

THE ATLANTIC UNION

FEBRUARY 2016

# GLEANNER



A **Tapestry** of Cultures,  
Languages, and Nationalities  
in **Worship and Ministry**

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# A Hard Nut Cracked

**A**fter two dreams and witnessing God's actual presence in the fiery furnace, Nebuchadnezzar was still resistant to fully acknowledging God's divine sovereignty. It wasn't until after God stripped him of his kingdom and caused him to live as a wild beast for seven years, that the Bible records the once proud king, now humbly saying, "I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified Him who lives forever. His dominion is an eternal dominion; his kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the peoples of earth are regarded as nothing. He does as he pleases with the powers of heaven and the peoples of the earth. No one can hold back his hand or say to him; 'What have you done?'" —Daniel 4:34-35, NIV.

The life and experiences of this great King reveals to us the conversion process some go through before they recognize and serve the sovereign Lord of the universe. In the book, *PROPHET AND KINGS* (pp. 514-521), Ellen G. White relates to the spiritual and political journey of Nebuchadnezzar based on Daniel, chapters 2-4. She says, "Exalted to the pinnacle of worldly honor, and acknowledged even by inspiration as 'a king of kings' (Ezekiel 26:7), Nebuchadnezzar nevertheless at times had ascribed to the favor of Jehovah the glory of his kingdom and the splendor of his reign. Such had been the case after his dream of the great image. His mind had been profoundly influenced by this vision and by the thought that the Babylonian Empire, universal though it was, was finally to fall." White said further that "Nebuchadnezzar's noble conception of God's purpose concerning the nations was lost sight of later in his experience; yet when his proud spirit was humbled before the multitude on the plain of Dura, he once more acknowl-

edged that God's kingdom is an 'everlasting kingdom'" (p. 514).

In spite of Nebuchadnezzar's short-lived recognitions and acknowledgments of God, it seems that he had a deeper inclination toward resisting God rather than fully submitting to God. Before his conversion he demonstrated a spirit and attitude in three different ways: (1) there was an unwillingness and failure to accept the Word of God that his kingdom, Babylon, would pass away, (2) there was an unwillingness to accept that there is only one true God of the universe who deserves his full submission and attention, and (3) there was a sustained lack of humility before God because of his ego.

Now, as we look at King Nebuchadnezzar before his conversion, we may comfort ourselves by saying that we are not like him; that we live in a different time and place. However, his spirit and attitude toward God before his conversion may be very similar to many of us today in our unwillingness to accept the Word of God and our lack of humility because of our egos. We need to recognize the importance of giving humility and obedience to the commandments and teachings of God as revealed in the life of Jesus and His Word, the Bible.

Whatever path or journey we may be on, we need to understand and experience real conversion in 2016 and, in the end, conclude as Nebuchadnezzar did that we must daily exercise full surrender to the control of Jesus Christ. This can be accomplished through the power and assistance of the Holy Spirit and the reading of God's Word. May this be the decision of us all in 2016. ☺

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*Carlyle C. Simmons is the Atlantic Union Conference executive secretary and director of the Health Ministries, Human Relations, and Prayer Ministries departments.*



*"Whatever path or journey we may be on, . . . we must daily exercise full surrender to the control of Jesus Christ."*



# A Tapestry of Cultures, Languages, and Nationalities in Worship and Ministry

» BY DEBRA MCKINNEY BANKS

**T**he Seventh-day Adventist Church is comprised of people of many backgrounds, yet we are one people, serving one Lord while sharing the same purpose and mission. A 2015 report by the Pew Research Center, a non-partisan organization in Washington, D.C., indicated that Adventists are the most racially and ethnically diverse religious group in the United States. According to the study, 37 percent of adults were identified as White, 32 percent are Black, 15 percent are Latino, eight percent are Asian, and another eight percent are another race or mixed race.

The Atlantic Union Conference is proud of the rich tapestry of cultures, languages, and nationalities of the members who add variety and diversity to the churches, schools, and other institutions across Bermuda, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New

Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. While numbers and statistics may vary within each conference, making an effort to celebrate and embrace diversity is something that is important to the administration and leaders in the Atlantic Union.

The Warwick church on the island of Bermuda boasts a racial mix of members of Black, White, and Portuguese heritage, although the population on the island is approximately 53 percent Black, 31 percent White, and has a small Asian and Hispanic representation (according to the 2010 census). Through joint efforts of the membership and Spanish-speaking believers, a Spanish congregation was formed and the two congregations now share the Warwick church building for worship services.

Kenneth Manders, president of the Bermuda Conference, also serves as

the interim pastor of the Warwick church. He applauds the church's openness in understanding one another and embracing differences. He also recognizes the need for the church to be intentional in reaching the White residents on the island. Manders feels the Warwick church is successful with respecting the diversity of its members by being purposeful about inclusion and placing people in positions of trust, who are sensitive to the needs of everyone. "Depending on who you place as a leader, no matter what race, that person of influence shapes the culture of the church. The leader can set the tone and the environment of what is allowed," Manders says.

On the opposite end of the racial spectrum in the Atlantic Union is the Northern New England Conference—home to churches in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont—each state with a “non-



Hispanic White” population of around 94 percent. Conference president Bob Cundiff is purposeful in addressing diversity in an area where it could be easily forgotten because of the small numbers of other racial groups.

Taking a cue from one of Adventism’s fundamental beliefs, Cundiff emphasizes “Unity in the Body of Christ” and uses this fundamental teaching as a platform to build upon to address diversity when he travels on speaking engagements around the conference. “I don’t see this as an option, or a choice. It is one of our fundamental beliefs as a church. To promote disunity in diversity actually goes against what we believe.” During his more than two years as president, four ethnically diverse churches have been added—one Haitian, one Indonesian, and two Spanish—to add to the cultural mix of the conference.

Cundiff has also placed two non-White pastors as heads of predominantly White congregations, and made an effort to incorporate representation of the different cultures and ethnicities to the camp meeting platform. “Even if we as a conference are not as diverse as other conferences, we can still celebrate diversity,” says Cundiff.

Northeastern Conference (NEC) leaders have learned to acknowledge and appreciate the diversity of its constituents and have a pastoral staff that reflects this. “Part of our strategy is to intentionally ‘cross-pollinate’ through the teaching and learning of other languages and cultural

practices,” explains NEC ministerial director, Ainsworth Joseph.

