

GLEAN



IN MEMORIAM

We remember those who died as a result of COVID-19



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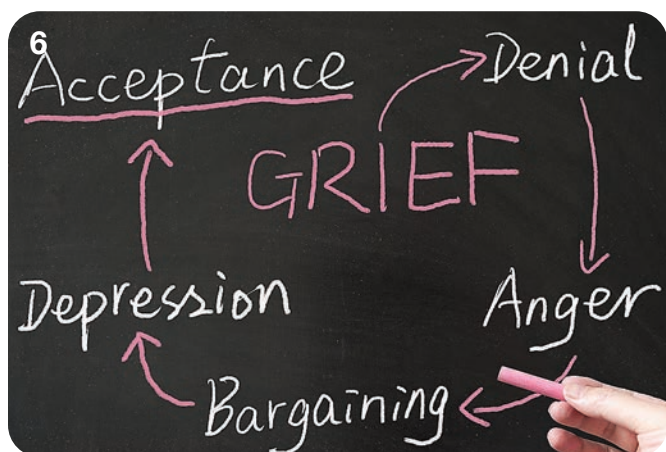
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Anchored in the Promises of God

In a time when governments and churches are reopening, and life is beginning to return to a semblance of normalcy, many continue to grieve the loss of loved ones—some never having had the chance to say goodbye. This reminds me of a particularly painful time in my life in 1991 when I was introduced to a new church district and spent the whole day and evening at church in meetings. There were no cell phones back then. That day, my father called me more than 10 times and did not get to speak with me. As it turned out, he would die the following day, while giving a Bible study. In the midst of the study, (I was told), my father started to cry with increasing intensity, “Jesus is coming soon! Jesus is coming soon! Jesus is coming soon!” And as he chanted about the Second Coming, he fell down and died. The man with whom my father was studying accepted the Adventist message soon after my father’s death. Yet, to this day, I wonder what my father wanted to tell me that Sabbath before he died.

Recently, the bereaved relative of a COVID-19 victim told me that the saddest thing about their loss was the fact that they did not get to say goodbye to their loved one. For many in this pandemic, not being able to be present with dying loved ones has been the most difficult aspect. Many were not allowed in the healthcare facilities, while others were not even aware that their relatives were dying.

The apostle Paul rightly stated in 1 Corinthians 15:19, NIV, that “If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.” But thank God our hope is not in this life alone. “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a

shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first”—1 Thessalonians 4:16, KJV. We have the hope of the resurrection. Death will not have the final word. Jesus will. God’s promise is that He will never leave us nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). And certainly not at the time of death.

At the time of this writing, 162,000 Americans have already died from COVID-19 (Google search 8/13/20). If we are not careful, we may become insensitive and oblivious to the enormity of suffering that death lays on the hearts of the bereaved. Death is a cruel enemy capable of plunging anyone into despair, discouragement, and deep depression. The good news is that our Savior understands the deepest longings of our hearts, and we can “come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16, NKJV).

In this time of uncertainty, when COVID-19 is a painful and constant reality, it is good to anchor our hope in the promises of God. This virus will not have the final word. It’s so good to know that Jesus has already conquered sickness, death, and pain. Psalm 116:15, NKJV, says: “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”

Let us honor the legacy of those lost to COVID-19, not only in celebrating their lives and cherishing their memories, but in living our own lives in preparation for eternity and the day when death itself shall be no more. ☺

Pierre Omeler is the Atlantic Union Conference executive secretary.



“In this time of uncertainty, when COVID-19 is a painful and constant reality, it is good to anchor our hope in the promises of God.”





IN MEMORIAM

We remember those who died as a result of COVID-19.

More than 200 members in the Atlantic Union Conference have lost their lives because of the coronavirus. The majority are from New York City and the surrounding areas and are members of the Greater New York and Northeastern conferences. Others who were sickened by the virus have recovered or are recovering.

The Atlantic Union Conference administrators and staff are praying that God will be a balm in Gilead to all of the families and friends who are grieving the loss of their loved ones and for those who are recovering from the virus. Thank you for joining with us in prayer.

“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away”—Revelation 21:4, NKJV.

Stand Fast in “Since”

There is nothing comforting about death, especially in the face of COVID-19, despite the fact that as we age and as death punctuates our existence, we become more acclimated to its chilling reality. We never anticipated the impact of this pandemic; the losses grow daily. To never hear that voice again or to feel that warm embrace; to never experience those interactions forged through the unique expression of personality—those ways that set them apart from all others, those ways that defy the expressions of written language—leave us mystified. The unspeakable hollowness and its attending sense of finality seldom fail to evoke in us a determination to realize the promise of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 (NASB): “But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.”

What is clear is that the apostle Paul had been exposed to people who grieved without hope, more specifically, young and early believers—at the genesis of the church—who didn’t have the benefit of the profound teaching of Christ’s resurrection. For many of them, there was no consideration of the conviction that attended the voice of the angel who declared to Mary, “He is not here, He is risen” (Matthew 28:6), nor of the power that decimated death and the grave—the twin consequences of sin—when Jesus arose and shook

them off. So here was Paul’s news flash: “If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.”

How, a non-believer might ask, can anyone’s grief be mitigated by the condition “if”? The apostle Paul seems to suggest that on condition of our belief in Jesus’ death and resurrection our sense of loss and detachment can be assuaged. In other words, if

“since.” While “if” has to patiently await the arrival of “then” in order to be completed, “since” actively invests in a foregone conclusion that is indicative of a steadfast faith; and that was the reason for Paul’s news flash. While it wasn’t “Breaking News,” it was the unchanged, immutable hope for the believer in every age.

“Since we believe . . .” we can face tomorrow; we can live in hope; we can walk with our heads up; we can

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus”—1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, NASB

I believe, *then* the comfort kicks in, but if I do not believe, I am left to an almost bottomless sense of loss.

Few translations do justice to Paul’s intent. The words are right, but the meaning is obfuscated in the translation of the second word of verse 14. Notice how the English Standard Version translates it: “For *since* we believe that Jesus died and rose again . . .”

There is a world of difference between the conditional assertion of “if” and the confident affirmation of

celebrate the goodness and the grace of God, and we can live with the assurance that God will keep His precious promises. ①



Abraham Jules is the senior pastor of the Community Worship Center Seventh-day Adventist Church.



Coping with **Grief and Loss**

By Debra Banks Cuadro

Encountering loss, such as death, is difficult at any time, but the coronavirus brings additional complications when navigating the grief process. Many people who lost a loved one during this pandemic were unable to say goodbye in person or, because of social distancing restrictions, did not have the option of attending a funeral or burial. Normal feelings of sadness and loss are intensified during this time without the in-person support from friends and family, in addition to increased feelings of isolation.

