



# Messenger

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

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# 'And it came to pass . . .'

by Catherine Anthony Boldeau,  
BUC Stewardship Director



Denis Martindale's poem, 'And It Came to Pass', is a metaphor about life transitions from birth through to retirement; but it could also relate to the electoral cycle that is conducted yearly in local churches, quadrennially in conferences, triennially in missions and quinquennially for the British Union Conference.

At the beginning of July this year, the British Union Conference (BUC) will hold its next session, at which delegates selected from its territories will attend a two-to-three-day constituency meeting. Each session has a seven-fold purpose:

1. Acknowledging God as the centre and focus of the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the UK and Ireland
2. Fostering unity and fellowship
3. Casting a vision for the next five years
4. Voting on policy and constitutional changes
5. Reviewing reports
6. Ensuring accountability
7. Electing national church leadership and issuing licences to workers and retirees

## Purpose

The BUC Session is an occasion to review the past, be realistic about the present and reset for future impact for the mission of the church. It is a time for the delegates to pray together for the direction of the Almighty and to thank Him for His guidance in the past and ask for His leading for the future.

It is a time to acknowledge past success, but it is not a time to sit on our laurels. It is a season to evaluate areas for development, but it is not a period to luxuriate over either the omissions or mistakes of the past. It is a period to expect accountability without arrogance, be inquisitive

without being inappropriate, and be generous in spirit as we conduct our Father's business.

## Choosing leaders

The session is the occasion at which the delegates select the national church leadership and issue licences to workers and retirees. This is a serious and solemn responsibility, but it is often politicised and almost approached as a combat sport, to the detriment not only of individuals, but also of the mission of the church.

In the choosing of leaders, 'God takes men (people) as they are, with the human elements in their character, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and learn of Him. They are not chosen because they are perfect, but notwithstanding their imperfections, that through the knowledge and practice of the truth, through the grace of Christ, they may become transformed into His image (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 294).

In our election of the national leaders of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, we need to be led by the Holy Spirit. The populist vote, regional interests and race dynamics need to be put aside so that we can truly be open and say, 'Speak, [because] your servant is listening' (1 Samuel 3:10, NLT). God is more interested in the hearts of our leaders, because 'people look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart' (1 Samuel 16:7, NIV).

## The past and the present

In Ezra 3, we read the story of the dedication of the second temple in Jerusalem. This story demonstrates the challenges of the passing of time and its effects on different generations and how they view incidents. Those who had seen the first temple wailed when they saw the foundations of the second; but those for whom this was new rejoiced gladly, and the sound of the weeping and rejoicing were mingled together 'so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off' (verse 13, NKJV).

The first temple 'came to pass', and so did the second temple. Centuries later, we are at a juncture where our reporting term has 'come to pass'. There are those who are 'rejoicing' and there are those who are 'weeping'. And there are moments when we are unable to distinguish these 'confusing sounds'.

## The future

As we begin this new year, let us do so with a sense of peace. The God who has led in the past and is leading in the present is the One who will take the reins in 2026. As we look forward to the future, may we take this opportunity to do so with a renewed sense of hope.



# Restoring what we have broken

by Dusanka Rancic,  
Editor

EDITORIAL

My father-in-law, a retired pastor, once shared a story about a church he led many years ago. The congregation had been divided for generations. Two influential families – who neither remembered the original disagreement nor fully understood why hostility still existed – continued attending the same church but could not reconcile. As the years passed, their children and then their grandchildren inherited the same division. Eventually, every unrelated church member felt pressured to 'choose a side.'

By the time my father-in-law arrived as the new pastor, the congregation functioned as two separate groups within the same walls. The original cause of the conflict had long been forgotten, yet the bitterness remained alive and well. What happens to a church when old wounds, pride or unresolved conflicts become more familiar than grace? How can we expect God's house to prosper when resentment feels more natural than compassion?

The truth is simple: it cannot. And we cannot reflect the character of Christ when we allow brokenness to shape our relationships more than love does.

A new year brings renewed hope. It gives us fresh opportunities, fresh challenges, and, to many of us, renewed determination. As you open the January issue of the *MESSENGER*, you will find uplifting words from our leaders – messages meant to encourage, inspire and remind us of God's faithfulness. As for me, I felt compelled to begin this year with a call to something foundational: forgiveness.

Forgiveness is not weakness. It is not denial. It is not pretending the hurt never happened. Instead, forgiveness is the courageous decision to let God heal what we cannot mend on our own. It is allowing Him to restore what has been chipped, cracked or broken in us – and, in turn, what we have broken in others.

As we step into a new year, let us first come before God and ask for His forgiveness – for missed opportunities, unkind words, neglected responsibilities or moments when we acted out of fear rather than love. While none of us is without flaws, God takes joy in making whole what has been broken. By His grace, our fractures become something beautiful.

Then let us also be bold enough to forgive those who have wronged us, welcoming them with open arms and offering a clean slate, just as God continually offers us. And, with humble hearts, let us ask for forgiveness from those we have hurt – whether by accident, by misunderstanding, or by choices we regret. Healing begins when we acknowledge our part and seek to restore what we have broken.

Scripture reminds us: 'Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you' (Ephesians 4:32, NIV).

May this year be a year of healing, restoration and grace – both received and given. May we courageously mend what has been broken and walk forwards in unity, love and renewed purpose.

PS: As we renew our focus on mission and outreach, let us also remember the children in our care, who learn about God through the example we set. May we guide them with patience, wisdom and daily expressions of God's love. To support this commitment, we are launching a new series of articles for the year: 'Biblical Wisdom for Godly Parenting'. Our first topic, 'Why our children matter to God', begins on page 8.



May we courageously mend  
what has been broken and walk  
forwards in unity, love and  
renewed purpose.

## A new year, a renewed hope: trusting God's grace for the journey ahead

On behalf of the British Union Conference – its officers, directors and staff – I extend to you heartfelt greetings as we stand on the threshold of a new year.

We pause in deep gratitude to God for carrying us through the challenges of 2025. It was a year that tested our resilience and stretched our faith. We saw our loved ones fall asleep in Jesus, and we were challenged as we navigated life! Yet, by the unfailing grace of God, we are still standing. Many of us can testify that without His sustaining hand we would not have made it. To Him be the glory.

As we enter 2026, I pray that the same grace which has preserved us will continue to guide, strengthen and uphold each of us. May the God who supplies all our needs according to His riches in glory pour out His abundance upon our homes, our ministries and our personal dreams.

I also pray that 2026 will be a year of deeper relationships: stronger bonds with our families, loved ones and friends; meaningful new connections with people who, through knowing us, will come to know God; and, above all, a renewed, vibrant and intimate walk with our Heavenly Father.

We embrace the promise of Scripture: 'For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it? I will make a pathway through the wilderness. I will create rivers in the dry wasteland' (Isaiah 43:19, NLT).

With faith in God's leading, hope in His promises and courage for the journey ahead, I wish you a blessed, prosperous and Spirit-filled new year!

Pastor Eglan Brooks,  
British Union Conference President

## From pain to promise: embracing God's peace in 2026

The year 2025 was one with difficult seasons. Loss, pain, sickness, discouragement and frustration may have sapped your energy and blurred your vision of God. But here comes 2026, and with a new year comes renewed hope in our God who cares. There is no place for fear in His calming presence of peace. Happy New Year!

Pastor Kirk Thomas,  
South England Conference President



influence the way we respond to life. It also stands to reason that during this year, no matter how difficult and confusing life is, or how forsaken we will feel, we have a reason to hope. Therefore, we as Seventh-day Adventists can go through this new year with the view that Jesus has promised us a living-with-forever hope. This is what the Bible refers to as 'the blessed hope': the reality of the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Jesus has purchased this forever hope for His children, and if we are His children then one day we will experience the reality of such hope. Could this year be the year when our hope in His coming will be fulfilled?

Pastor Steve Palmer,  
North England Conference President



## Grounded on the Bible; focused on the mission

At the close of 2025 I was reminded of two things: firstly, that the story of Christmas is grounded in the Bible. The reality is that whatever you think of Christmas, whether you and your church celebrate it or not, there would be no Christmas without the biblical story of Jesus underpinning it.



Secondly, the story of Christmas, specifically Jesus' birth, is focused on the mission. Jesus, God in human flesh, made it His mission to save humanity. The birth of Jesus is part of that mission story, leading to our salvation.

As we move swiftly into 2026, may your story follow the story of Christmas . . . grounded on the Bible; focused on the mission. I bring you greetings from all our Adventist congregations in the Irish Mission.

Pastor Adam Keough,  
Irish Mission President



## Stepping into 2026 with grateful hearts and serving hands

As we step into 2026, may we do so with hearts full of gratitude and hands ready for service. The Scottish Mission remains committed to sharing Christ's generous love across our communities, building hope, nurturing faith and extending compassion wherever we go – gratefully received, abundantly shared.

Pastor Jimmy Botha,  
Scottish Mission President



## A year to grow, share and shine for Jesus

As we step out of the challenges of 2025 and into a new year filled with promise, we do so with renewed faith and expectation. Our commitment is to continue bringing hope through every page of our publications. We want to inspire you to **read** the word of God; to encourage you to **discover** more deeply God's purpose for your life and the lives of those around you; and to help you **grow** in your spiritual journey, shining ever brighter for Jesus in all you do.

Elisabeth Sanguesa,  
Stanborough Press Chief Executive Officer



## A message of hope for every household: walking into 2026 with purpose

As we step into 2026, may we follow in the

## Happy New Year to all in the commonwealth of faith

A very important thing that will characterise this new year is something that we humans cannot live without. What am I talking about? Hope.

