

get connected

We connect people to Jesus and equip them to be his disciples.



A Word for 2024

by Pastor Nate Crandall

The word the Lord placed on my heart for 2023 was PRAYER. This year seems like more of the same with a little twist. The words “Intentional Outreach/Prevailing Prayer” have been ringing in my soul. Let me share a little with you about what that means.

By intentional outreach I am not referring to a program or a ministry of the church. I am talking about our church family as individuals intentionally crossing barriers, whether real or imaginary, for the sake of the Lord. These barriers can be present in an existing relationship. For example, there are those with whom we interact regularly that we don’t have spiritual conversations with. This is a barrier that can be crossed, but we must intentionally purpose to have those conversations. Some barriers exist with those we don’t know or don’t know well. Expanding our network of relationships in the direction that the Spirit will lead us can be a scary thought, but it can also be an exciting new adventure. If we are going to be the light of the world, then we must shine bright enough for people to see. This requires relationship development, and in order to do that, we must be intentional.

Wayne Gretzky, the great hockey player, was quoted as saying, “You miss 100% of the shots you

don’t take.” He first heard that quote from a coach of his who was frustrated over his lack of scoring in an important game. We can take from this bit of wisdom and apply it to expanding our connections with people. There are “shots” that we can take to break down barriers with others. In hockey, some shots are not taken because the chance of succeeding is zero. However, some players, like Gretzky when he was younger, wait for the perfect shot, and the perfect shot rarely shows itself. Crossing barriers can look as simply as complimenting a person or giving a smile or doing an act of kindness. The important part is being intentional.

Prevailing prayer builds on the work the Lord began last year. Prevailing refers to being diligent in our prayers. We must see success in prayer not so much by determining that we receive what we ask for, but by consistently growing in the habits of prayer. We must prevail against our own sinful nature and against the devil. These do not want us to pray. These are the enemies we fight against. Let us seek renewal in our efforts in prayer. Prayer does take work, and we must work at it. Thank the Lord, he gives us supernatural strength to prevail in prayer!



January 2024

Inside this issue:

5 Simple Prayers for the New Year	2
Milton Night of Prayer and Worship	2
New Sabbath School Classes	3
SDB Winter Virtual Delegate Forum	3
SDB World Federation Week of Prayer	3
You Just Never Know	4-5
Bulletin Board	6
Calendar	7



5 Simple Prayers for the New Year

reprinted from Christianity.com

New Year prayers focus on gratitude for the past year, seeking guidance for the coming year, and asking for God's blessings. The arrival of a new year brings a great opportunity to renew our faith and love for God. It's also an excellent time to renew the joy of salvation in our hearts as a new creation in Christ. (*2 Corinthians 5:17*)

Whether this past year brought you success, fulfillment, and joy, or you faced grief, setbacks, and struggle, you can look ahead to the new year with hope. (*Jeremiah 29:11*) Here are some prayers for the New Year in 2024:

Thanksgiving Prayer: Heavenly Father, as we stand on the threshold of a new year, we want to express our deepest gratitude for the blessings of the past year. Thank you for your faithfulness, your love, and your constant presence in our lives. We acknowledge your sovereignty over the days gone by and the days yet to come.

Guidance Prayer: Lord, as we enter into the unknown of the coming year, we ask for your guidance and wisdom. Illuminate our path with your light so that we may walk in your ways and make choices that align with your will. Help us to seek first your kingdom and trust that all other things will be added unto us.

Renewal Prayer: Gracious God, we come before you seeking renewal in the new year. Renew our minds, our hearts, and our spirits. May we be transformed by the power of your Holy Spirit, leaving behind the old and embracing the new that you have in store for us.

Strength Prayer: Heavenly Father, as we face the challenges of the coming year, grant us strength and courage. Help us to rely on your mighty power and to find our refuge in you. May we be steadfast in our faith, knowing that you are our rock and our fortress.

Prayer for Others: Lord, as we

embark on this new year, we lift up to you our loved ones, our communities, and the world. May your peace reign in our hearts and in the hearts of all people. Bring healing where there is brokenness and reconciliation where there is division.

