

# Village Voice



February 2021

## Perfect!

by Pastor Jeff Kinne

*Perfect!* the masked woman declared. I grinned ear to ear under my mask. She was talking to me, about me. She was official-looking enough. It seemed verifiable proof. I'm perfect!

The announcement brought bizarre thoughts:

*I'm ready for life!*

A bit late for one nearly three score and six.

*I'm ready to do marriage right!*

At two score on that account, I'm late for that too.

*Ready for kids!*

I wish I would have been, but with four of the grand type, that one's long past me also.

*Finally ready for pastoral ministry!*

I pined.

*Perfect!* The nurse announced it as she gawked between readouts on two guns (actually infrared thermometers, but guns sounds more thrilling) being pulled away from my forehead.

*Perfect! I've never seen a PERFECT!*

She actually said those words! Unfortunately, she wasn't talking about readiness for life, marriage, kids or pastoring. She was marveling at matching digital readouts. Both guns displayed the same—96.5. She'd never seen it before. That's what was *PERFECT!* Not me. Ugg!

Dola, my favorite mother-in-law, and her favorite son-in-law had just passed through the foyer doors of the Walla Walla University Church office complex. We were numbers 346 and 347 of 1,200 rapid responders to the "pop-up" COVID-19 vaccine outreach initiated by Walla

Inspire



Connect



Inform



Walla Department of Community Health and Providence St. Mary Medical Center on January 18. We were both appreciative of the resourceful team at the University Church that helped make it happen and extremely grateful to the scientists whose labor and brains made the first dose of the Pfizer vaccine possible as well as to the local medical personnel administering it.

But I was still pondering those first words.

*Perfect! I've never seen a PERFECT!*



Neither had I, especially in the mirror. Jesus is perfect, but no other human has been or will be until the great day when Christ makes us all, living and dead children of God, completely new.

But I'm still grateful, daily. Grateful that while I anticipate complete perfection by Divine finale, I can celebrate declared perfection today in heaven, in Christ, through Christ—"fully mature (perfect) in Christ" (Colossians 1:28 NIV) and ever-growing maturity on earth, empowered by His Spirit within.

That declaration of God in heaven for me and His work in my person through Christ does not create laziness in me about His calling. In fact, that merciful and gracious divine work moves me to diligence for Christ. Paul described this in his letter to Philippi:



"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:12-14 NIV).

Someday, by God's gift, we will hear the word, *Perfect!* from Someone who really knows and matters. It won't be in response to matching readouts from digital thermometers. It will be the welcome of our Savior whose perfection made us perfect.

That's the prize God calls us to in Jesus. It brings gratitude every today and joy anticipating every tomorrow. Celebrate it!