COVID-19 has significantly changed the way we live and the way we die. Common grief reactions include periods of sadness, shock/denial, anxiety, loss of sleep/appetite, anger, and distress. Psychology experts point out that having a clear plan for coping with bereavement is essential during this pandemic. Grief is not something to be avoided and can be purposeful in helping us to recognize our loss and the need to adapt. Here are some tips for coping with grief and sorrow in a healthy way and some suggestions on how to

help someone else during their time of bereavement.

1. Be honest with yourself and realistic.

Give yourself a bit of breathing space and grace by acknowledging that this health crisis is making normal things, including grieving, more challenging. Pay attention to your feelings, allowing yourself to feel sadness or cry. Practice self-kindness. Avoid blaming yourself for not being “stronger” or “more on top of things.” Cut yourself some slack and recognize



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that nothing is normal right now, and it's OK.

2. Be intentional about connecting with others.

"We encourage those who are grieving to talk," says Claudio Consuegra, director of Family Ministries for the North American Division. Consuegra and others who counsel recite a common phrase: pain shared is pain divided. The act of expressing your pain or feelings with someone else provides a way to lift some of the weight off your chest and allows someone else to help you carry it. "When you talk about your pain, you are taking some of that pain and sharing it, and the burden is now

in cities who look forward to the time each day when they come out on their balconies to collectively listen to local musicians play music, or sing, or make noise to show appreciation for essential workers during the pandemic. "We are social people . . . in reality, I want to be close to you, and I need to be close to you emotionally, but I need to maintain physical distance for our safety," Consuegra adds.

3. Be present and practice active listening.

It is good to offer support and help for someone who is grieving. Romans 12:15 says that we should "rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." In his practice as

mind.' It's a different way of saying it, but it tells the other person that I'm listening to what you are saying."

4. Offer practical help.

Some people who are grieving may find it difficult to gather their thoughts and focus on simple household tasks. "Sometimes we often want to philosophize or say something that makes the other person feel good or better, instead of doing something that actually helps," Consuegra says. He suggests that people can show they care in practical ways, even while maintaining physical distance. Instead of putting the responsibility on the person who is grieving to reach out and ask for help, think of ways you can assist and offer to do it. "When you are in the midst of grief, the last thing you want, and the last thing you think about, is calling somebody else," Consuegra says. "Offer to mow the lawn, pick up some groceries for them, bring precooked meals for them, take their kid to the park when you take your kids—offer things that are practical and necessary in their daily life to lend a hand and free them to focus on other things."

"Grief is not something we can fix. Everyone has their own journey and their own timeline; it's something that people have to journey through,"—Claudio Consuegra, North American Division Family Ministries director.

carried by two, or three, or 10 people," Consuegra adds.

As we continue in this pandemic, limiting physical connection is necessary for safety reasons, but Consuegra emphasizes that experiencing social closeness while maintaining physical distance is possible and necessary for our wellbeing. Phone calls, text messages, and video chats are some helpful alternatives to getting necessary support.

We should also seek safe, creative ways to interact. "We need to see people," Consuegra says. "It's good enough to be safe and watch the screen when we are on Zoom, Skype, etc., but we actually need to see faces, and to see bodies, and to listen to people." He cites examples of people

a grief counselor, Consuegra points out, "The ministry of presence is the most important thing we can do." Just quietly being there in the moment with the person who is grieving can be very therapeutic. If they want to talk, give the person that space of quietness to share without interruption. "Listen instead of talking," Consuegra says, but adds that the act of listening requires involvement. "Ask questions when appropriate, pay attention to the person's feelings as you listen to what they are saying," he adds. "If they say, 'Sometimes I feel like I'm going crazy,' don't just say, 'You're not going crazy.' Instead, validate those feelings by saying, 'It must be a horrible situation to feel like you are going to lose your

Feelings and symptoms of grief cannot only result from the death of a loved one, but also from the loss of a job, or the loss of the routine of school, play, worship, etc. Above all, be caring and patient with the person who is experiencing grief. "Grief is not something we can fix. Everyone has their own journey and their own timeline; it's something that people have to journey through," Consuegra says. As people adjust to a new reality and turn their attention to the things that are in their control, in time, feelings of grief will diminish. ☺

Debra Banks Cuadro is assistant communication director for the Atlantic Union Conference.



A Call to Service

“Make use of every ability; bring into exercise every power, every intrusted talent; use all the light that God has given you to do others good.”

Will God’s people listen to His voice speaking to them through His word? Will they take the instruction that comes from the source of all light? Will they receive the Holy Spirit’s teaching? In the words of Scripture I have quoted is a sermon for every member of the Church. Will you receive it, and profit by it? Will you be wise in your conception of what constitutes Christian character and Christian experience? Will you hear and receive the truth because it is truth? Will you have the faith that works by love, and purifies the soul from every spiritual defilement?

The Lord is coming. This earth’s history is soon to close. Are you prepared to meet the Judge of all the earth? Bear in mind that “he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy.” How terrible it will be in the last great day to find that those with whom we have been familiarly associated are separated from us forever; to see the members of our family, perhaps our own children, unsaved; to find those who have visited our homes, and eaten at our tables, among the lost. Then we shall ask ourselves the question, Was it because of my impatience, my unchristlike disposition; was it because self was not under control, that the religion of Christ became distasteful to them?

The world must be warned of the soon coming of the Lord. We have

but a little time in which to work. Years have passed into eternity that might have been improved in seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and in diffusing the light to others. God now calls upon His people who have great light, and are established in the truth, having had much labor bestowed upon them, to work for themselves and for others as they have never done before. Make use of every ability; bring into exercise every power, every intrusted talent; use all the light that God has given you to do others good. Do not try to be preachers, but become ministers for God. As the truth is better understood, it will ever appear in a more striking light; as you seek to enlighten others, with your mind under the holy influence of the Spirit of God, your attention will be directed toward those things that are of eternal interest. In such efforts, mingled with prayer for divine light, your own hearts will throb with the quickening influence of the grace of God; your own affections will glow with more divine fervor, and your whole Christian life will be more of a reality, more earnest, more prayerful. Thus with Christ abiding in the heart, you may become laborers together with God. ①

Excerpt by Ellen G. White, author and co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, THE REVIEW AND HERALD, March 18, 1902. Reprinted with permission.



By Sheila Holder

Coaching for Improved School Performance

The Atlantic Union Conference Office of Education, under the leadership of Jerrell Gilkerson, education director, embarked on an innovative instructional coaching program to further support teachers in classrooms. Even though one doesn't usually think of Jesus as a coach, He, in fact, engaged in many coaching practices and facilitated others in improving their performance. Many schools nationwide have introduced instructional coaching, in part, because school leaders recognize traditional in-service professional development is not affecting student achievement in a meaningful or lasting way. Instructional coaching promises to be a more effective way to improve instruction in schools.