Let's end 2023 with a thankful heart and start the new year with peace and faith. Let us release the bitterness and frustrations of the past year. Let us move into 2024 knowing God loves us and wants the best for us. Let's pray that the new year will be focused on healing ourselves through repentance and renewing our minds. We were not meant to do life alone! We can bring the light of hope into our own hearts, home, and world.

"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." ~ Romans 12:2



Milton Night of Prayer and Worship

Come together with the greater Body of Christ to start out the year in worship and prayer! The idea for this gathering was formed as a few of the pastor's in Milton saw a need for the Church to seek God together for revival and for his presence.

Friday night, January 5th from 6:30-8:00 pm at the Milton United Methodist Church. Worship will be led by the Chapel. Pastor Nate will be speaking on prayer. Everyone who wants to will be prayed for.



Welcoming the LGBT+ Community into our Lives with Grace and Truth

In the Great Commission, Jesus commands us to make disciples of *all* people. As followers of Jesus, how do we welcome our LGBT+ family, friends and neighbors in love and truth? This is a front and center issue in our culture. How do we find this balance as ambassadors of Jesus? Join us for this vital two session Sabbath School discussion on January 6th and 13th from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. Facilitator: Linda Lyke

"Whole Disciples for Broken Times" Sabbath School Class starting on January 20th

To be vital in our changing world, followers and disciples of Jesus Christ need to seek maturity. Spiritual maturity is a whole-life concept which is not relegated to just our beliefs – it also extends to our thoughts, actions, and emotions. Following interest around the book *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, by Peter Scazzero, we will explore how to pursue full maturity in our spiritual lives by exploring what it means to be emotionally healthy in them using Scazzero's book as a starting place.

Scazzero suggests that it is impossible to be spiritually mature while being emotionally immature. In this class, facilitated by Nick Kersten, we will strive together to address how to engage our God-given humanity and the emotions we all experience in ways that are healthy for us and the people around us without excusing sin or spiritualizing emotional immaturity. The class will begin on January 20th and end on May 18th, Sabbath mornings during the Grow Group time. We invite you to join us!

2024 Winter Virtual Delegate Forum

The Winter Virtual Delegate Forum is a virtual assembly of individuals from Member Churches of the SDB General Conference USA & Canada to gather together to receive information and updates from the General Council & Conference Directors and give feedback to the General Council & Conference Directors.

When: January 7, 2024 @ 1:00 p.m. Central Time

Where: On Zoom. Registration required at <http://tinyurl.com/59sdwn5e>

Who: Anybody who is participating in a Member or Candidate Church of the SDB General Conference USA & Canada

SDB World Federation Week of Prayer January 7-13, 2024

Booklets in the
Welcome Center

During the first full week of January since 1967, Seventh Day Baptists around the world have come together in prayer, sharing theme-focused meditations chosen by the author of the SDB Week of Prayer booklet. The theme for this year is

*"You, Then,
You Will Pray Like This."*

You Just Never Know

by Deirdre Camenga

Preface: One of our goals in the Awana ministry this year is for leaders to deliberately talk with the children about what they personally BELIEVE about trusting in Jesus, the Bible and walking with God and relate these to scripture. One of our leaders, Deirdre Camenga, did exactly that this fall as our 1st graders were memorizing Psalm 23. I asked her to share with you all how she was able to do just that and help these very young children how this Psalm applies to their lives as 6 and 7 year olds. – Angie Mullen, Awana Ministry Director

You just never know what God will do.

It was “Wear Purple Night” at AWANA to remember 2 little grade schoolers in the Milton School District: Nicolas who is awaiting a heart transplant and Charley who recently underwent the amputation of one of her legs as part of her cancer treatment plan. Hard stuff for littles to face. We wore purple to show support and to remind us to pray.

As I stood looking at our little 1st grade, purple clad Sparkies, I had an overwhelming prompt to speak to them about our Elizabeth, who at the age of 7 faced scary open heart surgery.

“Coincidentally,” we were

spending a few weeks helping the kiddos learn and understand Psalm 23. Also, “coincidentally,” Elizabeth had learned Psalm 23 as a little Sparky. (Eric and I knew we couldn’t calm her in the deep places of her soul. We knew that only God could do that. So, we sought ways to help her work Psalm 23 into her terrifying reality.) That particular evening, I briefly spoke to them about Elizabeth’s experience. At the suggestion of both Kathy Crandall, my fellow Sparky leader, and Angie Mullen, I agreed to talk more in depth the following week.