In the fall of 2014, the conference embarked on a plan of combining programs and trips in ministry and social settings to facilitate pastoral learning and cultural appreciation. During that time, NEC pastors from Portuguese, Spanish, French, and

for their constituents to learn about each other’s cultures.

“We are intentional in our efforts to foster cross-cultural events, such as our yearly United Camp Meeting that seeks to enhance the homogeneity of our membership,” says GNYC president G. Earl Knight. He emphasizes that GNYC has

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English backgrounds embarked upon an evangelistic mission trip to Brazil where they “lived, ate, fellowshiped, played, and ministered together.” In 2015, NEC also encouraged bilingual study by conducting seven weeks of intensive Spanish instruction for their English- and French-speaking pastors.

A similar approach is incorporated with the membership of the Greater New York Conference (GNYC). With more than 30 different languages and representation from more than 200 nations around the world on any given Sabbath, the challenge comes in incorporating the varied differences and providing opportunities

discovered that sharing a common language has been essential to their outreach. “We find that given the diversity of New York, people are more willing to open up when we speak their language—both linguistically and culturally. This is meeting people as they are.”

Worship styles and music are also shaped by culture, which can often pose a challenge when working with several different backgrounds. For guest speakers coming to the Warwick church, Manders is careful to note that wisdom and sensitivity are essential to staying on target with the gospel commission. “Many of our older members come from an

Anglican worship experience—they typically don't shout 'Amen!' and raise their hands. You must know your audience. A speaker may have to lower their volume and tone if necessary, or know not to ask them to say 'Amen.' You have to be all things to all people.”

Union Springs Academy (USA) in Union Springs, New York, which is part of the New York Conference, is

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the only boarding academy in the Atlantic Union. Working with students representing many countries and cultures who live, eat, worship, and play together 24/7, nine months out a year can be a challenge. “The school becomes a home and they all become a family,” says USA principal, Todd Coulter. “Worship styles, especially where music is concerned, and food are two of the things the students miss when away from their homes.”

The students are allowed and encouraged to express themselves by singing worship songs in ways that are familiar to them. “When they express [the song] in a way

that they are used to, the other students benefit as well, because it becomes a new experience for someone else of a different culture.” The students also have the opportunity to share favorite recipes and request dishes they are more familiar with from the cafeteria chef, who attempts to recreate foods or provide additional condiments and seasonings to appeal to the various cultural tastes.

John Amoah, Southern New England Conference (SNEC) ministerial and evangelism director, feels that making these types of accommodations are exactly what Jesus would have us do. “Three words come to mind: equality, equity, and sensitivity—and these are driven by the idea that at Jesus’ table, everyone is welcome and should be treated with love, respect, dignity, and grace.” Amoah has found this premise to be helpful in meeting the different needs and demands of SNEC’s diverse constituency.

In a world where separation and alienation have often been fueled by racial and ethnic differences, the Atlantic Union Conference is being a shining example of leadership that is invested in not only the spiritual needs of its constituents, but the whole person, and everything—language, food, music, and culture—that makes them unique. ①

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*Debra McKinney Banks is the Atlantic Union Conference communication assistant.*

# Unity in Diversity

*“In every word and act, kindness and love will be revealed; and as each worker fills his appointed place faithfully, the prayer of Christ for the unity of His followers will be answered, and the world will know that these are His disciples.”*

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BY ELLEN G. WHITE

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In our efforts in behalf of the multitudes dwelling in cities, we must try to do thorough service. The work in a large center of population is greater than one man can successfully handle. God has different ways of working, and He has different workmen to whom He entrusts varied gifts.

One worker may be a ready speaker; another a ready writer; another may have the gift of sincere, earnest, fervent prayer; another the gift of singing; another may have special power to explain the word of God with clearness. And each gift is to become a power for God because He works with the laborer. To one God gives the word of wisdom, to another knowledge, to another faith; but all are to work under the same Head. The diversity of gifts leads to a diversity of operations, but “it is the same God which worketh all in all” 1 Corinthians 12:6.

The Lord desires His chosen servants to learn how to unite together in harmonious effort. It may seem to some that the contrast between their gifts and the gifts of a fellow laborer is too great to allow them to unite in harmonious effort; but when they remember that there are varied minds to be reached, and that some will reject the truth as it is presented by one laborer, only to open their hearts to God’s truth as it is presented in a different manner by another laborer, they will hopefully endeavor to labor together in unity. Their talents, however diverse, may all be under the control of the same Spirit. In every word and act, kindness and love will be revealed; and as each worker fills his appointed place faithfully, the prayer of Christ for the unity of His followers will be answered, and the world will know that these are His disciples.

In loving sympathy and confidence God’s workers are to unite with one another. He who says or does anything that tends to separate the members of Christ’s church is counterworking the Lord’s purpose. Wrangling and dissension in the church, the encouragement of suspicion and unbelief, are dishonoring to Christ. God desires His servants to cultivate Christian affection for one another. True religion unites hearts not only with Christ, but with one another in a most tender union. When we know what it means to be thus united with Christ and with our brethren, a fragrant influence will attend our work wherever we go.

The workers in the large cities must act their several parts, making every effort to bring about the best results. They are to talk faith and to act in such a way as to impress the people. They are not to narrow the work down to their own particular ideas. In the past too much of this has been done by us as a people, and it has been a drawback to the success of the work. Let us remember that the Lord has different ways of working, that He has different workmen to whom He entrusts different gifts. We are to see His purpose in the sending of certain men to certain places.

A little longer will the voice of mercy be heard; a little longer will be given the gracious invitation: “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.” John 7:37. God sends His warning message to the cities everywhere. Let the messengers whom He sends work so harmoniously that all will take knowledge that they have learned of Jesus. ①

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*This excerpt, written by Ellen G. White, was reprinted from TESTIMONIES FOR THE CHURCH, vol. 9, pp. 144-146.*



## Youth Group Ministers to the Homeless

A Delta Airlines flight—carrying 35 youth and young adults—left JFK airport in New York en route to San Juan, Puerto Rico, for a youth retreat that would forever change the lives of all those in attendance. “The Puerto Rico trip changed my life. We went there to minister to others—to change their lives—but I was the one who left changed,” said Eli Beaubrun.

For five days and four nights in October 2015, youth from the Northeastern and Greater New York conferences made the Best Western Plus Condado Palm hotel their headquarters as they shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with local residents, hotel staff, and tourists. The purpose of the trip was to bring family, friends, and youth together to teach them the importance of reaching others and character building—via morning devotions, evening vespers, and nature excursions—all while enjoying the sunshine.