Hope is one of the most essential quests of human existence. It is a daily preoccupation. Every day we hope for something. We all search for hope, long for hope and attach ourselves to hope. It is a truism that the thing we place our hope on will

apostles' footsteps, open to the Spirit's leading. Just as Peter went to Cornelius, we also carry a precious promise: '[The ADC] will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved' (Acts 11:14, NIV). May this year be filled with the joy of knowing Jesus, the blessing of seeing more people drawn closer to Him, and the warmth of fellowship in our communities.

Pastor Christian Salcianu,  
*Adventist Discovery Centre Principal*

## **Hope in action**

As we step into a new year, ADRA-UK celebrates the hope and compassion that bind our Adventist family together across the UK and beyond. May we be inspired to continue uplifting communities, sharing God's love through action and standing together for those in need. Wishing you a year filled with purpose, peace and the joy of making a difference.

Sandra Golding,  
*Adventist Development and Relief Agency UK Chief Executive Officer*



## **Called, equipped, unstoppable: a generation rising**

Today it feels good to be part of a generation rising with purpose, passion and the favour of God. As we enter this new year, remember that God has placed something extraordinary within you, and the world is waiting for the impact only you can make. Step forward with courage, discipline and faith, and watch God do greater things in and through you than you ever imagined.

Pastor Njabulo King Ndlovu,  
*British Union Conference Youth Director*



## **Telling God's story together in 2026**

As we step into a new year, I am grateful for the stories of hope, faith and service that continue to shine across our union. Your resilience, creativity and faithfulness in telling the story of what God is doing have been a trustworthy source of inspiration.

Thank you for your untiring



support and commitment to sharing Christ's love in your communities. May 2026 be a year of spiritual growth, stronger witness and Spirit-filled communication across the British Union Conference.

Pastor Sam Davies,  
*British Union Conference Communication and Media Director*

## **A year to seek God first and trust Him fully**

In 2026, commit to putting God first in your life, as it is the foundation of effective Christian stewardship. As the Scriptures say (here paraphrased), 'Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don't worry about missing out. You'll find all your everyday human concerns



will be met' (Matthew 6:33, The Message).

Cathy Boldeau,  
*British Union Conference Stewardship Director*

## **Empowered by education, guided by God**

'Education is the most powerful weapon which can be used to change the world' (Nelson Mandela). Adventist education continues to shape the minds of the next generation for eternity. Thank you for your continued support of Adventist education in 2026. May God continue to teach us all through the reading of His word in this new year.

Lorraine McDonald,  
*British Union Conference Education Director*



## **God is our Navigator in 2026**

God of our past, our present and future,  
We look to You for guidance and for nurture,  
For courage to embrace whatever we may face;  
Give strength for the journey, endurance for the race.

Go before us into 2026.  
We need Your Spirit in our daily strife  
To live holy and keep hope alive –  
Fortify and sustain us, and help us thrive.

May we take courage from the way You have led –  
To embrace every promise, believe what You said,  
Recounting Your goodness with each passing year –  
Giving thanks for each blessing, moving forwards without fear.

We applaud Your providence throughout 2025;  
You sustained us with blessings galore, kept us alive,  
Protected us from dangers, battles fought and victories won;  
Thank You for divine favour – what more could You have done?

You provided all that we have needed,  
Inclined Your ear, listened when we pleaded.  
In times of uncertainty, You remained by our side.  
Lighting the dark places, You became our Guide.

God of our yesterdays, today and all our tomorrows,  
Direct us we pray;  
Lead us in Your way.

Then at last,  
When time shall have passed,  
May we hear that blessed 'Well done!'  
'Enter My glory, My daughter, My son;  
Heaven awaits, your crown has been won!'

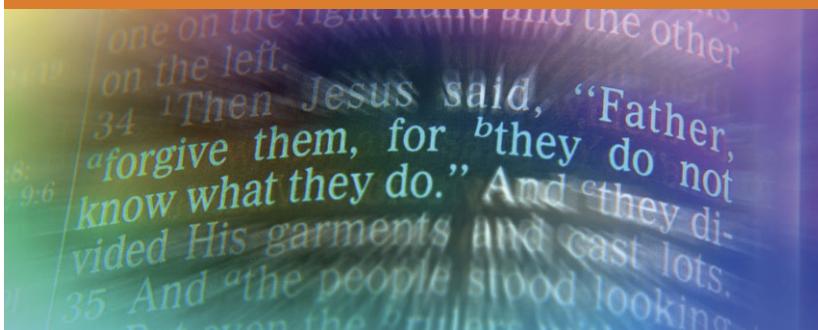


Divine Navigator, lead us on!

Sharon Platt-McDonald,  
*British Union Conference Health, Adventist Community Services and Women's Ministries Director*

# Forgiveness – the permission to heal

by Pastor Les Ackie, BUC Children, Family and Possibilities Ministries Director



Societies today are overrun with bitterness, grudges, resentments and hostility over unresolved issues. Conflicts fester, some originating in antiquity, producing destructive results that prevent individuals, communities and nations from forgiving. Hatred and persistent anger rip the heart out of relationships, destroying sensitivity to others and making people unwilling to forgive or seek forgiveness.

In light of these realities, we are astounded by acts of forgiveness that reflect Jesus' prayer, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do' (Luke 23:34, NKJV). Corrie Ten Boom forgave her Nazi captors; Nelson Mandela forgave apartheid atrocities; Amish families forgave the killing of their children and supported the gunman's widow; a mother forgave her son's killer; a young woman forgave and helped rehabilitate her rapist. Such acts defy logic and reveal the transcendent power of forgiveness.

It is impossible for human beings to live together in this world without hurting each other. Thus, we must master the challenging art of forgiveness. Martin Luther King Jr said, 'Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the door of resentment and the handcuffs of hatred.' Yet forgiveness is difficult because it requires us to let go of deep hurts, violated trust, and fears of future pain. The desire for justice may also hinder forgiveness if offenders seem unaccountable.

To understand forgiveness, we must clarify what it is not.

Forgiveness is not a feeling, but a decision of the will, often despite feelings. It is not automatic with time, but an intentional act. It is not 'whitewashing' by ignoring hurt; offenders must be held accountable. Nor is it taking blame for what is not ours. Victims often wrongly assume responsibility, but forgiveness requires us to place responsibility where it belongs. Even while forgiving his brothers, Joseph told them, 'You meant evil against me . . .' (Genesis 50:20, NKJV).

Understanding reasons for the offence may help, but it cannot be a condition for forgiveness. Even offenders may not understand their actions. Forgiveness does not mean tolerating inappropriate behaviour; healthy relationships require boundaries with consequences. It is also crucial to distinguish forgiveness from reconciliation. Forgiveness requires one person; reconciliation requires two or more. Jesus taught that the one holding the moral high ground should initiate peace (Matthew 5:23, 24). God Himself took the initiative in our salvation (Romans 5:8).

A major obstacle is the unrepentant offender, yet we are still obliged to forgive, because the primary beneficiary is the offended person. Forgiveness allows God to remove destructive emotions, enabling healing and reconciliation through His Spirit. Refusing to forgive means choosing to hold an attitude detrimental to spiritual, emotional, mental and physical wellbeing. Forgiveness is permission to heal. Paul counsels, 'Let all

bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you' (Ephesians 4:31, NKJV).

Lewis B. Smedes wrote, 'To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.' People can define themselves by resentment. Dr King warned, 'He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love.' Our willingness to forgive and capacity to receive God's forgiveness are inextricably linked. Jesus said, 'If you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you' (Mark 11:25, NKJV). We forgive, both because we have been forgiven and in order to be forgiven. Forgiveness is enabled by God's grace, which we must extend to others. Holding onto anger blocks His grace.

The forgiveness that we offer to others and the forgiveness that God offers to us are interlinked. Christ's parable of the unforgiving servant (Matthew 18:23-35) shows we must give what we have received. George Herbert observed, 'He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass.'

Forgiveness changes perspective, not facts. Its goal is not forgetting, but remembering differently, without the emotional intensity of the offence. God's promise to 'remember [our sins] no more' (Jeremiah 31:34, NKJV) is His choice not to hold our sins against us. Forgiveness does not ignore the past; it refuses to live there.

Forgiveness is not a one-time decision, but a process. We should not rush it in ourselves or others. Pushing too quickly may add to the hurt. Forgiveness is a journey inseparable from God's grace. The more we appreciate His forgiveness, the more we extend it to others. Paul concludes, 'Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you' (Ephesians 4:32, NKJV).



# Owning the hurt: a path to forgiveness and healing

by Lynne Sesinye-Samwinga

**F**orgiveness' is a powerful word. It is one that restores peace, mends hearts and rebuilds bridges that once seemed beyond repair. While much has been written about forgiveness from the perspective of the one who is wronged, there is another side of the story that is often overlooked: the side of the offender, the one who caused the hurt.

What happens when you are the offender; when your actions (by mistake or choice) have wounded someone you love? The Bible teaches that sin separates us from God and from one another, but, through repentance, humility and grace, reconciliation is possible. So how can we take responsibility, seek forgiveness and help those we have hurt to heal, guided by God's word?

## 1. Acknowledge your wrong without excuse:

The first step towards forgiveness begins with truth. Admitting your wrongdoing is never easy; pride wants to defend or minimise, but repentance requires full honesty. Say the hard words: 'I was wrong. I hurt you. I take full responsibility.' Saying, 'I didn't mean to' or 'You misunderstood me' doesn't erase the impact. Humility begins when you stop defending yourself and start validating the pain of the one you hurt.

