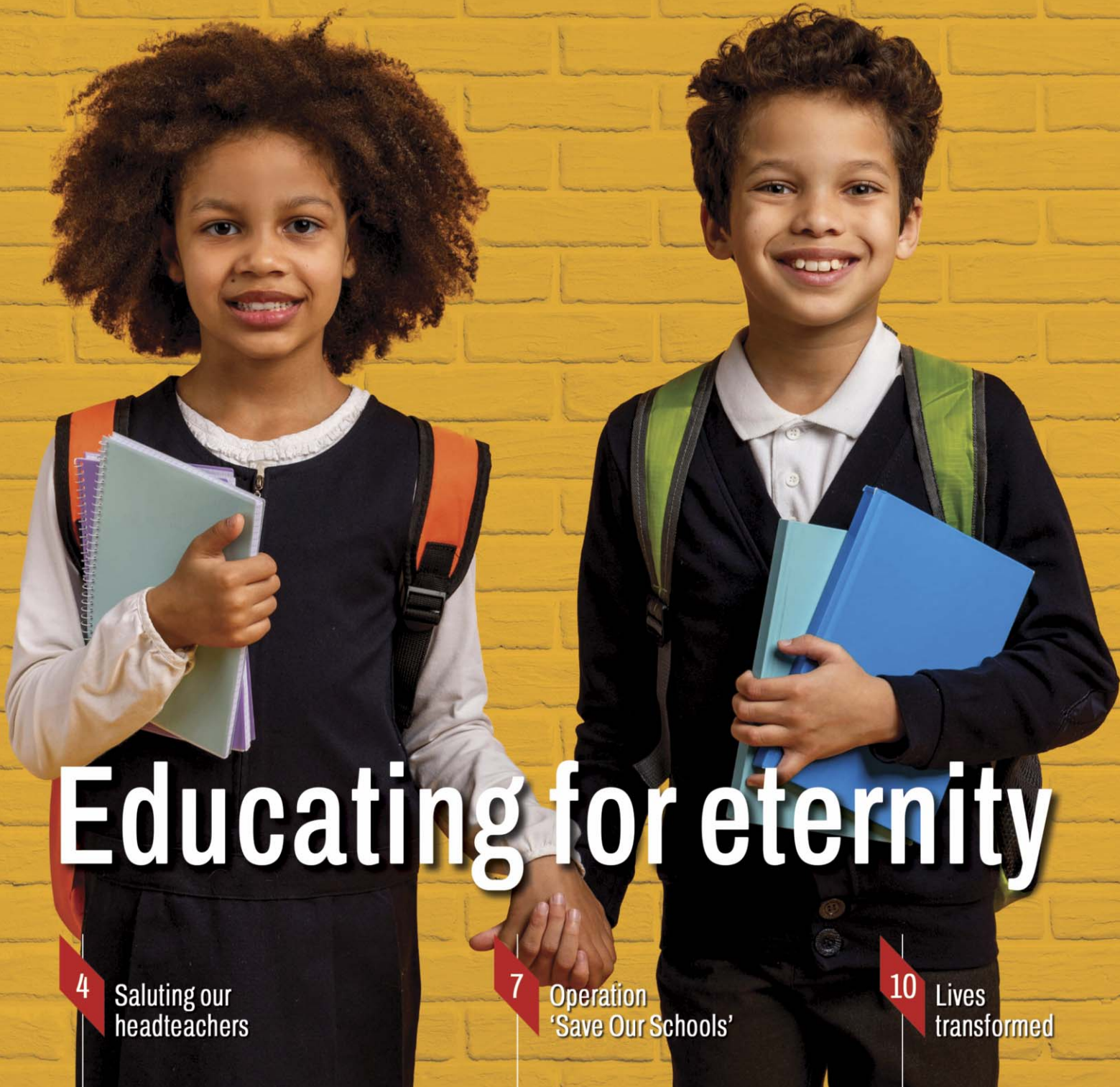


May 2026



# Messenger

Journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Church  
in the United Kingdom and Ireland  
*Established 1902*



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## Was it worth it? Revisiting Adventist education in the BUC

by Catherine Anthony Boldeau,  
BUC Stewardship Director

I am a product of Adventist education. My grandmother's casket and grave lacked the usual floral display, as she requested that the money be used to start an Adventist school in London. After my primary years in Hyland House School, we moved to Watford so that my brothers and I could attend Stanborough Primary and Secondary Schools. My parents upended their lives and spent thousands for Christian education. However, neither of my brothers attend church, and one of them has doubts about the existence of God.

### So, was it worth it?

For me, an Adventist education was extremely beneficial. Yes, we lacked extra-curricular activities, but the school was set in beautiful grounds. The facilities were extremely limited, but there was innovation. Some teachers struggled with their subject knowledge, but others knew their craft and were able to engage us as students. Some demanded respect through methods that have since been outlawed, but others understood classroom discipline. It wasn't perfect . . . but I can testify that the influence of those teachers who instilled holistic biblical principles into our lives, not only through their words, but also through their actions, will not be forgotten, even by those who no longer believe in the Bible.

### Enduring legacy

One of the enduring legacies of Adventist education is the roll-call of individuals who are now church leaders, not only here in the UK and Ireland, but further afield. Many of our former and current leaders received Adventist



education. From local church pastors to church administrators in the General Conference, you can see the benefits of Adventist primary and secondary schools.

I speak to alumni and am impressed at the calibre of adults whose lives have been impacted by Adventist education. Whether in law, marketing, music or sales, they have a certain focus that infuses their work and their lives.

### The recent past

Over the past five years, the Education Department of the British Union Conference was tasked to revive Adventist education with the strategic aim to develop cohesive, excellent and inspirational Adventist provisions using the following objectives as part of the methodology:

- Explore the value proposition of Adventist education in the United Kingdom and Ireland.
- Use current best practice and innovation in our educational institutions.
- Cultivate a growth mentality that drives excellence and raises educational standards and attainment in all our educational institutions.

I will leave the reporting of this to Lorraine McDonald, our Education Director, who has worked tirelessly with all our schools in the UK.

### Train up a child

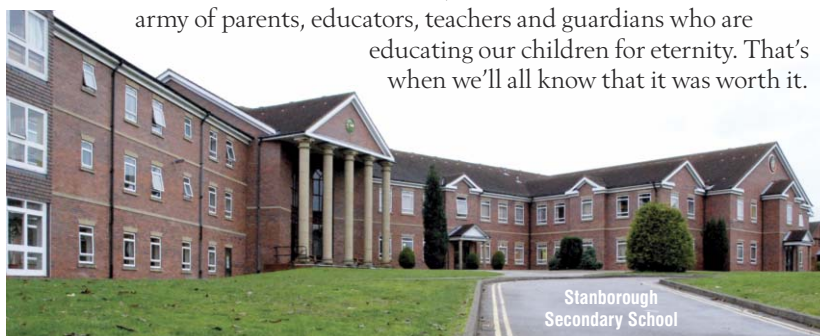
But after I've expounded on the virtues of an Adventist education, I can hear the murmurs of those who ask, 'But what about those parents who weren't able to send their children to an Adventist school?' Every Christian parent is given the responsibility to 'train up a child in the way he [or she] should go' (Proverbs 22:6, NKJV) and to teach wholesome principles to them 'when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up' (Deuteronomy 6:7, NKJV). The responsibility cannot be just left up to teachers. We as parents have a serious and solemn mandate for the welfare and souls of our children.

Some children are educated more by what they see on a screen than by their parents, and social media has become one of the most influential and often damaging educators of the twenty-first century. As parents, we need to be the ones who guide the young, impressionable and volatile minds of our children.

Ellen White stated: 'True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come' (*Education*, p. 13).

### Conclusion

I thank my parents for sending me to Adventist schools. And as I witness the work of Adventist teachers in state and private schools, as I hear of the countless numbers of parents who quietly homeschool their children with amazing results, and as I witness the time and effort that parents give to their children to teach them about God, I am humbled that we have an army of parents, educators, teachers and guardians who are educating our children for eternity. That's when we'll all know that it was worth it.



# Educating for eternity

by Dusanka Rancic, *Editor*



‘Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he [she] is old he will not depart from it’ (Proverbs 22:6, ESV).

What is education, really? Is it the accumulation of knowledge, the pursuit of achievement, or preparation for a career? Too often, we settle for definitions that are, as Ellen G. White so insightfully wrote, ‘too narrow and too low’.<sup>1</sup>

Her words challenge us: true education is not confined to textbooks or classrooms. It is not merely about shaping the intellect or preparing for this present life. Instead, it reaches far deeper, embracing the whole person and pointing towards eternity. It is, as she describes, ‘the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers’.<sup>2</sup>

Christian education, at its heart, is transformative. It does not simply inform: it restores. It seeks to reflect the image of God in each student, nurturing not only the ability to think, but the capacity to love, to serve, and to live with purpose. In a world that often measures success by status or achievement, this vision calls us back to something higher: a life of service rooted in Christ.

While preparing this issue of *MESSENGER*, which focuses on Seventh-day Adventist education, I remembered an extraordinary story connected to Ellen White’s book *Education* that can remind us just how powerful this vision can be. Originally published in 1903, the book crossed borders in an unusual way. Paja Pavle Radosavljević, a Serbian professor and psychologist who was then an assistant professor of experimental pedagogy at New York University, liked the book and translated it into Serbian in 1912 with the title *Biblical Pedagogy*. He removed the chapter on the Sabbath, added his own material (three short chapters applying the book’s principles to the Serbian context), and substituted Ellen White’s name as the author with his own, possibly fearing that it would not be accepted by the Serbian community at that time if it bore a woman’s superscription.

While this raises clear ethical concerns, the outcome was remarkable. Because the ideas were presented under the name of a well-known and respected scholar, they reached an audience that might otherwise have dismissed them. Many Serbian educators and students engaged deeply with these principles for years. The book would also have informed his own work as a prominent reformer of American education and as a professor of experimental psychology and pedagogy.

What does this tell us? Even when imperfectly carried, truth still has power. The principles of Christian education – wholeness, purpose and service – resonate because they meet a deep human need. They speak to something universal: the longing for meaning beyond oneself.

Today, the challenge remains. Will we embrace a broader vision of education in our homes, schools and churches? Will we nurture not only minds, but also hearts and characters? Will we prepare young people not just for success in this world, but for a life of joyful service now and in the world to come?