The highlight of the mission trip was the Sabbath-morning outreach to a population of homeless men and women in front of the neighborhood rehabilitation center. The youth headed out at 7:00 in the morning with brown bags filled with sandwiches, granola bars, and juice to give away. They prayed one-on-one with the homeless and provided words of encouragement in Spanish to the men and women.

Sabbath service with the Litheda church, a local Spanish-speaking congregation, was an awesome experience as well. The youth from both groups fellowshiped with one another and, afterward, participated in more outreach with the local residents.



Adventist youth from the Greater New York and Northeastern conferences participate in the Sabbath services at the Litheda church in San Juan Puerto Rico.

“The Litheda youth group really loved to share their time with [everyone]. Thank you for letting us be part of [your] activities and for letting us be part of your missionary trip,” said Alondra, a member of the Litheda church Adventist Youth Society.

Hotel guests showed they felt the

presence of the youth, often going into the conference room where the group gathered daily to participate in praise and worship, devotion, and prayer.

In addition to outreach, the group made sure to have fun as well. Excursions included a tour through Old San Juan, visiting historical sites, snorkeling, and horseback riding through the El Yunque National Forest. They also made time for shopping at one of Puerto Rico’s biggest shopping centers.

“Going to Puerto Rico with 35 unique and funny individuals was the greatest experience. God planned every single aspect of this trip, which is why, if you ask me, I would do everything all over again. I would say yes, from the part where we had to line up, to waking up early for devotion and breakfast, going on excursions, vespers, and meeting new people. It was truly the ultimate blessing. I want to thank God for working through Marlow Scott and for allowing this trip to be a total success,” said Marvens Valery, who turned 26 on the trip.

The youth, under the leadership of Marlow Scott and Naomi Beaubrun, are looking forward to another mission outreach trip in 2016. ①

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*Judith Silfrene is a member of the Horeb French church.*



## AUC Offers Career-changing Certificate Programs

**A**tantic Union College (AUC), an intimate Christian college located in South Lancaster, Massachusetts, offers career-changing certificate programs. AUC has partnered with professional organizations to offer these programs, which are geared toward high school graduates, working adults, or for those who just want to get ahead in their current employment.

In October 2015, the Medical Billing and Coding Course began with five students, who have finished their Medical Terminology and Anatomy and Physiology for Allied Health courses.

The certificate programs, offered in flexible innovative learning environments with low tuition, are:



Five students, from left, Jeffrey Clarke, Esther Noel, Sherine Tulloch, Jennifer Sierra, and Able Herrera, have received a certificate of completion for the Medical Terminology and Anatomy and Physiology for Allied Health courses.

- Certified Bookkeeper (American Institute of Professional Bookkeepers)
  - Enrolled Agent- EA (GLEIM Professor Led Live Review and Massachusetts Society of Enrolled Agents)
  - CompTIA, A+ and Cisco CCNA (CompTIA Academy Partnership)
  - Programs, Cisco Networking Academy)
  - Office Management
  - Medical Billing and Coding (AAPC— American Academy of Professional Coders)
- The quality academic certificate programs are

learner-centered and focus on preparing students for the ever-changing workforce. The AUC certificate program faculty and staff provide a quality, best-in-class Christian education, and support services through academic excellence, inspiring and engaging classrooms that foster community outreach and engagement. The classroom environments provide students with an education that prepares and promotes community and economic development in all industries through the classroom, academic, and social experience.

For more information about the certificate programs, call (978) 368-2110, e-mail: [certification@auc.edu](mailto:certification@auc.edu), or visit the Web site [www.auc.edu/ce](http://www.auc.edu/ce).

—Barbara Fuller, director of certificate programs, Atlantic Union College

## Students Participate in Community Engagement Projects

**I**n keeping with the core education requirements at Atlantic Union College (AUC), students are required to take Community Engagement as a core course. This course includes both theoretical and practical tools for learning how to engage with communities for social change.

During the class, the students read *CHRISTIAN SERVICE* by Ellen G. White and implemented what they learned in the community. The class is based on the principles found in the following quote: “As His representatives among men, God does not choose angels who have never fallen, but human beings, men of like passions with those they seek to save”—*CHRISTIAN SERVICE*, p. 7.

A measurable objective of the class was to choose a community engagement outreach project that would be SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely).

Eric Jean-Baptiste chose to host a Health and Wellness Fair at Atlantic



Bread of Life Ministry supporters Samuel Jerome, left, and Kevin Maldonado, right, stand with Sandra Mendes, Bread of Life Ministry director.

Union College. The health fair had a turnout of about 40 people who came to learn the biblical health laws, the importance of nutrition, exercise, water, sunshine, temperance, air, rest, and, most important, time with God.

A nurse taught participants about the importance of vital signs. A physical fitness instructor taught about the importance of exercise, and a health care coach taught about the importance of healthy eating.

Samuel Jerome and Kevin Maldonado chose to support the Bread of Life Ministry at the Village Church. Samuel championed a toy drive that blessed more than 75 children with toys. Jerome brought together churches and schools to donate to the cause. Maldonado was able to assist with the “Night of Giving” dinner at the Village Church. Together, Jerome and Maldonado partnered with Sandra Mendes, director of Bread of Life Ministry, and blessed the community with a night of giving on December 16, 2015.

—Barbara Fuller, director of certificate programs, Atlantic Union College



## Bermuda Institute Students Stuff the Bus

The holiday season is always a tough time for some families in the community. Organizations that are established to provide assistance are hit hard because of the great demand for support. Recognizing that need, back in 2014, the Bermuda Institute Student Association decided to make a difference in a tangible way. After a conversation with Dan Simmons, then director of public transportation for Bermuda, the “Stuff the Bus” initiative was born.

In a joint venture with the Department of Public Transportation (DPT), for three nights in a row, members of the Bermuda Institute Student Association met a bus with a volunteer bus operator at three different grocery stores to collect non-perishable goods and toys. Dressed in their school uniform with banners in hand, the students sang carols and invited the customers to purchase something



Dressed in their school uniform, Bermuda Institute students leave the grocery store with donated items to stuff the bus.

and donate it to stuff the bus on their way out.

The event was launched with the Minister of Transport, the Hon. Shawn Crockwell, an alum of Bermuda Institute, who held a press conference at Bermuda Institute with the students, DPT management, and the bus operators.