Gilkerson introduced the concept with the view to build teacher expertise and raise student achievement. The Atlantic Union funded this initiative in two conferences—Greater New York and Northern New England. After hearing presentations on the benefits of coaching, 26 teachers from these conferences applied to participate in the program, however, only two teachers could be accommodated when the program was launched.

As an instructional coach, I employed a blended cycle consisting of both virtual and face-to-face practices. Additional classroom structures were also used. At the conclusion of the instructional cycle, the feedback provided will be used to strengthen the ensuing programs.

Here are two encouraging quotes, one from each of the teachers: "I found this sharing of ideas and techniques intellectually stimulating because it has incentivized me to continue to seek and try new ideas," said a multi-



Marilyn Alvarez

Atlantic Union teachers participate in an instructional coaching conference to train experienced and newly-retired teachers as potential coaches and supporters.

grade teacher. "Duties and responsibilities are continually pulling us away from our real job—teaching. Coaching helped me to be creative. It helped me believe in myself again and [remember] why I became a teacher."

Because of the initial success of the program, additional initiatives were undertaken during 2019. In August 2019, the Office of Education instituted a two-day instructional coaching conference to train experienced and newly-retired teachers as potential coaches and supporters. These interactive sessions were led by me and Akasha, a leadership coach. Both days started with content teaching. Thereafter, hands-on strategies, large group practices, triad practices, demo coaching, and reflections occurred throughout the day.

In October 2019, eight potential coaches who had expressed a strong interest in strengthening their coaching skills met by Zoom to continue the learning process. They independently read and then conversed together discussing relevant topics

from the book *BETTER CONVERSATIONS*, authored by Jim Knight. These were rich sessions. One of the impactful takeaways was that emotional connections strengthen relationships, establish rapport, and require us to be fully present in conversations.

Training will not stop here, however. Plans are underway for ongoing workshops, webinars, continued Zoom sessions, and formal coaching classes that will lead to instructional coaching certification for those who want to transition to instructional coaching.

Research concurs that instructional coaching is advantageous for teachers and, most importantly, for students. When professional improvement for teachers is carefully planned, coaching, as an individualized tool, can be a powerful and innovative means for achieving the visionary goal of the Atlantic Union Conference Office of Education. ☺



Sheila Holder is an instructional coach and retired Bermuda Conference superintendent of schools.

God Responds to COVID-19

When the COVID-19 pandemic placed the already vulnerable in Bermuda at higher risk, the demand for the Church Community Supper Ministry on Wednesday evenings increased, and the need to expand the ministry to other times became evident. Dora Baker, Bermuda Conference Adventist Community Services (ACS) coordinator and St. David's church Adventist Community Services director, believes that, as Christians, it is our responsibility to follow in the footsteps of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, meeting the needs of the vulnerable in our communities, and by doing so, share the love of God in a very tangible way.

Escalating demands for food throughout the island became an impetus for Adventist Community Services Bermuda to do

something. Baker recalls, "As the pandemic increased in Bermuda, I began receiving more and more calls for assistance. The needs were far more than we could meet, as we are a very small congregation with mostly senior members on a fixed income." Baker asked her ACS team, the elders, and other members of the church to join her in seeking God's help through prayer. She then reached out to a variety of church and charitable agencies for assistance as the team readied to meet the increasing demands.

As the Bermuda government prepared to implement shelter-in-place regulations to mitigate the spread of the pandemic, God answered the prayers of His people. Following the prompting of Cyril Millett, St. George's church senior

pastor, Baker applied for a grant with the Bermuda Community Foundation. Further applications for grants were made to the North American Division and the Atlantic Union Conference. All requests were successful.

Kenneth Manders, Bermuda Conference president, encouraged Baker to attend a meeting with a philanthropist willing to sponsor the distribution of food vouchers to the needy. As a result, ACS leaders were able to respond to the various requests for food, and the feeding ministries through Adventist Community Services Bermuda continued during the shelter-in-place.

Several members of the church and the community at-large also generously provided much-needed donations of food and

finances to the feeding ministry of ACS Bermuda. The grants and donations enabled churches to meet ever-increasing demands.

In addition to serving a meal on Wednesdays, the Hamilton church ACS team, under the leadership of Marva Trott, expanded their feeding ministry to Sundays on a take-out basis. The team prepared the food, packaged it, and distributed it from their center. They serve an average of 400 meals a week; however, their numbers soared to approximately 500 meals per week during the heart of the shelter-in-place period. Every week, the team also distributed food hampers and food vouchers.

As the cooking team at the St. David's church was significantly reduced, the Bermuda Community Foundation agreed to



Volunteers set up for the grocery giveaway at St. David's church.

sponsor cooked meals via a few restaurants that, every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, prepared the food and delivered it to the church for distribution. More than 1,600 meals were distributed during the first three weeks of sheltering-in-place. The numbers rapidly increased as the weeks went by. This ministry extended to members of the St. George's community, and church members from St. George's and St. David's joined forces in the feeding ministry.

While distributing the cooked meals, it was brought to the team's attention that a few people had not eaten between Wednesday suppers and Mondays when supper was again served. The team decided to provide limited food items to individuals to suffice during this period. Once again, God stepped in and moved on the hearts of the management of Bermuda wholesale importer and distributor Butterfield and Vallis. They provided dry, canned, and refrigerated goods so those in need would have sufficient food

to feed their families over the weekends.

Donations from Butterfield and Vallis expanded the church's food inventory and allowed 67 families to obtain groceries at a free community "shopping" event held in the fellowship hall of the church. This ministry has grown to provide food hampers to nearly 100 families each week. Our thanks to Gerald Burgess and Derrick Ming of Hamilton church, who faithfully assisted with receiving and transporting food items weekly from The Market Place grocery store in the city of Hamilton to the St. David's church on the southside.

More recently, the Warwick church ACS leader, Carolina Carter, and her team undertook the distribution of food hampers to selected members of the community. This ministry has seen an increase in demand and, with God's blessings, they are accommodating all who ask.

Through the combined sponsorship of the philanthropist, the North



Members of the community shop for free groceries.

American Division, Atlantic Union Conference, Bermuda Adventist Community Services, Bermuda Community Foundation, and individual donations, all ACS leaders engaged in meeting the needs for food in their community.

We much appreciate the strong collaboration among all ACS Bermuda local church leaders in providing cooked meals, distributing food vouchers and food hampers, and meeting other non-food related needs. They served with grace and love, and those ministered to were genuinely thankful. In addition to the ACS Bermuda leaders mentioned above, gratitude is extended to Joseph Young of Somerset church, Terrylynn Gibbons of Rockaway church, Dianne Furbert of Southampton church, Carolin Scott of Pembroke church, Muriel Roach of Devonshire church, Tammy Robinson of Midland Heights church, and Damon Hendrickson, pastor of Restoration Ministries.

