

Navajo News



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Bringing the Gospel of Jesus to the Navajo

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May 2025

La Vida Native Campmeeting Back after Six Years

It was in the spring of 2019 when a Native Campmeeting in La Vida was held with Elder Ed Barnett, then President of the Rocky Mountain Conference, as our guest speaker. Then the COVID pandemic hit and shut down everything in March of 2020, which aborted our planned Native Campmeeting. When the dark clouds of the COVID pandemic cleared up in 2023, we decided to host one but again, it did not materialize. Many of our native brothers and sisters were asking, "when are you gonna have campmeeting in La Vida, we miss the campmeeting there".

The evening of Sunday April 27, several hours after our 2025 Native Campmeeting concluded, feeling exhausted but extremely joyful, I dozed off before 7:00 p.m. but woke up in the middle of the night and while meditating about the recent event and waiting to fall back to sleep again, my heart started to sing "How can I say thanks..." Indeed, how can I say thanks to our God for making another Native Campmeeting possible after six years? How can I say thanks to Him for all the things He has done this week-end? Oh, how my heart praises Him for how He has made everything and every part of the program beautiful and a blessing to everyone.

This 2025 Native Campmeeting theme was "Jesus is Coming, I Will Go Reach My World", in conjunction with the World Church emphasis on preparing for Jesus Second Coming and going out to prepare others for His soon return. We were very blessed to have Dr. Rick Remmers, Assistant to the President of the North American Division and in-charge of NAD Native Ministries, as our God providential and God-given speaker to spiritually grace the event. His uplifting, elevating messages and presentations and his pleasant and joyful presence and ministry have truly been a blessing to our souls and we surely praise God for sending him to us. We are also grateful to our La Vida Mission Board members who came, headed by our LVM Board President, Dr. Robert Gardner and his lovely wife Kimone and sister Kimberly, for equally gracing the event. And we surely thank God for our native and non-native members around the Navajo Reservation and beyond, who came and joined us. We had delegations from Monument Valley, Kayenta, Chinle, Kinlichee, Window Rock, Gallup, Crownpoint, Farmington, Albuquerque, Rio Rancho and community members around the Mission such as Lake Valley, Becenti, Whiterock, and Bisti.

During Sabbath the Church services catered to all age groups from one year old to the oldest member, through parallel programs for children, teens, youth and adults. During Sabbath School time in the adult division, we were blessed to hear three presenters who shared with us how we can go and reach people in our world for Jesus. Steve Pester, Dine Adventist Radio Network Manager, presented how we can share Him through the airwaves; Oliver Fulton, Elder of Chinle SDA Church, shared how we can reach and minister to the alcohol and substance-challenged and addicted individuals; while Rose Gomez, from Kinlichee-Window Rock, spoke about reaching people for Jesus at the Flea Markets and other Native Gatherings and everywhere else. As mentioned earlier, Pastor Remmers spiritually fed the adults during the Hour of Worship, with Elder Whitehorse translating in Navajo, while Mrs. Kimone Gardner provided nourishment from the Word of God to our children and teens.

Sabbath afternoon was highlighted by the baptism of perfect number 7 precious individuals; 4 La Vida students made ready by VJ & Beth and their dorm parents and 3 community members prepared by Dorie, Polly, Bob, Claire and the church outreach team. It was followed by Testimonies and Sharing time among the adult participants in the sanctuary; hiking for our



