# ATLANTIC UNION GIGGODIAN NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2022

# Let Not Your **HEART Be Troubled**

BERMUDA CONFERENCE OFFICERS RETURNED FOR ANOTHER QUADRENNIAL TERM SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE CONSTITUENCY REPORT

ATLANTIC UNION EXTENDS HELP TO THOSE AFFECTED BY HURRICANE FIONA

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# Thanksgiving Every Day!

o you have a favorite holiday? Three of our most celebrated holidays fall within five weeks of each other: Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's.

If I had to choose a favorite, it would be Thanksgiving. Both Christmas and Thanksgiving are steeped in Christian significance, but each has become enmeshed in tradition, pageantry, and folklore. This trifecta only serves to distract us from the original intent and true significance of each holiday.

We are all familiar with the commercialization and folklore of Christmas. What about Thanksgiving? We have incorporated much of it unwittingly into our lives, not realizing the grand departure that it represents. From a tradition and pageantry perspective we have the Macy's Day parade, football games, and a day of good eating.

Folklore would tell us that the native people were invited to and participated in a great feast with the Pilgrims at Plimouth Plantation (now Plimouth Patuxet). It was a day of intercultural connectedness and goodwill. Folklore would also tell us that these early settlers and indigenous residents were excited to spend a day together praising God and that the tone of the day was one of mutual respect and admiration. We are also taught that this was the very first Thanksgiving and it was the inaugural celebration that has carried on from that time up until this day. Much of this is far from the true historical facts of the early European settlement of Massachusetts.

The truth is that people have been celebrating a spirit of thanksgiving from long before Plimouth Plantation. On this soil, even before Europeans arrived, the native people celebrated a "Strawberry Thanksgiving" and a "Green Corn Thanksgiving." The English also had a long tradition of giving thanks to God for the good things He brought into their lives. Only one written record remains of the legendary "first Thanksgiving." Native people have oral tradition that brings additional flavor and understanding to that event. It wasn't as harmonious and egalitarian as we might want to think.

As we approach the Thanksgiving season, we need to return to the true meaning and spirit of Christian Thanksgiving. I would encourage you to cultivate thankfulness, not just at the end of November, but to look for and express thankfulness to God for His abundant blessings every single day of your life.

Today we are thankful. We give thanks to God for His love, His mercy, and His faithfulness. We give thanks for family and friends, life and laughter, and the little things that bring joy to our lives. We give thanks for our circumstances, even when they're difficult, for we know the hand of God guides us through it all. But what if we remembered thankfulness every day? What if we lived in a constant state of gratitude? Would our lives be different? Would our faith be strengthened? Would the things of God permeate every aspect of our lives?

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NET), the Apostle Paul writes, "In everything give thanks. For this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." What would life look like if we lived out that principle? Today we are reminded of all for which we must be thankful. May that gratitude move our hearts and cause us to make every day Thanksgiving. 0

Ted A. Huskins is the Atlantic Union Conference executive secretary.



"We give thanks for family and friends, life and laughter, and the little things that bring joy to our lives."

# Let Not Your HEART Be Troubled

et not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me." These words are the beginning of John 14:1-3 (NKJV). Take a moment to read it.

Have you ever read this text from the perspective of what it meant to the disciples? I wonder what the disciples thought when Jesus first uttered these words? Think about it: Judas had just walked out, the disciples had finished their Passover meal and left the room, and Jesus is talking about not worrying and trusting the Father. Why is Jesus talking about leaving? Where is He going? Why? And what, if anything, can we learn from this?

At that moment, the disciples had no clue as to what was about to befall them and their Lord. They were about to go through a trial which would cause them to question their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. Jesus would presently be stripped, whipped, ridiculed, and, finally, nailed to a cross. Would they give up and go home, back to their lives before they met Him and gave up all to follow Him?

Christ did not speak the words to help them through the good times. They were given to help them hang on during the dark times, specifically for what Jesus knew was about to break upon them. They didn't realize it then, but Jesus was giving them a lifeline. The Master shared those words of light and hope to fend off the darkness and despair that would soon overtake them. And we know, because we are the living proof, that the words of Jesus helped them overcome and continue to believe and preach in His name.

Do we find the same light and hope in Jesus' words today? The Apostle John could have shared any number of stories about his time with Jesus. Why did John include this story in his letter? Was he just recounting history or was he hoping to do something more for his future readers? Today, Jesus' disciples are facing many of the same challenges. There are disciples who are

struggling with their faith. It could be from spending too much time on "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also"—John 14:1-3. Powerful words, but only if:

 You know and trust the One who uttered those words. How well do you know Jesus? How much time do you spend talking to Him? Even more important, how much time do you spend listening to Him? Who do you know Jesus to be? The

"Jesus promises that He will come again. He invites us to place our trust in Him, unwaveringly and fully."

the Internet taking advice from the godless social influencers. It

could be because they see all the misery of the world around them and wonder, like the early disciples, "If Jesus is the Messiah, why is He letting this happen?" It could be from exposure to the so-called educational institutions which teach that you are not created but, rather, evolved from lower forms of life. The causes are as varied as there are people but the problem is the same—a plague of negativity, despair, and selfishness in a world devoid of hope. Is there anything in the Word of God that can help us, today?

words and promises of strangers don't do much to calm the anxiety and fear of the heart. But these words are the promises of a Friend, a Brother, a King who loves you. I can get excited in His words, in His promises, how about you?