## 2. Seek God's forgiveness first.

Before you seek forgiveness from people, come before God in repentance. Every offence against another person is also an offence against Him, for it violates His command to love. 'Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight' (Psalm 51:4, NIV). When you have sought His forgiveness, you approach others not from shame, but from grace-filled humility.

## 3. Be reconciled before seeking to worship.

Jesus taught that



reconciliation matters deeply to God: 'If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar. . . . First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift' (Matthew 5:23, 24, NKJV). This means that making things right with others is a prerequisite to our worship. God desires restored relationships rather than ritual offerings. A sincere apology can become a sacred act of obedience.

## 4. Approach with humility and compassion.

When you apologise, remember that the moment is not about you. The person you hurt may not be ready to forgive, and that is okay. Approach gently, not to control the outcome, but to show empathy. Say: 'I understand my actions caused you pain. I am deeply sorry. I do not expect immediate forgiveness.' Listen without interrupting or defending. True listening can begin the rebuilding of emotional safety.

## 5. Allow time and space to heal.

Forgiveness is not instant. Wounds need time. Pressuring someone to forgive quickly only adds to their hurt. If they need distance, give it. If they ask for silence, respect it. Show that their heart matters more than your relief. Patience is a sign of sincere repentance.

## 6. Demonstrate change through consistent action.

Words may open the door, but actions build the bridge. Let your change be

visible. If your offence was dishonesty, practise transparency. If you broke trust,

rebuild it through consistency. Change happens over time. Each humble choice is a brick in the structure of restoration.

## 7. Pray for the one you have hurt.

Prayer is one of the most loving things you can do for someone you have wounded. Pray that God brings them peace and healing: 'Lord, mend the heart I have wounded. Let Your grace bring comfort where I caused pain.' Even if reconciliation never comes, prayer keeps your heart tender and free from bitterness.

## 8. Forgive yourself and accept God's mercy.

After repentance, many offenders stay trapped in shame. But shame is not from God. When God forgives, He releases the sin, not to erase accountability, but to restore hope. Walk as someone redeemed: humble, teachable and changed.

## 9. Let love guide the journey.

At the heart of all forgiveness is love. 'While we were still sinners, Christ died for us' (Romans 5:8, NIV). Love teaches patience, humility and compassion. When love is your motive (not guilt or pride), healing becomes possible.

**Closing reflection:** Forgiveness is a journey of two hearts: one that must humble itself, and one that must heal. As the offender, your call is to walk in humility, patience and prayer. You cannot force forgiveness, but you can prepare the soil where it can grow. Let humility guide your steps, love shape your words, and faith lead you towards peace.

# Why our children matter to God

by Pastor Emmanuel Asamoah



**S**arah sighed, leaning against the kitchen counter. The children were finally in bed after a day of spilt juice and sibling squabbles. She loved her children fiercely, but in the exhaustion it could all feel... small. Did any of it really matter?

If you've ever felt like this, the Bible holds a profound message: your work matters, because your children matter immensely to God.

We often read the Bible through the eyes of kings, prophets and warriors. But when we shift our gaze downwards to see through the eyes of its youngest characters, we discover they are not just background characters: they are often the key to God's plan.

**Every child a precious gift in a dangerous world:** To understand how God values children, we need to understand the world of the Bible. In ancient Israel, the threat of losing a child was ever-present. Historical studies suggest that nearly 35% of children died before age 5, and a woman often needed six pregnancies to see two or three children survive to adulthood.<sup>1</sup>

In this context of profound vulnerability, parents had no illusions of control. Instead, they turned to powerful acts of faith. They understood that it was only by trusting in God – through fervent prayer and total dependence on His mercy – that they could hope to experience the joy of raising a child. Bringing a child into the world was an act of hope; raising one was a continuous exercise in relying on divine protection.

This reality makes biblical stories come alive in new ways. The anguish of barrenness for women like Sarah, Rachel and Hannah was about more than social shame; it was a deep, visceral longing for the miraculous gift of a child. The names they gave – Shemaiah ('Heard by the Lord'), Asher ('Happy One'), Nathaniel ('God Has Given') – were declarations of gratitude for precious

lives preserved against all odds by God's hand alone.

**God's pattern: working through the young:** Throughout Scripture, God consistently works through the vulnerable to accomplish His greatest purposes. Pharaoh tried to destroy the Israelites' future by targeting their baby boys. But God saved one boy, Moses, who would grow up to save a nation. God heard Hannah's fervent prayer, and her son Samuel grew up to anoint kings. Most profoundly, God's ultimate promise was wrapped in childhood: 'For to us a child is born' (Isaiah 9:6, NIV). Jesus, the Saviour, entered history as a helpless baby, sanctifying the work of parenting itself.

**Your sacred work today:** Our world can sideline children, viewing them as a distraction. But God's view is radically different. The time you spend wiping noses, preparing meals and settling arguments isn't trivial. It is sacred work. When you patiently settle a sibling squabble, you're teaching peace-making. When you pray over your feverish child, you are standing in the gap, just as faithful parents always have. You are not just raising a child: you are nurturing a soul God knows and loves, protecting a future, and participating in God's eternal plan.

## Pragmatic actions for godly parenting:

- Anchor yourself in prayer. When overwhelmed, whisper: 'God, I entrust this child to You. Help me.' This connects you to a timeless legacy of faith.
- Cherish their questions. When your child asks about God, say, 'What a great question! Let's explore that together.' Build trust when they bring big questions to you.
- Pray for them. Lay a hand on their sleeping head and pray, 'Lord, may this child love you with all their heart.' Claim God's promises for their future.

## Pragmatic actions for church communities:

- Deepen child dedications. Frame them as church-wide commitments to support families throughout childhood.
- Create intergenerational worship. Have children collect offerings or help with readings, showing they are valued church members *now*.
- Affirm parents regularly from the pulpit. Celebrate parenting as primary discipleship.

**Personal reflection:** Lord, my work in the home is not small. You have entrusted me with the most precious resources in Your kingdom. Help me to care for my family with love, patience and diligence.

**Church reflection:** Father, remind us that every home is a sanctuary. Teach us to value the unseen labours of parents, that together we may raise up faithful generations for Your glory.

<sup>1</sup>See Elizabeth Ann R. Willett, 'Infant Mortality and Family Religion in the Biblical Period', in Carol Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (Oxford University Press, 1988); Kristine Henriksen Garroway (ed.), *Growing Up in Ancient Israel: Children in Material Culture and Biblical Texts* (Society of Biblical Literature, 2018); and Shawn W. Flynn, *Children in Ancient Israel: The Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamia in Comparative Perspective* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

# The health benefits of gratitude

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



**A**s 2025 drew to a close, I took some time to list all the things that I was grateful for. Then I spent some time in prayer and thanksgiving to God for all the blessings He had enriched my life with throughout the year.

In extolling the virtues of gratitude, A. W. Tozer said: 'Gratitude is an offering precious in the sight of God, and it is one that the poorest of us can make and be not poorer but richer for having made it.'<sup>1</sup>

The enrichment that gratitude brings extends to enhancing our holistic wellbeing, and there is compelling evidence-based research to substantiate this claim. We examine a few scientific studies on the health benefits of gratitude in this editorial.

## Gratitude health benefits

An article titled '7 Ways to Boost Your Health by Practising Gratitude', published on 20 November 2023 by the Cleveland Clinic, explains that being intentional about gratitude has far-reaching benefits.<sup>2</sup> The article, referring to work by psychologist Lauren Alexander PhD on gratitude, states that 'it's something we should strive to include in our day-to-day lives year-round – whether that be in our friendships, our relationships, our physical activities or even during the quiet moments [when] we have time to ourselves.'

The article also quotes Lauren Alexander as stating: 'When I talk about gratitude with patients, I talk about actively and intentionally recognising those things that make our lives better in some way. . . . There is research out there that practising gratitude can help lower blood pressure, help build a stronger immune system and even help with certain treatment outcomes.'

The article highlights research involving nearly 3,000 participants from 2005 to 2023 in a review of 19 longitudinal studies: 'In that review, researchers identified that gratitude not only promotes mental health and healthy habits, but it also improves cardiovascular outcomes.<sup>3</sup> . . . A kinder heart is a healthier heart.'

The article lists the following seven 'small ways to practise gratitude every day':

- Boost your self-esteem by switching your perspective (when you encounter negative experiences, focus on one positive that has happened to you).
- Strengthen your relationships.
- Foster healthy habits.
- Remain intentional.
- Get active in the issues you care about the most.
- Model good behaviour.
- Enhance your appreciation for your lived experiences.

## Gratitude heals

On 11 April 2025, *Psychology Today* posted an article titled 'How Gratitude Heals from Within', sharing evidence on how gratitude may reprogramme the body's cells to enhance wellbeing. Author Mitchell B. Lester MD writes: 'Recent research suggests that cultivating gratitude doesn't just change our thoughts – it may actually transform our cellular memory, creating pathways for both emotional and physical healing.'<sup>4</sup>

Dr Lester further explains: 'Gratitude practice creates consistent

positive emotional states that trigger specific biochemical responses. Research has found that feelings of gratitude activate brain regions associated with moral cognition, reward, and fairness. These neural activations correspond with releases of dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin – neurotransmitters that not only improve mood but also influence cellular function throughout the body.'