Christian education is not an optional addition to life: it is, as many teachers rightfully understand it, a calling. It invites us to see every lesson, every interaction and every opportunity as part of a greater purpose: shaping lives for eternity.

May we not settle for less.

Use the latest issue of *FOCUS* magazine to promote Seventh-day Adventist education. With the new personalised contact card included, readers can easily connect with you or your local church.

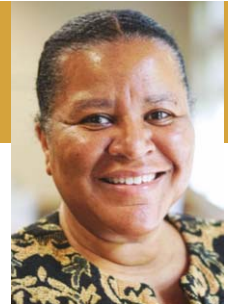


<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 13

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

# Saluting our headteachers

by Lorraine McDonald, *BUC Education Director*



In our six small Seventh-day Adventist schools, the role of the headteacher extends far beyond administration. It is a calling rooted in faith, service and a deep commitment to nurturing the whole child – academically, spiritually and socially. At the heart of this role lies the principle of servant leadership, a model that prioritises the needs of others, fosters community, and leads by example. A good headteacher in this context is not simply a manager of systems, but a shepherd of people.

Servant leadership begins with a mindset: the willingness to serve first and lead second. In a small Adventist school, this often means the headteacher is visible, approachable and actively engaged in daily school life. Headteachers may teach classes, support struggling students, mentor staff, and even step into operational roles when needed. This hands-on involvement builds trust and creates a strong sense of unity within the school community.

What does it take to embody this kind of leadership? First, it requires a clear sense of purpose. A headteacher in this setting is usually driven by a deep personal faith and a belief in the mission of Adventist education to develop character, inspire service, and prepare students for a life of purpose. This clarity sustains them through challenges and helps align decisions with long-term values rather than short-term convenience.

Second, it demands resilience and adaptability. Small faith-based schools often operate with limited financial and material resources. Facilities may be modest, staffing may be lean, and access to the latest technology may be constrained. A servant leader embraces these limitations not as barriers, but as opportunities for creativity and collaboration. They learn to maximise what they have,

encourage resourcefulness among staff, and cultivate a culture where everyone contributes.

Another essential quality is relational strength. In a smaller school environment, relationships are everything. A good headteacher knows each student by name, understands their backgrounds, and works closely with their families. Good headteachers invest time in building a supportive staff team where teachers feel valued and empowered. This relational approach fosters a sense of belonging that is often the defining strength of small Adventist schools.

One of the most striking aspects of these leaders is their willingness to work for significantly less financial compensation than their counterparts in the state sector. This choice is not made lightly. It reflects a profound sense of vocation. For many, the reward is not monetary, but spiritual and relational: the opportunity to make a lasting difference in the lives of young people. They are motivated by impact rather than income, by purpose rather than prestige.

Why does this matter? Because leadership sets the tone for the entire school. A servant-hearted headteacher creates an environment where students feel cared for, teachers feel supported, and the school community feels connected. This kind of atmosphere is particularly important in faith-based education, where values are not just taught, but lived. Students learn as much from the example of their leaders as they do from textbooks.

Moreover, in an era when education can sometimes feel impersonal and results-driven, the presence of a servant leader offers a powerful alternative. It reminds us that education is ultimately about people – about shaping character, nurturing potential, and inspiring hope.

## Let's hear from our fantastic headteachers themselves!

'Serving as **Headteacher at Stanborough Secondary (Boarding) School** has been one of the greatest privileges of my career. In just four years, I have witnessed lives transformed – students flourishing academically while demonstrating exceptional character, courtesy and purpose. One student's journey even led from atheism to becoming an Adventist, a powerful reflection of our Christ-centred ethos. We are intentional about educating for eternity, nurturing both mind and spirit.

'Our students benefit from



remarkable opportunities: visiting Loma Linda in California to deepen their understanding of science, technology, engineering and maths subjects and prepare for the demands of modern society, engaging in missionary service in India, and exploring culture in Austria. Innovation is central, with AI, design thinking and entrepreneurship – highlighted through events like Entrepreneurship Day. Every student also learns a musical instrument from Years 7 to 9, enriching creativity and discipline.

'Our staff's unity and commitment create a peaceful, family-like environment. As

Scripture reminds us, "The peace of God . . . will guard your hearts" (Philippians 4:7, NIV) and "Train up a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6, NKJV). This is truly educational heaven.'

*Jeanetta Liburd (since 2022)*

'Being the **Headteacher of Stanborough Primary School** is both a privilege and a calling. Christ is at the centre of all we do, shaping a school rooted in His presence, His peace and His purpose. I believe I was called for such a time as this to nurture hearts and minds, enabling every child to grow in faith, character and confidence.





'We have moved with intention from challenge to renewal, securing a positive Ofsted outcome in 2024 and achieving the Wellbeing Award. Our pupils consistently achieve above national expectations and leave us well prepared for the next stage of their education.

'Our strength lies in being a small, nurturing school that offers the best of everything – high standards, strong relationships and a deep commitment to wellbeing. It is a privilege to serve this community and help every child let their light shine. I look forward to seeing this strong foundation continue to flourish under future leadership.'

*Tiann Madden (since 2019)*

'Working as the **Headteacher of Hyland House School**

is both a joy and a profound privilege. I am humbled to lead a school that has been educating children for over 100 years, carrying forward a legacy of care, faith and excellence. Our small class sizes ensure that every pupil is truly known and supported, fostering our unique family feeling where children thrive academically and personally. As the only South England Conference school in London, we offer something distinctive: daily opportunities to pray together and intentionally nurture each child's spiritual growth. It is incredibly rewarding to see pupils develop not only in knowledge, but in character and faith, within such a warm, close-knit community.'

*Errol Gayle (since 2022)*

'To be the headteacher of a Seventh-day Adventist school is both a professional responsibility and a personal calling. My faith shapes my belief that education is a form of ministry and that schools are a mission field



where young people encounter high expectations, compassion and purpose. Inspired by the example of Jesus as a teacher, I am committed to developing the whole child, recognising that academic excellence is strongest when it is built on character, integrity and a sense of service to others.

'At **Harper Bell Seventh-day Adventist School**, our distinctive strength is the *Mountain of Excellence*, a clear shared framework that integrates academic ambition with Christian character development. By explicitly teaching self-regulation, metacognition and perseverance, we empower pupils to become reflective, resilient learners. This approach creates a culture where high standards are expected and achieved, preparing pupils not only for strong outcomes, but for lives of purpose, leadership and positive contribution.'

*Susan Sidhu (since 2025)*

'Becoming **Newbold School's headteacher** has been the greatest privilege of my teaching career, but I soon realised that custodianship of an 85-year-old school, a church cornerstone, comes with it. Navigation through this ever-changing world while retaining our principles is a challenge indeed.

'One such innovation has been our forest school programme. National recognition for our work (for example, Woodland Trust Platinum and Geographical Association Gold) blended with SDA teachings is a winning combination. Joining Reading University's Nature Parks programme has fed directly into our rich curriculum, producing a true "head, hand and heart" experience. God designed Earth to sustain all life; our children must learn to care for it responsibly.

'Of course, Ofsted remains a huge challenge. We were blessed to achieve "Outstanding" in our last

inspection, made possible through the hard work of our dedicated team. Inspection grades may change, but one constant remains: God is in charge, and we are simply His instruments.'

*Jaki Crissey (since 2014)*

'I became **Headteacher of Fletewood School**

when my parents retired in September 2016. My father, John Martin, had been Head for over 30 years, and I felt compelled to apply for the position as I have such a close connection to the school, having attended it myself as a child. And I am so glad I did! It has been a privilege to be the Headteacher for almost 10 years now, and to lead an amazing team of dedicated staff who only want the best for the children in our school.

'There have been challenges, but there have also been some amazing experiences, including all the times we've been able to support our local community by singing carols, raising money, feeding the homeless, and more. It is truly an honour and a blessing to be part of the Adventist education system; I feel very strongly that God led me to this amazing school, and I look forward to doing His work here for many years to come.'

*Rachel Gray (since 2016)*

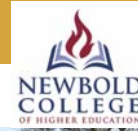
The power of a good headteacher in a small Seventh-day Adventist school lies not in authority, but in service. It is found in quiet acts of dedication; in the willingness to go the extra mile; and in the unwavering belief that every child matters. Such leadership may not always be visible to the outside world, but its impact is profound and lasting.

Join me in celebrating and saluting our headteachers. In an age when many headteachers are leaving the profession, pray for them daily that they will 'not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time [they] will reap a harvest if [they] do not give up' (Galatians 6:9, NIV).



# Between field and classroom

by David Criste,  
BA student, Newbold College of Higher Education



One year before coming to Newbold, I started working for the Swedish Seventh-day Adventist Church, taking on many roles, from youth leader to preacher, Bible study leader, event planner and church-plant worker. That experience has strengthened my faith massively, seeing people change for the better, seeing them coming closer to God and making a difference in society. I used to think that ministerial education was not necessary. After all, I had already experienced many of the responsibilities pastors are faced with on a week-to-week basis. I thought to myself: *What is the point of ministerial education? Just read the Bible and go!*

When coming into this kind of work without prior education, many preconceived ideas start to emerge. We all have our backgrounds and cultures, and these will form how we see ministerial work, and thus how we choose to carry it out. It makes us narrowminded and ineffective in our approach. Ministerial education helps combat this very problem. Since coming to Newbold, I have been challenged on many facets of my faith, but also regarding the way ministry is to be done.

A revelation that I received through my ministerial education is that ultimately everybody is different. We all come from different cultures, and that calls for ministers to be not only more understanding, but, most importantly, flexible. This does not mean that ministers should be people pleasers and water down the Gospel to include as many as possible. It is rather about understanding the needs of the people in the community and being able to accommodate the way you do things to be able to minister in an effective and meaningful way. This could include things such as the way church services and social activities are conducted.

There are many struggles that



come with this work, one of the biggest being burnout. At one point, I was planning a youth event with two different churches, holding Bible studies on Friday nights, being active in a church plant – and when the invitation came for me to preach on the other side of Sweden, I said, ‘Yes, of course.’ The reason I took on so many responsibilities was my own preconceived idea of what a church worker is supposed to do. I thought that to be a faithful servant of God, I had to say yes to everything. It was for God, right? This led me to burnout and stress. Only later did I understand that saying ‘no’ to certain requests is not being unfaithful or lazy; it’s taking care of my own well-being. That’s something I had to learn the hard way.

