the district. Joining him in the ranks of success were Odin and Jacob, who secured second and third place in the district (pictures at left).

These remarkable achievements reflect the exceptional talent and hard work of these young scholars and underscore the unwavering commitment of Rapid City SDA Elementary School toward nurturing the next generation of critical thinkers and writers.



Damion Red Feather receiving his award. Damion placed first in the district and 2nd in the state.



Odin Bowen reading his essay. Odin placed 2nd in the district.



Jacob Hartshorn reading his essay. Jacob placed 3rd in the district.



Tristan Jones reading his essay. Tristan placed 1st in the district and 2nd in the state.



The students who placed in the state, two of which were from the Rapid City SDA School.



All the winners of district and state placements, four of which were from the Rapid City SDA School.

# *The Pastor's Corner*

BY PASTOR BRIAN MUNGANDI

Dear church member,

Last month I was talking to Fred, one of our newer church members here. He said, "What are you doing pastor? Are you having a break from preaching?" This comment caused me to think about my preaching. No I am not egocentric! But is it just me or is it "natural" to think about self? I will admit that I have this tendency to study the Word of God thinking of myself FIRST, and then thinking of how I can connect myself and the Word with my faith community.

You know, while I was reading the Bible, I noticed that God called a single individual, Abraham, to start a nation. But what challenged me was when I found out that the purpose of that calling was for Abraham to become the channel of blessings to the whole world!

I didn't say this to Fred, but I have been thinking, maybe it is true that when God called you into the Rapid City faith community, he called you to become a blessing to the community. If so, then it is true that both you and I as individuals should become a blessing to this community. If we do that, then the image of God would be twice magnified.

These last few weeks, listening to ministerial departments and individuals share the Word has been a blessing to me as an individual. My hope is you have seen the many gifts with which the Lord has blessed this church. I am beginning to realize that God calls individual persons, you and I, "in order to build up the body of Christ" in the world.



Our calling is not ultimately about us as individuals but about what God is trying to accomplish in our world, in and through us as individuals and as a people. Paul says God has given individuals in the church gifts, for the sake of edifying the whole (Eph 4:12-16). We are called out of a community towards a community. Therefore, as individuals in the church, we must come together in unity of purpose. When we come together as a group in faith then we are truly a community.

It's important for each one to find our place in the community to be part of the family, not to display our accomplishments, but to enhance the beauty of our faith. If we read Paul's thought in Ephesians carefully, we see that he is saying the church community can be messy and difficult. But it's still important for all to be part of this church community. I think that this is God's plan for us individually and collectively as a church community to grow.

Let's not consider our "Self" more important than the community. Dealing with core beliefs, invariably we will clash with each other at times. Yes, it's not always easy. Yes, there will be differences. But let's find a way to work through those differences and issues together in unity as Paul describes.

My prayer is that individually and collectively as a community we learn to embrace each other and contribute to the well-being of one and all. Let's try to make this faith community richer.

Church Photos from this past month...





# Laundry Love

BY KELLI WASEMILLER

We first heard about Laundry Love at the Dakota Conference Women's Ministries Retreat in Medora this past fall. The weekend was centered around outreach and different ladies from across the Dakotas shared about the ministries that they have started at their churches. The Dakota ladies are active in their communities and so many inspiring ideas were shared, but we found ourselves drawn to Laundry Love. Both Bismarck and Jamestown have Laundry Love ministries and we were struck by the simplicity of the program, yet the powerful impact that it provides for community members in need.

In 2003, a Pastor was walking through his town in California, praying about what he could do to make a difference. He saw a homeless gentleman and decided to ask the man what he needed. The answer was surprising. "If I had clean clothes people would treat me like a human being." From there Laundry Love was born. Laundry Love washes the clothes and bedding of low/no income families and person(s) across the US. They brighten the lives of thousands of people through love, dignity, and detergent by partnering with diverse groups and laundromats nationwide. There are currently over 280 Laundry Love locations nationwide and together they have provided 3 million loads of laundry and served 2.5 million people.

The need for a Laundry Love ministry in Rapid City became apparent upon the closure of the Hope Center. Parkway Laundromat on 105 E North St. eagerly accepted our invitation to partner as a Laundry Love host. Marla registered with Laundry Love and was trained as a coordinator, as we must track the number of loads and individuals we serve. Earth

Breeze generously provides free detergent and we all started saving our quarters. Word quickly spread over Facebook and both KOTA and NewsCenter1 reached out to conduct interviews.