## Gratitude and longevity

In another potential benefit, research from Harvard Medical School suggests that gratitude could even promote longevity. An article by Maureen Salamon, Executive Editor for *Harvard Women's Health Watch*, published on 11 September 2024 carried the title 'Gratitude enhances health, brings happiness – and may even lengthen lives'.<sup>5</sup> The research drew on data from 49,275 women enrolled in the Nurses' Health Study, which included a questionnaire on gratitude. It was found that 'participants with gratitude scores in the highest third at the study's start had a 9% lower risk of dying over the following four years than participants who scored in the bottom third.'

## Gratitude is God's will

Scripture admonishes us in 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NLT): 'Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.' Ellen G. White, writing on the impact of gratitude and praise, states: 'Nothing tends more to promote health of body and of soul than does a spirit of gratitude and praise. It is a positive duty to resist melancholy, discontented thoughts and feelings – as much a duty as it is to pray.'<sup>6</sup>

May 2026 find us more grateful.

## Good health!

<sup>1</sup><https://generositymonk.com/2013/12/26/a-w-tozer-gratitude-is-a-gift-that-enriches-the-giver/>

<sup>2</sup><https://health.clevelandclinic.org/gratitude-for-wellness/>

<sup>3</sup><https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/37809310/>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-leading-edge/202504/how-gratitude-heals-from-within?msockid=052eefc976b1652f198cfb1077b76476>

<sup>5</sup>[www.health.harvard.edu/blog/gratitude-enhances-health-brings-happiness-and-may-even-lengthen-lives-202409113071](https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/gratitude-enhances-health-brings-happiness-and-may-even-lengthen-lives-202409113071)

<sup>6</sup>Ellen G. White, *Ministry of Healing*, p. 251

# Beauty from brokenness

by Sarah Jarvis

I've always loved things that are old. I suppose my taste was inherited from my mother, who collected anything and everything that was old. She was always coming home with a new piece of furniture or pottery or china. She used to enjoy getting things at 'knock-down' prices, proudly stating, 'This will be worth something one day.' However, there was invariably a sting in the tale – nearly all the items she bought were chipped or cracked; victims of crude repair jobs with ugly, thick staples (if they were old repairs); or daubed with brown globules of carpenter's glue. Having once had great beauty, her 'collectables' were now irretrievably marred.

Unfortunately, broken or chipped pottery and china is of little or no value unless it's something extremely old or by a very well-known maker (but, even then, a breakage or crack will seriously diminish its value). Sadly, most of

the items she bought were worthless. I still keep them for sentimental reasons, though, hiding the defects as best I can.

In our 'throw-away' consumer society, most of this stuff could be consigned to the dustbin – too marred to be aesthetically pleasing, and definitely not good enough to have on display.

### *Kintsukuroi*

I was reminded of her compulsive desire to collect a few years back when I heard about *kintsukuroi* for the first time. This is the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery using resin mixed with precious metals like gold. The result is often something more beautiful than the unbroken original.

While the things my mother bought may once have had some value – hand-painted china or delicate porcelain – the art of *kintsukuroi* doesn't confine itself to the repair of what was once valuable. It is also used on ordinary, simple clay pots!

These days, we definitely wouldn't consider an ordinary, broken ceramic bowl worth repairing, let alone consider it more beautiful for having been broken. So what makes something of little monetary worth valuable enough to warrant such repairs?

### The work of a craftsman

Well, value may be conferred by the simple fact that it is something that a craftsman has made; something through which he or she strove to achieve the perfect form – even if it was only in common-or-garden clay and unlikely to command high prices on the open market.

Whereas, in our toss-it-on-the-tip society, such handmade objects are revered for their usefulness and beauty only until broken, to the Japanese their value is enhanced through the art of *kintsukuroi*. Repair can raise these once-

broken objects to a whole new level of appreciation. Now that's not a common idea in Western culture, is it?

### Its roots

The origin of this art form is attributed to a story from the mid-1500s.<sup>1</sup> A great military leader with a hot temper was given a beautiful bowl for an important tea ceremony. Someone dropped the bowl, which broke into five pieces. One of the guests quickly spoke up with an improvised poem, cleverly linking the name of the giver of the bowl, the style of the bowl, and the five broken pieces, making them all laugh and thereby avoiding the wrath of the hot-headed leader. This specific bowl has since become quite famous and is now considered to be 'Important Cultural Property'.

This story goes on to say that instead of the break 'diminishing [the bowl's] appeal, a new sense of its vitality and resilience raised appreciation to even greater heights'. It became more beautiful for having been broken. According to Japanese tradition, the true life of the bowl 'began the moment it was dropped'!

### A lot older than we think

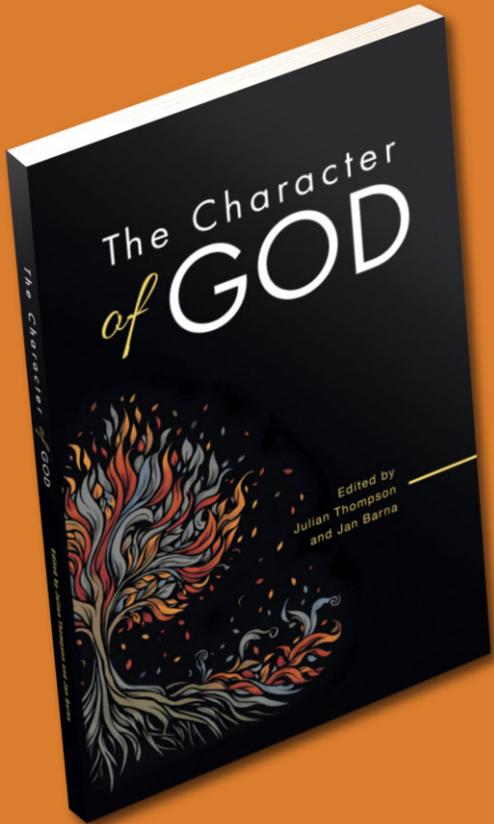
Life quickly bruises, chips and breaks far too many of us. Sometimes it messes with our dreams and aspirations. Sometimes it batters our bodies. All too often its damage seeps deep down to those unseen spaces – crippling our emotions or effacing our self-worth.

The concept of *kintsukuroi* may be a metaphor of hope, despite our brokenness. In fact, this concept is a lot older than we may think. One thousand five hundred years before someone broke that Japanese tea bowl, Jesus Christ told a number of stories about the mending of personal brokenness, such as the story of the prodigal son written in Luke 15:11-32. This simple story illustrates God's attitude to those whom life batters and breaks. He wants to practise *kintsukuroi* on us! He wants to reshape us – restore us – make us more valuable to Him (and ourselves) than we ever were before!



<sup>1</sup>[www.camiimac.com/good-juju-today/blog/kintsukuroi-more-beautiful-for-having-been-broken](http://www.camiimac.com/good-juju-today/blog/kintsukuroi-more-beautiful-for-having-been-broken)

# The Book of the Month



## The Character of God

Blending wisdom from the ancient pages of Scripture, contemporary thought, and reflections from pastoral practice, Seventh-day Adventist theologians, pastors and practitioners unite to provide fresh perspectives on the character of God: who He is and why it matters today.

This book reveals God to be a compassionate and relational Creator who comforts the hurting, offers hope to the broken, and invites us to partner with Him in creative, meaningful and life-affirming ways. *The Character of God* challenges us to consider anew the beauty and depth of God's Person and embark on a spiritual journey of transformation and discovery. This isn't just another book about theology – it's an invitation to an encounter with the living God.



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.lifesourcebookshop.co.uk](http://www.lifesourcebookshop.co.uk).

## Colouring beyond the lines

by Dara Dare

Growing up, I remember being taught the importance of colouring inside the lines, following a neat, safe and predictable pattern. If we were to go over the pre-defined lines, the artwork would look messy, and it would be obvious that a mistake had been made. Colouring inside the lines felt like the 'right' thing to do. But what if God wants us to do the opposite of that this year?

The start of the new year is when many of us make plans, set goals and outline what we hope life will look like. We sketch the year ahead with good intentions, mapping out our steps and shaping our dreams. However, the psalmist reminds us in Proverbs 16:9 (NKJV) that 'a man's heart plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.' It's a beautiful reminder that planning isn't wrong, but it isn't final either.

Sometimes, without realising it, our carefully drawn lines begin to limit us. They restrict what we believe God can do or even what we allow Him to do in our lives. We plan within the borders of what feels realistic, sensible or achievable. But God doesn't work according to our neat outlines. He isn't confined to the edges we draw or the boundaries we set.

As a lover of art, I've always been drawn to abstract pieces in galleries and museums. Abstract art is odd, unexpected and truthfully often confusing. Some people dismiss it entirely, calling it messy or meaningless. But if you pause long enough, you often find the beauty in the apparent mess; the colours blending in surprising ways, patterns forming in unlikely spots, a story told beyond the tidy lines and structure. There is intention even in the strokes that look chaotic.