Work in the field was a really good experience for me, and a real eye-opener, even a deciding factor as to why I ultimately chose this field of study . . . though it is important to note that with it came growth that could have been assisted by a prior education. I was learning as I worked, having a coaching session every week, which was very useful and insightful – although I can’t help but wonder how much deeper and more meaningful the Bible studies,

sermons and visitations could have been if I had known what I know now, including ancient languages, history and the cultural context of the Bible. Ultimately, ministerial education is all about equipping people to equip others with the tools necessary to understand the Scriptures on their own with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

But what happens if you have no tools to give? Then the depth of the Bible study will be limited and kept at a basic level, which is not essentially bad, but there are many hidden gems to be found.

Having been between field and classroom, I can say that whatever you choose to do, if your eyes are fixed on God and you talk with God about this calling that you may be feeling, He will lead you. Talk with Him, because He truly wants your best, and let Him have the last word in your life. If you are determined to enter ministerial work, if you can undertake some ministerial education, do it! But if you are still indecisive about entering ministerial work, try working in your local church for a period of time, and see for yourself if that is something that God is calling you to do.

# Operation ‘Save Our Schools’ – a Christian education appeal

## A call to preserve Seventh-day Adventist education in the UK

by Lorraine McDonald, BUC Education Director



Seventh-day Adventist education has long played a vital role in nurturing not only the academic growth of our young people, but also their spiritual development and moral character. Rooted in Christian values, our schools provide a unique environment where faith and learning go hand in hand. Today, however, this important mission is under threat. Through the ‘Save Our Schools’ Christian education appeal, we are calling on all church members to take action to preserve this essential part of our community.

In a world where many educational systems are increasingly secular, our schools stand out as places where biblical principles are integrated into daily life. Students are not only taught academic subjects, but are also guided in developing a personal relationship with God, learning compassion and integrity.

A key strength of our educational system is the collaboration between home, school and church. This partnership ensures that children receive consistent messages about faith and values in every area of their lives. Parents, teachers and church leaders work together to support young people, creating a strong foundation that extends beyond the classroom. This united approach has proved to be powerful in shaping

committed, thoughtful and spiritually grounded individuals.

Our schools are more than just places of learning: they are centres of spiritual influence. Daily worship, weeks of spiritual emphasis, chaplaincy services and active church-school partnerships all contribute to a vibrant faith experience for students and their families. The impact of this is clearly seen in the lives changed over the last few years (see p.10). These are real people whose lives have been transformed through the influence of Adventist education.

The success of our schools is undeniable. They provide safe, nurturing environments where students can thrive academically and spiritually. They also serve as outreach centres, connecting families to the church and introducing many to the message of hope found in Christ. In many ways, our schools are among the most effective evangelistic tools we have.

Yet, despite this success, serious challenges now threaten their survival. Government policies affecting independent schools have created financial and operational pressures that many institutions are struggling to meet. The reality is stark: nearly 140 private schools across the UK have already closed, including one of our own, Dudley

House School. Without immediate support and intervention, our remaining Seventh-day Adventist schools could face the same fate. Watch the video to understand the challenge: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqa7U8eiz7k>.

This is why the ‘Save Our Schools’ appeal is so urgent. It is not simply about preserving buildings or institutions: it is about protecting a mission. It is about ensuring that future generations continue to have access to an education that nurtures both mind and soul. It is about safeguarding a system that has already proved its value in transforming lives and strengthening the church.

Every church member has a role to play. Whether through prayer, financial support, advocacy or simply raising awareness, each contribution matters. Now is the time to come together as a community, just as we encourage collaboration between home, school and church. By acting now, we can secure the future of Adventist education in the UK.

The question is simple: can you help? By getting involved today, you become part of the solution. Together, we can ensure that Seventh-day Adventist education continues to flourish, inspiring faith, shaping character, and changing lives for generations to come.

### In recognition of Jenny Johnson, former headteacher of Dudley House School

As we reflect on the closure of Dudley House School in July 2025, we honour the extraordinary dedication of Jenny Johnson, who led with unwavering commitment for nearly two decades. In the face of constant challenges, she embodied authentic, servant-hearted leadership, never hesitating to take on whatever role was needed. From headteacher to classroom teacher, safeguarding lead to groundswoman, administrator to chaplain, she worked tirelessly to secure the very best for every pupil.

Her resilience, compassion and determination have left a lasting mark on countless young lives. Jenny’s legacy is not only written in the memories of those she served, but in the futures she helped to shape. Her work has not gone unnoticed: it stands as a testament to her faith, service and selfless leadership.

We applaud you, Jenny!



If you would like to contribute, scan the QR code or use the following details to set up a standing order through your bank: British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists; sort code: 404527; account number: 90183482; bank: HSBC. Use the reference ‘Education SOS2026’.



# The gift of unplugging

by Judith Purkiss, Assistant Headteacher (SENCO/Inclusion)



Assignments; timetables; deadlines; exams; assessments; planning; reviewing . . . the words could almost be sentences in themselves. They loom large like headlines, and there seems to be no end to the relentless cycle. And you have not even thought about life outside of the classroom. You still have to get home and do homework or marking. You still need to be a son, daughter, parent or carer. You still need to function

as a member of a family, a church or a community. There are so many things to do, and there is so little time in which to do them.

When you even suggest that to a non-teacher or non-student, they are quick to remind you about those long holidays in the summer. They tell you about the two weeks off at the end of each term, and the single week at the end of each half-term. How dare you even mention the word 'tired'? Do you even know what the word means?

The stark truth is that there are so many people in education, teachers and students, who are exhausted. Teachers are approaching burnout because of the relentless pressure to perform, jump through many bureaucratic hoops, deal with the declining behaviour of a minority of students, and keep up with the competing demands of students, Ofsted, parents, examination boards, the governing body and the senior leadership team.

It can be hard to admit, to yourself or to others, that you feel pressured. It can be even worse if you



Rest is not just a good idea. It is, fundamentally, a God idea.

are a believer. People will tell you that somehow it is 'unspiritual' to experience a low mood. Only the prophet Elijah was allowed to have that experience; and even he does not always have a favourable report among the resilient faithful.

This helps to build the case for a day of rest . . . a real day off. If you are an active member of a faith community, weekends can be just as busy as the working week. You might find yourself teaching a Bible class, running the children's department, running the education department, or being part of the family life team. You may think that you should be able to do these things almost with your eyes closed – after all, you do it every day. To a seasoned teacher, that sounds suspiciously like work.

When Moses led the Israelites through the wilderness, the Lord gave him the Ten Commandments as a covenant between Himself and His people. One of those commandments, the fourth, calls upon people to remember the Sabbath day as a day of rest. The commandment calls to mind that

the Lord rested after the six days in which He created the heavens and the earth (Exodus 20:11). The question for every overworked teacher facing burnout should be this: 'If the Creator of the universe, the Almighty God, rested, why should you think that you can work without taking a break?'

And that does not mean kind of switching off while keeping an eye on your phone just in case you miss an email. It means taking yourself away from every distraction. It means not allowing anyone to impose unrealistic deadlines on you because you fear unemployment, performance management or your own sense of failure. It means following the example of the Creator.

The writer of Hebrews explains, 'There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest' (Hebrews 4:9-11, NIV).

Rest is not just a good idea. It is, fundamentally, a God idea.

# Beyond lectures: how children really learn

by Pastor Emmanuel Asamoah



James watched his daughter's eyes glaze over during family worship. He was explaining God's creation, but her attention was clearly elsewhere. Frustrated, he wondered, *Why isn't she listening to this important truth?*

Many faithful parents face this struggle. We have vital spiritual truths to share, but our teaching methods often fail to connect with how children actually learn. The biblical model, however, reveals a profound understanding of pedagogy that modern education is only now rediscovering: true learning happens through multi-sensory experience, not just verbal instruction.

## The biblical model: learning through all five senses

Ancient Israelite education was fundamentally experiential.<sup>1</sup> God commanded the Israelites to use physical objects, dramatic re-enactments and sensory-rich rituals to teach spiritual truths. When God instituted the Passover in Exodus 12, He didn't just give a lecture about salvation: He created a full-body learning experience where children tasted the bitter herbs, smelt the roasting lamb, saw the blood on the doorposts, and heard the story of God's deliverance.

The entire Jewish ceremonial system followed this pattern. The tabernacle's colours, textures and fragrances created a visual and olfactory classroom. Feasts like Sukkot required families to build and dwell in temporary shelters – a hands-on lesson in God's provision during the wilderness wanderings. Solomon's book of Proverbs constantly uses concrete imagery from nature and daily life – ants storing food, lions prowling – to

make abstract wisdom tangible.

## The modern disconnect: when faith becomes abstract

In our well-intentioned efforts to systematise theology, we've often reduced faith transmission to verbal explanations. We tell children Bible stories, but remove the sensory elements that made them memorable. We explain theological concepts, but fail to create experiences that embed them in a child's consciousness.

This approach conflicts with how God designed children to learn. Neuroscience confirms that multi-sensory experiences create stronger neural pathways and more durable memories. When learning engages multiple senses simultaneously, knowledge moves from being information to becoming formation.

## Making faith tangible again

The good news is that we don't need special equipment or training to implement biblical teaching methods. We simply need to rediscover the power of engaging the whole child in the learning process.

## Pragmatic actions for godly parenting:

- **Create object lessons from daily life:** Use ordinary household items to demonstrate spiritual truths. Bake bread together while discussing Jesus as the 'Bread of Life'. Plant seeds while talking about faith growing. The concrete object helps anchor the abstract concept.
- **Dramatise Bible stories:** Instead of just reading about David and Goliath, act it out with simple props. Let children feel the smooth stones, hear the giant's taunts (dramatised by Dad!), and

experience the story physically. The embodiment makes it memorable.

- **Answer questions with experiences:** When a child asks, 'What does God's protection feel

like?' create a safe experience of being covered with a blanket during a thunderstorm while praying together. When they wonder about Jesus calming the storm, listen to the sounds of wind while reading the story and then experience the 'great calm' together.