The second annual “Stuff the Bus” initiative was another great success in December 2015. After unpacking all the

boxes for distribution, it was clear that the objective had been met, the bus had indeed been stuffed. The Bermuda Institute (BI) students were able to assist six charities: Big Brothers–Big Sisters, Teen Services, Lion’s Club, Coalition for the Protection of Children, Salvation Army, and Sunshine League. The students were all so grateful. Little did they realize the impact that this project would have on others.

On the last day of school in December 2015, representatives from several of the charities came to school to collect the hampers that the students had prepared for them. In addition to food, toys for children were provided, as well. One company in particular called to make sure the students would stop by their office to collect all the toys they had purchased for children of all ages.

This event was a huge success on all levels. The community gave great support through donations; the partnership with DPT is now cemented. Both the bus operators and the students are making plans for 2016. The charities were blessed and the spirit of giving and volunteerism is alive and well with the students at Bermuda Institute. They praise God for the opportunity to give back to their community.

—Frigga M. Simmons, director of development, Bermuda Institute

## St. David’s Church Holds Concert for a Worthy Cause

The St. David’s church Adventist Community Services (ACS) department held a benefit concert to aid in providing free Christmas food baskets to persons in the St. David’s area. Throughout the year, there were several calls for

the members to assist in providing for the needs of the community, and so, the church’s ACS leader, Ann Pitcher, came up with the idea of assisting the cause with a concert.

Participants for the concert included members of

the church and the community. Using a music application, seven-year-old Milan Nisbett played a piano solo on her iPad. Other performers included Kimore Waddell, who shared two compositions: a poem and an original essay, saxophonists Dwaine Foster (the new Bermuda Institute band teacher), Kenneth Cox, Sr., and Calvin White, Sr., as well as 12-year-old pianist Mikhail Nisbett.

A male septet, with members from the Adventist and AME churches, sang after breaking a 50-year rest period. The men, in their 60s, came together earlier in 2015 for a funeral and have been accepting requests to

minister in song ever since. Beresford Richardson played the piano for the group.

A reception followed in the church’s fellowship hall. To the delight of young and old, the Adventist Community Services department served haystacks and drinks.

The truth is that the department provided much more than a relaxing evening of music, verse, food, and fellowship. It provided an opportunity to fund a worthy cause—the Christmas food baskets—and the Lord blessed. The department more than reached its goal for the evening.

—D. Randolph Wilson, associate communication director, Bermuda Conference



A male septet, with members from the Adventist and AME churches, sing at the benefit concert at St David’s church.

## Advent of Faith Group Baptizes Three



Newly-baptized candidates are welcomed into the Advent of Faith group; from left, new members Delilah Spence and Daniel Spence; Vernon Jordan, Trinity Temple church and Advent of Faith group pastor; new member Vanessa Spence, and Sonia Spence, elder.

The Advent of Faith group in East Greenbush, New York, welcomed three new members on December 12, 2015, as a result of a baptism performed by Vernon Jordan, the group's pastor. The Advent of Faith group operates under the umbrella of the Trinity Temple church in Poughkeepsie, New York. The group has been in existence for five years and is under the leadership of Sonia Spence, elder.

The right hand of fellowship was given to newly-baptized members Vanessa Spence, Delilah Spence, and Daniel Spence. The group solicits your prayers as the members continue to reach out to the community and win souls for Christ.

—Mirlande Jordan, member and pastor's spouse, Trinity Temple church

### SAVE THE DATE

The Edward D. Herndon  
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## What's Happening in Your Community?

Northeastern Conference communication leaders—We are looking for news and other inspiring stories from your area. How are the members sharing evangelism outside the walls of your church? How are the youth and young adults getting involved?

E-mail your stories with the photos attached as separate files to the Northeastern Conference communication director.

For information on submitting articles, visit:  
[www.atlantic-union.org/writing-guidelines.org](http://www.atlantic-union.org/writing-guidelines.org)



JeNean Lendor

Communication Director

Northeastern Conference

E-mail: [jlendor@northeastern.org](mailto:jlendor@northeastern.org)

## GNYC Youth Ministries Department Wraps Up 2015 While Preparing for 2016

With the end of 2015 in sight, the Greater New York Conference (GNYC) Youth Ministries Department kept the energy level high as they continued on their mission to “Do Something!” Three major events took place during the months of November and December: the TCS New York City Marathon, a Graduation and Consecration Service, and the Youth Advisory Retreat.

Representing one of the largest volunteer groups for the 2015 annual TCS New York City Marathon, GNYC youth were out in force with about 300 volunteers. Four GNYC youth participated in the marathon. They were greeted in every borough with the smiling faces of



At the annual Consecration and Graduation Service more than 100 candidates who attended the School of Evangelism are recognized for completing the course requirements.

GNYC supporters, who served from the starting line to the finish line.

In mid-November the annual Consecration and Graduation Service was held for the GNYC Youth Ministries department

School of Evangelism. The program was hosted by the GNYC associate youth ministries directors, Angel Reyes and Teddy Williamson. More than 100 candidates completed the course requirements, graduating from the

following classes: Master Guide, Adventist Youth Leadership Certification, Adventist Youth Preach, Adventist Youth Media, Adventist Youth Theater, Adventist Youth Emergency Services, Adventurer



Greater New York Conference Adventist Youth Ministries leaders attend the annual Youth Advisory Retreat in Stamford, Connecticut.



GNYC youth—one of the largest volunteer groups for the 2015 annual TCS New York City Marathon—were out in force.

Instructor Award, Pathfinder Instructor Award, Adventurer Leadership Award, and Pathfinder Leadership Award.

The keynote speaker, Ariel Manzueta, pastor of

Manhattan Spanish church, empowered both candidates and their supporters alike to “do something” to share Jesus. Rohann Wellington, GNYC communication director and assistant to

the president for strategic planning, charged the candidates for service in ministry, and Northeastern Conference Youth Ministries director, Roger Wade, consecrated the candidates with

prayer. Luis Biazotto, GNYC Adventist Community Services director, was in attendance to support and encourage the candidates.

The culminating event for the GNYC Youth Ministries department was the annual Youth Advisory Retreat. More than 100 staff members met at the Stamford Hotel and Executive Meeting Center in early December to start the ball rolling for 2016. The staff were spiritually fed as they met in groups of various sizes to finalize plans for 2016 by area and ministry. Time was set aside for team building and some fun amidst the dedicated efforts of the team. The team united, pledging to retain, reclaim, and restore the youth of GNYC for 2016.