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**Jeff Kinne**

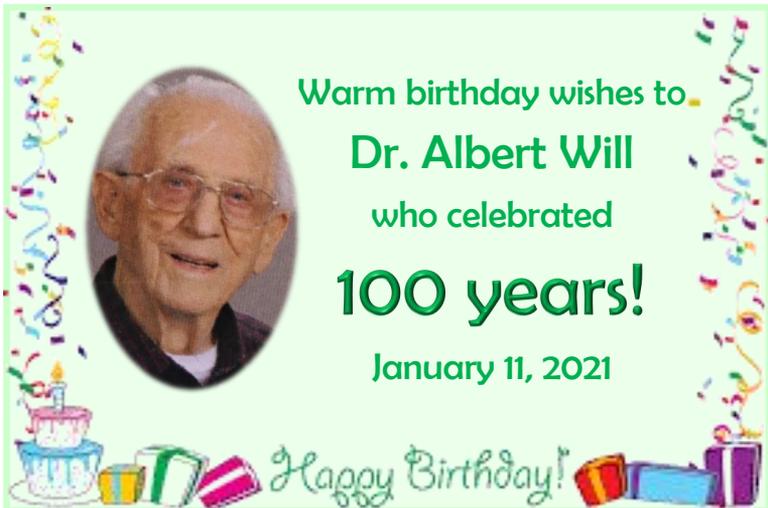


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“Brethren and sisters, it is by beholding that we become changed. By dwelling upon the love of God and our Saviour, by contemplating the perfection of the divine character and claiming the righteousness of Christ as ours by faith, we are to be transformed into the same image. Then let us not gather together all the unpleasant pictures—the iniquities and corruptions and disappointments, the evidences of Satan’s power—to hang in the halls of our memory, to talk over and mourn over until our souls are filled with discouragement. A discouraged soul is a body of darkness, not only failing himself to receive the light of God, but shutting it away from others. Satan loves to see the effect of the pictures of his triumphs, making human beings faithless and disheartened.”

—Ellen G. White, *Counsels to the Church*, p. 80

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# Paul Abrams Celebrates 101 Years of Life!

by Marv and Wanda Hansen



Paul, pictured here with caregiver Wanda Hansen, turns 101 on January 31



Paul Abrams was born January 31, 1920, at the beginning of the "Roaring 20's" and grew up in the Midwest. He was drafted into the United States Army and served during World War II, mainly stateside but was shipped to the Philippines toward the end of the war, where he was honorably discharged.

Some interesting facts from his lifetime:



Most common entertainment: Listening to the radio

Rent for an apartment: \$15 per month

2 story home purchase price: \$6,000



New Chevrolet car: \$525

Gasoline: \$.30 per gal

1/2 Gal of milk: \$.30

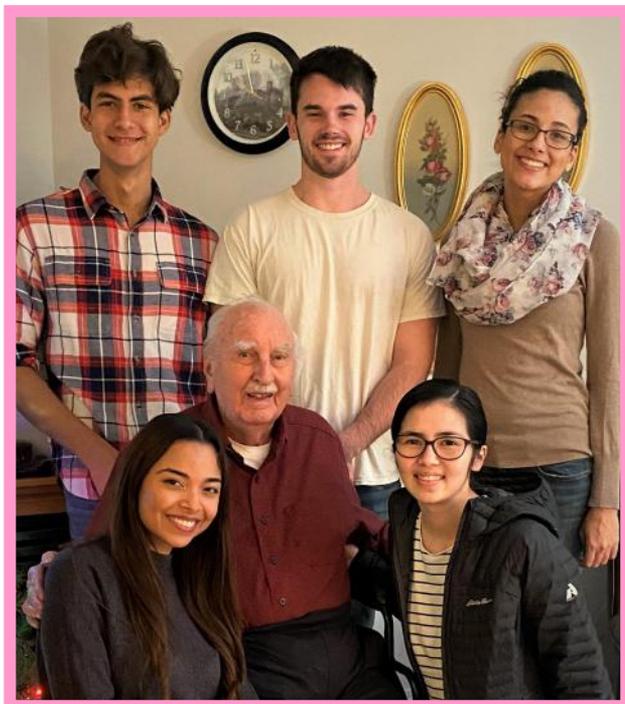
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Paul celebrated his birthday in the company of his youthful caregivers (clockwise from top left)

Tobin Kearns, Caleb Sewell, Eliana Kearns,  
Mariana Nobuhara, and Katherine Ayerdis



Happy Birthday, Paul!

# Sunset Promises

by Kiersten Ekkens

Even the caress of raindrops on my skin and the warm bundle of fur in my arms weren't enough to break through the icy stone ramparts around my heart. It had been a tough week, and God seemed very far away. His promises seemed cold and impersonal and meant for someone actually worthy of His benevolence. I knew only too well all the times I had slipped up during the past few days, and each time my doubting heart added more stones to that wall between Him and me.

Rex demanded down and I lowered him to the ground without even thinking. His ears flicked against the raindrops peppering his little black coat. I giggled. Such a wet kitten for one who hated water! He ran around the house, seeking shelter under the bushes from the cheerful drops. I followed at a somewhat slower pace, and then I saw it. Golden sun had broken through the clouds, glowing through the quickening drizzle. Against the mountains, dark clouds, and clear blue sky, the light shattered through a million drops, painting a vivid arch of promise.