## Pragmatic actions for church communities:

- **Design multisensory Sabbath schools:** Equip teachers with resources that engage all five senses – textures to touch during stories, scents to smell, simple foods to taste, and movements to act out key concepts.
- **Create experiential worship spaces:** Set up prayer stations where children can physically interact with biblical themes – writing prayers on stones and placing them at a cross, feeling different textures while learning about God's creation, or walking through a prayer maze.
- **Train parents in experiential methods:** Offer workshops showing how to transform ordinary family activities into faith-forming experiences, moving beyond verbal instruction to embodied learning.

## A prayer for our families:

*Lord, You taught us through Your creation, through objects we can touch and stories we can enter. Give us creativity to move beyond mere words, that our children might taste and see that You are good. Help us to build faith not just through what we say, but through what we experience together in Your presence. Amen.*



<sup>1</sup>Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1903); Philip J. King and Lawrence E. Stager, *Life in Biblical Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001); Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 1-9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible, vol. 18a (New York, NY: Doubleday, 2000); Karel Van der Toorn, *Family Religion in Babylonia, Syria, and Israel: Continuity and Change in the Forms of Religious Life* (Leiden, NL: Brill, 1996)

## Lives transformed – the power of Seventh-day Adventist education

by Lorraine McDonald, BUC Education Director



In our Seventh-day Adventist schools, a quiet transformation is taking place – one that is shaping not only academic futures, but lives, beliefs and entire families.

Designed as centres of influence, our schools offer more than high-quality education. They provide an environment where students of all backgrounds (faith and non-faith alike) are invited to explore purpose, character and spirituality. The results are becoming increasingly visible. Since 2022 alone, there have been 33 pupil baptisms and 4 parent baptisms, with 44 ongoing Bible studies. Behind each number lies a deeply personal story of change.

For many students, the journey is far from straightforward. Doubt, hardship and questioning often mark the path. Yet it is precisely within these struggles that transformation begins.

One student, Shawn Luz, openly reflected on his experience: ‘The path hasn’t been easy. Doubts and fears have often made me question God’s love and why He allows hardships in my life. But, in searching for answers, I’ve come to understand two important truths: Jesus’ sacrifice is the ultimate expression of God’s love, and even the painful moments are shaped into something meaningful within His purpose.’

His testimony echoes a wider pattern – young people grappling

with life’s complexities and finding meaning through faith.

For Michael Boother (who joined Stanborough Secondary School as an atheist), the turning point came after a period of isolation and a life-threatening experience. ‘I had a difficult time at my first secondary school; it made me feel lonely and isolated. My mum and dad wanted to find a school that would be caring, nurturing and supportive for me to succeed,’ he shared.

That search led him to a new environment where he began exploring faith more deeply. ‘While I was there, I began to learn about religion. . . . I still had lots of questions,’ he admitted. Those questions became more urgent after a serious football injury required emergency surgery. ‘This was a turning point for me, and my faith developed from there. Since then, I have been regularly attending church, which has helped me strengthen my faith.’

Moments like these are not lost on educators. School leaders describe them as the true measure of success, beyond grades and accolades. As Jeanetta Liburd, a headteacher, explained, while academic excellence and character development remain essential, seeing students choose a life of purpose and faith is the greatest reward.

Yet the impact does not stop with students. In many cases, it reaches

into homes, rekindling beliefs long set aside.

One parent, reflecting on his own journey, described how his daughter’s education became the catalyst for his spiritual renewal. ‘In the 1990s, I attended a Christian primary school where I first learnt about the Bible and the love of Jesus. Those early years shaped me; yet, as I entered adulthood, the cares of the world slowly drew me away,’ he said.

Years later, his daughter began attending Fletewood School in Plymouth. Her daily enthusiasm and persistent questions sparked something unexpected. ‘Many times, I found I had no answers for her. It was in those moments of silence that I realised the answers she sought could only come through faith,’ he explained.

Through her curiosity, he rediscovered his own. ‘Her simple, sincere questions gently led me back to the Saviour. . . . Today I continue to learn . . . experiencing the peace that comes from walking in obedience to all of God’s word.’

Even staff members are not untouched by this environment. One teacher admitted arriving with no faith at all and initially wanting to leave. ‘There’s just something about the school,’ he later reflected. Years on, he recognises that ‘something’ as God – having learnt to pray and even share Bible texts in his everyday life.

These stories, diverse yet deeply connected, reveal a consistent thread: transformation. In a world often dominated by distraction and pressure, our Seventh-day Adventist schools are nurturing spaces where young people – and those around them – are finding clarity, resilience and faith.

While statistics offer a glimpse of impact, it is the voices behind them that tell the real story. The full extent of these transformed lives may only ever be fully understood in eternity.

# The Book of the Month



## The Lissy Periwinkle series

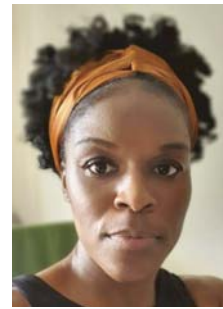
Lissy Periwinkle is an ordinary girl with frizzy hair, an active imagination, and an extraordinary garden! She loves to read; and, as she reads the Bible and talks about the Bible stories with her family, she often pictures the Bible stories coming to life. This charming set of four beautifully illustrated books for juniors follows her adventures through the week when the world was created; Cain and Abel, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel; the life of the patriarch Abraham; and the call of Moses, the Ten Plagues, and the Exodus from Egypt. It's a series that doesn't shy away from exploring some of the more challenging parts of the Old Testament, and your children will have their faith strengthened and discover more about the love of God as they read.



To order this excellent book for yourself or to give it as a gift to someone you care about, telephone 01476 591700 (8.30am-5.30pm, Monday-Thursday) or visit [www.lifessourcebookshop.co.uk](http://www.lifessourcebookshop.co.uk).

## Fix me, Jesus

by Shade Henry-Thompson



Have you ever prayed for someone to change, but grown discouraged when they stayed the same year after year? Many of us have people close to us – parents, siblings, children, friends and church members – who behave in ways that cause us pain or concern. Often, we have argued and pleaded, hoping that something we say would somehow be the spark that would cause them to make a change in their lives. We spend hours praying, begging God to ask them to see how they are hurting us and others. Some of us keep praying, and some of us eventually give up – disappointed in the person and disappointed in God.

Spring is a season when the world celebrates new beginnings – the budding of flowers, the warmth creeping in through the earth and air, the natural world awakening from its winter sleep. We can be reminded that so much of the change that happens around us is outside of our control. We, in our humanity, cannot change those around us, any more than we can change the seasons.

Recently, I was reminded of one of my favourite African-American spirituals. The lyrics are very simple but powerful: 'Oh fix me, oh fix me, Jesus . . . fix me, Jesus, fix me.' I thought about how remarkable it was that the writer of this hymn felt his or her own need to be fixed, despite probably being surrounded by so many other people who clearly needed to be fixed as well – men and women who were violent, unjust and abusive. No doubt, he or she had prayed many times for those people and the world around to change. Isn't it frustrating to look around and see a world in which God allows evil people to flourish despite your prayers?

We should never give up praying for those around us to have new life in Jesus, from those closest to us to powerful people we may never meet . . . but the prayer that must be closest to our hearts is one that has echoed through history in the hearts of those who love God – a prayer for change that God can always answer, as long as we surrender. 'Fix me, Jesus, fix me.' That is a new beginning that we can depend on.



# Butter Bean Falafels



DINNER



Butter beans have a subtle flavour, so they are great for young ones to try as a new dish. Can be used as a main course (serve with rice and gravy) or side dish (serve with a sauce).

- 1 Finely dice the **onion**.
- 2 In a bowl, mash **butter beans** with a fork or potato masher.
- 3 Mix into the beans the onion, **garlic**, **chillies**, **turmeric**, **salt**, **pepper** and **herbs**.
- 4 Thoroughly mix up ingredients using your hands or a food processor. (Using a food processor will create a smoother texture.)
- 5 Mix in **flour** until mix becomes drier.
- 6 Put some flour on surface and on hands and shape falafel mix into small balls, roll in flour and press down gently to form thick discs.
- 7 Bake in a medium oven for 20 to 30 minutes or until golden brown.



## Shopping list

**Butter beans** – 1 can (drained)  
**Onion** – 1 medium  
**Garlic** – 1 tbsp  
**Garam masala** – ½ tsp  
**Turmeric** – 1 tbsp  
**Flour** – 2 tbsp  
**Herbs** – 2 tsp mixed, dried  
**Salt** – ½ tsp  
**Black pepper** – 1 tsp

Falafels are great served warm or cold with hummus or pitta bread, or in a wrap. The patties could also be made bigger to form a substitute for a bean burger.



Taken from *Cooking with Kids*.

To purchase yours, follow this link: <https://lifeforcebookshop.co.uk/product/cooking-with-kids-paperback/>



# 1. Proverbs Part 1

X X J R R C N U L W B S K I O R G S A S  
 J M X G E C I T S U J G K E S D E B G E  
 R O C F R I E N D Y V N C X E A S N Y H  
 W D K V I S I O N T O N Q W N I X E E W  
 S S Q O Z J L L K W E M N F F A J A P X  
 O I R Z L K R B L G N G O B U Y R M X Q  
 L W F P T B L E I A V G R I V T C E D N  
 O S T U B D D L U S Z O T P R I D E P D  
 M T S N R G I E Y A T H R O K O X B G H  
 O P Y D E D R F N H H O N O U R Z Y I V  
 N S S E Y I B E E U S B V V I S X D K Z  
 G H V R X S V R F P S H I E L D H D D I  
 J G S S X C G V E U N D Z V O V S U H L  
 D Z Z T V R P R B M G S M E D I C I N E  
 D Y V A K E A O K A B E Y Y H R L U D P  
 W D J N D T F I R S T F R U I T S N Y Q  
 R R S D T I J C Z X R S O E Q U R X H R  
 L X Z I Q O M D A E X V P P R O L A T J  
 P H I N H N G P G Q S B I E Y U Q W I O  
 U M X G K F G D J Y X Q Q W B S L L R N

BROTHER  
 FIRSTFRUITS  
 HONOUR  
 MEDICINE  
 REFUGE  
 TRAIN  
 VISION

DILIGENCE  
 FRIEND  
 JUSTICE  
 PRIDE  
 SHIELD  
 UNDERSTANDING  
 WISDOM

DISCRETION  
 HEART  
 KNOWLEDGE  
 PROSPER  
 SOLOMON  
 VIRTUOUS

# The immune system and wellbeing, part 3 – the impact of digestion

by Sharon Platt-McDonald,  
*BUC Director for Health, Adventist Community Services & Women's Ministries*



*In this article we continue the series on the immune system by taking a look at how it is affected by our digestive wellbeing.*

### The gut link and immune system function

Scientists are studying the connection between our digestive and immune systems and what it might mean for our wellbeing. The Centre for Microbiome Informatics and Therapeutics (CMIT) has published early findings from a new study. An article by Lindzi Wessel, titled ‘How Your Gut Is Controlling Your

Immune System’, reports: ‘A new study by researchers from the MIT’s Centre for Microbiome Informatics and Therapeutics offers important new clues by demonstrating how microbes from the human digestive system can direct the development of T-cells, a family of cells critical to immune function. The findings, published in *Cell Host and Microbe*, yield a better understanding of gut-immune ‘communication’, which experts hope might eventually mean help for patients with immune disorders for which few effective treatments currently exist.’<sup>1</sup>

Exploring the research outcomes, the article features a discussion with Jun Huh, CMIT Investigator and Associate Professor of Immunology at Harvard Medical School, a senior author of the study. He states: ‘We are just at the tip of the iceberg in terms of understanding how gut bacteria and our immune cells talk to each other. . . . But it’s like the first steps in deciphering a communication code between two kingdoms – we know it’s important and these early steps are very exciting.’

