

The President's Pen!

Welcome to the first edition of *The President's Pen!* *The President's Pen* is an e-mail communication vehicle by which the Idaho Conference president communicates to the Idaho Conference constituents, family, and friends. Our goal is to publish *The President's Pen* at least every other month.

The Four Strategic Priorities of the Idaho Conference

The Idaho Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has four strategic priorities for the 2019-2023 quadrennium. They are the focus of our leadership and ministry for the current four-year term. How are we doing in accomplishing the four priorities? I will list them and give an update report that follows.

Facilitate exponential Christ-centered church growth—spiritual, discipleship, and numerical

In 2020, the North Pacific Union Conference (NPUC) administration offered a unique eighteen-month partnership (2021-2022) to the Idaho Conference administration that included significant human and financial resources to help us experience exponential Christ-centered church growth. Soon after the offer, the Idaho Conference administration and the NPUC executive secretary, Elder Bill McClendon, began meeting via phone and Zoom Conference dreaming and praying together about what exponential growth might look like in the Idaho Conference. We had a face-to-face meeting in early 2021, and Operation Exponential Growth was born. Operation Exponential Growth is portrayed in a five-part paradigm including prayer, revival/revitalize, baptize/disciple, plant, and reclaim. Please see the attached document for the paradigm graphically shown. We set a faith goal of 175 baptisms/professions of faith in 2021. We are grateful to the NPUC for this partnership.

Our pastors and many of our churches in Southern Idaho and Eastern Oregon embraced Operation Exponential Growth. Local church leaders and members planned and held community outreach, reaping meetings, and evangelistic meetings last year. The Lord blessed with 157 precious souls added to His church by baptism and profession of faith in 2021. That was a 100 percent increase compared to the COVID year of 2020. Praise the Lord!

In 2021, the Idaho Conference surpassed 7,000 members for the first time in our history. According to 2021 membership data, considering baptism/profession of faith growth and transfer growth, the Idaho Conference is the fastest growing conference in the NPUC.

Operation Exponential Growth is intentional soul winning and outreach. It is our new way of life. It is our new identity. It is what we do day-to-day and year-to-year to faithfully fulfill the Gospel Commission of Matthew 28:18-20. Many of our pastors and church leaders have already hosted or are planning to conduct community outreach, reaping meetings, and evangelistic meetings in 2022. This year's faith goal is 200 baptisms/professions of faith, by God's grace. I invite you to join us in praying that God will help us reach this goal as we share the good news of eternal life in Jesus with the people in our communities.

Recruit, grow, equip, and empower strong Christian leaders

We embrace the biblical teaching of the priesthood of all believers. Every Seventh-day Adventist Christian who has experienced the assurance of eternal life and the baptism of the Holy Spirit is gifted for service and ministry. One of the roles of the pastor and local church leaders is to provide training and mentoring for members to discover their spiritual gift(s) and find their niche in ministry. The Idaho Conference administration also takes this important role seriously. We offer annual training in Prayer Ministries and Women's Ministries. We provide biennial training via Transformed for Ministry Sabbaths in each of the three geographical areas of the Conference (during odd years) and Elders' Retreats (during even years). We have also provided Children's Ministries Workshops on an occasional weekend.

Engage youth and young adults in all aspects of ministry

The Camp Ida-Haven team does a phenomenal job of hiring approximately fifty young adults for the annual six-weeks of summer camp. Gem State Adventist Academy and our youth department do a fantastic job of holding an annual ID Youth Conference on the campus of Gem State Adventist Academy. The Pathfinder and Adventurer Ministries teams do an excellent job of working with our churches in training our children and young people in ministry and leadership. When possible and appropriate, the Idaho Conference employs young adults in positions of leadership and ministry, namely, elementary school educators, Gem State Adventist Academy educators and staff, pastors, Camp Ida-Haven staff, and Barefoot Media Ministries staff.

Further, the Idaho Conference is ready to hire a person to serve as Vice President for Administration and Young Adult/Youth/Children's Ministries Director. This will be one full-time equivalent (FTE), with one-half as Vice President and one-half as Young Adult/Youth/Children's Ministries Director. We believe that God will lead us to someone that can give leadership as Director of Young Adult/Youth/Children's Ministries while also giving leadership as Vice President for Administration. The search process is currently taking place.

Strengthen and grow our Adventist schools

Some of our elementary schools enjoyed an enrollment increase for the current school year, 2021-2022, while some of our smaller schools had a slight decrease or were status quo with enrollment. Opening enrollment for the 2021-2022 school was 353. The 2020-2021 opening enrollment stood at 304, so that was an increase of 49 students compared to last school year. Praise the Lord!

Gem State Adventist Academy opened the 2021-2022 school year with 66 students. It represents a significant enrollment increase compared to last school year. In addition, Gem State Adventist Academy is in the strongest financial position it has been in for many years. We are thankful for the visionary and thoughtful leadership of the Gem State Adventist Academy administration, faculty, and staff.

My heart is full of gratitude and appreciation for our pastors, educators, office staff, Camp Ida-Haven staff, Barefoot Media Ministries staff, church leaders, and all our constituents. Thank you for everything you have done and are doing to prayerfully and thoughtfully move forward in accomplishing these four strategic priorities during this challenging, yet exciting time in Earth's history. Praise God!

Baptisms and Professions of Faith through March 22, 2022 – 14

Idaho Conference Membership through March 22, 2022 – 7089

Year-to-date (YTD) tithe through February 2022 compared to YTD through February 2021 – +4.55%

Youth Department & Gem State Adventist Academy Mission Trip

On March 17, 2022, seven students and four adults traveled to Bethel, Alaska to help with a Regional Native American Camp Meeting. They will assist with music, VBS, and youth meetings. Please pray for them and their ministry.

Congratulations LGACS Lego Snap-Its!

The La Grande Adventist Christian School's (LGACS) Lego Robotics team, the Lego Snap-Its, entered the North Pacific Adventist Robotics Qualifying Tournament. They won 1st place in Core Values and second runner-up for the Champion Award. They have been invited to participate in the next level of friendly competition in Florida on May 1, 2022. Congratulations LGACS Lego Snap-Its!

Personal Note

Thank you so much for your prayers for me during my hospitalization and recovery in 2021. God heard and answered them! I have recovered and have been back to work for the last eight months. Praise God!

Bible Promise

“Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.” Isaiah 41:10.

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