ACS Bermuda is grateful for the support received

from the Bermuda Conference administrative team and staff. They also value the services of our non-church-member volunteers. One evening at St. David's church, after distributing food hampers, a member of the community out walking his dog stopped by and inquired about the food ministry and its sponsorship. Calvin White, a church elder, answered all of his questions. As a result, the visitor joined in service and invited his friends from the neighborhood to join. They are now faithful volunteers of the St. David's church ACS team.

ACS Bermuda invites everyone to pray that God will continue to provide the resources to allow this ministry to continue to meet the needs of their communities, and to strengthen all Adventist Community Services teams that serve the people in Bermuda on behalf of the Master-Servant, Jesus Christ.

—Adventist Community Services staff,
Bermuda Conference



Derrick Ming, Hamilton church member, shares a free take-out meal with a member of the community.

Women's Ministries Reaches Many Through the "Finding Shelter" Evangelistic Series

The evangelistic series, "Finding Shelter," held virtually June 19-27, was a moment in time when people from around the world attending and participating felt God's presence from night to night. International evangelist Della Patton blessed them each evening with messages from God. Lisa González, Greater New York Conference (GNYC) Women's Ministries director and Glennly Mendez-Calcaño, GNYC Women's Ministries advisory member, co-hosted the series. These messages, presented in English, were translated into Spanish and viewed on Zoom and Facebook.

Although the series began on June 19, preparation began prior to the event with a prayer marathon, titled "More Prayer, More Power," led by Claudette Henry, which lasted for several days. "We firmly believe that we can do nothing without the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit," said Priscilla Alao, GNYC Women's Ministries evangelism advisory member.

Each night commenced with a different guest who opened with prayer, a recap session held by Henry and Alao, a 10-minute nugget presented by special guests, and special music by various singers. Prior to the nightly message, singing evangelist Juliet MacFarlane presented the



Greater New York Conference Women's Ministries director Lisa González, top center; advisory members, Sherma Baptiste, top left; Glennly Mendez-Calcaño, top right; Priscilla Alao, second row, center; and Claudette Henry, bottom center; Sunil Siceron, translator, second row, left; and Della Patton, international evangelist, second row, right; engage the viewers of the "Finding Shelter" evangelistic series.

message in song. After each message, prayer requests were shared.

Prayers were offered for salvation, faith in God, various illnesses, children and families, feelings of hopelessness, and the list goes on. Special prayers were offered for those sick with the coronavirus and those mourning loved ones lost due to the virus. The participants continue to petition the throne of God for the prayer requests.

The message was not only received in the U.S., but also outside of the U.S. borders in such countries as Peru, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Brazil,

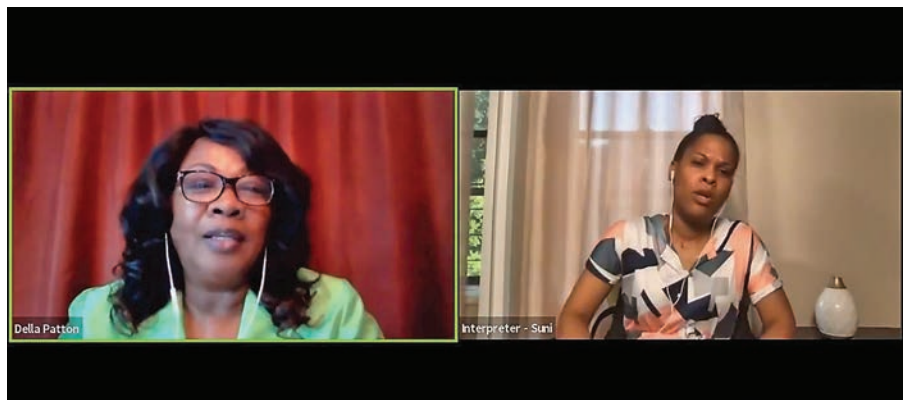
and Bangladesh. Leaders requested music from attendees and organized an impromptu international mini-concert. The concert took place on the last night of the series. Many musical contributions were submitted, but unfortunately, because of time constraints, they could not all be shared, though all the contributions were appreciated.

"Despite technical difficulties and other challenges, God emerged victoriously! We may not know, until we reach heaven, exactly how many souls were touched and accepted the Lord, but we do know that the Holy Spirit was working," said Alao.

Organizers expressed thanks to the advisory team members, the international evangelist, the host and co-host, the translator, technician, and all those who worked tirelessly to make the evangelistic series a success.

To watch the videos of the Women's Ministries "Finding Shelter" evangelistic series, visit the Greater New York Conference Facebook video page at <https://bit.ly/33ar340>.

—Women's Ministries department, Greater New York Conference



Della Patton, an international evangelist, left, preaches the Word during the Greater New York Conference Women's Ministries "Finding Shelter" evangelistic series with translation by Sunil Siceron, right.

Greater New York and Northeastern Conference Churches Feed Families in New York

The Greater New York (GNYC) and Northeastern (NEC) conferences are coordinating efforts to meet the growing need to feed thousands of families in New York City each week.

On Monday, August 3, the GNYC warehouse on Edison Avenue in the Bronx, received a delivery by City Harvest, one of the region's largest food banks, of 12,000 pounds of food for distribution by both conferences to the five boroughs in New York City. This weekly commitment by City Harvest will continue through December 31.

Atlantic Union Conference representatives on hand to receive the delivery included G. Earl Knight, president; Jose Joseph, Haitian Ministries and African Ministries vice

president and Adventist Community Services director; and Yvonne Knight, Women's Ministries and Prayer Ministries director. Conference representatives from GNYC included Henry Beras, president; Ysaias Javier, treasurer; and Luis Biazotto, Adventist Community Services director. Representing NEC was Mario Augustave, Adventist Community Services director.

The recent crisis has brought the two conferences to a new level of collaboration within the shared territory of New York City, to meet the immediate need for food. The joint effort brought in City Harvest to the rescue as a key component of the strategy. The initial exchange between the two conferences laid bare the extreme scale



Luis Biazotto, Greater New York Conference Adventist Community Services director, left, and Henry Beras, Greater New York Conference president, right, assist with unloading the food from the City Harvest truck.



The City Harvest truck makes a delivery to the Greater New York Conference Adventist Community Services warehouse.



Volunteers at the Greater New York Conference warehouse pray for the recent shipment of food; from left are, Melbourne Gregory, North Bronx church elder; Henry Beras, GNYC president; Ysaias Javier, GNYC treasurer; Luis Biazotto, GNYC Adventist Community Services director; G. Earl Knight, Atlantic Union Conference president, Jose Joseph, Atlantic Union Conference Adventist Community Services director; Mario Augustave, Northeastern Conference Adventist Community Services director; and Walter Harris, GNYC warehouse manager, far right.

and seriousness of taking on the task to address the escalating need.