### Further findings

The National Library of Medicine (National Centre for Biotechnology Information) published a paper on 15 October 2020 that carried the headline ‘Gut Microbiota and Immune System Interactions’.<sup>2</sup> The abstract, explaining key findings in the paper, outlines how the gut (digestive system) and the immune system interrelate to affect our wellbeing.

The abstract commences: ‘Dynamic interactions between gut microbiota and a host’s innate and adaptive immune systems play key roles in maintaining intestinal homeostasis and inhibiting inflammation. The gut microbiota metabolise proteins and complex carbohydrates, synthesise vitamins, and produce an enormous number of metabolic products that can mediate cross-talk between gut epithelial and immune cells.’

Explaining cellular-level activity in the gut and its immune impact, the abstract continues: ‘As a defence mechanism, gut epithelial cells produce a mucosal barrier to segregate microbiota from host immune cells and reduce intestinal permeability. An impaired interaction between gut microbiota and the mucosal immune system can lead to an increased abundance of potentially pathogenic gram-negative bacteria and their associated

metabolic changes, disrupting the epithelial barrier and increasing susceptibility to infections.’

Highlighting the negative outcomes of a problematic digestive system and its repercussions for broader ill health and other diagnoses, the abstract



states: ‘Gut dysbiosis, or negative alterations in gut microbial composition, can also dysregulate immune responses, causing inflammation, oxidative stress, and insulin resistance. Over time, chronic dysbiosis and the translocation of bacteria and their metabolic products across the mucosal barrier may increase prevalence of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, inflammatory bowel disease, autoimmune disease, and a variety of cancers.’

This makes sobering reading. It calls for informative action, not just for immune health, but for our overall wellbeing and disease prevention.

### Digestive health tips

Consistent positive lifestyle habits are essential to maintain good digestion and safeguard gut health.

Carrie Madormo, writing in an online article published by Verywell Health on 8 December 2025, titled ‘9 Daily Habits that Can Improve Your Gut Health’, outlines what she considers to be requisite for excellent digestion.<sup>3</sup>

Listing the key lifestyle choices, she advises the following:

- eat gut-healthy foods, such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes and healthy fats;
- manage chronic stress;
- exercise every day;
- get better sleep;
- consider a probiotic supplement;
- drink more water;
- see a specialist if you have digestive problems;
- limit sugar intake; and
- quit smoking.

Access the full article at:  
[www.verywellhealth.com/how-to-improve-gut-health-11712148](http://www.verywellhealth.com/how-to-improve-gut-health-11712148).

### Reflection

Once you have read the article, take a moment to reflect on how many of the above tips you are including in your daily lifestyle choices, and how you can improve.

### Good health!

<sup>1</sup>[https://microbiome.mit.edu/microbiome\\_news/how-your-gut-is-controlling-your-immune-system/](https://microbiome.mit.edu/microbiome_news/how-your-gut-is-controlling-your-immune-system/)

<sup>2</sup><https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7602490/>

<sup>3</sup>[www.verywellhealth.com/how-to-improve-gut-health-11712148](http://www.verywellhealth.com/how-to-improve-gut-health-11712148)



## How generosity is transforming our school community

In recent months, Stanborough Primary School has been blessed by the kindness and generosity of families, churches near and far, and supporters who believe in investing in children. Through donations and gifts, we have been able to create spaces that nurture joy, development and resilience, even when the weather refuses to cooperate.

Two wonderful examples of this can be seen in our wet play provision, funded by the HSA (our Home School Association), and our soft play equipment for our Early Years Department, provided through a separate generous donation. With the recent weeks of heavy rain, these indoor play opportunities have become an essential part of daily school life. Instead of being confined to classrooms, children have been able to move, explore and play safely indoors, and we pray that the days ahead will be dry and bright as we step into spring. The commitment of our parent body truly strengthens what we are able to offer the children, and we are incredibly grateful for the time, energy and care they give in supporting the school community.

These spaces support not only physical wellbeing, but also emotional regulation, social skills and happiness, all of which are vital for learning. The difference this has made is remarkable. Children return to class calmer, more focused and ready to learn. Laughter, teamwork and creativity now fill spaces that once had to be used simply for waiting out bad weather.

As the Bible reminds us, 'Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up' (Galatians 6:9, NIV). These are the quiet, faithful acts that leave a lasting impression on a child's school experience. Because people chose to give, our children are able to learn, play, and grow in new, exciting environments full of possibility.

People support Adventist education in different ways: some give time; some pray; and others give financially, whether through one-off gifts, regular giving, or leaving a legacy. Each act of generosity helps ensure that children continue to grow in safe, nurturing, Christ-centred environments for years to come.

If you feel led to support our school projects, every contribution (large or small) goes directly towards enriching the lives of our pupils. It allows us to invest in spaces, resources and experiences that make a real difference every day.

We are also welcoming new families. Admissions are open from Nursery through to Year 6. We are always delighted to meet parents who are seeking a caring,

values-led Adventist education for their children. Our school is built on partnership between families, churches and our wider community, all of whom believe that every child deserves the opportunity to flourish.

Thank you to everyone who has already given, prayed, or supported us. Your generosity is not just funding equipment: it is shaping childhoods, building confidence, and creating joyful spaces where children truly thrive.

To learn more about our school, our projects, or admissions, please follow us on our social media channels @stanboroughprimaryschool or get in touch. We would love to connect with you.

If you would like to donate to our school:

**Account name:** Stanborough Primary School

**Sort Code:** 20-91-80

**Account Number:** 93152626

**Reference:** SPSGiving

Scan our QR code to watch our school promotional video

SALLY AGUIAR



With the amicable Jamaican-born headmaster, Mr Errol Gayle (left) and the Windrush Foundation's resident Calypsonian, Alexander D. Great (centre).

## World Book Day event at Hyland House

'The whole world opened to me when I learnt to read'  
(Mary McLeod Bethune).

I recently participated in a World Book Day event at Hyland House School in north London, an independent Seventh-day Adventist school for boys and girls aged 2 to 11. As a 'fireside storyteller', I was delighted to see so many enthusiastic children dressed as their favourite storybook characters, including Rapunzel and Iron Man.

Furthermore, I was equally impressed by a talented pupil (about 8 years old) who played Brer Anancy in the school play. Moved by this future actor, I felt compelled to gift him a signed copy of my latest children's picture book, *A Home for Mr No-Roach*, which also features Brer Anancy.

Having spoken about my five children's books during the morning assembly and told a short story about 'Brer Anancy in Bird-Cherry Land', I later facilitated a storytelling/creative writing session for the younger children.

Special thanks to music teacher Yvonne D. Reynolds for organising this World Book Day event, along with the teachers. It was good to see photographer Ivy Reynolds again, and to meet the other guest speakers.

DR VELMA MCCLYMONT



## Care home visit

Sabbath 21 March was a beautiful sunny spring day, which was very welcome after the long, wet winter we've had in the UK.

A couple of members who work at a care home local to Bristol Lodge Causeway Church invited a group of young people to provide a musical afternoon programme for their residents on Global Youth Day. This consisted of several well-known and beloved hymns, accompanied by a keyboard, guitar and clarinet, with hymnbooks provided for the residents so they could sing along. A number of inspiring texts from the Bible provided hope and comfort. The programme was supported by Lodge Causeway's handchime team, and a group of youth from the church came to add volume to the singing.

Drinks and cakes were provided for the visitors at the end of the service. Everyone enjoyed the planning and delivery of this simple but rewarding trip out into the community.

STEPHANIE ANDERSON

## A powerful Easter journey at Long Eaton Church

On 28 March 2026, Long Eaton Church hosted a moving Easter presentation that took the congregation on a vivid journey through the final hours of Jesus' earthly life – from the Garden of Gethsemane to His trials before Annas, Caiaphas and Pilate, through the crucifixion, and ultimately to the glory of the resurrection.

The programme had been in preparation for several weeks, with promotion taking place across Long Eaton to invite the wider community. Seven of our young people served as rotating narrators, each taking a section of the story and bringing it to life through a carefully prepared script. Their narration was beautifully woven together with hymns and special music that deepened the emotional impact of the story.

Sisters Kathleen and Brigetta delivered a heartfelt rendition of 'Don't Cry for Me'. Other musical highlights included 'I Believe in a Hill Called Mount Calvary', 'Then Came the Morning', and 'Champion of Love'. These selections helped to anchor the Gospel message of hope, sacrifice and victory that defines the Easter season.

A concluding message brought the key themes together, reminding all present of the depth of Christ's love and the salvation offered through His sacrifice. After the programme, the church family enjoyed a shared



lunch, where the atmosphere was warm, joyful and filled with gratitude.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing a desire for more programmes of this nature – especially those that welcome and engage the community. It was a day that strengthened faith, uplifted hearts, and reminded us all of the power of the resurrection story.

DR JABU SITHOLE



## Ipswich Church celebrates a historic youth milestone

Ipswich Seventh-day Adventist Church joyfully celebrated its annual Pathfinders and Adventurers' induction ceremony on 31 January 2026, marking a significant and historic moment for our youth ministry.