I looked down to where a little kitten was vigorously sharpening his claws on my shoes and scooped him up. We stood there together in the rain watching the glory unfold all around us. To the west the golden sky shone





brighter, above us the blue heavens glowed deeper, and the eastern sky held a perfect double rainbow. My thoughts strayed back only a few months to when I had been begging God for a kitten, and I believed He would lead me to the perfect one even though it seemed like an impossibility then. Now, faced with other darker impossibilities, I realized the tokens of God's answers to prayer and His promises that never fail.

But that wasn't all. The rain slowed, though the rainbow still hung over the snowcapped mountains. The setting sun turned the clouds to orange and crimson and the flaming sky began to melt those stones between me and God. And I began to realize the foolishness of questioning God's promises. He can paint the sky perfectly, He can give me the perfect kitten, He can do anything He promises He will do.

But that wasn't all. The rain slowed, though

**Kiersten Ekkens**



**Oliver King, son of Benjamin and Maria King, was baptized by Pastor Solis December 26, 2020.**



**God bless you, Oliver!**

# Village Church Television Ministries

by Elizabeth Travis

The COVID-19 virus has led to some difficult adjustments, forcing people to change their habits and make difficult decisions. However, through all the chaos of 2020, there's been one thing people can rely on every week—the Village Church service on Sabbath morning.



With many people currently unable to attend church in person, live broadcasts from Blue Mountain Television and YouTube have been a blessing now more than ever, bringing the

**Lowell Mann**

Village Church service to people all over the area.



But a lot more goes into the televised church service than most viewers ever see. This ministry requires preparation, dedication, hard work, and a whole lot of prayer to bring Village Church to people every week. And no one is more aware of this than Lowell Mann, the producer.

“We have a very dedicated crew who put their heart and soul into this ministry. We couldn't broadcast without them.... It's not about what we do but what God does through us for the furtherance of His kingdom.”

The crew starts with a Thursday evening meeting to go over all the details of the week's church service, learn who will be giving the prayer, music, and scripture, and coordinating the audio so each one knows what his or her job will be.

On Sabbath, the technical director arrives at 10 a.m. and begins setting up equipment while the graphics are being

## Lowell at the sound board



put in order. The floor director coordinates everyone on stage and last-minute changes are made. The crew all have a prayer before cameras go on, asking God to help them reach people through this media ministry. The crew set up their camera shots, everyone gets in place and, at 11 a.m. precisely, they are ready to broadcast Village Church to the world at large.



**Bruce Mooney at the controls**

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A thousand tiny things go into making sure the broadcast runs smoothly. Like everyone else, the television crew has had to make adjustments for the new COVID-19 regulations such as changing the camera angles so the plexiglass in front of the pulpit doesn't cause a glare, or prerecording musical pieces since there can only be two people on the platform at a time. But overall, the

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**Camera operator Allan Payne**



television crew has continued in their mission to bring God's message of love to people all over the area.

"COVID has changed many things in our lives, including the way we do church," says Lowell Mann. "Ministries like VCTV are more crucial in these trying times. I do not doubt that more people are watching our service on BMT or online each week than are physically in the church each Sabbath.

I want to thank the church for their prayers and support over the years. I ask for continued prayers and support as our cameras are in dire need of an upgrade."

We are grateful for the dedication of the film crew and look forward to keeping up Village Church Television Ministries for many years to come.

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**Beth Travis**



## *Coming Soon—Winter Vespers Series*

**What:** be inspired by beautiful music, uplifted with hopeful words, and encouraged through fellowship with one another.

**Where:** Village Church Sanctuary

**When:** Sabbaths, 4:30 p.m. beginning Feb. 20

**Who:** Matt and Josie Minikus will be the featured musical artists at our first Winter Vespers. [www.mattandjosie.minikus](http://www.mattandjosie.minikus) Some may remember this wonderful young couple and their beautiful music from an inspirational concert they presented several years ago at Village. Other presenters will be announced in coming weeks. We look forward to enjoying this time of spiritual inspiration with you!