—Andrés J. Peralta, youth ministries director, Greater New York Conference

## #GivingTuesday Impact Doubles Funding for Student Scholarships

Greater New York Conference leaders lined up at the donation station on December 1, 2015, to cast their contribution toward the Giving Tuesday campaign. Giving Tuesday is a recent global fundraising tradition following the Thanksgiving holiday that generates millions of dollars for charitable causes through the power of social media.

Marlene Romeo, Greater New York Conference superintendent of schools, in her appeal for participation in Giving Tuesday, said, “More of our students deserve the opportunity to grow spiritually, academically, and socially.” The response was overwhelming. The day of greater giving began when the CEO of Universal Business Solutions visited the Greater New York Conference office and doubled the company’s dona-

tion from 2014 with a gift of \$10,000.

On Giving Tuesday, the atmosphere at the conference office was infectious as students from several conference schools appeared in uniform. Students participated in morning worship and toured the conference office, interacting with staff and sharing how Adventist education has positively impacted their lives.

During the Greater Scholars Young Philanthropist President’s Awards luncheon, the Greater New York Conference Education Department recognized students for their philanthropic spirit and participation in the Giving Tuesday campaign.

In 2014, through Giving Tuesday efforts, the conference raised more than \$16,000 for the Cuba mission. This year, Giving Tuesday focused on the local need of providing stu-



Greater New York Conference administrators pose with the CEO of Universal Business Solutions, center, who contributed \$10,000 for scholarships on Giving Tuesday.

dent scholarships to children and youth attending Adventist schools. The Educating for Eternity scholarship campaign, launched during summer camp meetings and spearheaded by the Planned Giving and Development office, has raised more than \$30,000 for student scholarships. This nearly doubles the amount of conference funding available

for student scholarships in previous years.

God continues to provide generous support from donors with gifts of all sizes. To learn more about any of the Greater New York Conference schools, visit [www.gnyc.org/education](http://www.gnyc.org/education).

—Janice Da Silva, associate director, GNYC Office of Planned Giving and Development

## Bay Knoll School Students Participate in Outerwear Outreach

December 21, 2015, was a blustery cold day, but that did not prevent the Bay Knoll school students from going out on the streets of Rochester to share God's love by distributing warm outerwear with others. Everyone, from pre-K to Grade 8, along with teachers, parents, and even visiting grandparents, participated in the event.

The recipients were not the only ones who benefited. The students also benefited. Here are some of their reactions. Eh Doh learned that giving out "stuff" can be a blessing and can change others' lives. Sydney learned that giving to others makes you happy. Thaw said the experience taught him that clothes can be a blessing. Monica declared that she enjoyed putting bags out to help people.

Adrianna said that she enjoyed sharing God's mes-



Bay Knoll students prepare to go out on the streets of Rochester to distribute warm outerwear.

sage of love with others through sharing clothes. Vicky said she found the experience touching. She did not expect to see people take up the bags and wear the items in them. She was glad she participated in Outerwear Outreach because she saw how it helped oth-

ers. Jet expressed a similar sentiment. He, too, was surprised at the speed with which the bags were taken.

Joelle recognized that many people were touched by their kindness and hoped that they would learn the true meaning of Christmas. Marques said he

felt happy that they were giving to less fortunate folk, and was gladdened by the sight of those who took the bags. Frandley overheard someone say she was touched by their acts and thought it was awesome. Merry thought the trip was great. Joshua declared the trip to be a good sign of love. Derrion deemed it an honor to be able to give to the poor, and Yadley thought it was fun.

Each bag contained an item or two that would help a person keep warm in cold weather, and a sign that read, "I'm not lost. If you are cold, please take me to keep warm. Merry Christmas. Bay Knoll SDA School." The students hope that the physical warmth of each bag kindled the flame of God's love in each recipient's heart.

—Valeska Caesar, principal, Bay Knoll school

## Bay Knoll School Make Jesus the Focus

*"We welcome you, we welcome you, to our program today; we hope that you are richly blessed by what we sing and say. We hope that you appreciate the sacrifice Christ made, and rejoice that for you and me, the ransom He has paid."*

From the moment that the lyrics (left) heralded the beginning of the annual Christmas program at Bay Knoll church on December 12, 2015, the audience looked and listened avidly until after musically wishing everyone a merry Christmas

and a happy New Year the students exited the church via the middle aisle.

The members, parents, relatives, friends, and well-wishers in attendance were reminded by the students from the Bay Knoll school that Christmas is not about getting gifts and attending parties. The student body in chorus reminded the audience that the only available accommodation for "Mary's boy child" was a stable.

The recorder ensemble, Grades K-2's performance of "Silent Night" on bells, and Stick drama of "One King" by Grades 5-8 reinforced the theme. Jet Steam's solo, accompanied by a pictorial display and the Tone Chimes ensemble, continued to remind those present that

Jesus, who came as the poorest of men, is the One on whom they should focus at this time.

The play "What Is Christmas All About?" written by Grades 1-4 teacher Sue Kingman, demonstrated how mistaken good people could be about this season and what they really should be doing.

Many thanks were expressed to Lee and Marilyn Duncan and Jennifer Pettengill, who provided and performed music for the program.

Many who attended declared the program to be inspiring and well presented. One attendee declared it so good that she wished she could share it with her church.

—Valeska Caesar, principal, Bay Knoll school



Bay Knoll school's students in Grades 5-8 perform "One King" using stick drama.

## Kingsbury School Students Go the Extra Mile

As is our custom every morning during worship in our classroom, I was asking the students if they had any prayer requests. My fourth-grader, Rebekah, raised her hand and asked that we pray for her bus driver's neighbor.

When I asked if there was anything in particular we could pray for, she said that there was a woman with three children that just moved in next door to her bus driver. This woman had nothing—no beds, furniture, curtains, or much of anything else.

The students immediately said that we could help her, but they weren't sure just how to do it. We prayed for her that day, but God was going to ask us to do a little more.

Later that same day, our Home and School leader asked me if we were doing food baskets or any kind of outreach during the holiday season, and if we were, she would be willing to head it up. It was then that I mentioned to her there was a family in need of assistance that we were just made aware of that morning. We got to work immediately.