The Atlantic Union came to the table, bringing energy and influence to bear on the appeal to the North American Division and other entities for help in tackling this critical need. "This is a very important witness. The only reason we exist as a church is to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself set the example of meeting the needs of His community. We cannot claim to be followers of Jesus until we do what Jesus did," Knight said.

—Donnieval Walker, communication director, Greater New York Conference

Come, Experience the USA Difference

Families, how is your courage these days? There is so much for us to wonder about and so many unknowns in our world today. Now that school has begun, there is concern, especially on behalf of our children. Are they in a safe environment, an environment where they will stay healthy and have as much of a classroom learning experience as possible?

Many schools have started the school year with an online learning program, which, for some, is a positive, while, for others, it is a negative. Regardless of what form education takes for our children, our desire for them is that they continue to learn and grow intellectually, socially, emotionally, physically, and, most importantly, spiritually.

Adventist schools throughout the Atlantic Union are doing their very best to provide a positive learning environment for students. An advantage our schools have is the relatively small class sizes,

which makes following current safety guidelines much easier. At Union Springs Academy (USA) we are prepared for the challenges that have been placed upon us. We have set processes and safeguards in place that will give our students an in-person classroom environment, while allowing for optimum health and safety.

Take a look at these quotes and comments, shared by Union Springs Academy students, about the differences they see with an Adventist Christian education:

- “The worships every morning and evening.”
- “Seeing different spiritual views and learning about God, making a close relationship with Jesus a reality.”
- “Participating in campus ministries really made me feel useful in God’s service.”
- “Making friends from different cultures and



Student-led, Week of Prayer programs, are one way Campus Ministries engages students to grow their faith and gain confidence in their leadership abilities.

having friends who are like family. These people I have met this year will be in my life forever.”

- “My spiritual, academic, and work-related experiences helped me become more mature, smarter, and a more dependable person.”
- “Teachers who care about how you are as a person, not just academics, but outside the classroom too. You are not just a number.”
- “A smaller environment in a country setting.”

One of the most positive aspects of an Adventist education is that sense of family. Each student knows and is known by every other student, as well as the faculty and staff. They are not simply a number or a face in the crowded halls or classrooms. They, instead, have a close-knit school community that will be there to help them celebrate their highest highs, and love

them through their lowest lows. And yes, just like in other families, problems will arise; however, they can be resolved within the supportive environment of a faith community.

Ellen White outlines the scope of Adventist education clearly in the book, *EDUCATION*, p. 13: “Our ideas of education take too narrow and too low a range. There is need of a broader scope, a higher aim. True education means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study. It means more than a preparation for the life that now is. It has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. It prepares the student for the joy of service in this world and for the higher joy of wider service in the world to come.”

Certainly, in the world of Adventist education our ultimate goal is for the eternal well-being of our students.



Pictured is Union Springs Academy’s Administration Building, Newmyer Hall.

As teachers, our prayer is that our students will see Christ living through us, also through our teaching, through our interactions with students outside of the classroom, creating a bond with our students that will last through eternity.

Adventist education is more important now than ever. For those who do not have access to a local Adventist high school, please prayerfully consider Union Springs Academy. We are nestled in the picturesque, rural Finger Lakes region of Central New York, near the shores of Lake Cayuga. Our students enjoy a safe and peaceful atmosphere, while obtaining a first-rate education, learning skills needed for this life and the next. The academy's beautiful and



An ariel view of Union Springs Academy in rural, Central New York, sitting on 300-plus acres of land.

tranquil surroundings are conducive to connecting with God. This is a place where faculty and staff seek daily to bring the students' minds toward heavenly things. Despite the current challenges, Union Springs

Academy, by God's grace, is growing and thriving, both in the curriculum offerings and enrollment.

If you are wondering how you can afford to have your student attend USA, one way is through scholarships

available for Atlantic Union Conference students. Come, experience the USA difference! Now is the time to make the change of a lifetime!

—Tom Dunham, vice principal/ history teacher and Patty Dunham, alumni communication director, Union Springs Academy, and Miguel Crespo, president, New York Conference

“Adventist schools throughout the Atlantic Union are doing their very best to make a positive learning environment for students.”



Hannah Crittenden, Union Springs Academy senior and a valued employee in maintenance, does a variety of jobs, including mowing the campus lawns, landscaping, painting buildings, and fixing things around the campus.

57th USA ALUMNI WEEKEND

October 2-4, 2020

POSTPONED

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For More Information follow the Union Springs Academy Alumni FB page and the School website on the Alumni Tab.

Union Springs Academy | 40 Spring Street | Union Springs, NY 13160 | 315-889-7314

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Pathfinder Drum Corps Participates in a Bench Dedication Ceremony



Captain Christopher Giabrome from the New York Police Department Police Service Area 9, offers condolences to Aamir Griffin's mother, Shanequa Griffin.

The New York Police Department's (NYPD) 113th Precinct Community Affairs Department asked the South Ozone Park church drum corps to participate in a bench dedication ceremony in memory of Aamir Griffin. Griffin was a 14-year-old junior varsity basketball player, who was killed by a stray bullet in November

2019, while he was on a basketball court just outside his home.

The dedication ceremony was rescheduled several times because of the COVID-19 pandemic. On July 10, though heavy rains threatened to force the publicized event into a small room at a senior citizens center, the 113th Precinct decided to move forward

and hold the ceremony outside of the center before the rainstorm began. The ceremony and unveiling of the monument would be a constant reminder to the Griffin family of how much Aamir was loved by the community.

The drum corps, under the leadership of the director, Dennis Bush, marched in the pouring rain and led the Griffin family, along with Melinda Katz, Queens district attorney; commissioners and officers of the NYPD; New York Sanitation Department officers; New York City firefighters; the media, and onlookers to the unveiling of the memorial. The monument—a brown wooden bench with a bronze basketball in its center—sits outside the building where Aamir's family resides, and is in close proximity to the basketball court where he met his demise.

In 2019, the South Ozone Park church Pathfinder drum corps

was recommended to the 113th Precinct Community Affairs Department and was invited to play in the community Veterans Day Parade. The drum corps rendered a befitting tribute to the veterans and was recognized by the precinct for their participation.

The South Ozone Park church is proud of the spirit of volunteerism and the dedication of Naomi, Samuel, and Benjamin Jack; Deven Bush; Shamar Munroe; and the other Pathfinders who have kept the Pathfinder law by doing their honest part and are servants of God and friends to man.

—Lorraine Archie, communication secretary, South Ozone Park church



Memorial bench with sculptured basketball is dedicated in Aamir Griffin's honor.