## 2021 Pathfinder Bible Experience

by Pastor Jeff Kinne



**S**abbath afternoon, January 16, one team from our Waiilatpu Pathfinder Club tied for first place in the 2021 Pathfinder Bible Experience. Congratulations!

The annual event had fewer churches represented this year because of a reduced number of Pathfinder clubs currently meeting due to COVID-19 concerns. However, Waiilatpu Pathfinders were represented by two teams. Way to go!



**Team 1 with Trina McCoon**

Pathfinder Bible Experience teams were asked 90 questions (worth 1–5 points) about the biblical books of Hebrews, first and second Peter, James, and the comments from the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary on these particular books. Questions were not only challenging mentally but also relevant spiritually.

Pathfinder club meetings, Waiilatpu Bible Experience Coach Trina McCoon met with team members nearly every Monday since September. This huge undertaking also included weekly assignments, daily personal study and memorization of assigned Bible books and chapters.



**Team 2 with Trina McCoon**

Waiilatpu Team 1 participants were Eleanor Jeffery, Brianna Fabian, Dixie Kinney. Team 2 participants were Myrantha Mellish, Jazmine Snider-Holliday, Christina Snider, Allen Ibarra-Sanchez, Yohanna Ibarra-Sanchez.

Waiilatpu Team 1 and the Milton Rangers team tied for first place and both advance to the Conference Level Bible Experience in February. First place from the UCC Bible Experience moves on to the North Pacific Union and ultimately to the North American Division Pathfinder Bible Experience.

**Jeff Kinne**

Congratulations to all the Waiilatpu Pathfinders who participated and thanks to Coach Trina McCoon! And Godspeed to Team 1 as you continue to the Conference level.





## A Sincere Thanks by Pastor Jeff Kinne



Your sacrificial contributions to the Village Church Budget exceeded our 2020 goal by nearly \$10,000. Praise God! In a year of unprecedented challenges for all of us, we closed our financial books with a greater surplus than we have experienced in eleven years. Praise God! Thank you, Village members!

Just as exciting, 47 people newly joined the Church Budget giving team of 361 families in this effort. Nearly 20,000 dollars were contributed by folks for whom we had no prior record of supporting the Village Church ministry. Praise God! These new contributors were the catalyst that helped us finish the year in God-honoring fashion. Praise Him! Additionally, the new contributors have begun to experience the joy of teamwork in God's kingdom. Nothing compares to knowing that the resources of one's life are furthering God's work on earth in the very place where you're planted. These financial resources will enable us to continue to spread the good news of God's love in the Walla Walla Valley, to support Christian education, Sabbath Schools for children and adults, Vacation Bible School, Pathfinder, Adventurer, and Eager Beaver Clubs, health and wellness programming, winsome literature distribution, community outreach activities, discipleship training programs and much more.

It was this kind of giving that caused the apostle Paul to pen this praise: "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift" (2 Corinthians 9:15 NKJV).

With that flourish the apostle Paul finished his commendation to the church in Corinth for their generous support in behalf of beleaguered and destitute believers in Jerusalem. Their generosity, says Paul, not only supplied desperately needed assistance, but also created a chorus of praise to God that has reverberated ever since. God was praised because of their generous giving. People marveled at the unprecedented overflow. It evidenced, witnessed to God's goodness because such liberality is not natural. It pointed to the life-transforming work of God within.

So too with you, Village Church. God bless you all!

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**Jeff Kinne**





**by Heidi Duffield**

GYC-Northwest is coming to Village Church this March! Programming will start Wednesday evening, March 24, and go through Sunday morning, March 28. Our theme “Why Do We Wait?” is based on Joshua 18:3. “Then Joshua asked them, “How long are you going to wait before taking possession of the remaining land the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has given to you?” (NLT). Through messages from our presenters, personal testimonies from our team, seeking God in prayer, and fellowshiping together, we will explore practical ways to take possession of the promises of God.

GYC-NW is a young adult led, non-profit organization that seeks to provide a platform for fellowship, worship, and inspiration especially for ages 18-35, though all are welcome. You can think of us as a winter camp meeting. We seek to be a resource to bring young adults and ministries together and to inspire young adults to actively bring their friends, family, and neighbors to Jesus.

