



PROCLAIMING Jesus PASSIONATELY

LUKE 4:18



FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT RON AGUILERA

FYI (For Your Information...)

A weekly e-newsletter for employees and friends of the
Illinois Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

March 24, 2021



DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” John 8:36

Both my daughters played on the sports teams when they were in high school. One of the things I used to say to them, especially if they did not do well, was, *“What matters most is not how you played, but that you did your best.”*

As I reflect on those conversations, I realized that parenting reminds me of how much my heavenly Father loves me. On those days when I stumble at life and make some big mistakes, God, my heavenly Father, isn't standing there angry, or frustrated, or upset that I failed. He isn't mad at me when I don't have a home run or touchdown day. See, His love is not based upon my performance or even any action of mine at all. The Bible says, *“... while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8). In other words, I am loved. Period. Not because of who I am (or am not) or what I've done (or haven't done), but because of who He is and what He's done.

It's my natural tendency as a parent to spend a lot of time worrying about my kids, even now when they are grown, married, and live far away. I have laid awake at night worrying: Am I spending enough time with them? Are they eating healthfully enough? Am I laying a solid spiritual foundation? Does she feel loved enough? Should I have responded like that? These worries can quickly spiral into a place of beating myself up and feeling shame and guilt. Thankfully Jesus doesn't turn His back on me when I mess up. Instead, He invites me near: *“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest”* (Matthew 11:28).

Jesus is whispering to you and to me, “You are free. When I died on that cross, it was for you. It was for your mistakes. It was so you don't



Seventh-day Adventist[®] Church

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have to carry around the weight of guilt and shame and feelings of ‘not doing enough.’ You can rest in Me. Let Me be adequate where you feel inadequate. Trust Me. look to Me when you don’t know how to respond or know the next step. Lean on Me when you feel overwhelmed. Stop stressing, worrying, striving, and trying so hard. I came to give you life, and hope, and joy. Rest in Me.”

I don’t know where you are at today or with what you might be struggling. But I know this: Jesus is offering this freedom to you as well. You don’t have to carry around the weight of trying to be enough or do enough. You don’t have to try harder, be more, do more, or prove your worth to attain God’s love. In Christ, you are redeemed, chosen, forgiven, and loved. You can rest in Christ’s amazing love for you — even on those days when you fail, fall, and make mistakes.

COVID UPDATE

As you’ve probably heard, the State of Illinois issued a new set of COVID guidelines. They are called “A Bridge to Phase 5.” They have updated Phase 4 guidelines and provided parameters for moving into the “Bridge” column.

There are three primary metrics for moving into the Bridge:

- 70% of those aged 65 and older with both vaccines.
- 50% of the population above the age of 16 is fully vaccinated.
- No reversals of hospitalizations or deaths over a 28-day monitoring period.

When 1 or 2 is combined with 3, then we will begin to move into “The Bridge to Phase 5” guidelines.

Also, venues with a greater than 200-person capacity can now hold gatherings of 250 or 25%, whichever is less. Venues with less than 200 can hold gatherings of 50 or 50%, whichever is less. And Chicago and Suburban Cook operate under a different set of metrics and guidelines. If you have any questions, please contact John Gryns, Illinois Conference Executive Secretary, for more information.

NEWS

☞ As I mentioned last week, some of our educators are retiring and moving on, which means we have some new faces joining our team. I am happy to announce that Judie Rosa has accepted the principal position at Hinsdale Adventist Academy. Judie and her family will be joining us from Spencerville Adventist Academy in the Chesapeake Conference. Also, Tabby Di Caro has accepted the principal/teacher position at Gurnee Christian School. We welcome both to our Illinois Conference team!

☞ We are excited about our upcoming Illinois Conference Proclamation Series from April 11-17. The theme is “The Greatest Story.” We will be looking at stories of Jesus in the gospel narrative to address common questions and struggles while offering the gospel hope Jesus provides. Each presentation will begin at 7:00 each evening and last for one hour. We will have a Sabbath program on April 17th with a repeat of the church service at 7:00 PM. Here are the general themes and speakers below:

- April 11 (7:00 PM) - Hope and Healing, Pastor David Ocegüera, Bolingbrook Church
- April 12 (7:00 PM) - Love and Relationships, Pastor Gordon Fraser, Goshen Church district
- April 13 (7:00 PM) – Forgiveness and Reconciliation, Pastor Jonathan Burnett, North Shore Church
- April 14 (7:00 PM) - Life and Purpose, Pastor Matthew Lucio, Peoria Church
- April 15 (7:00 PM) - A Different Kingdom, Pastor Jason Salyers, Hinsdale Church

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April 16 (7:00 PM) - Celebration and Joy, Elder Ivan Williams, North American Division
April 17 - A Forever Story – Elder Ivan Williams (9:30 AM - 12:00 PM and 7:00 PM)

Save the date and make plans to use this resource as an evangelism/proclamation event for your church.

RESOURCES

- ☞ Are You Ready to Make #NoCricketsInClass a Reality? Join Curtis Hall for a FREE workshop where you'll learn how to facilitate robust interactions in your Sabbath School class. This webinar will be offered on Sunday, March 28, at 11 AM and 5 PM Eastern.

Here's what you'll achieve during this workshop: Discover step-by-step the one key to drawing viewers into your discussion, learn how to have consistent and lively interaction, practice these new skills with other participants in small Zoom breakout rooms, and receive feedback on what worked and what can be improved. Gain the confidence to take what you have learned and practiced in this safe space to your class and see interaction like never before!

Register at: <https://tinyurl.com/ss6pzm7>

- ☞ Adventist Community Services Presents *Ministry Development Webinar*.
Join Adventist Community Services (ACS) for a free webinar on Thursday, April 1 at 2 PM Eastern. Participants will learn how churches and communities can partner to provide services in the community. This webinar will be presented by Marshall Gonzales, ACS Director for the Texas Conference and Southwestern Union Conference.
Sign up at: <https://www.communityservices.org/events/ministry-development-webinar/>

DID YOU KNOW. . .

. . . On this day in 1989, the oil tanker Exxon Valdez ran aground, spilling some 11 million gallons of oil into Prince William Sound in Alaska and creating the largest oil spill in U.S. history up to that time?

“The decisions you make today will determine the stories you tell tomorrow.”

—Unknown



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