Dennis Bush, Pathfinder director, and a few members of the South Ozone Park church Pathfinder drum corps, Deven Bush; Naomi, Samuel, and Benjamin Jack; and Shamar Munroe.

Trinity Temple Church and Northeastern Conference Adventist Community Services Administer COVID-19 Tests

The Northeastern Conference (NEC) Adventist Community Services (ACS) Department teamed up with the Trinity Temple church, in Poughkeepsie, New York, on June 10 to provide COVID-19 testing for the residents of Hudson Valley in upstate New York. ACS, through Alicia Massop-Flowers, D.O., ACS consultant, provided tests, PPEs, and other supplies. Medical volunteers came from area churches utilized the NEC health van for the testing process. After setting up the van, volunteers provided COVID-19 testing for 41 members of the community.

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



Some of the workers on hand to give assistance at Trinity Temple church are, from left, Mario Augustave, Northeastern Conference Adventist Community Services director; Maykel Desir, Mid-Hudson French church elder; Georges Voyard, Mid-Hudson French church pastor; Vernon Jordan, Trinity Temple church pastor; Suwauny Westney, Trinity Temple church member; and Mirlande Jordan, Trinity Temple church pastor's wife.

Mount Vernon Holds Baptism at the Beach

The song writer declares that, "His truth still marches on" and no better illustration of this declaration can be seen than that which transpired on Sabbath, July 18, at Orchard Beach in Bronx, New York. Pierre Eddy Laguerre, Mount Vernon church senior pastor, baptized seven people into the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

The candidates' ages ranged from 16 to 66. They came from varied backgrounds, yet one thought prompted them to be on Orchard Beach on that Sabbath morning—being baptized in Jesus. During the pandemic, Bible worker Beverly Rowe, along with her associate, Cardene Wallace, kept their Bible studies alive

through the telephone lines. Truth traveled through fiber-optic lines until the Spirit opened the eyes of the candidates to the realities of a blessed life in Christ Jesus.

Along with Gregory Nelson, the church's associate pastor, Laguerre took the seven to the watery grave and gave public witness to the transformative power of God even in these dark times. Onlookers clapped and cheered as the newest members of Mount Vernon church gave their lives to the Lord, because, regardless of the day or the hour, His truth marches on.

"The exigencies of COVID-19 have forced us to find new ways of doing the essentials for God's



Pierre Eddy Laguerre, Mount Vernon church senior pastor, left, gives the last instructions to baptismal candidates in the parking lot at Orchard Beach.

kingdom. We reverted to baptism in the sea. The public, unaccustomed to the display of God's grace in such manners, marveled. Maybe we need to explore more creative avenues through which God's ways

can be shown and taught to our neighbors. We will really be making friends for Jesus," Laguerre said.

—Communication staff, Mount Vernon church



God, Conspiracy Theories, and Three-Part Harmony

Admittedly, it's a pretty eclectic mix. On Northern New England Conference's YouTube channel you can now find sermons on the character of God by Jim Gilley, pastor and former president of 3ABN, and Lonnie Melashenko, worldwide speaker; a sermon on Christ our Savior by James Reid, Pine Tree Academy chaplain and Bible teacher; seminars on prophecy, healthful living, and conspiracy theories; and music by the Brunswick church's own Kings Trio.

If the channel offerings read something like a list of camp meeting programs, that's because the channel was launched to be the platform for NNEC's virtual July camp meeting. But this digital ministry, now that it's launched, will go well beyond camp meeting offerings.

Northern New England is engaged in establishing a robust range of digital ministry offerings, some of which interact with and support its church-planting efforts. Aside from its well-established (and increasingly successful) digital evangelism platform, NNEC is now expanding into intensely local digital campaigns where pastors make short YouTube ads offering to pray with or study the Bible with people who get in touch with them. These ads, placed in the zip code immediately surrounding the pastor's church, offer a way to connect with a digitally-focused population during this time of crisis and uncertainty.

NNEC is also taking the unusual step of producing a feature-length video that tells the story of the war between

Christ and Satan, in a very engaging and creative way. I personally believe that this "great controversy" framework is Adventism's greatest gift to the Christian world, though in this case, the video will be used as an outreach to Northern New England's majority post-Christian population. Those who engage after watching the video will be invited to meet up in a neutral location with cast members and church-planting teams for wide-ranging conversations about the character of God and earth's final days.

But even without all the expansion that is planned, NNEC's current YouTube channel has a great deal of value. The sermons offered by Gilley and Melashenko are of great value, as is the original music and health programming. Also, the seminar

"Conspiracy Theories: Why We Love Them and How They Change Us" by Scott Christiansen, Northern New England Conference communication director, is an important offering for all Christians during these deception-filled last days. If you'd like to see some of NNEC's channel, you can find it on YouTube by searching "Northern New England SDA."

Emerging as a producer of engaging original digital content may not seem like an obvious move for a small conference, but in these last days the entire church is moving to do whatever it takes to vigorously proclaim salvation through Christ to a distracted world, and that definitely includes Northern New England Conference!

—Ted Huskins, president, Northern New England Conference

Brunswick, Maine, Church Starts "OG" Club

Long, long ago when Paul Layman was in college, he and some friends started an "over the hill" club because, at 22, they were older than most people attending Andrews University. That club came to mind when Layman recently found himself with some time on his hands and in search of things he could do to help his neighbors in the Brunswick, Maine, area. Taking matters into hand, Layman talked to his friend, Ed Goodman, and together they started the "Old Guys Club" at the Brunswick church, with the objective of engaging in a wide array of

service projects for people in need in their community.

The club now has more than a dozen members who, to date, have repaired small engines and rebuilt snowblowers, taken on small electrical repair and plumbing projects, shoveled and salted driveways and walkways, cleared fallen tree limbs after storms, loaned generators when the power was off for extended times, roto-tilled garden plots and helped plant those plots, cut and delivered firewood, and much more. Their work has mainly benefited elderly community members, especially widows on a fixed



Ed Goodman, Paul Layman, and Mark Clemenson of the Old Guys Club take a break from one of their service projects.

income who can be devastated by an unexpected household repair bill.

"I think the people who have benefited the most from this effort are the

club members themselves,” said Layman. “The average age of the club members is probably around 70, and doing these things for our neighbors makes us feel good, helps us socialize, gets us outside, and keeps us out of trouble with our wives. Those are all important things!”

Most club members have a specialty that they bring to

the club. Some members are adept at small engine repair, others have electrical or plumbing experience, others specialize in woodworking or basic carpentry projects. Together, the club members are able to take on just about any light household maintenance or repair project.

The community members they work with tend to be not only very appreciative,

but are also often open to receiving literature that the club passes out, including the book *STEPS TO CHRIST*. “This club is a very effective way to make friends,” said Layman, “And once you help someone, chances are they will tell a friend. All our work has come to us by word of mouth! I think what makes the members of this club the happiest is

the appreciation that we get from our neighbors for putting our God-given skills to work, plus the many chances we get to witness. This club is a good thing for us old guys!”