We decided upon the 2nd Tuesday and 4th Wednesday of each month. We provide two free loads for individuals and four loads for families, from 6:00-7:30pm. We've only been at it for two months but we've already served 78 people and provided 225 loads of laundry. Each night we spend an average of \$400 and are so thankful to the Parkway Laundromat for providing \$100 each time.

Individuals are so thankful and it is an honor to make a small difference in their lives through something that we often take for granted. One young mom has come regularly and she shared with us that she didn't know how she'd be able to do laundry for her family, but then she learned about Laundry Love from her son's teacher at school. Another couple stripped down to everything but the bare essentials to ensure that every last piece of their clothing could be washed. We have received beautiful thank you notes and smiles of appreciation and we're reminded of Psalm 51:7, "Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow." The impact of Laundry Love extends far beyond clean clothes. It's about building relationships, fostering empathy, and creating a more inclusive community where everyone feels valued and supported.

If you are interested in getting involved, please talk to Marla or Kelli. Please keep Laundry Love in your prayers and that each individual may experience Jesus's cleansing love through an act as simple as laundry.



We are actively fundraising to support this ministry and invite you to start a quarter jar at home. We'll put those quarters to good use! If you prefer to give online, you can follow this link to donate and also receive an annual tax receipt.



And in case you missed it, here's one of our news interviews.



# *In Loving Memory*

## *Frank Bissenden*

*April 3, 1931 - April 21, 2024*

Francis H. "Frank" Bissenden, age 93, passed away peacefully April 21st, 2024 after a phone call from his son, Jeffrey McManus. His wife Lorene & surrogate daughter, Nora Veit were at his side at Fountain Springs Nursing Home, Rapid City, SD. Frank went to sleep in Jesus until Resurrection Morning. The Code of Angels lined Miller Hallway to honor Frank's passing with salutes & flags.

Francis was born April 3rd, 1931, in Rapid City, SD, the 4th child of Stanley and Scena (Jones) Bissenden. He attended Rapid City High School; then enlisted in the USAF in 1951. The Korean War was ending. He was stationed at Bergstrom AFB, Austin, TX. He traveled to Japan two separate times. Francis was dock chief (27th Fighter Wing); then crew chief (12th Fighter Wing). After being honorably discharged in 1955, he enrolled in an auto mechanics course in ND; then worked at Lockheed in CA. He returned to Rapid City 1960. He was employed with Montana Dakota Utilities: Retiring as Serviceman General after 33 years (1993).

Francis married Lorene (Mikolash) McManus on September 30th, 1967, a widow with a 3 year old son, Jeffrey. To this union was born a daughter, Nanci Jane in 1969. In 1978, Francis joined his family in baptism as a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Francis was very generous to others in need: giving vehicles for their transportation, fuel cards, appliances, and helping others to move. He was the kind of dad who drove across town to sweep snow off his daughter's car and start the motor before she had to leave for work. He made sure his "son" had money for tuition to graduate mid-term (SDM&T) and provided a car for Jeff's high

school (ND) & college days (Lincoln, NE.) His daughter Nanci claimed he was the "Daddy" she always wanted! His "son" Jeffrey said "Dad gave me principles to live by." He was a faithful husband, always opening doors for Lorene. He was soft-spoken; a true gentleman. Francis had an impressive collection of wristwatches, military caps & unusual hats. He exhibited a "Green Thumb" by raising 17 rose bushes & kept his lawns pristine.

Francis was anointed March 8th, 2024 by Elders Kinton (Stephanie) Rittberger & Paul (Nina) Clark from the Seventh-day Adventist Church; a recommitment to his baptismal vows. (1979) A Celebration of Renewal of his wedding vows (56 years) took place at Fountain Springs Fireside March 15th, 2024. Pastor Brian Mungandi officiated. His "son" Jeffrey flew in from VA to give a moving Tribute to his Dad. Local guests, church friends, nurses & aides attended. John & Crystal England added "Something Blue": Hydrangea Plant. They served cakes on Francis' daughter Nanci's dinnerware as "Something Borrowed." The cakes were decorated by family friend Judy Jazek Sikes. Nora Veit took pictures and helped serve cake. Joyce Casper had guests sign the notebook. LaZann (Steve) Allen provided the couple's favorite songs: "Let It Be Me" (Everly Brothers) & Gershwin's "Love is Here to Stay." (Colorado State Choir).