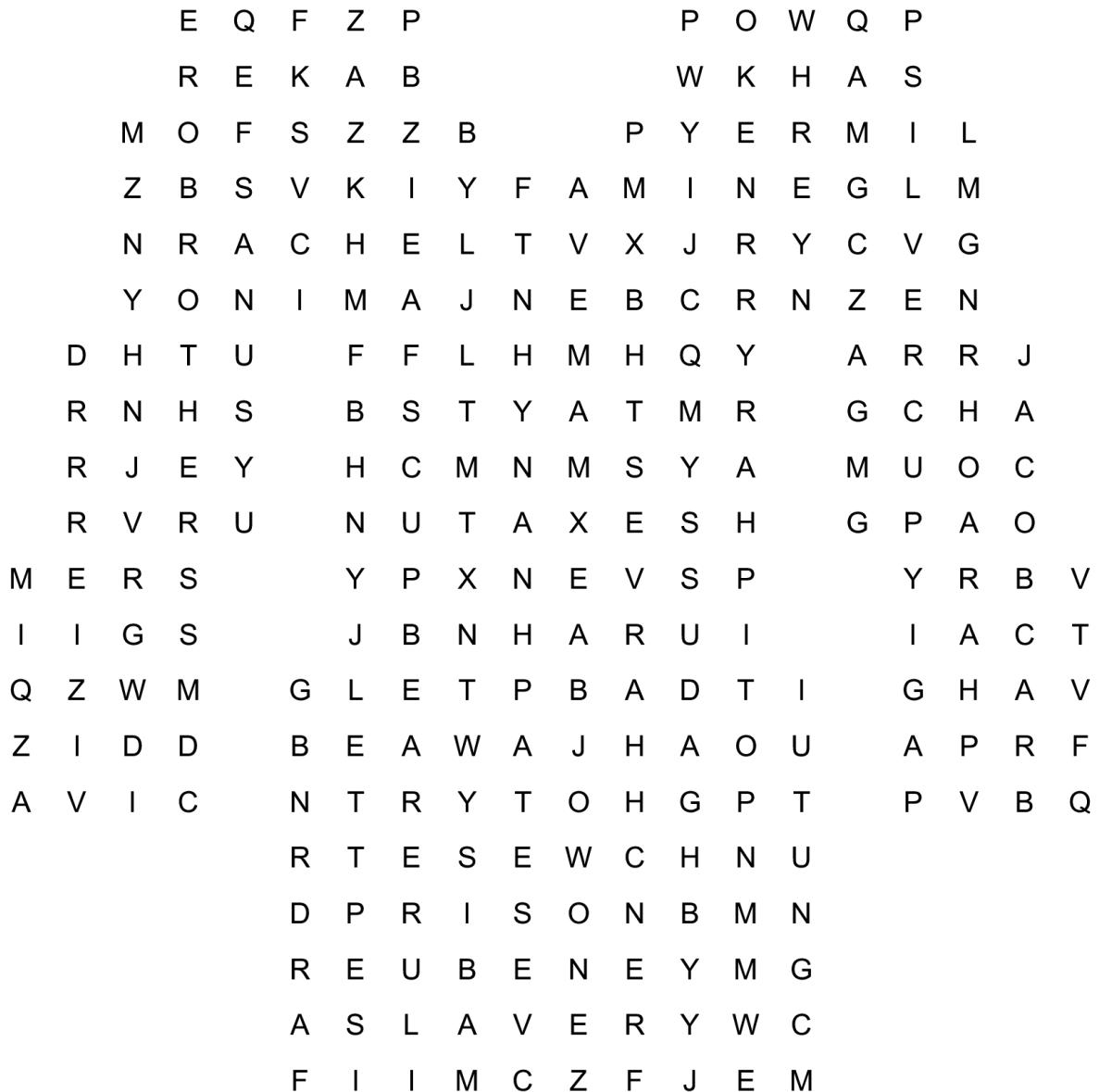
In the same way we can appreciate abstract art, I want to encourage you this year to loosen your grip on the tidy plans you've made. Allow God to take the pencil from your hands and colour beyond the borders. Let Him create something unexpected, something that may not look polished or museum-worthy at first glance, but will eventually reveal beauty, purpose and divine intentionality.

As we step into this new year, let God handle the colouring. He can do exceedingly above what we could think, ask or even imagine, far beyond the lines we draw for ourselves.





## 17. Joseph



COAT  
MERCHANT  
PHARAOH  
RACHEL  
PRISON  
HARVEST

BROTHERS  
BAKER  
POTIPHAR  
BENJAMIN  
DREAMS  
VIZIER

SLAVERY  
CUP BEARER  
JACOB  
REUBEN  
SILVER CUP  
FAMINE

Taken from *Hidden Words 7*  
To purchase yours, follow this link: <https://lifesourcebookshop.co.uk/product/hidden-words-7/>



Mary Magdalene was a woman who hadn't made wise choices.



Mary believed Jesus was God's Son and anointed His feet.



Mary was the first to see Jesus after He rose from the dead!



Jesus can make unhappy, broken people whole – just like Mary.

Taken from *Heroes of the Bible – New Testament*.

To purchase yours, follow this link: <https://lifesourcebookshop.co.uk/product/heroes-of-the-bible-new-testament-colouring-book/>

# Reflecting Hope retreat inspires leaders through Spirit-empowered discipleship

by Pastor Sam O. Davies, BUC Communication and Media Director

More than 220 evangelism and personal ministries leaders from across the British Union Conference (BUC) gathered at the Hinckley Leonardo Hotel from 7 to 9 November for the final Reflecting Hope weekend of the current quinquennium. The retreat brought together speakers from the UK and abroad, offering participants practical guidance, insight and renewed zeal for mission under the theme 'Inspiring Hope through Spirit-Empowered Discipleship'.

BUC Evangelism Director Dr Augustus Lawrence led the weekend retreat, which featured several guest presenters each contributing to a dynamic exploration of discipleship, evangelism, community engagement and cross-faith witness.

Adding to the programme's richness, the Stanborough Press was present throughout the event, offering a wide range of books and resources for attendees to purchase to support their ministry and personal growth.

The retreat opened with a devotional message from Kris Lenart, an international speaker and founder of the Lenart Leadership Institute, who shared memorable experiences from evangelistic meetings in Mauritius. Lenart reminded participants that our power comes from the Word of God. He emphasised, 'It is through Jesus that demons flee, lives are restored and communities are transformed.'

Sharing his own conversion testimony and mission experience, Lenart encouraged leaders and participants to organise evangelistic meetings for young people, pray intentionally for one person to lead to baptism, and reach out proactively within their communities.

Pastor Hon Ni Tsang led the morning devotionals, using simple, practical illustrations in reflective, interactive sessions to demonstrate spiritual truths through everyday

actions. Her object lessons offered thought-provoking insights, grounding the retreat in meaningful spiritual reflection.

Friday evening's keynote presentation from Dr Michael Lewis, Associate Director of the North American Division Evangelism Institute, explored the theological and practical foundations of biblical discipleship. Lewis argued that the church has excelled at evangelism but struggled with retention because many congregations lack clear discipleship pathways. 'Discipleship is not an event or a programme: it is journeying with people,' Lewis stated. 'Baptism is not the end point; it is the starting point.' He challenged churches to restructure their systems around disciple-making, prioritise relational evangelism, and nurture intentional pathways, all grounded in the power of the Holy Spirit rather than in programmes or events alone.

On Sabbath morning, Pastor Michael Mbui examined the connection between church culture and discipleship. Through initiatives such as daily prayer, memory texts, food-bank ministry and a community garden, his church works to embed discipleship into every aspect of congregational life. Saying, 'Jesus with me, Jesus in me, Jesus through me,' he reminded attendees that discipleship is both personal and missional.

Testimonies from local members involved in community initiatives illustrated how authentic relationships and shared acts of service draw people closer to faith, and conference and mission departmental leaders presented updates on key evangelistic and discipleship initiatives. Strategy discussions led by Lewis and Lenart explored prayer-driven evangelism, the Bible study movement and community engagement 'from the outside in'.

On Sunday morning, Dr Jeff



Kris Lenart

Couzins presented an insightful seminar on engaging the Muslim community with wisdom and respect. Drawing from both Scripture and the Qur'an, he identified practical bridges for discussing Jesus, the Holy Spirit and righteousness by faith. He emphasised trust-building, personal stories and relational witness, urging attendees to avoid confrontations and instead cultivate genuine friendships.

Angel Alishev and Michael Garkov, leaders of ASI-UK, shared an overview of the organisation's mission, encouraging church leaders to collaborate more closely with lay members who are committed to marketplace evangelism; and the Adventist Discovery Centre Principal, Pastor Christian Salcianu, offered a range of outreach and discipleship materials, including *The Wise Man's Journal*, a new Christmas discipleship booklet by Catherine Anthony Boldeau, encouraging every delegate to use the resource in their local outreach efforts during the festive season.

At the close of the retreat, Dr Lawrence expressed heartfelt appreciation to all who contributed to making the retreat a meaningful success, before urging attendees to carry the weekend's insights back into their local churches with renewed commitment to Spirit-empowered discipleship and to sharing Christ's love with their communities. Dr Lawrence also expressed heartfelt appreciation to Mr Garkov for his tremendous support of the BUC's evangelism and discipleship initiatives. In recognition of his contribution and in gratitude for a significant financial donation towards the ministry, Mr Garkov was presented with a commemorative plaque.

# ConNECTed Leadership 2025

by Pastor Solon Kyriacou,  
NEC Ministerial Association Secretary, on behalf of the Connected Leadership team



CONNECTED NEC

Running from 14 to 18 November 2025 at Staverton Park Hotel, the NEC's third consecutive ConNECTed Leadership programme – now including the Youth Department in addition to the Treasury and Ministerial Association – started with a worship service after dinner. Pastor Fredrick Russell, Principal of the True North Leadership Group, set the tone for the weekend, which was themed 'A Cut Above'.