GYC-NW was privileged to experience Village Church’s hospitality in 2018, and we are happy to be back. I am excited about GYC-NW because I see it filling a gap in fellowship and spiritual renewal. A gap which many young people have experienced this past year. Register for the event or contact us at [www.gycnorthwest.org](http://www.gycnorthwest.org) Alternatively, you can stop me at church and ask any questions you may have. Bring a friend, and I hope to see you there!

Heidi Duffield is a member of Village Church and serves as President of GYC-NW.

**Heidi Duffield**



## Cindy's Corner

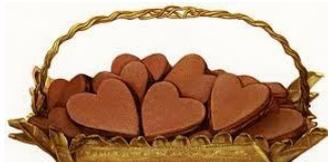
### Crispy Oat Crackers turned into Valentine Treats

1 cup chopped dates (Medjool dates work best)  
1/3 cup boiling water

Pour boiling water over chopped dates and let it set while you make the cracker dough.

1 cup hot water  
1/4 cup avocado oil  
1/4 cup honey

Shake hot water, oil and honey together well in a covered pint jar.



4 cups quick oats  
1 cup unsweetened finely ground coconut (or ground walnuts for higher protein with healthy omega-3 fats)  
1 teaspoon salt

Mix quick oats, coconut and salt together in mixing bowl and pour hot water/oil/honey mixture over it, stirring well. Let set for 15 to 20 minutes. Press cracker dough onto waxed paper dusted with flour. Sprinkle rolling pin with flour and roll dough out on waxed paper to about 1/16 inch thick. Cut into heart shapes using cookie cutters. Bake at 325 on Pam-sprayed cookie sheets for 12 minutes or until golden brown. While crackers cool, mash the dates with fork or potato masher until smooth. Spread a thin layer of date mixture on a heart-shaped cookie and cover, sandwich style, with another cracker. Your kids will love this healthy valentine treat.

You can use ground walnuts instead of the ground coconut to make delicious whole grain crackers and flavor them with onion and/or garlic powder mixed with the dry ingredients. They are wonderful crackers to take on a trip because they travel well and the healthy fat in the walnuts and fiber in the oatmeal stretches out the time it takes to metabolize so you can reach the destination or your next real meal without getting hungry.

Cindy Walikonis



Dear Village Voice readers,

Have you noticed the pattern in conspiracy theories? There's something dangerous "out there" of which the majority of people are unaware. But you can escape if you listen to someone "in the know" and follow instructions.

How closely this pattern mimics and mocks the message of Christianity. There IS something dangerous and deadly, it's called sin, and an adversary "seeking whom he may devour" (I Peter 5:8). You CAN be rescued and escape the danger if you listen to Someone in the know and do what He says.

Here's the difference. Conspiracies are all about self-preservation while Jesus is about self-sacrifice and surrender.

When I was a child, I learned that we kneel, bow our heads, fold our hands, and close our eyes during prayer because that is the posture of reverence. It is also a posture of surrender. No weapon in the



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**Karen Ekkens**



hands, no eye on the enemy, no way to rapidly run and escape. Surrender. Surrender to Jesus. He is the only way to safety.

God bless you!  
*Karen Ekkens, editor*

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### Staff

Editor: Karen Ekkens  
Assistant Editors: Carolyn Gaskell  
Terry Koch  
Contributing Writer: Beth Travis  
Design/Layout: Karen Ekkens  
Mail Team Coordinator: Kathy Hazen

Email:  
[village.voice@villageadventist.org](mailto:village.voice@villageadventist.org)

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Marv Hansen, pp. 4, 5  
Kiersten Ekkens, pp. 6, 7  
Karen Ekkens, pp. 8, 9  
Courtesy VCTV, pp. 7, 8  
Michael Jeffery, pp. 10, 11

### College Place Village Church

Address: 715 SE 12th Street  
College Place, WA 99324

Phone: 509-525-0882  
FAX: 509-525-0883