During the week, I retrieved a few items to use as visuals: Elizabeth’s scrapbook with photos before and after her surgery, the shepherd’s staff Eric made for her, and a pillowcase her Grandma and I made which was embroidered with Psalm 23. My goal was to take the kiddos on Elizabeth’s surgery journey – to help them see how God used Psalm 23 in a powerful way. I hoped and prayed they’d understand that scripture is relevant. It’s not just words to be memorized. God uses His word to speak comfort and courage to us.

Armed with my props, I stood

before a combined group of 1st and 2nd grade Sparkies. I explained that as a Sparky their age, Elizabeth had learned Psalm 23. God used it to help her face this very scary operation. She learned by experience that He was with her as she “walked through the valley of the shadow of death.” It was a serious operation. The surgeon actually had to stop her heart so he could fix it. Without the surgery, she would die. That was Elizabeth’s sobering reality.

As I held up the shepherd’s staff, I explained that just as shepherds use their crook at the end of the staff to draw sheep close to them, so Jesus drew and kept Elizabeth close to Him.

As I held up the pillowcase, I explained that, in the hospital, Elizabeth rested her head on Psalm 23.

Next, I held up the scrapbook and page by page walked the Sparkies through Elizabeth’s open heart surgery journey.

Preoperative photos included Tacy sitting on the gurney next to Elizabeth



as they rode together down to the operating room. I pointed out Lovie Lamb, a stuffed animal Elizabeth clung to, which reminded her she was God’s

You Just Never Know, *continued*

little lamb. He was her Shepherd and He was caring for her. I told them that if they were to ask Elizabeth if she was scared before her surgery, she would say “The night before, I was terrified. But the morning of the surgery, I felt the deepest peace I’ve ever felt. It was the perfect gift.”

The Sparkies “joined” Elizabeth, just out of recovery, before she headed to the ICU. I pointed out the anesthesiologist who held a black bag that he used to breathe for her. They saw Lovie Lamb at the foot of her bed.

Post-op photos followed. Elizabeth’s first stop = the ICU with all manner of tubes and wires and monitors. They could see that the first couple of days Elizabeth did not feel very well. I fielded lots of questions like, “What’s that wire? Why is her skin orange? What are all those lines? (Reference to her heart and respirations monitor).



A couple days later, the Sparkies watched Elizabeth walking laps with her IV pole in tow. They liked the photos of Elizabeth and her bestie, who had come to play foosball. I also pointed out the photos in which Elizabeth rested her head on the Psalm 23 pillowcase.

The Sparkies really took note of her incision. I told them that the incision has since healed, but she still bears the scar. In fact, every time she gets dressed, she sees the scar and is reminded that God, her Shepherd, walked with her through the surgery and took care of her. I showed them a post-op photo of Elizabeth next to her surgeon, whom God used to heal her heart. (Elizabeth was holding Lovie Lamb).



They enjoyed the photos of Lovie Lamb’s x-ray and Lovie Lamb with a pulse-ox device on her little foot.



They had lots of questions for me that evening. Each photo prompted many questions.

I told them that Elizabeth had a lot of people praying for her before, during and after her surgery, just like we have been praying for Nicolas and Charley. The prayers of our friends helped and encouraged us just like our prayers help Nicolas and Charley. God hears. God listens. God cares.

I told them that now Elizabeth is a doctor who helps other people get better. Kathy asked if that’s one of the reasons why she became a doctor. In part, yes, because of the good

care she received. (A side note: Elizabeth’s cardiologist for nearly 20 years ‘hooded her’ when she graduated from medical school 18 years after her surgery. “Coincidentally,” he was celebrating 50 years since graduating from the same medical school.)

In the moments, hours and even days after walking those Sparkies through Elizabeth’s journey through the ‘valley of the shadow of death’, I experienced some wonderings. Did those little Sparkie truly grasp that God uses His word to speak to us of His love and care? Did they begin to understand that God’s word can be trusted to do as it says? They are not just words to be memorized. Did they truly see how God used Psalm 23 in little Elizabeth’s life and He longs to use it in their lives as well?