—Scott Christiansen, communication director, Northern New England Conference

“Three Questions For God” Gets Crowdsourced

Looking back over the last 60 years (which is as long as I’ve been observing the church), it seems there were many times when my church valued conformity over creativity. It seemed that creative people—who yearned to contribute in their own unique ways to the spreading of the gospel—were encouraged to contribute in more pedestrian ways. But these are the end times, and change is very much upon us. Now my church—our church—is seeking a multitude of creative ways to proclaim the gospel. This change is very much exemplified by the North American Division Communication Department, which strongly encourages experimentation by our youth in media productions.

Across our division, there are creative endeavors underway that tell the story of salvation through Christ, through song, story, and stage, and the use of everything from videos to pocketbooks to podcasts to reach audiences in the

limited amount of time we have left. This surge of creativity extends even to small conferences, including the Northern New England Conference (NNEC), which is attempting to produce a feature-length film titled “Three Questions For God.” The film uses layered stories

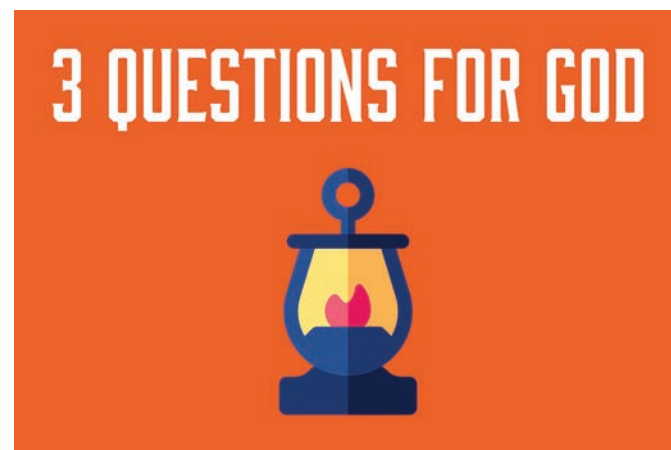
post-Christian population in NNEC. But since producing a video of adequate quality is a major undertaking, NNEC has put out a call for help by attempting to crowdsource technical assistance and funding. NNEC has set up a website (www.threequestionsfilm.com)

with creatives from across the division to produce an important witnessing tool for our times.

Once completed, the film will be promoted by NNEC on YouTube, and will be specially targeted at communities where teams of church planters are operating. Then, when viewers react and respond to the video, they will be invited to meet with cast members and church planters to engage in wide-ranging conversations about the character of God and the times we are in. Essentially, the video initiates relationships that are built around searching out the character of God, and these relationships, if they continue, inevitably lead to deep Bible studies and spiritual discovery.

Please keep this project in your prayers and, if you feel led to do so, visit the project website and add your support to the crowd of Adventists that is pushing this end-time effort forward.

—Scott Christiansen, communication director, Northern New England Conference



The Northern New England Conference has set up a website (www.threequestionsfilm.com) that allows people who have experience in video production to volunteer for the crew.

to take viewers through the biblical account of the war between Christ and Satan, thus giving them the ultimate framework for understanding pain, suffering, sickness, death, and the character of God.

The film is meant to appeal to the majority

that allows people who have experience in video production to volunteer for the crew and allows people to support the video with their donations. The page also has a link to the script for the film, which is available to read. Essentially, NNEC is trying to recruit and partner

Worcester Pleasant Street Moves Forward with Community Health Fair During COVID-19

Although many events have been postponed or canceled this year because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Health Ministries team at Worcester Pleasant Street church still hosted their annual community fair, albeit on a much smaller scale. Despite record heat on the day of the event, July 19, more than 30 people visited the various tents that dotted the church lawn and received information on the eight laws of health, as well as items to help them stay safe from COVID-19.

“We looked for a creative way [to] not have a lot of crowding and still social distance carefully, yet still be able to educate and give persons the health information to help them along during this pandemic,” said Claudia Barrett, Pleasant Street church Health Ministries director. “We [wanted to] let them know that our church is still there in the community and that we care about their health, and we are trying to do our part to help them during this time.”

While the numbers of positive COVID-19 cases are decreasing in Massachusetts, the Health Ministries department wanted to emphasize the importance of fighting disease God’s way—using preventative lifestyle measures, as well as information about helpful herbs that can help build the immune system. To help maintain social distancing, visitors followed one-way directional arrows to the



A guest at the Pleasant Street church community fair receives pre-bagged ingredients from Neisha Vanhorne, left, and Rodlyn Moore to make an immune-boosting herbal tea.

information tents that were spaced out to reduce contact with each other.

Volunteers provided each visitor a bag to receive handouts, free bread, hand

lemon, and fingers of fresh ginger and turmeric to make the nourishing tea.

Although the number of people seen that day was significantly lower than at

“Among those who visited were two individuals who were looking for a church home, and one of them attended church the following Sabbath. (Pleasant Street opened its doors for worship service at no more than 40 percent occupancy on July 3.)”

sanitizer, and hand wipes at the different tents. Visitors also received a special recipe to help boost the immune system, as well as pre-bagged cloves of garlic, a

previous community fairs, those who braved the heat were among some of the neediest, including some who were homeless and some who were impaired

because of substance abuse. Among those who visited were two individuals who were looking for a church home, and one of them attended church the following Sabbath. (Pleasant Street opened its doors for worship service at no more than 40 percent occupancy on July 3.)

“It’s not easy to do stuff during COVID because of all the restrictions, but we touched quite a few lives,” Barrett said. As the pandemic continues, the Health Ministries team will host another small community fair to distribute more sanitation and personal protective equipment.

—Communication department,
Pleasant Street church

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ADDRESS CHANGE

If you moved recently, be sure to submit your new address information to the church clerk or conference.

Contact information for the conferences is in the shaded box located on the bottom right of page 23.

Help us keep your address information up to date!



UPDATE ON PTA'S ALUMNI WEEKEND:

The Pine Tree Academy Alumni Committee voted to cancel our 2020 alumni weekend. The golf tournament will proceed as scheduled on October 2, at 9:30 a.m. The committee arrived at this decision after discussing the logistical challenges that COVID-19 presents for safely hosting an event that has historically produced a turnout that exceeds the 50 person indoor limit that the State of Maine has in place at this time.

We know many alumni will be disappointed by this news. However, we would like to leave you with exciting information. The alumni association will acknowledge this year's honor classes at next year's alumni weekend scheduled for October 1-2, 2021. Please save the date for this event.

May God bless you during these challenging times.