Worship continued on Sabbath morning with a devotional by Pastor Steve McKenzie framing the weekend's presentations, followed by a presentation from the President and CEO of Adventist Risk Management, Pastor James Winegardner, during the Sabbath School time, and then another stirring message for Divine Service by Pastor Russell. The congregation was also addressed by Pastors Eglan Brooks and Steve Palmer, BUC and NEC presidents respectively.

The Sabbath afternoon programme brought elders, deacons, deaconesses and youth leaders together for an excellent workshop by Elder Craig Gooden on how leaders can involve youth in church life. Meanwhile, the treasurers were presented with a workshop on the work of local treasurers and the importance of the Seventh-day Adventist Association (SDAA), given by BUC Treasurer Wederly Aguiar and Alan Rodney, a member of the

NEC Building Committee. The Sabbath was rounded off with another plenary session by Pastor Winegardner, who managed to make even risk management a spiritually inspiring message! Then, after the evening meal, Pastor Russell preached another inspiring sermon.

Following another spiritual introduction to the day by Pastor McKenzie, the Sunday morning workshops for the elders and diaconate were led by Sophia Nicholls, co-founder of the Adventist Special Needs Association, who showed how church leaders can facilitate and enhance the worship of people with special or additional needs. Then Tony Smith, a Bible worker in Derby and Burton, gave a practical presentation on five things to avoid when giving Bible studies. The treasurers were blessed with former BUC president Pastor Don McFarlane's presentation on the relationship between the pastor and the church treasurer, followed by Sandra Aguiar speaking further on risk management in the local church setting, while youth leaders were privileged to hear Craig Gooden's presentation on how to build a vibrant church youth community.

After the weekend sessions, the pastors arrived for the Monday and Tuesday for an early start with a thoughtful devotional by Pastor Danny Apeadu, followed by further messages from Pastors Russell and Winegardner, before Antonio

Belgrave, leader of Positive Deviant Ltd, an organisational development consultancy, gave the first part of his presentations on strategic planning for pastors, with plenty of interactive participation. A competitive teambuilding session led by the NEC's HR Officer, Preethy Christopher, preceded the evening devotion led by Pastor Sam Ouadjo, BUC Ministerial Association Secretary.

The following morning's spiritual start-up was given by Steven George, currently an intern in the Nottingham area, before Pastor Russell rounded off his presentations with the simple but profound concept that not every difficulty in an organisation is a problem to be solved – sometimes it's a tension to be managed! Further presentations by Antonio Belgrave and Pastor McFarlane gave way to lunch, after which there was one more presentation by Pastor Emanuel Bran, NEC Executive Secretary, promoting the Redemptive Membership Review process each church should be going through. Pastor Kyriacou, NEC Ministerial Association Secretary, rounded off the programme with closing thoughts and an invitation to the pastoral team to come together for a season of mutual support.

The weekend was made spiritually special by a wonderful praise and musicians team, led by Ainsley Johns, NEC Music Director. Thanks go to the media team, led by Caleb Taylor-Grant, and the secretarial powerhouses that are Yvonne Chambers and Orlene Dunkley-Lawrence! And we're grateful for the presence and ministry of the Stanborough Press and Adam Ramdin's *Lineage* resources.

We look forward to connecting our leaders together even more powerfully in 2026!



## Young adults inspired in Norfolk

The third successive Envision International Young Adults Conference brought 115 young adults to Hays Wood Retreat in King's Lynn from across the United Kingdom, Holland, Belgium and Germany from 23 to 26 October for a weekend of worship, reflection and community. Since its inception, Envision has been defined by a clear mission: to inspire a new generation of believers to be passionate about soul-winning and the transformation of both themselves and their communities – empowered by the Holy Spirit to be light-bearers in these final days. The theme for this year's conference was 'Contentment'.

At the Envision conferences, young adults encounter God in authenticity and purpose, free from fear, judgement or pretence. Every theme, every topic and every invited speaker is prayerfully selected to guide attendees towards spiritual renewal and a renewed commitment to service.

This year's Envision Conference placed an even greater emphasis on practical evangelism and community engagement, particularly within the Norfolk area. Understanding that true discipleship extends beyond the walls of the church, the organising team intentionally planned outreach activities that would bring hope, visibility and service to local communities.

Three outreach teams were deployed – one serving at a local food bank, helping to organise and distribute essential items to those in need, and the other two engaging in vibrant street evangelism in the historic town of King's Lynn, where they sang uplifting hymns, distributed devotionals, prayed with residents and held heartfelt conversations that left a deep impression.

The partnership with King's Lynn Seventh-day Adventist Church, under the leadership of Pastor Jerry Smith, proved to be a powerful collaboration. Local church members joined forces with the Envision delegation, creating a dynamic outreach team that reflected unity, compassion and the shared mission of the Gospel. The event sparked interest and joy within the community – residents described the experience as 'a moment of light and hope'.

The evangelistic outreach was complemented by rich, Spirit-filled messages and workshops led by Dr Wesley Knight and Elder Stephanie Knight, who called young believers to trust in God's purpose, cultivate humility and pursue spiritual depth amid the challenges of modern life. Many attendees left the conference deeply moved and spiritually revived, affirming their personal commitment to prayer, Bible study and service. For many, Envision

2025 was not just an event, but a defining moment in their walk with God.

Envision continues to demonstrate that evangelism is not confined to large-scale campaigns – it is about presence, compassion and genuine connection with people. The success of this year's outreach in Norfolk, particularly in partnership with the King's Lynn community, has laid the foundation for future mission-driven collaborations in the region.

Through God's grace, Envision is transforming hearts, building bridges and reigniting the spirit of evangelism across generations. The prayer remains simple yet profound: 'Lord, use us to bring light where there is darkness and hope where there is despair.'

AMA ANARFI AND RUMONA NYAJERY



## North England Conference Area 4 World Pathfinder Day – a Sabbath to remember!

On 1 November 2025, coordinated by the Area 4 coordinators, Pathfinders from nearly every church across Area 4 gathered at the Northampton High School for Girls for a Spirit-filled World Pathfinder Day celebration. The event, graced by the Mayor of Northampton, Councillor Jane Birch, showcased excellence, unity and youth commitment to God's mission.

Highlights included vibrant music from Newark Pathfinders, a precision drill display by Coventry Pathfinders, and an outstanding performance from the Area 4 Drill and Drum Team, which visitors said 'set the bar very high for the next World Pathfinder Day'!

The message, entitled 'Pathfinders on Purpose', was powerfully delivered by Pastor Ikwisa Mwasumbi, who challenged the young people to live intentionally for God. He made a heartfelt appeal to the Pathfinders, and forty-two responded – twenty-eight requesting baptism, and fourteen seeking prayer or Sabbath support.

Adding to the excitement, thirteen Pathfinder teams took part in a mini Pathfinder Bible Experience quiz, demonstrating their growing knowledge of God's Word and their commitment to spiritual growth.

The day concluded with joyful worship as Pathfinders and guests sang 'We Are Marching Over to Jerusalem', filling the hall with praise and celebration. Truly, all glory and honour belong to God for an unforgettable Sabbath that celebrated faith, unity and youth leadership in Area 4!

LEVON JOHNS



in full dress uniform, Leicester's Pathfinder club joined the cadet forces in honouring those who have served and given their lives for our freedom.

'From small acorns, mighty oak trees grow.' This year, the event was four times larger than that first year. The parade is led out by the club's precise and exciting Pathfinder drum corps. They are followed by the Army Cadet Force, the Sea Cadet Corps and the Air Training Corps, and then by our own Pathfinder clubs. The parade is followed by an outdoor service, a two-minute silence and wreath laying. Each year our own Elder Ivan Browne has been invited to represent the King and Lord Lieutenant in his capacity as Deputy Lieutenant of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

The Pathfinders make such a difference: a witness of a different order. In a complex, deeply diverse city, they send a strong message about involvement, inclusion, faith and discipline. Their drumbeats and expert marching bring out the entire neighbourhood in honour of those who have served and sacrificed, and also in admiration and curiosity of our own young people and their hardworking staff!

PAULINE MATTURI



## Samwinga brothers shine during visit to radio station

On 9 November, the Samwinga brothers (ages 15, 18 and 19) arrived at the broadcasting studio of Koast Radio in Ashington, Northumberland, alongside their parents, Victor and Lynne, for a special interview and live performance. The family, who live in North Tyneside, entered the studio with excitement, ready to share their story and their music.

Leano, Luendo and Levi shared that they have been singing 'since they could talk'. The three brothers are members of a five-member singing group, Oreliaires, which regularly performs around the country, and at a recent event in Birmingham they sang to an audience of more than 600. The name 'Oreliaires' means 'light' or 'golden', and their mission is to spread light through their talents and bless others.

The presenter invited them to sing, and the studio filled with their harmonies as they performed live, followed by warm clapping from the studio team. The presenter admitted she 'was blown away', describing their voices as 'incredible'.

The brothers haven't written original songs yet, but they hope to enter a studio in early 2026 to record demo

## The difference Pathfinders make

In the national life of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth, Remembrance Sunday must count as one of the most moving moments.

Five years ago, the Thurnby Lodge part of Leicester decided they would have their own community remembrance service, including a parade along its main road. The St Matthew's Fellowship Church of Leicester worship in that part of the city and thought it would be a great public contribution to march too. In that first year,

in full dress uniform, Leicester's Pathfinder club joined the cadet forces in honouring those who have served and given their lives for our freedom.

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PAULINE MATTURI

tracks. Their aim is to create music that 'touches hearts, makes people happy and blesses them'.