The answer, of course, is sometimes we just never know, just like I didn’t know God would use Elizabeth’s heart surgery journey to encourage Sparkies 23 years later. However, God doesn’t ask me to know the exact workings of His plan. He only asks me to trust that He faithfully IS working His plan. He asks me to be sensitive to His prompts and trust Him for the results. Just because I never know, does not mean He doesn’t know.



- 3 Phil & Lois Watson
- 4 Ryan Holbrook
- 6 Sophia Kersten
- 6 Jeremy Lade
- 8 Amanda Sykora
- 8 Doneta Osborn
- 8 Nate Crandall
- 8 David St. Clair
- 8 Elijah Geske
- 10 Addison Pethtel
- 17 Sondra Muench
- 23 Katie Lubke
- 23 Kathleen & Ryan Holbrook
- 24 Josiah Lubke
- 25 Lillian Holbrook
- 26 Jim Lyke
- 27 Barbara Jones
- 30 Verne Wright



Annual Meeting
Sunday,
January 21, 2024,
9:00 a.m.

Pick up an Annual Report in the Welcome Center after January 13th.



Ladies Sit 'n Sip
 Tuesday, January 9,
 9:00 a.m. at Sharla's



Church Photo Directory

We will be publishing a new Church Directory for 2024 in late January. If you would like to be included, please stop by the Welcome Center and add your information to the list or email the church office. Please submit updated pictures at churchoffice@miltonsdb.org.

January – Awana	
3	Club
10	Club
17	Club – Beach Party Night
25	Club
31	Club – Valentines for Seniors

January – Collision	
3	Bible Study @ The Ice ShanTea (4:30-6) Collision @ Camp Wakonda
8	Roller Skating with Koinonia Youth Ministries
10	Bible Study @ The Ice ShanTea (4:30-6) Collision @Camp Wakonda
17	Bible Study @ The Ice ShanTea (4:30-6) Collision @Camp Wakonda – PIZZA Night
25	Bible Study @ The Ice ShanTea (4:30-6) Collision @Camp Wakonda
31	Bible Study @ The Ice ShanTea (4:30-6) Collision @Camp Wakonda

January Children's Church

January 6
Unit 19: Session 3
 Jesus Was Baptized
 (Matthew 3, Mark 1)

January 20
Unit 19: Session 4
 Jesus Was Tempted
 (Matthew 4, Luke 4)

Focus on Funds

as of November 30, 2023

General Fund Balance	\$ 9,599.28
Cash at Mem. Fund	\$26,472.90
Nov. Undesignated Inc.	\$15,664.44
Nov. Total Income	\$20,325.95
Nov. Expenses	\$25,281.31
Denomination Giving YTD	\$ 5,210.00
Capital Campaign Fund	\$ 9,724.38

January 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat																
	1 	2 7:00 Scouts	3 6:30 Men's Bible Study - Sharla's 9:30 Women's Bible Study - In person/ zoom 4:30 Youth Bible Study - The Ice ShanTea 6:25 Awana 6:30 Collision	4	5 6:30 Milton Night of Prayer and Worship - United Methodist Church	6 9:00 Sabbath School 10:30 Worship and Children's Church																
7 1:00 SDB Winter Virtual Delegate Forum	8 8:00 TOPS <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; width: fit-content;"> SDB World Federation Week of Prayer - Jan. 7-13 </div>	9 9:00 Ladies Sit 'n Sip - Sharla's 7:00 Scouts	10 6:30 Men's Bible Study - Sharla's 9:30 Women's Bible Study - In person/ zoom 4:30 Youth Bible Study - The Ice ShanTea 6:25 Awana 6:30 Collision	11	12	13 9:00 Sabbath School 10:30 Worship																
14	15 8:00 TOPS	16 7:00 Scouts	17 6:30 Men's Bible Study - Sharla's 9:30 Women's Bible Study - In person/ zoom 4:30 Youth Bible Study - The Ice ShanTea 6:25 Awana 6:30 Collision	18	19	20 9:00 Sabbath School 10:30 Worship and Children's Church																
21 9:00 Church Annual 	22 8:00 TOPS	23 7:00 Scouts	24 6:30 Men's Bible Study - Sharla's 9:30 Women's Bible Study - In person/ zoom 4:30 Youth Bible Study - The Ice ShanTea 6:25 Awana 6:30 Collision	25	26	27 9:00 Sabbath School 10:30 Worship																
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January
2024

