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"Evangelism the Way of Life"

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"Upper Peninsula Church Undergoes
Major Renovations"

NEWS
"Manistee Church Hosts
Impactful Weight Loss Program"

INFORMING MEMBERS SINCE 1988

Memo

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2023

DISCOVERING
REVELATION



Members across the state chip in to do their part. Georgia (left) leads the prayer team accompanied by Jax at the Cadillac church. Team members prayed during every meeting throughout the series.



Jim Micheff



Kameron DeVasher



Andy Im

Evangelism the Way of Life

A conference-wide public evangelistic effort like *Discovering Revelation* is a massive undertaking. Beyond the spiritual preparation of prayer and the blessing of the Holy Spirit, months of planning are required to secure or develop quality resources, allocate or raise significant funds, train and equip local speakers and coordinators, and to organize effective advertising—all with the goal of sharing the Three Angels' Message with as many people as possible.

When *Discovering Revelation* launched on Monday, October 2, just over 1,500 guests had pre-registered to attend some 70 local sites across Michigan. While not every pre-registrant came, many others attended in their place. Thus, with 83 percent of participating churches reporting at the time this was written, we praise the Lord for the over 2,800 opening night attendees. More than 1,000 were non-Adventist visitors—an average of 15 non-members per *Discovering Revelation* site!

It's important to note that non-attending pre-registrants, along with those who came for a time but stopped at some point, are often a rich field for further follow-up ministry. For such individuals, their harvest may very well come in subsequent studies or series.

Beyond quantitative measures like attendance and decisions for baptism, there are qualitative observations unique to each location that are important to recognize, as well. Some churches are holding their meetings in conjunction with more extensive health outreach programs. Some supplemented the handbill mailings and social media advertising with broad personal invitation efforts ahead of the public campaign. Some meetings are being held in neutral sites like public libraries or local resort/conference centers. What impact did these approaches make to the campaign's success? In the months ahead, we will comb through the data and feedback from these meetings to analyze what factors promote greater success and how we can best leverage these in future evangelistic efforts.

One element we've emphasized before and during the series is maintaining a

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close connection between the conference leadership and the participating churches. Weekly Zoom calls are held to share testimonies, answer questions, and lift each other up in prayer. Additionally, Kameron DeVasher, Andy Im and I are striving to personally visit each *Discovering Revelation* site to witness firsthand the incredible work being done, to offer words of encouragement and prayer, and to share those experiences with the broader conference family via our Michigan Conference Facebook page and weekly email Update. Through these visits, we've been blessed to hear and see powerful testimonies of how the Holy Spirit is working in the lives of visitors and workers alike. Let me share a few.

When Vic Guajardo from the Ithaca church took his grandchildren to the park, he met his neighbor who lives just two houses away from the Ithaca church and is a minister of another denomination. He also had his grandchildren with him. During their conversation, the neighbor mentioned that he had seen the sign for *Discover Revelation* in front of the church and had one of his members ask him about the meetings. He had encouraged them to go because "Seventh-day Adventists really know their Bible." Guajardo invited him to come and he said he would.

Sim Clements and Lynne and Mickey Nickless told me that one guest came because she first heard about the meetings on Strong Tower Radio, found a hand flyer hanging on her door and later received a mailed flyer. When she saw the billboard on I-69, she said she just had to come and see what this was all about.

Dawn Geigle told about one guest who attended grade school in Fremont all the way through the 8th grade back when Fremont had a church school. Somehow, she had slipped away from the church. She responded to an invitation and hasn't missed a single meeting.

Dedication of Members

One thing that stands out during the *Discovering Revelation* series is the dedication and sacrifice of our members. It's not easy to have a full-time

job and commit anywhere from three or more nights a week to serve for several hours into the evening for a month or more. And to do it with enthusiasm, energy, and warmth! But that's what so many have been doing on a weekly basis, and we praise God for members faithfully responding to the call of Jesus to spread His message of love and mercy.