This year's ceremony was particularly special as, for the first time, Ipswich Church invested its first group of ten young people into the Ambassadors Club. This makes Ipswich a pioneering church within the British Union Conference, as there are currently no established Ambassadors clubs across the Conference. The invested Ambassadors were Nomusa Sibanda, Hannah Squire, Whitney Mafundu, Jessica Mansi, Revely Espineli, Chantel Madzivire, Victor Nyakupinda, Nyasha John, Shakoi Bailey and Ruben Micael Lima Vaz da Conceicao.

The Ambassadors Club is designed for young people aged approximately 16-21, bridging the gap between Pathfinders and adult church involvement. It focuses on spiritual growth, leadership development, service and life skills, helping young people to build a personal relationship with Christ while preparing them to serve confidently within their churches and communities. The club encourages youth to take ownership of their faith, develop strong values, and live out a Christ-centred lifestyle in practical ways.

The induction service was a powerful reminder of the importance of intentional youth discipleship and investing in the next generation of leaders. Seeing our young people step forward and commit themselves to growth, service and mission was both moving and inspiring for the entire congregation.

Ipswich Seventh-day Adventist Church hopes that this milestone will encourage and inspire other churches to prayerfully consider starting an Ambassadors club. With the right support and vision, Ambassadors ministry has the potential to strengthen youth retention, nurture leadership, and empower young people to remain actively engaged in church life.

We give thanks to God for His guidance and look forward with excitement to what He will continue to do through our youth.

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM



## CHAS charity event: children helping children

As we wait on the Lord, we are called to serve others. One way of serving is through raising awareness and funds for charity. The children and youth of Crieff Seventh-day Adventist Church wanted to do something to help children in need. Therefore, with the expertise and help of Moyra Rodd, they created various paintings to sell, with all proceeds going to their chosen charity: Children's Hospices Across Scotland (CHAS), Rachel's House Children's Hospice in Kinross. This vital charity provides diagnostic support and palliative care to sick children, along with bereavement support for their families.

And, so on Sunday 8 March, Crieff Seventh-day Adventist Church held an afternoon of cream teas, featuring a gallery of paintings lovingly put together by the church's children and youth, in which the staggering amount of £1,000 was raised for this worthy cause. The event was well attended and supported, not only by members of the church, but also by the community.

Crieff Church is proud of its young members' selfless ambition and grateful to Moyra Rodd for encouraging these attributes.

In Matthew 18:2-5, Jesus instructed adults to become more like children, and in moments like this it is easy to see why. Many of us can talk ourselves out of doing bold things such as this. But the children of Crieff never worried about whether nobody would attend, or whether the paintings would sell. They focused on the cause, did their part, and trusted God with the rest. As a result, they raised an incredible amount of money that will go to help God's children facing immense trials. Furthermore, they demonstrated God's giving nature and love to their wider community.

May we all remember the instructions to be like children and show humility as we look for and create opportunities to serve, just as the young members of Crieff did.

MARIANN COWIN

## Compassion beyond borders

In the wake of the devastation caused by Hurricane Melissa, the spirit of compassion and service at Hyland House School shone brighter than ever. When news reached the school of the destruction in Jamaica, the headteacher, Mr Gayle, along with teachers Miss Clarke and Miss Dooley, met immediately to consider how the school community could respond in a meaningful and practical way.

It was quickly agreed that support would be directed to Thornton Primary School and the surrounding community in Jamaica, an area identified as being in urgent need of assistance. What followed was a remarkable outpouring of generosity that demonstrated the true strength of collective goodwill.

Staff, students, governors and families of Hyland House rallied, donating essential supplies to help those affected rebuild their lives. Churches, schools and other organisations also joined the effort, contributing to the growing collection of clothing, educational materials, food, toiletries and household essentials, given with care, solidarity and hope.

Thanks must be extended to the London Area Advisory Council, which played a vital role in ensuring that the accumulated goods could be shipped safely and efficiently to those who needed them most.

Upon arrival in Jamaica, the donations were warmly received by Mrs Blair, who expressed her heartfelt gratitude on behalf of Thornton Primary School and the many families who will benefit. Thornton Seventh-day Adventist Church also conveyed deep appreciation, acknowledging that the items would assist members of their congregation as they continue to recover from the devastating natural disaster. The gratitude and delight expressed by the recipients reminded everyone involved why such humanitarian acts of service matter.

As children of God, the Hyland House School community are guided by Matthew 25:40 (NKJV): 'And the King will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."'

In responding swiftly and generously, Hyland House School has demonstrated that education extends far beyond the classroom. It nurtures compassionate hearts, fostering global responsibility and living out values through tangible acts of kindness.

BY ERROL GAYLE



## Pathfinders lead the way: safety, service and a long-awaited return

After years of quiet, the Basildon Pathfinders are officially back in the pages of *MESSENGER*! It's been about six or seven years since our club last shared an update here; but, as Teen Leadership Trainees (TLTs) Level 1, we felt it was time to show everyone what we've been up to.

As part of our TLT requirements, we recently took on the challenge of organising two major safety events for our church community. However, we didn't just want to 'check a box' – we wanted to do something that actually made a difference for our friends, family and neighbours.

A few months ago, we reached out to the Essex Police Department to see if they could help us educate the youth on neighbourhood safety. After some back-and-forth planning, we coordinated a visit from our local neighbourhood officers, Debbie and Allan, in February.

These are the officers who work every day to keep our streets safe and watch out for children in the area. During their talk, they gave us the 'real deal' on staying vigilant (what to look out for when we're out and about), whom to call (clear advice on how and when to contact the authorities) and community care (how we can play a part in keeping our neighbourhood safe for everyone).

The session was a huge success, leaving everyone feeling more empowered and aware of their surroundings. The officers not only enlightened us, but joined in with Sabbath School, our main service and our fellowship lunch. They also gave us practical tools like safety alarms, literature and keepsakes to share with the wider church. What a day!

In addition to the police visit, the TLTs Level 1 also coordinated a full-church fire drill. Being the first TLTs to lead a practice drill like this was a bit nerve-wracking, but it was essential. Ensuring that every member of our congregation – from the youngest Adventurer to our eldest members – knows exactly what to do in an emergency is part of our mission of service.

Doing these requirements taught us that leadership is about taking the initiative. We saw a need for better safety awareness, and, with the help of the Essex Police and our church leaders, we made it happen.

We hope this inspires other Pathfinders to get involved. We are more than just a club: we are a team trained to help our community stay safe, smart and prepared. Keep an eye out for us – this won't be the last time you hear from the Basildon Pathfinders!

EVANDALE NGONDO-BITTNER AND RYAN DUBE



## Adventist physician shares faith and resilience at Houses of Parliament

Dr Desaline Joseph, Consultant in Paediatric Sleep Medicine at Guy's and St Thomas's NHS Foundation Trust and Honorary Senior Lecturer at King's College London, delivered a keynote address at the Global Women Empowerment Awards 2026 held at the Houses of Parliament on Thursday 12 March. The event,

organised by the United Kingdom Women's Network and Edward John, a member of Stoke Seventh-day Adventist Church and a respected leader in the Tamil community, in partnership with the World Tamil Organisation, brought together leaders, professionals and community representatives to celebrate the resilience and achievements of women across communities. The programme was hosted by the Rt Hon Nia Griffith MP and Lord Hannett John.

In her address, Dr Joseph reflected on her personal and professional journey, emphasising the vital role of support networks, acknowledging mentors including Dr Mike Wailoo, Professors Petersen and Silverman, Dr Toni Wolff, Dr Whitehouse and Professor Gringras, who invested in her development.

Dr Joseph also shared how faith and prayer sustained her through significant challenges. She paid tribute to the Tottenham, St Matthew's and Leicester Central prayer teams, as well as the steadfast encouragement of her mother, Janette Joseph, and spiritual mentor, Pat Flemmings. Encouraging younger generations to draw strength from faith, family and community, she reminded attendees that our stories are ultimately for God's glory. 'Let us take the Gospel to every corner of the earth,' she said, 'even into the heart of the Government, so that all may know who Jesus is.'

DESALINE SIMON



## Baptism at Camp Hill

During Divine Service on Sabbath 4 April, Camp Hill Seventh-day Adventist Church was filled to capacity as members, family and friends gathered from across England to witness a truly uplifting and spiritual occasion – the baptism of five young souls committing their lives to Christ.

The atmosphere was one of reverence, joy and heartfelt gratitude as the congregation united in celebration. Loved ones filled the sanctuary, offering overwhelming support and encouragement for the candidates taking this important step of faith: Cienna Rey, Aset Morrison, Ife Opasanya, Fiona Irving-Robinson and Kaisha Cessna Harris.

Touchingly, video messages from parents expressed their love, pride and prayers for their children. The heartfelt reflection shared by Dionne, in particular, deeply resonated with all in attendance.

Prior to their immersion, the candidates publicly affirmed their faith through the 13 baptismal vows, administered by Head Elder Erastus Rwigamba, as a powerful testament to their commitment to God and His Word.

The baptismal service was led by Pastor Swaby, supported by Elder Marcus Rey, who stood alongside him during the immersion of his daughter, Cienna Rey – a powerful symbol of paternal love and spiritual leadership.

Each candidate's journey was uniquely inspiring. Kaisha Cessna Harris stepped forwards with confidence and faith. Aset Morrison, visibly emotional, was supported by a close group of school friends, demonstrating the strength of Christian fellowship. Ife Opasanya and Fiona Irving-Robinson also made their commitments, each standing as a testament to God's calling on young lives.

Ife Opasanya's favourite scripture, Genesis 50:20, was particularly touching, as it beautifully reflects the testimony of his life experience – which he had previously shared with the church family – reminding all present of God's ability to turn challenges into triumph for His purpose.

The message also drew from Isaiah 6, where the prophet Isaiah is given a vision of God seated on His

throne, surrounded by angels declaring, 'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty' (verse 3, NIV). In response to this divine encounter, Isaiah recognises his need for cleansing and willingly answers God's call to service, saying, 'Here am I! Send me' (verse 8, NKJV). This powerful passage reminded the congregation that an encounter with God leads to transformation, commitment and a readiness to serve.

As witnesses to these baptisms, the congregation was reminded that Christ saves, strengthens, and calls each of us into a deeper relationship with Him. An altar call was extended, inviting others to surrender their lives to Christ and experience the same transforming grace.