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pastornate@miltonsdb.org

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Pastor John Pethtel
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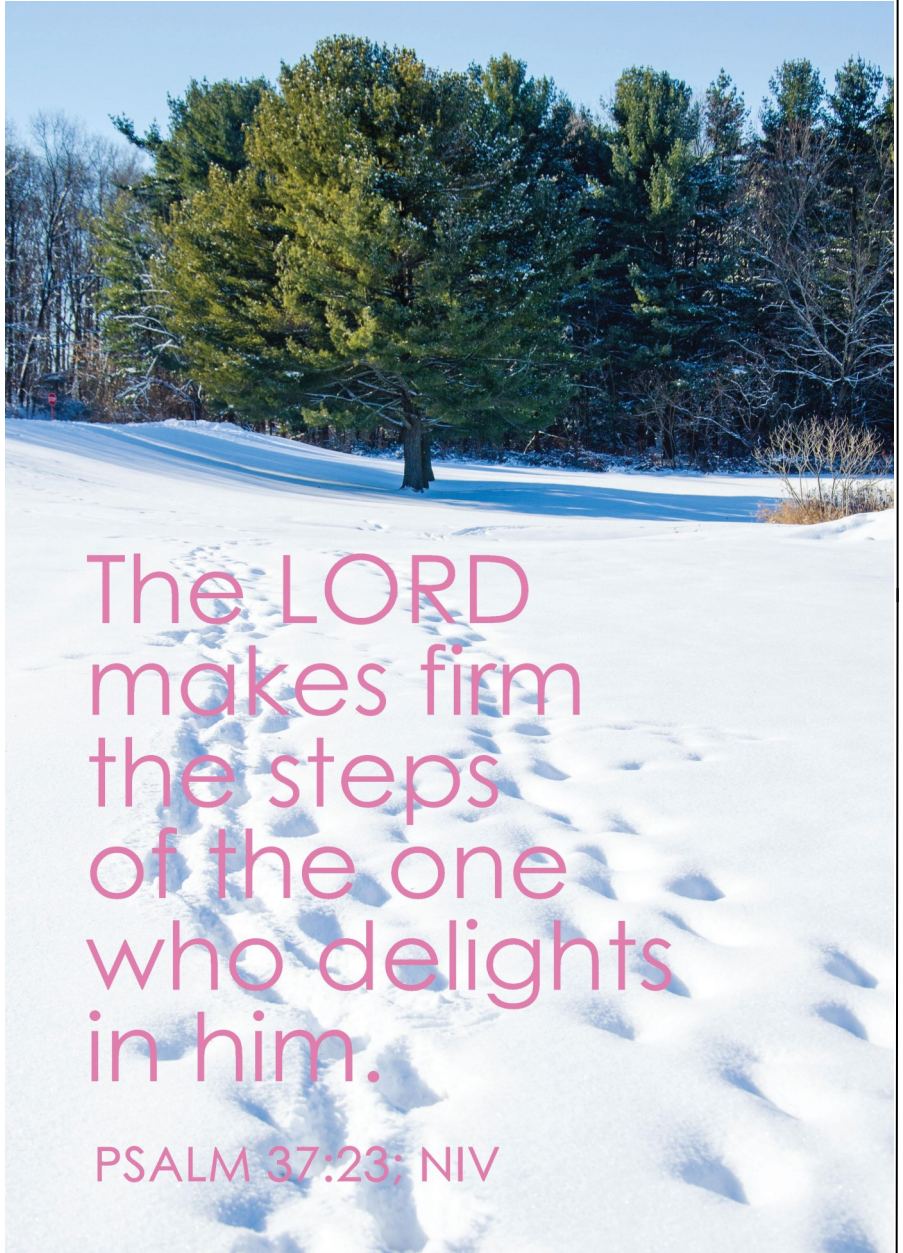
Administrator: Janet Butler
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asmullen92@gmail.com

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renee@miltonsdb.org

Outreach Coordinator:
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lykelinda@miltonsdb.org

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Online Worship

Our Sabbath morning worship service is available **live** on our YouTube channel. Go to <http://TheConnecting.Church/WorshipOnline> for the link. We are also posting links to the sermon notes on that same page.