In preparation both prior, during, and following the event, it's critical for members to organize, plan, and mobilize for service. Advertising, distributing flyers, and spiritually preparing for the series through prayer and fasting are several ways members got involved prior to the event. It was amazing to hear how churches rallied together to pray for the upcoming series, fully recognizing that success depended upon God and members cooperating with His providence and strength.

During the series, church leaders designated responsibilities such as registration, audio-visual (AV), greeting guests, and children's coordinator, to name a few. Each team member plays a coordinated role that makes the event possible. As the saying goes, you're only as strong as your weakest link with everyone fulfilling an important and interrelated task. For example, the children's coordinator serves a multi-faceted role by providing guests with day care services enabling them to freely listen to the nightly messages. They also help other members with small children so that they're able to serve in various ways through the evening hours.

It's also encouraging to see new members taking on some of the responsibilities needed to carry out a series of meetings. Vic and Trish Mosley are two dedicated new members who joined the Pullman church family during the last evangelistic series conducted by Elder Jay Gallimore. Now they invite family and friends and have taken on the responsibility of registration for *Discover Revelation* because they want to help others find the truth.

With many churches committed to a series lasting several weeks or more, it's more of a marathon than a sprint

Prayer Focus

Every Monday morning, the Michigan Conference staff meets for worship and prayer. Please join with us as we pray for these churches and ministries.

NOVEMBER 7

Battle Creek Tabernacle
Battle Creek Academy
Battle Creek ACS

NOVEMBER 8

Battle Creek Korean
Hyunho Suh

Battle Creek Zomi
SB Cin

NOVEMBER 14

Delton/Hastings
Hastings SDA Elementary
Jeff Dowell

Hillsdale/Pittsford

NOVEMBER 21

Burlington/Coldwater
Burlington ACS
Bayani Pastrana

NOVEMBER 28

Charlotte/Urbandale
Charlotte Adventist Christian School
Philip Lee

DECEMBER 5

Detroit Metro
Metropolitan Jr Academy
Dan McGrath

Ann Arbor/Plymouth
Plymouth ACS Center
Ann Arbor Adventist Elementary
Daniel Rodriguez

DECEMBER 12

Detroit Northwest
Detroit Northwest Food Pantry
Victor Thomas

Warren

Giancarlo de Miranda

Detroit Korean/Troy Korean Co
Bomki Kim

Belleville/Tecumseh
Victor Vaughn

DECEMBER 19

Cherry Hill/Farmington
Cherry Hill Food Pantry
Jorge Neketela

Detroit Romanian/Monroe/Oakwood -
Detroit Oakwood Food Pantry
Oakwood Jr Academy
Jarod Thomas

DECEMBER 26

Brighton/Lakes Area Co
Raymond Torres

Ann Arbor Korean
Hyunho Suh

Troy

Troy ACS Center
Troy Adventist Academy
Troy Adventist PreSchool
Steve Conway

Upper Peninsula Church Undergoes Major Renovations

After seeing incredible numbers pour through church doors from community ministry, the members of the Sault Saint Marie church began to seriously evaluate the state of their building. The members knew it was past time for a remodel and stepped out in faith to begin renovations.

Now, they look back and praise the Lord for how His hand directly touched their project. Over the past few years, the Sault Saint Marie church has become very active in their community, participating in center of influence ministry, says David Austin, who pastors the church. They restarted their Pathfinder club, which has grown into an active youth ministry, with children from the community enrolled in the club. The church also began a health ministry, which has been very successful. After holding a plant-based food fair, members were ecstatic to see that it had brought nearly 50 people from the community through church doors. Attendees, says Austin, commented “we’ve been waiting for something like this—where have you been?”

In addition, “the Lord was sending people,” Austin says, “people we’d never contacted before.” People who listened to Strong Tower Radio, people who watched 3ABN or Amazing Facts, people with questions about their faith—they streamed through the doors.