As each candidate entered the watery grave of baptism, a sacred hush fell over the congregation. Emerging from the water, they were welcomed as newly born brothers and sisters in Christ, each wearing a rosette to mark the significance of the occasion. They were presented with baptismal certificates and a selection of important literature to guide them in their continued walk of faith and service to Christ.

The service concluded with elders warmly greeting each of the newly baptised with handshakes, hugs and words of encouragement. It was a Divine Service that will long be remembered – a powerful reminder that God is still calling, saving, and transforming lives.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT, CAMP HILL CHURCH

## Ordination and baptism in Essex

Sabbath 7 March was a very special day for members of 'The Ark' Church Plant in Rivenhall, Essex, for there were two very special events.

In the morning Jacqui Stone, daughter of the late Pastor Desmond Murtagh, was ordained as an elder by Pastor Laszlo Liebhardt. This was a long-overdue recognition of her years of dedicated service to the church, coupled with a wealth of biblical knowledge that is always spread with love.

Satan tried his best to upset the arrangements by arranging for the hall to be double-booked on the day, despite it being our regular booking, but we were not going to be thwarted, and we arranged a fellowship lunch at another local hall.

In the afternoon, we were blessed by the baptism of Ruth Marshall (17), who has given her life to Jesus. This was conducted at a local swimming pool, which had been booked especially for the occasion. Again, Pastor Liebhardt officiated, and it was witnessed by family and friends.

Once again, Satan tried his best to usurp proceedings by having the power supply cut off, leaving us with no lighting; but, as always, God was the Victor.

Both services were a great witness to friends and family who are not regular churchgoers. To God be the glory!

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT



## 'One Heart, One Voice' – Hackney Church Prayer Day

The first Sabbath of April, which coincided with Easter, was a day of prayer at Hackney Seventh-day Adventist Church. Under the theme 'One Heart, One Voice', Hackney's Prayer Ministries team called for unity at an unprecedented time of world conflict taking place at the commemoration of the death and resurrection of Christ. Hackney's Prayer Ministries leader, Eileen Philip, pointed out that unity among believers can only take place when individuals humbly submit themselves to the leading of God's Holy Spirit through prayer, confession and repentance, ever abiding in Christ.

The Sabbath School superintendent, Volta Weekes, likened prayer to life-giving oxygen, maintaining its necessity for an abiding spiritual connection with Christ. Her mother, Vanessa Richmond, then prayed for a spirit of unity and love to exist among believers at this critical prophetic time in earth's history. The call to prayer was intergenerational, with children from Junior Sabbath School participating in the service by reading a poem titled 'The Unified Echo', followed by a poignant rendition of 'Make Me a Channel of Your Peace'.

The adult Sabbath School lesson, titled 'Reality Check', encouraged individuals to examine their spiritual lives and heed the counsel given in Revelation 3:18 to obtain 'gold', 'white garments' and 'eye salve' (representing the spotless character of Christ and submission to the Father's will through the promptings of the Holy Spirit).

Psalm 42 was sung by Siobhan Prince, who reflected on the importance of pouring out one's soul to God in prayer and thirsting after Him, just as a deer thirsts for water.

In her message, 'The Divine Architecture of Oneness: One Heart, One Voice', Volta Weekes spoke candidly on the importance of believers developing a spirit of forgiveness and love to bring about unity. She said: 'We must lay down our need to be right in favour of the need to be reconciled. It is then that we can truly glorify God.'

Following the stirring message, the day continued with a season of prayer. A practical presentation on 'The Holistic Health Benefits of Prayer' was presented by Zinze Bishop. Testimonies were also shared of God's protective care and sacrificial love for humanity, as demonstrated on the cross and celebrated worldwide at Easter.

*DARELL J. PHILIP, COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA ASSISTANT*



## Watford Town celebrates diversity on International Day

Members and visitors at Watford Town Seventh-day Adventist Church gathered on Sabbath 14 March for a joyful celebration of culture, faith and unity during the church's annual International Day. Attendees were welcomed by colourful banners and decorations displaying flags from around the world, setting the tone for a celebration of the church family's global nature.

The special service highlighted the rich diversity within the congregation, which represents more than thirty-three nationalities. The worshippers' vibrant traditional attire created a striking display of cultures from Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, South Asia and the South Pacific.

A flag parade featuring all of these countries provided a powerful visual reminder of the church's international makeup, along with music, cultural presentations and personal testimonies, while emphasising the shared faith that brings everyone together.

Pastor Johnson's sermon focused on love as the binding force that unites people, particularly within the church community. Drawing on biblical principles and creatively adapting the story of the three little pigs, he illustrated how love serves as the 'mortar' between the bricks that strengthens relationships and builds a strong spiritual foundation. He emphasised that genuine Christian love transcends differences and helps believers resist the divisions that can arise within communities.

The service celebrated how the Gospel transcends borders, languages and traditions, uniting believers as one global family in Christ. It also served as a reminder of the



worldwide mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, a global movement committed to sharing the message of hope and salvation with communities around the world.

In the afternoon, the Adventist Youth Service (AYS) continued the international theme with a lively 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?'-style icebreaker that tested participants' knowledge of languages from around the world, discovering who among the congregation had the gift of languages.

The evening social provided an opportunity for members to share cuisines from around the globe, with individuals offering unique insights into the foods and traditions of their respective countries.

Visitors, members and church leaders expressed gratitude for the diversity represented at Watford Town and encouraged the congregation to continue building bridges within the local community through service, fellowship and hospitality.

The day proved to be a meaningful expression of unity in diversity, reflecting the beauty of a multicultural church family worshipping together and celebrating God's blessings across cultures.

*KARL JOHNSON, COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT*



## 2026 BUC Session Notification

Notice is hereby given that the tenth quinquennial session of the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will take place at the Atrium Hotel London Heathrow, Great South-West Road, Feltham TW14 0AW, from Wednesday 1 to Friday 3 July 2026.

Notice is also given that proposals to modify the constitution of the British Union in harmony with the General Conference model constitution will also be presented. Delegates will receive documentation in advance of the session.

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Main Speaker

**Pastor James Rafferty & Risè Rafferty**  
Bible Study & Health Speakers

**Dr Peggie Ncube & Dr Zebron Ncube**  
Family Ministries Speakers

**Pastor Adam Ramdin**  
Teens Speaker

**Pastor Steven George**  
Youth Speaker

**Pastor Wezley Bishop**  
Childrens Speaker

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DATE	VENUE	TIME
26-31 May	NEC Camp Meeting, Yarnfield	
14 June	Manchester North	10am-2pm
26-28 June	Newbold Graduation and 125-Year Celebration	

## Messenger

Journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the United Kingdom and Ireland  
Established 1902

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## Empty church to become centre of influence in Bath

On 1 February, Pastor Robis da Silva was appointed as the new district pastor for Bristol Lodge Causeway Church, Bath Church, and the Salisbury church plant. One vision he shared with the churches was both bold and inspiring: transforming the currently unused Seventh-day Adventist building in the centre of Bath into a vibrant centre of influence that will serve the local community every day.

For more than five years the building has remained closed. It sits in a remarkable location, just behind Bath Abbey Cathedral and close to the famous Roman Baths, one of the city's most visited tourist attractions. Every year, thousands of people pass by its doors.

Pastor da Silva quickly recognised the great potential of this location. In the heart of such a historic and busy city, the church building could become a place of connection, service and hope for the community.

The vision is to transform the building into a Seventh-day Adventist centre of influence, a welcoming space where the church doors are open daily and people can come for support, learning and fellowship. Planned activities include workshops on overcoming depression, anxiety and guilt; health and lifestyle guidance; opportunities for conversation, prayer and community connection; Sabbath worship services; a welcoming café-style space offering hot drinks; and a small area with books, magazines and spiritual resources.

Before the vision can become a reality, however, significant repairs are required. The building currently suffers from serious roof problems, including leaks, dampness and mould. The estimated cost of the renovation is around £16,000.

The Bath church strongly supports the project and is already contributing to the effort. However, additional funds are still needed to prepare the building for community use. At the same time, the Bath church building itself is also undergoing repairs and renovations, with plans to open its doors for community activities and outreach once the work is completed.

The project is part of the 'Go SEC' evangelism initiative, which encourages churches to actively engage with their communities through practical ministry and service. If the renovations progress as planned, the goal is to open the SDA Centre of Influence in Bath during the summer.

The church warmly invites people living in the Bath area to help, whether by volunteering with activities, supporting the renovation, or simply coming to share fellowship.

With prayer, community support and God's guidance, the closed building in the heart of Bath could soon become a lively place of ministry, compassion and hope.

PASTOR ROBIS DA SILVA



## Ordination service at Leicester Central

Sabbath 21 March was memorable for Leicester Central. As the deacons, deaconesses and elders processed into the sanctuary in formation, there was reverent excitement in the packed church as Sintron Baptist and Charles Mensah were to be ordained as elders and Thomas Faustman was to be ordained as a deacon.

Dr Patrick Herbert's homily highlighted that success comes "not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," says the LORD' (Zechariah 4:6, NKJV); that, although the ordinands have been set apart to be used by God, they must always remember that no one is indispensable; and, above anything else, that their roles require humility as they serve God and the congregation.

A song of willing availability to serve was then sung by one of Leicester's soloists, Thenji, emphasising the ethos of ordination, before the ordinands publicly affirmed their commitment to accept their duties. The leadership laid hands on them, and Dr Herbert prayed over them as they committed to faithfully serve God with integrity.

The church clerks presented each ordinand with a certificate as a memento of this special day, and the men were embraced in a moment of solidarity when the diaconate and elders flanked the ordinands for a picture. They were all now ready for service.

This occasion stood as a witness to those who attended. One of the ordinands had invited four of his work colleagues who had never been to an ordination service and were not church attenders. They declared that they had enjoyed the service so much that they would visit Leicester Central Church another time.

MAXINE CHAMBERS



**Wendy Susan Bradley (1944-2025)**  
**d. 2 September.**



Wendy was born in Wokingham in Berkshire and grew up near Reading. She and her parents and sister then moved to Devon, where her parents ran a bed and breakfast.

After leaving school, Wendy worked as a receptionist for the Automobile Association in Basingstoke. She enjoyed working for the AA, and would often recall happy memories of her time there.