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Sunset Table

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Bangor, ME	6:10	5:58	5:46	5:34	5:24	
Portland, ME	6:17	6:05	5:53	5:42	5:32	
Boston, MA	6:21	6:09	5:58	5:47	5:38	
South Lancaster, MA	6:23	6:11	6:00	5:50	5:40	
Pittsfield, MA	6:30	6:18	6:06	5:56	5:46	
Hartford, CT	6:28	6:16	6:05	5:55	5:45	
Providence, RI	6:23	6:11	6:00	5:49	5:40	
New York, NY	6:33	6:22	6:11	6:01	5:52	
Albany, NY	6:30	6:18	6:07	5:56	5:46	
Utica, NY	6:37	6:25	6:14	6:03	5:53	
Syracuse, NY	6:41	6:29	6:17	6:07	5:57	
Rochester, NY	6:47	6:35	6:23	6:12	6:02	
Buffalo, NY	6:52	6:40	6:28	6:17	6:08	
Keene, NH	6:25	6:13	6:02	5:51	5:41	
Manchester, NH	6:22	6:10	5:59	5:48	5:38	
Portsmouth, NH	6:19	6:07	5:56	5:45	5:35	
Brattleboro, VT	6:27	6:15	6:03	5:52	5:43	
Burlington, VT	6:28	6:16	6:04	5:52	5:42	
Rutland, VT	6:28	6:16	6:04	5:53	5:43	
Hamilton, Bda	6:59	6:50	6:42	6:34	6:28	

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW YORK

Celebrating 100 Years: Union Springs Academy invites you to mark your calendars and join us for our centennial celebration Sept. 17-19, 2021. Our Sabbath service speaker is John Thomas, General Conference associate secretary. Whether you are an alumnus of Union Springs Academy or are passionate about the history of Adventist education, you are invited to celebrate God's goodness to the oldest boarding academy in the Northeast. For more information, visit unionspringsacademy.org.

OBITUARIES

LEWIS, Donald E.—68; b. June 29, 1951, in Kittery, Maine; d. June 4, 2020, in Hampton, N.H. He was a devoted member of the Portsmouth church in Portsmouth, N.H. He was a lifelong musician who loved playing the bass guitar. He is survived by his wife of 49 years, Dianne Curtis Lewis, of Hampton, N.H.; two sons, Jason (Kathy) Lewis of Hampton, Colo.; two grandchildren, Alicia Lewis and Nathan Lewis; and his mother, Lois Sloban Lewis of Seabrook, N.H.

PERRONE, Angelo J.—83; b. Nov. 22, 1936, in Worcester, Mass.; d. Dec. 29, 2019, in West Boylston, Mass. He attended the Village Church in South Lancaster, Mass., for many years. He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Karen; four sons: Mark (Caroline) Perrone of Flushing, N.Y., Matthew Perrone of Worcester, Mass., Joseph (Carrie) Perrone of Maple Grove, Minn., and Justin (Ingrid)

Perrone of Derry, N.H.; three daughters: Tina (Brian) Hood of Worcester, Mass., Paula (Andrew) Choi of Falling Waters, W.Va., and Kristan (Ben) Yeaton of Phippsburg, Maine; a brother, Ergindino (Evelyn) Perrone of Lawrence, Mass.; a sister, Stella Cicero of Worcester, Mass.; nine grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

RATHBUN, Eleanor Marie Daniels—86; b. Aug. 6, 1933, in Somerville, Mass.; d. April 30, 2020, in Woburn, Mass. She graduated from the New England Sanitarium Nursing School in 1955 as a registered nurse. She was a member of Stoneham Memorial church since 1974. She is survived by her husband of nearly 65 years, Charles Rathbun, six children: David (Gina) Rathbun, John (Jackie) Rathbun, Paul (Marilyn) Rathbun, Martha (Michael) Peddle, Mark (Mary) Rathbun, and Mary (Michael) DeSantis; 12 grandchildren: Emily Wingate, Danielle Rathbun, Kelsey Servi, Kyle and Matthew Rathbun, James Peddle, Kayleigh, Elizabeth, and Connor Rathbun, and Nicholas, Tyler, and Jonathan DeSantis; and one great-grandchild, Logan DeSantis.

THORNLEY, Hilda "Ruth" Martin—79; b. Sept. 28, 1940, in Taunton, Mass.; d. Apr. 7, 2020, in Providence, R.I. She was a member of the Taunton church in Taunton, Mass. She is survived by her husband James Thornley of Rehoboth, Mass.; two sons, James Thornley, Jr. of Rehoboth, and Daniel (Darlene) Thornley of Dresden, Maine; two grandchildren, Samantha Thornley and Tonya D'Alessio; one brother, Stephen Martin.

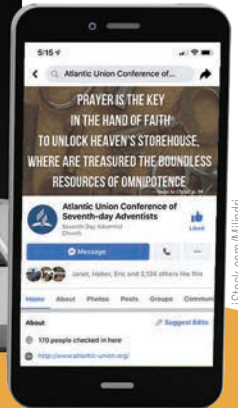
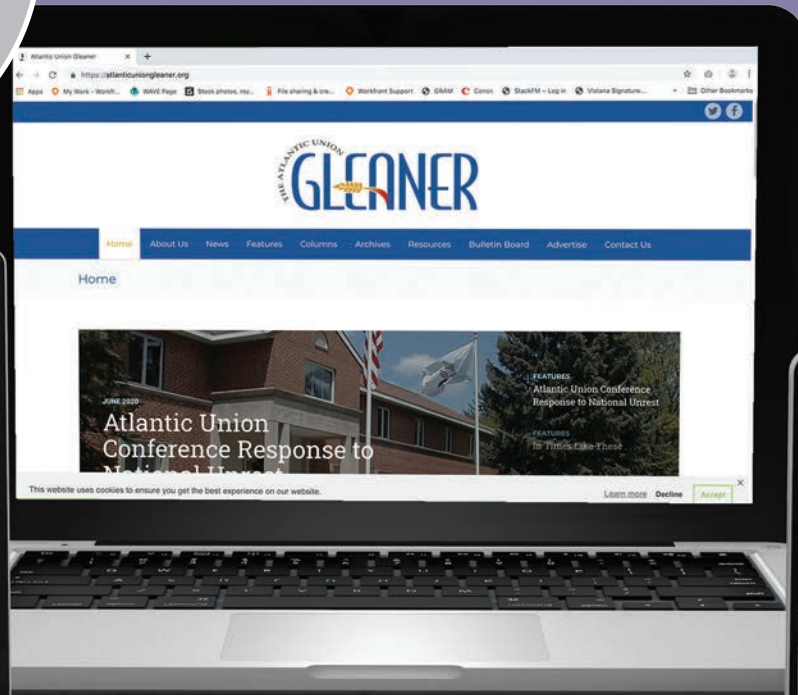
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