I asked the bus driver to find out what things the family wanted or needed for Christmas. The next day, the bus driver gave me a list and a big hug telling me it was from the mother, Tammy. Tammy couldn't put into words her thanks, so she wanted to give a hug to show her appreciation.

A letter indicating what the family needed was sent home with the students as well as given to the church members. The response was amazing. My students really stepped up and, the next day, I had a student who had already gone shopping the



Kingsbury school students went the extra mile during the holidays to help a family in their community that was in need.

night before. I have another student who spent all of her own money to make sure that these children had a good Christmas and others who were still planning the perfect gifts to show this family the love of Jesus.

On December 19, the students, a parent, and I delivered a trunk load of gifts as well as food to this family of four. Tammy was so overwhelmed that she could barely speak. She started asking me about our school and if we were Christian based, and also asked about our church and when we held services. She indicated she would love to know more about our school and felt that her children would really benefit from a Christian education. Tammy also relayed that she would be seeing us at church. The students smiled at this woman, who was trying to hold back her tears of joy, and they knew how much of a difference this small act had made in her life and the lives of her children.

The next Monday, the bus driver said that she couldn't even put into words how

grateful she was for what we had done for her neighbor. Tammy thought that the children might have each gotten one gift, but never expected everything we had given her.

God is so good, and my prayer is that Tammy and her children saw Jesus that day and will want to know more about Him and His love. I pray she saw that these chil-

dren were filled with the light of Jesus and she will want that for her children as well as herself. As we continue the school year, I pray that our school can continue to live our mission: "Empowering students to think deeply, serve humbly, and trust God wholeheartedly."

—Alicia Biek, principal,  
Kingsbury school

### What's Happening in Your Community?

New York Conference communication leaders—We are looking for news and other inspiring stories from your area. How are the members sharing evangelism outside the walls of your church? How are the youth and young adults getting involved?

E-mail your stories with the photos attached as separate files to the New York Conference communication director.

For information on submitting articles, visit: [www.atlantic-union.org/writing-guidelines](http://www.atlantic-union.org/writing-guidelines).



Jeremy Garlock  
Communication Director  
New York Conference  
E-mail: [jeremy.garlock@nyconf.org](mailto:jeremy.garlock@nyconf.org)

## Many Blessed by Operation Christmas

Operation Christmas is one of the most anticipated events of the year at Riverview Memorial school. It is a day full of Christmas celebrations and community service that is planned and discussed far in advance. But last year, I found I just wasn't looking forward to it.

of the morning rotating between three stations set up throughout the school. At one station, they created bookmarks and cards; at another they crafted Christmas ornaments to be passed out at a nursing home later on in the day. At the third station, they made

headed for Cedar Ridge Nursing Home. There we sang Christmas carols for the residents, passed out the goodies the students had created, and loved the elderly people, who were eager to shake hands and give out hugs. The grateful words and the beaming smiles from both residents and staff showed the children just how appreciated they were.

As I drove back to the school with a few of my students in the car, I couldn't help but smile and think, "they really get it!" All the way home, the young people in my car kept on singing carols. Their voices were

maybe they had caught a glimpse of what Christmas is all about. Whatever their reason for singing in the car that afternoon, it made a lasting impression on me. I felt renewed and couldn't help but smile. This was another precious moment, another treasure, another reason that I love Adventist education. This is why I love my job. In what other occupation could I receive the blessing I was given that day?

The day ended with Christmas caroling in the neighborhood around the school, with some of the kids in a hay wagon pulled behind the school tractor and the rest of the group walking behind. At each house, a group of students would knock on the door, hand our neighbors the candy cane crafts they had made, and wish them a merry Christmas.

The whole group sang as we made our way through the streets of our little community. As we pulled back into the school driveway, we were all tired and ready to go home, but everyone had a smile on their face and a song in their heart, including me. The day had been a blessing for everyone, but had been downright rejuvenating for me. What a wonderful God we serve, and what great kids we serve!

—Mary Merwin, principal, Riverview Memorial school



Rachel Gilbert and Terrie Smiley join in the caroling and have as much fun as the kids.



Alexander Davis, Leah Gilliland, and Jamie Poissonnier work on crafts for Operation Christmas.

I'd enjoyed it in the past, but this time it just felt different. I'd been so busy that just thinking about a 12-hour workday during an already hectic week made me tired. But I would soon find that, as always, God knew what I needed better than I did.

The day of Operation Christmas arrived and the kids were really excited. We started the morning singing carols, reading the story of Jesus' birth, and reflecting on the real reason we celebrate Christmas. The students spent the rest

a craft using candy canes, which included a poem that used the common Christmas candy as an object lesson to remind people of Jesus.

After lunch, the students piled into a caravan of parent and teacher cars and

beautiful and I was happy to see that a positive impact had been made on the nursing home residents as well as the students. Perhaps it was the interaction with the elderly, maybe it was the contagious joy of Christmas carols, or

## Pine Tree Academy Uses Music to Mingle and Bless

Pine Tree Academy in Freeport, Maine, is well known for its music program. It hosts the Music Clinic that Northern New England Conference's Education Department sponsors each year, drawing

students from all over the northeast. And Pine Tree's band, choir, and especially their bell ringers, have traveled the world giving concerts. But during the holiday season, Pine Tree uses its talents and facility to mix

and mingle with the local community while delivering a blessing at the same time.

"Coastal Winds" is the town of Freeport's community band, and is under the direction of Brendan Krueger, who is also prin-

cipal of Pine Tree Academy. This group, made up of approximately 40 members from the mid-coast Maine area, presents two concerts during the Christmas season. One of these is held at the New Gloucester First





Coastal Winds, led by Pine Tree Academy principal Brendan Krueger, front row left, is a seasonal community band that has completed its 15th season.

Congregational Church, and the other at the Harraseeket Inn in Freeport.

Coastal Winds cooperates with area churches and towns to raise money for local food banks and the Freeport fuel assistance fund. At each concert, the suggested price of admission is non-perishable food items and/or financial donations to these local community assistance programs. These concerts, which have been

ongoing for 15 years, have raised thousands of dollars in fuel relief as well as large quantities of food.

By hosting the band and providing leadership for the effort, Pine Tree Academy gets to work with an entire cross-section of community members that it would not normally cross paths with, something that delights principal and director Krueger.