That was when the church realized they needed more space and began to seriously evaluate the current condition of their facility. There was nowhere to park, says Austin, and “we knew we needed to fix our walkway and our doors—they were rusting.” He adds, “parts of our electrical hadn’t been touched since 1947.”

The church began looking for contractors, but no one called them back. They finally got ahold of one, but he was booked “sixteen months out, and then he forgot about us,” says Austin.

They needed money, and they needed someone to do the work, as they didn’t have the knowledge or the time to do it alone. “We started praying,” said Austin, and “held a prayer and fasting session.” They sent the prayer request to Strong Tower Radio, and the Lord heard their prayers.

A Divine Appointment

Rich Sutton, director of “Mexico Missions & Beyond” heard about Sault Saint Marie’s plight from Strong Tower Radio, and he was touched. Sutton organized a group of 35 volunteers to come work on the church for 2 weeks. Adventists from Florida, Arkansas, and Virginia came together to help renovate the church. This group included members from the Sault Saint Marie church, and members from other churches in the Upper Peninsula.

“Some stayed for two weeks; some could only stay for a few days,” Austin says, but no matter how long

After removing all the shingles, a volunteer preps the roof for new roofing materials.



“The Sault Saint Marie church is thankful for the volunteers who poured time and effort into their building, but most importantly, they are thankful to God.”

they stayed, all volunteers worked hard.

As the initial projects of electrical and new entrances were being completed, Sutton suggested that, while there were volunteers, why not put on a new roof, add insulation, and do new siding, as well as add new classrooms, make the baptistry functional, and fix the heating? The heating was a serious issue. The system was old and there were no heating ducts. When the heat turned on, it was so loud that whoever was speaking couldn't be heard even with a microphone. “We just had to wait for it to shut down,” Austin says.

Sault Saint Marie members jumped at the opportunity to better their church, and side by side with the volunteers, they began to tackle the new projects. Those who could helped with the construction projects. Some helped offsite or ran errands. Some stayed at home and cooked for the workers. “There was a host of volunteers performing different tasks,” shares Austin.

Unexpected Issues

Unfortunately, the project didn't run quite as smoothly as Sault Saint Marie members hoped. “When they pulled the siding off,” Austin says, “they found dry rot.” The rot had spread, creating a hole so large that “two adults... could fit through the hole in the corner down into the crawlspace.” Fortunately, Sutton “brought talented people that could know how to fix it,” Austin says, “and they went right to work.”

If they had waited just five years to renovate, the dry rot would have caused them to have to abandon the building, Austin explains. The church had raised \$100,000 in the past five months, “which was a miracle,” Austin says, but it wasn't enough. There “wasn't enough money left to do the rest of the tasks.”

All of the volunteers and members gathered together to pray, and shortly after, an offering came in for \$8000. Another volunteer felt impressed to call an acquaintance, and despite being “nervous about asking for money,” Austin says, “the person gave \$25,000.”

“God has been leading every step of the way,” Austin says, “we have had about \$400,000 - \$500,000 worth of work done on our church. There will be changing rooms for baptisms, balcony seating, two new rooms for classrooms—God has been very good—it's just been one miracle after another.”

It is worth noting that, although the church was already

Volunteers meet for worship before beginning the day's work.



Volunteers hard at work with various tasks to restore the church.



The interior of the church was also refurbished, adding new floors and a baptistry.



A view of the almost-completed church, with new siding, new roofing, and restored entryway.



Manistee Church Hosts Weight Loss Program



Above: Advanced Cooking School attendees learn how to cook a healthful, delicious vegan meal.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), nearly half of the American population suffers from at least one chronic illness, such as hypertension, heart disease, arthritis, or diabetes. It is no wonder that Mrs. White describes the health message as “the right arm of the gospel” when so many Americans are searching for help on their health journey. Adventists have a health message that is unique as its guidelines come straight from God. It is our duty to share it with the world, just as it is our duty to share the gospel.

