



FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT  
RON AGUILERA

# FYI (For Your Information...)

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



January 22, 2020



## DEVOTIONAL THOUGHT

Psalm 129:2, *“They have greatly oppressed me from my youth, but they have not gained the victory over me.”*

Monday of this week was Martin Luther King Jr. Day here in the United States. Often, we think of this day as a holiday or a day off from work, but it is much more than that. Martin Luther King Jr. is one of the great men of history. He stood up for equal rights for the African Americans in the mid-1950s and 60s. His speeches are still quoted today, and many songs have been written about him. He received a Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, and he was assassinated in 1968 as he organized a nonviolent protest rally for African Americans who were not being paid equally to their white counterparts. Our world is a different place today because of Martin Luther King Jr, and he is just one of many great people who have stood up for those in the minority and suffered a great price because of it.

We may not be confronted with the same level of persecution as Martin Luther King Jr., but we all deal with negative opinions and people who try to pull us down or are against us because of gender or race. See, oppression can come in all different kinds of forms; physical attack, passive-aggressive behavior, bullying, negative words, and even in the church, discrimination can rear its ugly head. When negativity or discrimination comes our way, we have a choice on how we deal with it. We can allow it, or we can stand firm and defend against it and not allow it to ‘gain victory over us (or others).’ As Psalm 129 shows us, the people of Israel had also experienced great oppression over an extended period, and yet, they trusted in the Lord, and He saw them through.

It can be a real challenge to stop negative opinions or thoughts of discrimination from seeping into our minds, but we must remember that God does not wish negativity to have victory over us, He wants us to be light-bearers and to model His love, grace, and justice. May it be so in our churches in Illinois.



Seventh-day  
Adventist<sup>®</sup> Church

ILLINOIS CONFERENCE

*Making healthy  
disciple-making  
churches*

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## ILLINOIS CONFERENCE THEME

If you have not heard, the Illinois Conference Theme for the year 2020 is *Knowing Jesus Intimately*. You can watch a short video message about it at: <https://www.ilcsda.org/administration/president/presidents-video-fyi/item/25>

I want to invite each church and church member to focus on ways you can get to know Jesus more intimately in 2020. Make this year a transformational year in your life and the life of your family. Commit to making prayer your top priority. Spend time in God's Word daily. You won't regret it!

## SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION TRIP, March 22-April 1.

**The trip was FULL, but two people have backed out, so there are TWO spots left.** If you were thinking about it and you missed out, here is your second chance. Sign up now. The highlights include Istanbul, Turkey, the seven churches mentioned in the book of Revelation (which are found in both Turkey and Greece), Athens, Greece, and a three-day cruise with stops on the Greek isles of Patmos, Crete, and Santorini. (We will be on Patmos on Sabbath). For more information and the registration form, please visit the home page of the Illinois Conference website: [www.ilcsda.org](http://www.ilcsda.org). Scroll down through the details to the links to the forms and documents at the end. To enroll, send your application directly to Gospel Travel. If you have any questions, contact Wanda Martinez at 919-577-0043.

## NEWS

- ☞ 10 Days of Prayer update. I am so excited to hear about how many of our Illinois Conference churches started 2020 by participating in the 10 Days of Prayer focus, which took place from January 8-18. If your church did not participate, it is not too late to set aside 10 Days over the next month or so to focus on prayer.
- ☞ I want to report to you that Janoa Gilman has been hired as our new Illinois Conference Assistant Treasurer. She replaces Jamie Daum, who accepted a position with General Conference Auditing Services. We welcome Janoa to the office ministry team.
- ☞ I am so excited when our churches do something to represent Jesus well. Thank you, Richland Bridge. Under the leadership of Pastors Rod and Donna Willey, the Richland Bridge church sponsored a Health Fair on January 12. Here are some of the stats from the clinic:

Total number of guests served - 78  
 X-rays taken - 100  
 Teeth cleaning procedures provided - 48  
 Teeth extracted - 35  
 Fillings placed - 28  
 Total Value of Services Provided? \$35,500

The above figures do not include the value of the Christian literature and health resources that were distributed as well as the friendships made! Many thanks to Randy Griffin from the Lake Union, and the team there. Over 90% of the church participated in this event!

- ☞ If you would like to receive the latest news, the FYI, links to video messages, and receive information from the Illinois Conference right to your smartphone, you can text ILC to the following number (844) 947-6582 to begin receiving materials and information in real-time.

## RESOURCES

- ☞ *Steps to a Vibrant Church*, by Brad Cauley. A turnaround guide for churches in plateau or decline. Are you serious about fulfilling the mission of Christ? Do you wish to see more people accept the fantastic truths God has entrusted to Seventh-day Adventists? If you want to be part of a happier, healthier church where you can see God moving, check out this guide for congregations wishing to grow. This book is available in English and Spanish. For more information, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/y6zkdzfn>
- ☞ Are you looking for help leading youth Sabbath School? Check out Youth Sabbath School Ideas, a free resource from the NAD Youth Ministries Department. Each week you will find lesson helps featuring opening activities, lesson study options, application ideas, and more. Sign up for weekly emails to stay up to date with the latest lesson resources! Learn more at: <https://www.youthsabbathschoolideas.org>

## DID YOU KNOW . . .

. . . that Paul's advice in Philippians 4:6 was the most shared, highlighted, and bookmarked verse of 2019? "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for all He has done."

*"Our heavenly Father waits to bestow upon us the fullness of His blessing. It is our privilege to drink largely at the fountain of boundless love. What a wonder it is that we pray so little! God is ready and willing to hear the sincere prayer of the humblest of His children."*

– Ellen G White, *Steps To Christ* p. 94



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