Krueger has sought to expand Pine Tree's com-

munity musical witnessing effort and, for the last five years, the academy's bell ringers have been one of the featured groups in the Christmas festivities sponsored by the Town of Camden. The event is called "Ring in the Season" and Krueger loves seeing his talented students participate in it. "Our students were able to participate in a cooperative effort that premiered a commissioned musical piece

and raised \$1,100 for the Camden Food Pantry. Most importantly, though, they were able to meet a great number of people and make a lot of new friends! It is by meeting people that we are able to witness, and that is one of the many blessings our music program brings to both students and staff."

—Scott Christiansen, communication director, Northern New England Conference

## Portsmouth Living Waters Starts Outreach Program

Late last November, the Seymour Osman Community Center at the Dover New Hampshire Housing Authority was the setting for a Thanksgiving meal to remember. It was also the setting for the first in a series of outreach projects planned by the Portsmouth Living Waters Pathfinder Club.

The Pathfinders and a generous complement of adult volunteers from the Portsmouth church prepared and served more than 100 meals with all the fixings, including takeout meals boxed up for people who were not able to attend. Stacey Kearns, director of Family Services for the Dover Housing Authority, said that she considered this to be a "huge success." She said that she saw one of the highest turnouts for this meal, and that 27 families were fed.

Eight of those families were new to participating in any events held at the community center. Not only was this at Thanksgiving, but it was at the end of a month, which can be a very difficult time for families on tight budgets. Kearns expressed her deep gratitude to the Pathfinders and to Chef Kurt and his crew of cooks (a.k.a. Minions). She also invited our group to come again in January.

The Thanksgiving meal was only the start. The next steps included another meal and then activities for children throughout January. The Pathfinder club wants to go deeper still, though, and is currently discussing what meaningful services can be offered, with most service ideas falling in the health and wellness sector.

Some approaches being seriously discussed are a smoking cessation class and a depression recovery seminar. In the



The Portsmouth Living Waters Pathfinders prepare to serve a meal.

spring, the Pathfinders will again visit the area, rakes in hand, to help people rake up leaves and get a start on yard work.

The men's ministries group in Portsmouth will also be coordinating with the housing authority to conceive and implement projects that will help the people there.

The people of the Portsmouth church take Christ's words to heart when He said to "Go out into the world!" And the council in THE MINISTRY OF HEALING is followed as well: "Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, 'Follow Me' " (p. 143).

—Doug Berrill, member, Portsmouth church

## Brooklawn Eagles Pathfinder and Adventurer Clubs Impact the Bridgeport Community



Members of the Brooklawn Eagles Pathfinder and Adventurer clubs deliver holiday treats to the firefighters at a firehouse in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The Brooklawn Eagles Pathfinder and Adventurer clubs decided the 2015-2016 club year was going to include more opportunities for community outreach. On October 31, 2015, when the U.S. celebrated Halloween, the clubs went into nearby

neighborhoods and handed out 2,000 GLOW tracts. The tracts were focused on what happens after one dies.

Then, the young people had another challenge to meet. What started out as a fundraising idea for their mission trip to Belize, turned into “Youth on a

Mission.” After church service on Sabbath, December 12, the Pathfinder and Adventurer clubs went to several shopping centers and strip malls and distributed more than 4,000 tracts.

Although they did not make their goal of 5,000 tracts, they did their best.

The second phase of the day was to make and deliver 70 trays of holiday cookies and baked goods to firehouses, halfway houses, and a hospital in Bridgeport, Connecticut. This massive undertaking enlisted the help of church members to bake treats. One member, alone, baked more than 100 cookies! Not only were the trays delivered, but the youth sang carols for the community workers and residents.

The night was such a blessing, and the recipients responded warmly with a resounding “thank you.” On October 31 and December 12, the City of Bridgeport was positively impacted by the Brooklawn church, either by their literature evangelism, caroling, or sweet treats. This may become a permanent addition to the Pathfinder and Adventurer calendar of events.

—Roxanne August, member, Brooklawn church

## Bread of Life Ministry Feeds 158 People

For the second year in a row, the Village Church in South Lancaster, Massachusetts, was the location for a community Christmas dinner. The event, sponsored by the church’s Bread of Life Ministry, was held on December 16.

About 158 people were served dinner, 106 children received gifts, and 76 boxes of food were given away, with a Bible included inside each box. Donations from local businesses as well as volunteers from the Lancaster area churches—the Brazilian church, College Church, and Sterling church,



Bread of Life Ministry volunteers assist with serving dinner to people from the community.

as well as Atlantic Union College—helped make the evening a success.

Following dinner, the group had the opportu-

nity to attend a program in the Village Church, which included a special song by JP O’Connor, the church’s pastor, and his wife, Anibel.

This is one of the most important moments in the year for the Bread of Life Ministry team because it gives them a chance to show the community more of Jesus’ love and show how much they appreciate the friendship of those in the community.

The Bread of Life Ministry currently serves about 180 families per week with food baskets. Team members are thankful to God for this ministry and for those involved, especially those involved with the December 16 dinner.

—Sandra Mendes, team member, Bread of Life Ministry

## Lynn Spanish Church Members Rally Around Grieving Family

Members of the Lynn Spanish church in Lynn, Massachusetts, rallied around the surviving family members of four people who died in a tragic fire. The victims—all related—perished in a three-alarm fire on the morning of December 5, 2015, in their multi-family home located in Lynn.

The victims were identified as Sonia Cruz, 36, who was also pregnant; her sister, Maritza Cruz, 39; their niece, Yasmin Cruz, 19; and nephew, Rodolfo Cruz, 28. Two other family members suffered injuries but were treated and released at a hospital in Boston. The family lived on the second floor of the three-family house and hailed from the Dominican Republic. As a result of the extensive damage to the structure, a demolition order was issued and the charred remains of the house have since been torn down.

Mourners filled the pews of the church on the evening of December 5 to remember the lives lost and comfort the family. For many who attended, their grief was overwhelming.

On Sabbath, December 19, the Lynn Spanish church joined with the Lynn Adventist Community Services Center, and the Southern New England Conference (SNEC) Adventist Community Services Department to raise funds for the families affected by the fire. This was a time to begin healing and moving forward in Christ. The community was generous with their donations. The grieving church and family was touched by the love and compassion shared. Frankie Vazquez, SNEC Adventist Community Services director, coordinated the outreach effort.