Wendy married David Bradley in Southampton in 1987, and shortly afterwards they moved to Eastleigh in Hampshire, where they came into contact with the Seventh-day Adventist Church and were baptised by Pastor Viv Llewellyn in 1994.

Sadly, David died in 2007 after being cared for by Wendy at their home over many months. Her unshakable faith in God helped her to get through this sad and difficult period and enabled her to remain engaged with activities both in church life and outside it. She was the communications secretary for the Winchester church for many years, as well as head deaconess for several years. She was a keen gardener and took pleasure in arranging the church flowers.

Wendy loved to visit public gardens and would often return home with a box of plants. She was happiest when pottering in her garden; and, despite her disability, she remained positive and stoic. She always had a warm smile and was always very welcoming to visitors. She kept in contact with many young friends, who appreciated the supportive and loving part she played in their lives.

Wendy's memorial service took place on 29 September 2025, and she was buried in Eling Cemetery, Southampton. She is greatly missed by her Winchester

Church family, but we are grateful that she is now at rest from her trials until Jesus returns.

*GUY WHITWORTH*

**Joan Maxwell (née Raitt) (1936-2025)**  
**d. 17 December.**



Joan Maxwell was born on 18 January 1936 in Rugby, Warwickshire, the eldest of four siblings – John, Margaret and Lincoln. Her father, Arthur Raitt, was a teacher at Newbold College. In 1946 he was asked to teach at Helderberg College and the family moved to Cape Town. It was here that Joan completed her schooling and trained as a teacher. She subsequently taught in various church schools, and among her pupils was her youngest brother, Lincoln.

She married Stanley Maxwell, one of the lecturers at Helderberg College, in January 1960. In 1961 they moved to Binfield, Berkshire when Stanley transferred to Newbold College. In 1966 they moved to Kumasi in Ghana, and then to Ile Ife Hospital in Nigeria a couple of years later. In 1971, they returned to the UK and settled in Watford.

Joan and Stanley had three children: Alan, Pam and Audrey; and two grandsons: Adam and Alex. On returning to the UK, Joan started working at the church headquarters on Stanborough Park. After a few years she transferred to the Home Health Education Service (HHES). She then moved to the Accounts Department at Granose Foods, and finally to a firm of accountants where she worked for a number of years before her retirement. Sadly, Stanley passed away in March 2013.

Joan was a faithful member of Stanborough Park Church. She had many roles, including organist, church clerk and deaconess. She also helped in the kitchen for the monthly fellowship lunches, served

the refreshments at the seniors' club, and played the piano in cradle roll.

Sadly, Joan experienced a difficult last few months in and out of hospital with deteriorating health. She died peacefully in hospital during the evening of Wednesday 17 December with her family and friends regularly at her side in her final days. The family are grateful to all those who took the time to phone, email, visit and send cards to her during this time.

The funeral was held at Stanborough Park Church on Wednesday 21 January 2026. The service was conducted by Pastors Jacques Venter, James Shepley and Lorraine Johnson.

Joan is sorely missed by her children and grandsons; her sister, Margaret; her brother, Lincoln; and the wider family. We look forward to being reunited in heaven.

*PAM ROBERTSON*

## Messenger

Volume 131 • 5 – May 2026

**Editor: Dusanka Rancic**  
**Design: David Bell**

**Proof reading: Andrew Puckering**  
**Production and distribution: Peter Oppong-Mensah**

COPY FOR No. 7 – 4 June 2026

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The Editor may alter, clarify, précis or expand articles sent to her if she thinks it necessary. Published monthly on Fridays by the British Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. For general enquiries, email: [info@stanboroughpress.org.uk](mailto:info@stanboroughpress.org.uk)

Printed in the UK.

**Visit the BUC website at:**  
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ISSN 0309-3654



## Outreach to the homeless

On the evening of 19 February 2026, the Beckton Maranatha Seventh-day Adventist Church Women's Ministries Department organised an outreach initiative to serve members

of the community experiencing homelessness.

Fifteen individuals were welcomed and provided with a warm, nutritious meal, with additional food given as a takeaway. Each guest was also gifted with thermal long-sleeved tops and thermal socks to help keep warm during the freezing weather.

This initiative reflects the church's commitment to demonstrate Christ's love through service and compassion. Together, we continue working for God as a team.

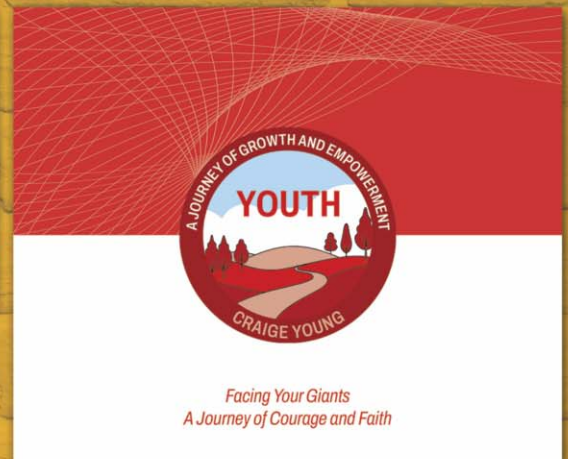
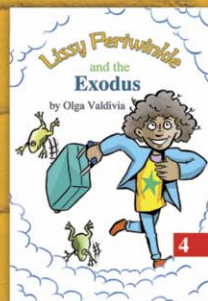
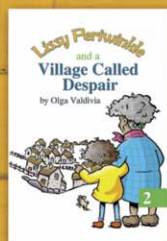
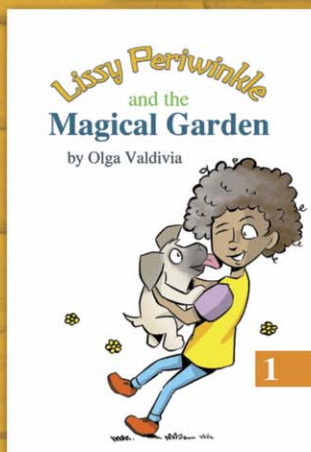
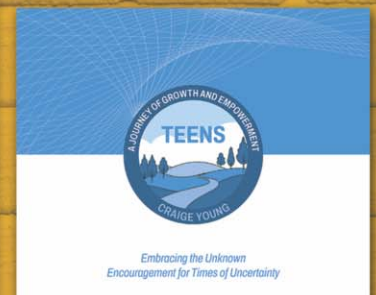
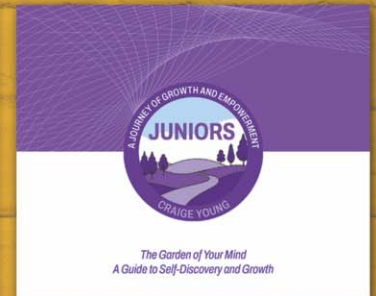
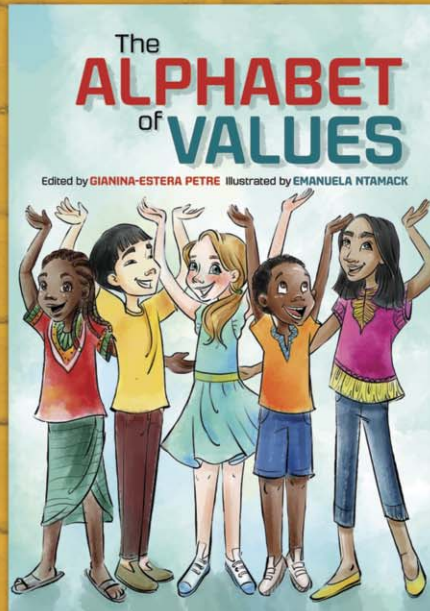
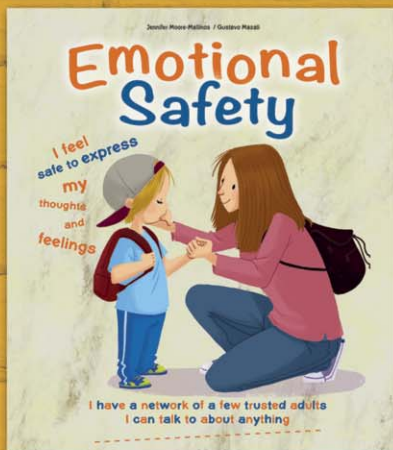
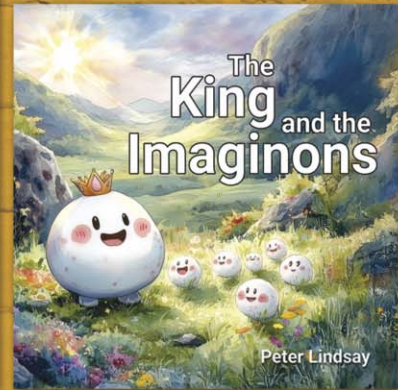
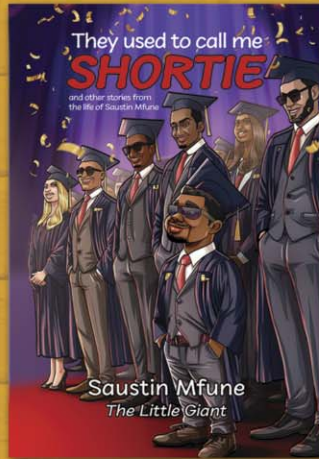
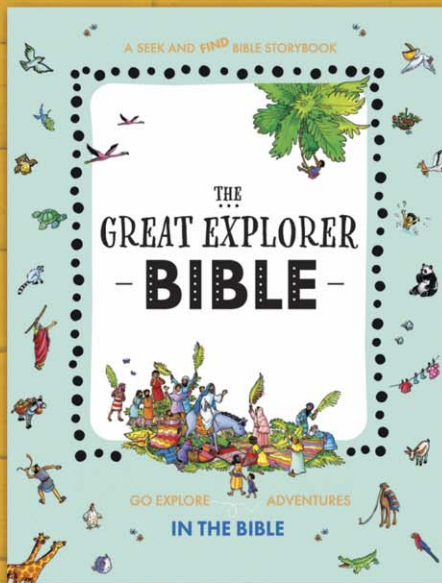
*WINNIE MICHOMA, WOMEN'S MINISTRIES DEPARTMENT LEADER*

## Sunset

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8	8.35	8.47	8.45	9.06	9.11
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29	9.05	9.17	9.17	9.43	9.45

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