The presenter thanked the Samwinga brothers for their talent, their kindness, and the joy they bring to listeners, adding confidently: 'These boys are going places. They are spreading happiness and joy.' All five members of the Oreliaires subsequently sang at South Shields Seventh-day Adventist Church on Saturday 20 December. You can find them on Instagram (@theoreliaires) and TikTok (@theoreliaires).

LYNNE SESINYE-SAMWINGA



## SEC Children's Ministry Secretary visits Heathrow

On Sabbath 15 November 2025, Heathrow Community Seventh-day Adventist Church was visited by Sharon Mattis, the South England Conference Children's Ministry Secretary working under SEC Children's Ministry Director Pastor Rio Espulgar. Sharon shared the story of how Moses was drawn from a basket on the River Nile by Pharaoh's daughter, drawing parallels with what Ellen G. White wrote about the Christian duty to care for orphans and vulnerable children, emphasising compassion and practical support.

The day was a high day. Many thanks to Pastor Roland, Sister Marlen and Pastor Rio.

SHARON MATTIS



led by Pastor Ikwisa Mwasumbi, NEC Pathfinder Director, alongside Pastor Neville Taylor, Bradford's district pastor. Their lessons, discussions and spiritual preparation culminated in this beautiful Sabbath celebration. Meanwhile, the adult candidate completed his baptismal preparation under the guidance of Pastor Taylor and Elder Benjamin Nhandara, following a dedicated period of study and faith-building.

Pastor Ikwisa commended the Pathfinders for their commitment, highlighting those who consistently attended their lessons and praising the punctuality of several outstandingly dedicated students. Among the memorable testimonies was that of Kupakwashe Mutsvanemoto, who approached Pastor Ikwisa after discovering her name had been accidentally omitted from the registration list. Determined not to miss the opportunity, she requested to be added and diligently completed all her baptismal studies – an inspiring example of perseverance and spiritual hunger.

Pathfinder Director Lucia Nhandara expressed her excitement and gratitude at seeing so many young Pathfinders give their lives to Christ. She described the moment as a profound blessing, noting that the decision of these young people to follow Jesus was a powerful testimony of the church's ongoing commitment to nurture and guide its youth in faith. Her joy reflected that of the Pathfinder leadership team, who have walked alongside these young disciples in their spiritual journey.

As each candidate stepped into the baptismal waters, tears flowed freely among family members, leaders and fellow church members, a moving reminder that heaven rejoices over every decision made for Christ. The sight of these young Pathfinders choosing Jesus deeply touched the congregation, strengthening the church's resolve to continue nurturing its youth.

Following the service, as a direct result of the powerful three-day revival messages led by Pastor Dr Robin Ramroop from the Philippines earlier in the week, several individuals from the congregation also made the decision to give their lives to God. Pastor Ramroop's Spirit-filled messages had invited the congregation to embrace Christ's promise of rest, renewal and salvation.

The service concluded with prayer, singing and warm embraces as the newly baptised members were officially welcomed into the family of God. Their commitment, combined with the revival decisions, brought renewed joy and strengthened the church's mission.

*RUDO CHENGETA, PATHFINDER COUNSELLOR*

## Baptism at Birmingham Perry Beeches Church

On Saturday 22 November the members of Birmingham Perry Beeches Church gathered with family and friends to witness the baptism of nine precious souls: Annaliese Huhuyana, Brian Nyathi, Celyne Mpozembizi, Jesuferanmi Babafemi, Matthew Mavhunga, Mickoy Brown, Naomi Moyo, Nathan Moyo and Noel Dhlomo. Officiating in the service were local elders who were instrumental in leading the candidates to baptism. The deeply applicable sermon, titled 'Why Not Now?' and based on Acts 22:15, 16, was preached by Pastor Jermaine Swaby, Ministerial Field Secretary for Area 5 and pastor of the Castle Vale, Chelmsley Wood and Windsor Street churches. Then Pastor Rainford McIntosh and Pastor Jermaine Swaby baptised the candidates, after which they



From left to right, back row: Mickoy Brown, Brian Nyathi, Nathan Moyo, Matthew Mavhunga, Noel Dhlomo, Jesuferanmi Babafemi, Annaliese Huhuyana, Celyne Mpozembizi and Naomi Moyo; front row: Elders Nzwani Huhuyana, Thamsanqa Khumalo and Emmanuel Babafemi and Pastors Jermaine Swaby and Rainford McIntosh

were welcomed officially into church fellowship. To God be the glory; great things He has done.

*BIRMINGHAM PERRY BEECHES COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT*



## A mother's joy: Hackney Church rejoices in the baptism of regular attendee

On the evening of 1 November, God welcomed His child back into His arms as Dave Miller, a regular attendee of Hackney Seventh-day Adventist Church, was baptised, to the immense joy of his mother and siblings.

In the morning, Elder Brenda Rutherford had given a heartwarming message on loneliness, reminding us not to give up on our children – a fitting statement considering what would take place that afternoon.

Elder John Mathieu opened in prayer, remembering those affected by Hurricane Melissa and giving thanks for the opportunity to worship together. After some favourite songs, Elder Chris Brooks, addressing the church, spoke highly of Brother Miller, who is always on time for church and has a peaceful and pleasant character. Hackney's resident minister, Pastor Vaughn Thorpe, welcomed the congregation, especially Brother Miller's mother and family.

As Brother Miller's mother embraced her son, we heard that she had been praying earnestly for him to return to the fold. As she wept and hugged her son, the congregation was invited to pray for all the parents crying out for their children.

Stepping forward to face the sea of faces in the audience, Brother Miller responded, 'I do' to each baptismal vow read. Sister Lynette spoke about first meeting Brother Miller and how she had been taken aback by his eagerness to serve God and the community. Elder John Locker gave a thanksgiving prayer, reminding us how much we are loved by our everlasting Saviour.

We heard Psalm 23 and then Matthew 6:9-13 being read beautifully by Brother Miller's sisters. Sister Myrtle O'Keefe sung sweetly, her voice reaching every part of the church.

Earlier in the service, we learnt that Brother Miller had spent three years in regular Bible studies with Pastor Thorpe. Now he stood faithfully in the baptismal pool, willing to give his life to God.

The service ended with a benediction by Elder John Mathieu before Hackney's members along with friends and family passed on their words of appreciation to the newly baptised Brother Dave Miller. In a world full of pain, hurt and devastation, we as God's children must stand up, stand strong and stand together for Jesus.

ZINZE BISHOP, COMMUNICATIONS & PM SECRETARY



Pastor Goodluck with Jayden, Vera, Mui and Yvonne



Pastor Goodluck baptising Sister Mui

## The joy of heaven

The joy experienced in heaven is beyond measure whenever someone turns back to God (Luke 15:7). Therefore 15 November 2025 was unforgettable for

St Austell Church in Cornwall – a celebration of grace, mission and answered prayers.

The journey to that day began weeks before, during preparations for the Impact SEC 2025 evangelistic campaign. With intentionality and compassion, the church hosted a free health expo on 22 and 23 October, leaving visitors encouraged, grateful and touched. Several visitors questioned how a church could give without expecting anything in return. The requests for the programme to continue showed how much the community longed for genuine care and connection.

Following the expo, four consecutive weekends of evangelistic meetings took place under the theme 'Hope for Today'. Christ was uplifted, the Gospel was presented with clarity, and the Spirit softened hearts. Families and friends attended as the church prayed, served and connected. By the end of the campaign, three people had made the decision to give their lives to Christ.

On the day of their baptism, St Austell Church was filled with anticipation as the candidates stepped forward. Then a young man, deeply stirred during the service, stood up and announced his desire to give his life to Christ. He became the fourth baptismal candidate. The church responded with joy.

The celebration continued as one of the newly baptised mothers dedicated her son the same day. The joy was seen in smiles, heard in songs, and felt in every heart, reminding everyone that evangelism is not a programme, but the heartbeat of the church – love in action, truth shared, and Christ revealed.

Heartfelt appreciation goes to the South England Conference leadership and evangelism director; the St Austell church leadership; and every member who prayed, gave, worked and believed. Above all, all praise belongs to God.

PASTOR GOODLUCK AJUZIE, DISTRICT PASTOR, CORNWALL

## Adventist doctors support network conference 2025: 'Great Calm'

The Adventist Doctors Support Network (ADSN) is a community of Seventh-day Adventist doctors and healthcare professionals across the United Kingdom and Ireland. Founded by Dr Elsa Charles, a general practitioner whose guiding motto, 'A healthy doctor, a healthy patient', continues to shape the network's mission, ADSN promotes the wellbeing of Adventist clinicians while strengthening their capacity to serve their communities with compassion, balance and faith.

The 2025 annual conference, themed 'Great Calm', was held at Newbold College of Higher Education on 4 and 5 October 2025, drawing more than sixty doctors, psychologists, pharmacists, nurses and allied health professionals from across the UK, all united by a shared desire to integrate faith with professional life.

Sabbath morning began with an inspiring Sabbath School led by Okantan, an NHS pharmacist, followed by a joyful song service. The sermon was delivered by Pastor Christian Salcianu, Departmental Director at the British Union Conference and Principal of the Adventist Discovery Centre for the UK and Ireland, who reminded listeners that their professional practice is a sacred calling through which God's healing work continues.

A wholesome lunch in the student canteen provided time for fellowship and networking, followed by an engaging ice-breaker activity that helped participants discover shared hobbies and forge new friendships.