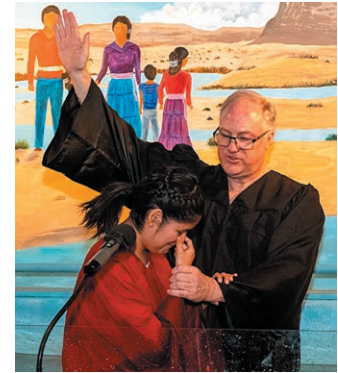
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junior and teen campers; and craft activities for our younger kids. Pastor Remmers gave his last presentation during the Sabbath sundown worship from the story of Samuel, giving us courage as "we go", to just listen to God and speak the message He want us to deliver and share with others and He will bless our efforts. But the campmeeting was not over yet. Saturday evening was for games, fun and relaxing time with young peoples' laughter filling the gym. The campmeeting concluded Sunday morning after breakfast in a combined devotional (closing for the campmeeting and opening for the La Vida Spring Board Meeting) with Dr. Robert Gardner, our Board president, as speaker, inspiring us to keep our dreams and hope alive in anticipation of Jesus' Second coming.

The group separated after devotional with the Board members going to the meeting and all the other campmeeting participants availing themselves of the La Vida Community Services Free Flea Market and a lunch of Navajo Tacos before heading home. Is your



I was blessed to see all 3 of our girls baptized and to tell them about Jesus and the love of everyone that came to the camp meeting renewed my faith. I needed that blessing.

- Renita, Girl's Dorm Parent

heart singing "How can I say thanks..." with me now? Amen, Praise the Lord!

- Dorie Panganiban, La Vida Mission SDA Church Head Elder and 2025 Native Campmeeting coordinator



Notes from the Fix It Shop

Hello Dear Brothers and Sisters!

La Vida Mission's Maintenance Team has BEEN BUSY! Spring has arrived; cold one day and hot the next but always windy. Arranging plans for the week has had to be flexible.

Some of the items the TEAM is working on: Repair of the sewer lift station beside the Older Boy's Dorm. (Thanks to Karl Schwinn, it is repaired now); replacing faucets and hose bibbs, sealing swamp cooler bases, trying to keep our old vehicles patched up and running, switching out broken dryers and refrigerators, trying to maintain our old commercial dishwasher...the list goes on and on.

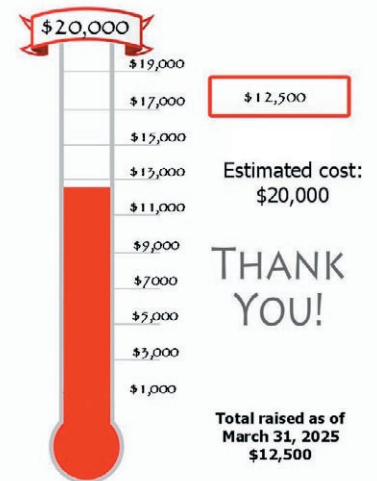
But, I have really great news! Thanks to you, prayers have been answered. As I said in the last newsletter, we are faced with a large project to repair the school's bathroom. I estimated we would need around \$20,000 for the project. As of today \$12,500 has been donated to this project. I am working with a Mission Group to come and to provide the actual labor for the project. Praise the Lord for answers to prayers and donations!

Another really great news item is that La Vida Mission won a Small Systems Water System Award for Excellence from the New Mexico Environment Department for all the work in bringing La Vida Mission into state compliance. This includes the new water storage tank and a newly configured Community Water Hydrant. I want to thank all of you who prayed and donated to this huge project!

On April 4, 2025, two representatives from the New Mexico Environment Department came to present the Source Water Protection Plan. This document was completed over several months by reviewing historical documents and La Vida's overall plan for continued protection of our well water. Several piles of rubbish were cleaned out of ravines that are considered "watershed" areas. I am now in the process of selling several of our old vehicles with the express intent to clear them out of the watershed and to garner enough to purchase a new-to-us student transport vehicle. As of now, we have only two vehicles that are running and are able to transport students. Please pray about this project.

Again, thank you so much for all your help, your prayers and donations. Without you, the Mission stands still in keeping up with projects across campus.

Happy Spring!
Lee McIntosh



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A Full and Fruitful April 12-13 Week-end

The month of April 2025 has been a really busy month at the Mission. It started on a full week-end of April 12-13 with Pastor Mike and Cathy Kissner, retired pastor and Community Services Director of the Rocky Mountain Conference respectively.