The funeral service for the victims was held on January 4 in Lynn, Massachusetts. Eduardo Rodriguez, pastor of the Lynn and Malden Spanish churches, officiated the service. SNEC president, David Dennis, and pastors Julio Pagan of the Boston, Lowell, and Stoneham Spanish churches, Noel Ojeda of the Framingham and Jamaica Plain Spanish churches, and Valery St. Natus of the Bridgeport Spanish church in Connecticut, assisted Rodriguez with the service. Dionisio Olivo, Atlantic Union Conference vice president for Hispanic and Portuguese ministries, gave the homily, providing



Valery St. Natus, pastor of the Bridgeport Spanish church in Connecticut, speaks at the funeral service of the Lynn fire victims.



Volunteers of the Lynn church are out in the community raising funds to assist the fire victims' family.



Eduardo Rodriguez, Lynn church pastor, talks with the volunteers who assisted in raising funds for the family.



Eduardo Rodriguez, pastor of the Lynn church, gives a mourner time to share her thoughts at the funeral.

hope for the family and community members who came to support.

“The Southern New England Conference family grieves with the Cruz family and our Lynn church. In this tragedy, the faith in the resurrection has been strong. The City of Lynn has been very kind and loving to the Lynn church. The Lynn church family has rallied and reciprocated by being

a source of comfort and hope to the many grieving people in the city,” said David Dennis, SNEC president.

Rodriguez accompanied the bodies and officiated at the services of the victims who were transported back to the Dominican Republic for burial.

—GLENER staff with information from [compassionboston.org](http://compassionboston.org)

"On Sunday morning, I wait for the time of your voice, telling us that Jesus is standing and knocking at our doors."

- Stephan, Listener in Ukraine



## ANNUAL OFFERING

MARCH 12, 2016

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# UNITY

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

Psalm 133:1

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April 22-24, 2016

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ANDRE WALLER  
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Tekoa Missions



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## Sunset Table

March 2016	4	11	18	25	Eastern Daylight Saving Time
Bangor, ME	5:28	5:37	6:46	6:55	
Portland, ME	5:35	5:44	6:52	7:01	
Boston, MA	5:39	5:47	6:56	7:03	
South Lancaster, MA	5:41	5:50	6:58	7:06	
Pittsfield, MA	5:48	5:56	7:04	7:12	
Hartford, CT	5:46	5:54	7:02	7:10	
Providence, RI	5:41	5:49	6:57	7:05	
New York, NY	5:52	6:00	7:07	7:14	
Albany, NY	5:48	5:56	7:05	7:13	
Utica, NY	5:55	6:04	7:12	7:20	
Syracuse, NY	5:59	6:07	7:16	7:24	
Rochester, NY	6:05	6:13	7:22	7:30	
Buffalo, NY	6:10	6:18	7:27	7:35	
Hamilton, Bda	6:18	6:24	7:29	7:33	

## OUT OF UNION

**Broadview Academy Alumni Association BVA Alumni Weekend is April 29-30.** Mark your calendars. Honor Classes, '46, '56, '66, '76, '86, '91, '96 and '06. N. Aurora Adventist church, N. Aurora, IL. Friday

night vespers, SS, church, lunch, and afternoon music program. Ideas and information welcome. For communication purposes, **we need your e-mail address, postage is too expensive.** Send it to: Ed Gutierrez, edjulie1@att.net; or call: (630) 232-9034. More Information to come. Check the BVA Web site.

## OBITUARIES

**HARRIS, Tammy R. (Wilson)—49;** b. Jul. 25, 1966, in Portland, Maine, d. Dec. 5, 2015, in Cheshire, Conn. She was a longtime member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, first in Maine, then in New Haven, Conn. She is survived by her son, Jeremy Duguay; stepdaughter, Jennifer Prudhomme; sisters Beth Wing (Les) and Cindy Goodrich; her brother, Todd Wilson (Mary), and her grandchildren.

**OSER, Doris M. (McGann) Schumacher—87;** b. Feb. 6, 1928, in Houlton, Maine.; d. May 26, 2015, in West Boylston, Mass. She graduated from South Lancaster Academy and was a member of the Sterling church in Sterling, Mass. She is survived by five daughters, Bonnie Adams of Leominster, Mass., Ronda Hakala of St. Petersburg, Fla., Linda Bailey (Lee) of Spencer, Mass., Debra Schumacher and Dorothy Przyborowski (Zbigniew) both of


Worcester, Mass.; a sister, Mildred Dearborn of Buxton, Maine; a brother, Ronald McGann of Norridgewock, Maine; her step-children, Kris Oser Koller (Alan) of New York, William Oser (Christine) of Holden, Mass., John Oser (Sandy) of Townsend, Mass., and Sharon Oser Cohen (Michael) of New York; 20 grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren.

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**ART CLINIC 2016 | February 4-6, 2016**

Northern New England Conference



**follow HIM**  
...If the Lord is God, follow Him... 1 Kings 18:21

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Must Register by: January 11, 2016**


**All Welcome to Weekend Program**  
Friday, February 6 - Vespers 6:30pm  
Sabbath, February 7 - Church Service 9:30am  
Visual Presentation 10:45am  
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**SPEAKER** Pastor Ramsey Asenjo  
Claremont/Plainfield NH & Rutland VT District

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March 31-April 2



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*Fight the good fight of faith...*  
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Editor ..... Ednor A. P. Davison  
Circulation/Back Pages/Proofreader ..... Debra McKinney Banks  
Copy Editor (off-site) ..... Pat Humphrey  
Layout & Design (off-site) ..... Haziel Olivera

### Contributors

Bermuda .....  
Greater New York ..... Rohann Wellington, [rwellington@gnyc.org](mailto:rwellington@gnyc.org)  
New York ..... Jeremy Garlock, [jeremy.garlock@nyconf.org](mailto:jeremy.garlock@nyconf.org)  
Northeastern ..... JeNean Lendor, [jlendor@northeastern.org](mailto:jlendor@northeastern.org)  
Northern New England ..... Scott Christiansen, [schristiansen@nnec.org](mailto:schristiansen@nnec.org)  
Southern New England ..... David Dennis, [skypilot@sneconline.org](mailto:skypilot@sneconline.org)  
Atlantic Union College .....

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**NETS Evangelism Center:** Kevin Sears, Director; Lois King, Assistant Director. Office Address: P.O. Box 446, South Lancaster, MA 01561. (978) 368-2638. E-mail: [registrar@netsatlanticunion.org](mailto:registrar@netsatlanticunion.org). Web site: [www.netsatlanticunion.org](http://www.netsatlanticunion.org)

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