The afternoon programme combined professional insight with spiritual reflection. Dr Amanda Chisholm, an NHS GP, wife and mother, spoke candidly about burnout; Dr Sasha Bennett, a portfolio GP and EMCC-accredited mentor and coach practitioner from Gloucester Church, highlighted the importance of mentoring younger doctors and generously offered one-to-one mentoring sessions; and Dr Nomsa Maphango, a Southampton GP and one of the weekend's key organisers, led an important discussion inviting delegates to consider establishing an Adventist clinic in the UK, presenting successful models from established Adventist medical centres in Europe and Australia.

Sabbath afternoon continued with heartfelt



Attendees in the Canteen Atrium

testimonies. Dr Gloria Mosha-Onchiri shared how she encouraged colleagues to form prayer groups during the pandemic, strengthening faith and resilience at work. Dr Jacqueline Halliday-Bell provided the musical meditation before the sermon and later testified to God's sustaining grace through life's trials, recounting her journey into publishing children's books. Dr Stephen Katebe, a GP-turned-entrepreneur and founder of [www.tekihealth.com](http://www.tekihealth.com), shared a powerful testimony about trusting God's timing in business and career decisions.

Sunday's programme began with a keynote devotional by Dr Kevin Stuart, a consultant chemical pathologist based in Leeds who provides specialist clinical services for obesity, lipid disorders and porphyria. In his local church, Dr Stuart creatively uses health and science to illustrate Bible principles. The morning continued with an exceptional presentation by Dr Desaline Joseph, a paediatric consultant and one of the UK's leading sleep specialists, educating attendees on the science of sleep and its vital role in human function. The conference concluded with a workshop titled 'Walking with the Healer', led by Dr Christianne Theiss and supported by Pastor Salcianu.

The conference received positive feedback, testifying to its powerful blend of worship, learning and connection. As ADSN continues its online meetings, mentoring initiatives and prayer sessions, its mission remains steadfast: to nurture healthy doctors, healthy patients and a healthier community in Christ.

DR J. HALLIDAY-BELL



Kellys and Charity with the two boys, Kellys Jnr and Kayden

to journey together under the Lord's leadership.

With heartfelt words, Kellys and Charity exchanged vows once more, thanking God for His protection and seeking His wisdom. Their testimony was a powerful reminder that love rooted in Christ grows deeper and stronger with time.

The celebration continued with a joyful wedding supper that united the family and the church in honouring the couple's love and God's faithfulness.

## Celebrating God's faithfulness: Kellys and Charity renew their vows

On 1 November, Lodge Causeway Seventh-day Adventist Church was filled with joy and thanksgiving as Kellys and Charity Sikabbwele renewed their marriage vows after ten years of walking together in faith, surrounded by family, friends and their two beloved children, Kellys Jnr and Kayden.

The service was led by Pastor Namushi Namuchana, who shared a sermonette reminding the congregation that marriage is a covenant sustained by God's grace. He blessed the couple, affirming their renewed commitment

ELDER DES MILLS (PHOTO BY SISTER LOUIIGE DE SAN JOSE)

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Pastor Roger Neal with two of the young people

## Harvest reunion at York

Many memories were stirred at York Seventh-day Adventist Church on Sabbath 18 October 2025 as Pastor

Roger Neal preached at the Harvest Festival, accompanied by his wife Marilyn. Pastor Neal was the resident minister at the church a quarter of a century ago, before his retirement, and he was delighted to see many former members of York return for the day to spend the Sabbath with him.

Pastor Neal was also overjoyed to see how much the York church has grown over the last few years – it is now regularly full to capacity, and plans are being made to establish church-plants. This is remarkable, considering that the Conference considered closing the church at one point – but the faithfulness of the members and a miraculous answer to prayer during Pastor Neal's tenure enabled the church not just to continue, but also to provide a valuable service to the disabled people of York and eventually to grow and thrive as we see today.

After a delicious potluck, Pastor Neal displayed a collection of photographs from his time at the church, which brought back a lot of memories and provoked much joyful discussion.

ANDREW PUCKERING; PHOTO: CLAIRE HALL



Enoch Kanagaraj BEM DL with his wife, Nishtha Kanagaraj

## Adventist appointed Deputy Lieutenant

On Thursday 30 October 2025, His Majesty King Charles III, following the recommendation of the Lord-Lieutenant, Robert Voss CBE CStJ, approved the appointment of

Enoch Kanagaraj BEM DL as Deputy Lieutenant for Hertfordshire, recognising Enoch's outstanding service to faith, charity and community leadership. As Deputy Lieutenant, Enoch will assist the Lord-Lieutenant in representing His Majesty The King at civic and community events.

A devoted Seventh-day Adventist and founder & chief executive of the One Vision charity, Enoch has worked tirelessly to build bridges between diverse communities, faith leaders and public services. His appointment, published in the *London Gazette*, acknowledges his dedication to the biblical call in Matthew 5:16 (NKJV): 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.'

For Enoch, this honour is not a personal achievement, but a divine calling to serve with humility. Sharon Platt-McDonald, British Union Conference Director for Health, Adventist Community Services and Women's Ministries, commented: 'Enoch's service . . . shows that when we align our mission with God's compassion, communities are healed, lives are restored, and faith is made visible.' Dr Jude Jeanville added: 'Enoch's appointment as Deputy Lieutenant is a testament to how God honours those who serve faithfully.' Pastor Eglan Brooks, President of the British Union Conference, also extended his heartfelt congratulations, saying: 'Enoch's appointment is a testament to the way God continues to use His people to influence and serve in public life,

reflecting the values of faith, service and integrity that the church upholds.'

Enoch expressed heartfelt thanks to his family, the One Vision team and Stanborough Park Church for their love and support.

ENOCH KANAGARAJ BEM DL

## Recognising the work of faith in building healthier, stronger communities

One Vision Hertfordshire received the Health Creation Champion of the Year Award last year at the Health Creation Alliance National Partnership Summit 2025 in Manchester. The award recognises One Vision's outstanding contribution to reducing health inequalities and empowering communities through collaboration, compassion and community-led innovation.

The summit's theme, 'Health Creation: Wealth Creation – Investing in Community Agency', brought together national leaders, community champions and health professionals. The award recognises that when people of faith and goodwill work together, transformation follows. One Vision Hertfordshire was recognised for its Faith and Health Networking Board, its Cancer Champions Programme with Macmillan Cancer Support, and its Community Connector Training, showing that service is an act of faith and that real care begins not with systems, but with relationships built on trust, empathy and respect.

To God be the glory for what He has begun through the work of faith in Hertfordshire.

ENOCH KANAGARAJ BEM DL



## London Area 6: 'United in Exaltation & Prayer'

Tottenham Lighthouse Church Prayer Ministry hosted the London Area 6 programme, 'United in Exaltation & Prayer', on Sabbath 22 November 2025,

divided into four main sections: adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication. The music was on top form, and Eileen Philip wrote and read a special poem.

A surprise guest from Jamaica, Pastor Levi Johnson, Executive Secretary of the Jamaica Union Conference, joined the service via Zoom. He gave us an update on the situation in Jamaica and what the Seventh-day Adventist Church was doing to alleviate the suffering. An offering was collected for Hurricane Melissa relief.

Pastor Dee Edwards, a dynamic speaker who pastors the Harrow and Hanworth churches, preached on the Canaanite woman of Matthew 15:21-28. She was presented with a fruit basket at the end of the service.

Much positive feedback was received. Thanks go to the London Area 6 churches that sent representatives to this special service. Thanks also to all those who participated in and supported the programme, including through prayer. We thank God for its success.

MAXINE DONOVAN, AREA 6A PRAYER COORDINATOR



## 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Leicester St Matthew's

On 6 September 2025, Leicester St Matthew's Church celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, welcoming back many old faces and a few new ones, and remembered those they had lost along the way. Tears, laughter, solos and Bible games were all part of the day.

Starting off as a Sabbath School group in 2000, St Matthew's was supposed to be a three-month Bible study project in the community. Their aim was to spread the Gospel of Jesus to the people on the second-poorest estate in the country. However, three months turned into six months, and six months became a year. St Matthew's members brought the Bible to life, loving their

neighbours as themselves. Members of the community became familiar faces, and as the church grew they moved several times, making lifelong connections on the way.

As the years passed by, St Matthew's Community Fellowship connected with a charity called The Bridge, which feeds the homeless. Initiatives such as 'Bags of Hope' were born, whereby the young people would deliver care packages each week to those in the city centre.

St Matthew's also established a relationship with the charity The Big Local. Each year they take part in the local neighbourhood fair, hosting a health expo to conduct health checks and give health information. Each year, familiar faces return with positive testimonies and a desire to have a go on the famous smoothie bike.

During the pandemic St Matthew's welcomed hundreds of people to their virtual services, showcasing their children's digital talents and hosting an international choir. Now they worship at Christ Church in Thurnby Lodge, where they continue to minister to the community.

The members of St Matthew's thank all who have supported them. They are indebted to the many organisations they have been connected to: The Bridge, the Neighbourhood Centre, Taylor Road School, the Tenants' Association, The Big Local, St Matthew's House, and the Leicester Anglican Diocese. God bless your work and ministry.

It has been a bumpy but joyous journey for the smallest church in Leicester, and by the grace of God they continue to persevere through whatever challenges life throws their way. Here's to another twenty-five years!

LEICESTER  
ST MATTHEW'S  
COMMUNICATION  
TEAM

## Messenger

Volume 131 • 1 – January 2026

**Editor: Dusanka Rancic**  
**Design: David Bell**  
**Proof reading: Andrew Puckering**  
**Production and distribution: Peter Oppong-Mensah**

COPY FOR No. 2 – 8 January 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

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