The Kissner couple are used to coming to La Vida Mission in the fall with a U-haul truck loaded with donations for the Mission that they gathered from the different churches in the Rocky Mountain Conference and they have been doing this hard labor of love for La Vida Mission for more than 30 years now. But on Sabbath of April 12, Pastor Mike came to officiate the ordination of church elders, deacons and deaconesses before preaching in La Vida Mission in the morning and in Crownpoint in the evening. The following day, Sunday, April 13, Cathy conducted the CPR/AED and Disaster Response and Donation Operations training seminar for mission staff and local church officers and some community members. A total of 18 participants finished the classes. Everybody in attendance was grateful for the knowledge received from the training and feel more confident as they get involved in the community services of the church and in being a disaster responder.



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- Dorie Panganiban



Positions Available:

Is the Lord touching your heart to step into full-time missions? We always need committed, mission-minded individuals to be a part of La Vida Mission. Currently we are looking for a maintenance manager and an office manager/bookkeeper. If you are interested in one of these or other possible positions, please contact Ms. Kim at 505-786-3004, email kim@lavidamission.org, or mail a letter of interest to PO Box 3308, Farmington, NM 87499.

Bulletin Board

Special Thanks to:

- Our Heavenly Father for providing our needs.
- Faithful donors who support LVM with prayers, financial and other donations (including Box Tops for Education).
- Student sponsors for their many contributions, prayers and letters.
- Echo Food bank, Farmington, NM for produce and other food items.
- Neal Kelley & Sharing Ministry for donations of produce and supplies.
- Donors/supporters of our Native Campmeeting.
- Centerville SDA Church Mission Group for toys for the toys for our students.
- James & Natalie Dodd for assorted stationery, socks and other items.
- Allen & Andrea Steele for bread & pastries for Campmeeting.
- Cheri Burkhalter for homemade bag for each girl in the dorm with Bible, lead pencil, socks, comb, hair tie and other items.

In Memory of

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|--|--------------------------------|
| George & Margaret Armstrong | by Lanny & Barbara Davis |
| Andrew Barbera | by John & Robin Korponay |
| Bern Bless | by Simon Elloway |
| Joanne Clifford | by John & Robin Korponay |
| Pastor Stephen Gillham | by William Bennett |
| Pastor Stephen Gillham | by Carol Gillham |
| Wayne Hyatt | by Lynette Hyatt |
| Luella Lamoreaux | by David & Nancy Lamoreaux |
| Art & Barry Lizer | by Oradelle Lizer |
| Jose A. Lopez | by Diane Lopez |
| Larry McCoy | by Nancy McCoy Wearer |
| Pat & Brenda McDonald | by Rhonda McDonald |
| O.V. Mills | by David & Elizabeth Johnston |
| Fleta Oliver | by Mr. & Mrs. Jack Wood |
| Cora Rickaby | by Jerry Rickaby |
| Dr. & Mrs. Leon Rittenhouse (my parents who served at La Vida) | by Lois Pecce |
| Emily Smith | by Douglas & Melody S. Wheeler |
| Kenneth Smith | by Lola Smith |
| Lance Turner | by Jim & Shirley Turner |
| Lydia Brooke Wood | by Mr. & Mrs. Jack Wood |

In Honor of

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|--|-----------------|
| Walter Maier | by Mabel Maier |
| My Former Students | by Gene O'Toole |
| Northern California Conference Pathfinders | by Don Smith |

Thank you to all of the donors who make a difference at La Vida!

Stories From Sabbath School

Picture a semicircle of small chairs around a felt board occupied by small children from infancy to 10 years old. They are looking expectantly at the teacher who holds a mirror while they sing:

“Who has come to Sabbath School? Shyla, Shyla. Who has come to Sabbath School? Shyla has!”

What are your memories of Sabbath School? The songs? The finger plays? The Bible stories and the crafts?