He was preceded in death by his parents, brother Art (Helen) Bissenden, sisters Peggie (Archie) Halvorson & Betty (Wally) Lanouette & daughter Nanci Jane. He is survived by his wife Lorene, "son" Prof.



Jeffrey (Janet) McManus, granddaughter Morganne McManus, two "daughters" Nora Veit & Crystal (John) England, Brother-in-law, David Fuller (Betty) "nephew" Sam Dyer, dearest ones, Kevin & Tammy-Brodie Gusmano & Alvin & Linda Perrigo, with many beloved nieces & nephews. USAF Military Burial (Inurnment) at Black Hills National Cemetery at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations welcomed: The Humane Society of the Black Hills, Cornerstone Mission, Roofs for Africa % Maranatha via 3ABN Internet.





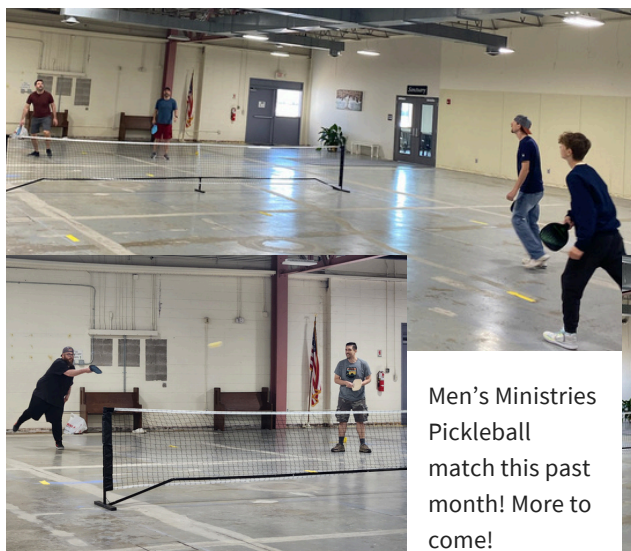
## Church Life



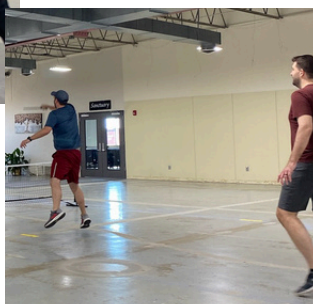
Some of the men from church had a blast bonding over paintball this past month. Thankfully no serious injuries!



On Men's Ministries Sabbath, we had Pastor Nathan Cranson from the Rocky Mountain Conference speaking on "The Key To Finding Fulfillment."



Men's Ministries Pickleball match this past month! More to come!



## Worship Service Check-in Survey

We would like to check in and see what you think of the new church service we've had these past 3 months. We encourage you to scan the QR code to share your thoughts!



## Kindergarten Open for 2024-25

**Rapid City Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School will be hiring a full-time kindergarten teacher starting next year!** As enrollment grows, it has been a true blessing to see as we expand the school to 3 full-time teachers in effort to minister to our young people. If you or someone you know has a child who will be starting kindergarten next year, we invite you to enroll them in a beautiful faith-based education here at Rapid City SDA Elementary!

**For enrollment details, contact Ms. Jamie Howell at:**  
[msjamiehowell@gmail.com](mailto:msjamiehowell@gmail.com).

For more church info, recorded services, or to access prior newsletters and bulletins, visit [www.rapidcitysd.adventistchurch.org](http://www.rapidcitysd.adventistchurch.org)

Got something newsworthy? Send an email to:  
Stephen Wasemiller  
[rapidsdacommunications@gmail.com](mailto:rapidsdacommunications@gmail.com)

# Church Map

Our church building can be a bit confusing to navigate! You may find this guide useful to find Sabbath School classes, bathrooms, building entrances, or offices. If you have any questions, please ask!



## Adult Sabbath School Classrooms

- 1 Main Adult Sabbath School**
  - Studying from the SDA Sabbath School Quarterly
- 2 Young Adult Sabbath School**
  - For college-age individuals (16 and older)
- 3 The Library Sabbath School**
  - Discussion-based class for all ages
- 4 The Music Room Sabbath School**
  - Adult Sabbath School lesson study

## Children's Sabbath School Classrooms

- 5 Cradleroll Class - Ages 0 - 3**
- 6 Kindergarten Class - Ages 4 - 6**
- 7 Primary Class - Ages 7 - 9**
- 8 Junior Class - Ages 10 - 12**
- 9 Teen Class - Ages 13 - 15**