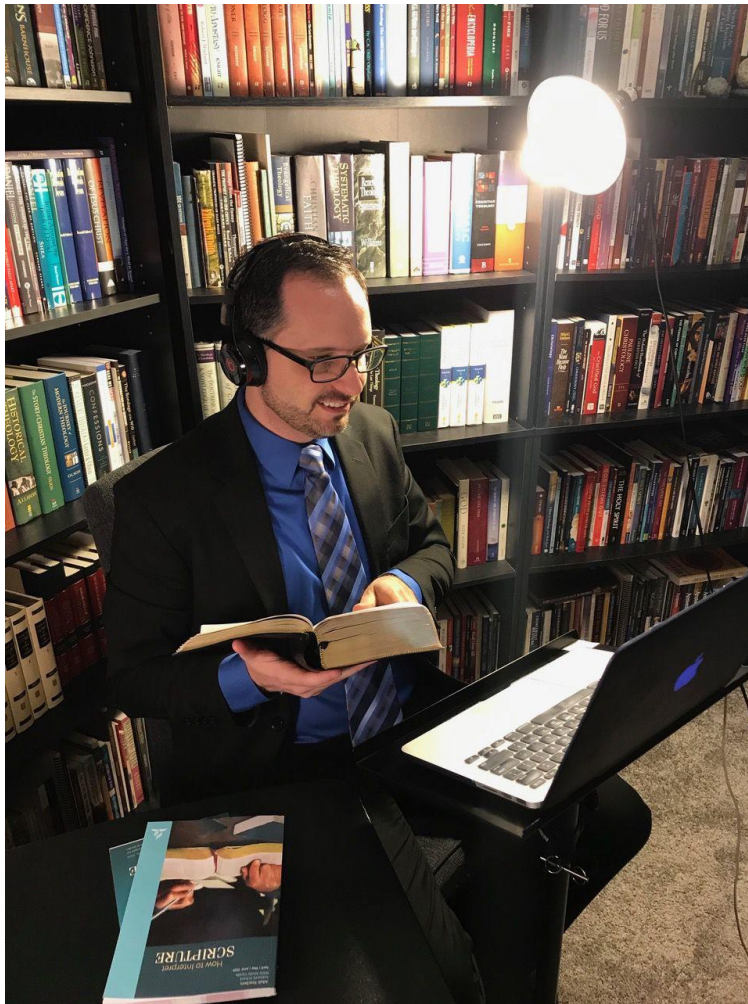


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## Sabbath School an ongoing effort

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Apr 22, 2020




The Rev. Matthew Tinkham Jr., leads the English-speaking adult Sabbath School group from his home office.

Submitted photo

Lenoir City Seventh-day Adventist Church is looking for new ways to hold its weekly Sabbath School while everyone is kept at home at least through April 30.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Sabbath School was held at 11:15 a.m. Saturdays after a 9:45 a.m. worship service.

Sabbath School is a time for Bible study and discussion with a changing topic every 13 weeks, the Rev. Matthew Tinkham Jr., church pastor, said. Every group does something different, including time for music, prayer and study. The church broke down its members into groups based on age, from preschool age to adult. However, coronavirus has put a halt to most of these.



“What’s kind of interesting and perhaps unique about our church is that when we have our worship time at 9:45 (a.m.), we have it in both English and Spanish because we have a large English-speaking group and a large Spanish-speaking group at our church,” Tinkham said. “There’s translation. I’m the pastor, and I do the preaching in English, but we have a live translation into Spanish at the same time. We do have a large adult Sabbath School group, we actually have two. One is in English, and we have a separate one that’s in Spanish.”

For now, Tinkham is meeting with the English-speaking adult Sabbath School group through Zoom to discuss this quarter’s topic of interpreting the Bible. In the new format, Sabbath School starts at 11:15 a.m. with a worship service immediately following.

“At this point, now that might change, the adults that speak English have just been working with Zoom,” Pat Germsheid, Sabbath School superintendent, said. “Now we also have, our church runs a television network so we watch that. It’s on seven days a week. They have at least half a dozen different adult formats, so if that’s the way you want to do Sabbath School, you can do it on Thursday or whenever you want.”

Germsheid said the church is looking into other ways to connect so that the younger groups can still attend.

Tinker said it is difficult, especially for young children, to create a curriculum effective enough for an online platform because there are typically arts and craft projects that correspond with Bible study to keep youth engaged.

“When we’re not at home with COVID-19, we have a Sabbath School for the wee little children and in Lenoir City a lot of those folks are Spanish-speaking at home, both the teachers and students with the little ones,” Germsheid said. “A lot of our population in that age group, Spanish is their first language. Then we have a class for kindergarten for 4-, 5- and 6-year-olds and as far as language goes, that’s mixed. Then we have grade school children, we call that primary. Then we have our junior youth class, that would be middle school and high school.

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“We’re talking about maybe setting up something for the children, you know, long distance,” Germsheid added. “A lot of the families are just doing their own Sabbath School at home at this point.”