I don't have any memories because I never was in a Sabbath school or a Sunday school growing up. But a wonderful thing happened to me 55 years ago when I first went to church. I was invited to help in the children's Sabbath School. .

I had read the Bible all by myself prior to meeting other Christians, but I didn't even know the song, “Jesus Loves Me”. I had seen few pictures that many children might see growing up in a Christian home. After spending a year being mentored and nurtured there in South Texas, I went to Eden Valley, a self-supporting college-aged school. And, you guessed it, they put me in the children's Sabbath School to help!

When I came to La Vida Mission some 50 years later, in 2017. I was assigned the wonderful job of teaching the younger Sabbath School here.

On Sabbath April 26th, I had the joy of seeing two of the children that I've taught since kindergarten, both in our church school and Sabbath School, be baptized. Additionally two of our current Sabbath School students got baptized that day.

Shyla and Othaniel have only been coming for about 3 months to church and Sabbath with their mother. They also have been studying every week on Sundays with Bob Blair and Pastors Polly and Dorie Panganiban. What a miracle and a joy it has been to see those two children drink up every thing that is presented to them.

I have a funny little story about these two. You have to keep in mind that we are very isolated out here. Houses can be an hour away from each other. People can travel 30 minutes to an hour or more to get to church. And they may not know many other people who are coming to this church.

We had been studying the life of Jesus each Sabbath and were just past the wise men and Herod's awful act. For the whole time that the two children had been coming to class they were the only two, since our students go home on the weekends as a rule.

But on this Sabbath we had a visitor from Centerville, Ohio. Addie was visiting us with a mission group. She's a third grade student at the church school in her town.

We were reviewing what had happened so far since Jesus had been born. One child would start and tell what had happened so far in the story and then another one would chime in to continue the story. When it was Addie's turn, she started right up and told quite a bit with great detail.

8-year-old Shyla looked at me with utter amazement on her face and asked, “How does she know that ? She wasn't here last week!”

I'm thinking that was the day that she began to know that she had a whole family that went so much further than she had ever imagined.

I will never forget the joy on the children's faces in Sabbath School. I was also intrigued with how well kids ,who had never met, got along. They were especially kind to the younger ones in the group. And there was one little boy who, whenever he saw me during the three days of campmeeting, would shout my name and run up and throw his arms around me.



Reva likes to plant, so she started to teach our girls. She cut a small piece of her heartleaf Philodendron plant and let them start to care for it. She put it in water for them and they watched it sprout roots. They kept it in their room on their dressers and changed out the water once a week. She also taught them to make a hanging plant holder that they can put them in and watch the roots grow. They took such good care of them that they were able to plant them in soil and they will continue to care for them, when school ends they will take them home with them. They are very interested in learning to plant more things and we told them just remember to water so it will grow and grow. She also told them that after it gets bigger they can cut a little piece off and start a new plant again. They are learning to care for plants and enjoy it very much.

-Renita Juan

And Stories from the Girl's Dorm

We told our girls about Earth Day and how people will go out and pick up trash along the roadside and the communities. How the CHR of the Chapters set up a day for the local community to pick up trash then go back to the Chapters for water and refreshments and they said, “Can we pick up trash on Earth Day?” So Reva and I decided to take them around the campus to pick up trash. They were excited about it and had fun, they would like to do it weekly! Hahaha! We told them we need to keep the earth clean and not throw trash on the ground. It also shows what you are



like as a person, by how you take care of where you live by keeping it clean. I encourage them to be neat and clean and have respect for their school and their dorm, to take care of what God has provided for them and to be thankful for it. So that's how we ended up picking up trash for Earth Day. As we got closer to the clinic, EJ and Kayden asked, “Can we help?” They joined us from the clinic to the big boys dorm and to the trees before you reach the big girls dorm. It was good to see them excited about picking up trash and cleaning the La Vida Community.

-Renita Juan