Mike and Dotti Lambert, members of the Manistee church, have been faithfully carrying out health seminars and hands-on programs for the past 26 years. The health message is especially meaningful to them as, years ago, Mike was re-converted to Adventism after 22 years of absence through the truths found in the health message. The Lamberts personally understood the importance of the health message and spiritual health, and they turned their efforts to holding seminars to help others.

For the past four years, says Dotti, they have been hosting “healthy weight loss seminars and vegetarian/vegan cooking schools.” This summer, they began another session of the Unfit 2 Fit Weight loss program, which ran from July through end of August.

After mailing out 12,000 handbills, several from the community expressed interest in attending, and ultimately, the Manistee church hosted nine attendees at the seminar. Of the nine, five

“The Manistee church recognizes that the health programs bring people into the church who otherwise would probably never walk through the doors.”

were non-members, reports Lambert.

Unfit 2 Fit focused on losing weight healthfully, using diet and exercise as tools. Each meeting began with a weigh-in, followed by breathing exercises, and then 30 minutes of exercise, which was either walking or chair exercises. The Lamberts provided coaching during this time, as well as personal testimony. Mike was a truck driver, and before finding and practicing the truths of the health message, he struggled with his own health. “Mike lost 100 pounds when he first started following the health message,” Dotti says. “He used to cook healthy vegetarian food in his truck.” Their personal experience showed attendees that it is possible to cook healthfully, even if traveling or short on time.

Following the exercise, attendees were given the opportunity to learn how to cook a healthy vegetarian or vegan dish, and then Mac Mills, who pastors the Manistee church, closed the meeting with a spiritual nugget. Each participant was given a recipe and handouts that accompanied the week’s lesson.

Mills also participated in the program, which was beneficial for community members to learn alongside the local pastor and interact with him.

The class met once a week on Sunday for eight weeks, and at the end of the eight weeks, all nine attendees had faithfully attended every meeting and had graduated from the Unfit 2 Fit Weight Loss seminar.

One attendee was so committed that, despite her husband having to have surgery a few hours away, she came “long enough to weigh in and pick up the handouts,” says Lambert.

“When they graduated,” Lambert says, “we had a vegetarian dinner for them and their spouses. Each



The graduates of the 8-week Unfit 2 Fit program hold their diplomas.

family received the *7 Secrets Cookbook* and *Steps to Christ*, as well as a diploma.”

After the conclusion of the Unfit 2 Fit program, all attendees were invited to come back to Manistee church for an Advanced Vegetarian/Vegan cooking program, which began on Sunday, September 24. Of the nine Unfit 2 Fit program attendees, 8 chose to come to the Advanced cooking program to continue learning.

This program will meet once a month and continue through 2024.

Manistee church has seen “great interest in health programs in the community,” says Lambert. From the health message, Mike and Dotti have personally seen people drawn into the church. “It’s all worth it, even for just one,” Dotti says. “One time we

only had one person come [to a health program], she requested Bible studies, and was baptized.”

The Manistee church recognizes that the health programs bring people into the church who otherwise would probably never walk through the doors. “We always make sure that there is an opportunity for spiritual growth,” Dotti shares. “We always include the eight principles of Health,” she shares. The eight principles are nutrition, exercise, water, sunshine, temperance, rest, air, and trust in God. All attendees are also invited to upcoming evangelistic series and offered Bible studies.

The church is thankful for God’s guidance through their health evangelism efforts. “We couldn’t do it without the Lord,” Lambert says. 🙏

By Communication Team

(Evangelism the Way of Life, continued from page 2)

to the finish line. Even though some churches have concluded the advertised meetings, the work isn’t over yet. It’s important for members to get involved with personal Bible studies and discipleship-based activities, and together with the local pastor follow up with those who expressed interest.

It can be discouraging if few or no guests come to the meetings, and some might be tempted to consider the meetings unsuccessful. It might be tempting to conclude that evangelism doesn’t work in their location. At Brighton I asked the team how many joined the church through evangelistic meetings. A large portion raised their hands and one lady said she didn’t even come until the 20th night.

When God commissioned us to take the gospel to the world, He promised to be with us. The results are His responsibility. We are not able to measure our

success. We look at outward things that are measurable, like attendance or baptisms, but God looks deeper—right into the heart. He measures the attitude, the love for souls, the opportunities provided, our spiritual interest, and the willingness to respond and work with Him in the plan of Salvation. When we give our best in service, God amplifies the transformation process of our characters toward the likeness of our Savior. This can’t be measured by humans.

For Christians, evangelism isn’t an event—rather it is a way of life. Our goal is to cooperate with Heaven in presenting the gospel through our God-centered life and sharing the invitation to all.

We are relishing the joy of seeing so many who have responded to the gospel invitation through *Discover Revelation* and the enthusiasm and commitment of the local church teams in carrying out the Gospel commission. We, too, lift our voices in praise to God.

(Upper Peninsula Church Undergoes, continued from page 4)

playing a significant role in the community, the renovations have caused heads to turn. “We were already known as the white church at the top of the hill,” shares Austin, “but now we are the white church that’s getting a facelift.” Sault Saint Marie locals are stopping by to ask questions.

After the renovations are complete, Austin is optimistic to see how God continues to work through the little white church. Sault Saint Marie is home to Lake Superior State University. At previous health events, “a quarter of our interests were from the university,” Austin reports. “The hope is that our center of influence will [continue] to grow and reach out to the university.”

As winter is around the corner, landscaping will be put on hold until spring, but the church is planning a grand opening in May to celebrate. “All praise goes to God,” Austin says, “there’s no chance that a small church like this could raise \$140,000 in less than a month if it weren’t for Him.” The Sault Saint Marie church is thankful for the volunteers who poured time and effort into their building, but most importantly, they are thankful to God for, as Austin says, “He brought all of us together.” 🙏

By Judy Ringstaff, Communication



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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

NATURE NUGGET

Heermann's Gull

There is no such thing as a seagull! The term "seagull" is a colloquial expression often used to refer to various gull species that are commonly found near coastal areas and bodies of water. There is no single species known as the "seagull."

In Michigan, there are Ring-billed Gulls and Herring Gulls, which breed during the summer. Other species migrate through during the spring and fall. Of all the species of gulls in the world, my favorite is the Heermann's Gull. They breed in Mexico in the spring and then do a "reverse migration" in the fall by flying north up the Pacific Coast to Washington State and Southern Canada for fall and early winter!

Heermann's Gulls are the easiest of the gulls to identify. They have slate gray bodies with darker gray and black wings. Their heads are lighter and they have red/orange bills. Immature gulls are nearly all black and do not have a red bill. These dark-colored gulls really stand out in a crowd of the usually white and light grey species. The pictures



below were taken this past October near Port Townsend, Washington.

Do you stand out in the crowd? Are you easy to identify? I don't mean colored hair, or noticeable clothing or an expensive car. I mean, do your spiritual fruit show in your daily behavior? Do people you come in contact with feel blessed and do they want to know more about what makes you different? Something to think about. 🙏

By Dr. Gordon Atkins, Head Naturalist, Camp Au Sable
Photo taken by Dr. Gordon Atkins

MONTHLY CALENDAR

November

- 3-5** Public Hi-C Retreat (CAS)
- 10-12** Crystal Mountain Marriage Retreat
- 17-19** Youth Rush Summit (CAS)
- 20-24** GLAA Home Leave
- 22-23** Office Closed - Thanksgiving

December

- 14-Jan 2** GLAA Home Leave

January

- 12-14** Teen Snow Outing (CAS)
- 26-28** Father-Son/Man Camp (CAS)

*CAS = Camp Au Sable