 You've already learned that Jesus is a man of His word, that He can accomplish whatever He says He will do. What do I mean? The first time a person steps out in faith and puts their trust in God is probably the scariest experience in the Christian walk. It is exciting and terrifying, when a person's faith goes out of the sanctuary and they are pressed into daily service. For example, the first time you return your tithe and find out that God's math is amazing. He makes 90 percent go further than 100 percent! When you pray for God to help you find a job and you are suddenly presented with an unexpected opportunity. When your life is down in the dumps

and a stranger shows up to help you, and talks to you about God and His love and plan for your life. Then as suddenly as he came he disappears. I have experienced all three! Yes, there is a God, He is powerful, He knows my name! God is more powerful than any problem I face. There are little "g" gods out there who promise much but take more from you than they give. This God is different! He knows, He loves, and He is never far away! He is keenly aware of our lives, and our needs, and He providessometimes in miraculous ways. I can find hope and get excited in words from Someone like that!

The words of Jesus should provide as much or maybe even more hope for us than for the apostles. We have more history to get a better picture of who He is. The words of Jesus are given to provide hope to us as we face the closing scenes of earth's history. The words of Jesus are also here to provide hope for the times when, like the early disciples, we experience things that may make us want to question our choice to put our faith in Him or the times when God says, "no," "not now," or "you're going to have to wait until my return for that one."

Jesus promises that He will come again. He invites us to place our trust in Him, unwaveringly and fully. It is only then that we will begin to find the same comfort and encouragement that the apostles experienced.

I'm excited at the words of my Lord and can't wait for Him to return. Until then, by God's grace, I want to remain faithful and involved in telling others about the person He is, and that He is coming back. How about you? <sup>(1)</sup>



Miguel Crespo is president of the New York Conference.

## Bermuda Conference Officers Returned for Another Quadrennial Term

Pictured following the Bermuda Conference quadrennial session are, from left, Pierre E. Omeler, Atlantic Union Conference president; from Bermuda Conference: Rosemary Tyrrell, superintendent of schools; W. DeJaun Tull, executive secretary, and his wife, Latoya; Claudette Manders, the president's wife; Kenneth Manders, president; Marcia Spencer, the interim treasurer's wife; W. Aaron Spencer, interim treasurer; and Elias F. Zabala, Sr., Atlantic Union Conference treasurer.

n September 25, at the Third Quadrennial Session of the Bermuda Conference, 225 delegates met at the Bermuda Institute auditorium to elect officers for the next quadrennium.

Richard Martin, pastor of the Devonshire church, delivered the devotional message "I'm Choosing to Trust God." Using Exodus 14:10-17 as his text, he drew on the children of Israel's Red Sea experience and God's protection from Pharaoh's army. He said God could have led them the fast way, but shortcuts are not always the best because there may be obstacles we are not ready to face.

He encouraged the delegates to develop and operate on "God-givens"—trust in the Lord; cast your cares upon Him; and no weapon formed against you shall prosper.

"God provides impenetrable protection and has invisible options," he said. "Just because you don't see something coming doesn't mean you shouldn't come and see it." He invited the delegates to "come and see a God who is worthy of our trust, our hope, and our dependence because His leadership is intentional."

After the devotion and the official call and seating of delegates, the executive secretary called the third quadrennial session to order.

The delegates then received and voted on reports from the president, executive secretary, treasurer, auditor, and the constitution and bylaws committee's recommended changes.

Following the report from the nominating committee secretary, delegates elected Kenneth Manders as president

for the third time. As the constitution allows for only three consecutive terms, this will be his last presidential term. In accepting the presidency, Manders thanked the leadership of the union, the conference administrative team, the office staff, and the constituents for giving him another opportunity to serve. "I am your servant," Manders said.

W. DeJaun Tull was reelected executive secretary, W. Aaron Spencer, interim treasurer (who plans to retire once



Seated on the platform during the Bermuda Conference constituency session are from left, Atlantic Union Conference representatives Elias F. Zabala, Sr., treasurer, and Pierre E. Omeler, president; and Bermuda Conference representatives Carlyle C. Simmons, parliamentarian; Kenneth Manders, president; W. DeJaun Tull, executive secretary; and W. Aaron Spencer, interim treasurer.

a suitable replacement is found), and Rosemary Tyrrell, superintendent of schools. Additionally, the delegates voted for the executive committee and trustee committee members.

### Voted departmental directors are:

Adventist Community Services	Dora Baker
Adventist Youth Ministries	
Associate director for Pathfinders	
Associate director for Teens	
Children's Ministries	Valvet Scott
Communication	
Family Ministries	Richard Martin
Health Ministries	Leonard Gibbons
Hispanic Ministries	Hector M. Quinones
Human Relations/Intercultural	W. DeJaun Tull
Associate director	Ernestine DeGraff
Associate director	Loida Ratteray
Media Ministries	Hector M. Quinones
Men's Ministries	Dwayne Burgess
Ministerial	W. DeJaun Tull
Personal Ministries	Kenneth Simons
Possibility Ministries	Pauline DeShield
Prayer Ministries	Michelle Hill
Prison Ministries	Kirk Johnson
Publishing	Norma Lynn Showers
Religious Liberty (PARL)	Carlyle C. Simmons
Sabbath School Associate	Carlyle C. Simmons
Sabbath School Associate	Roslyn Francis

"The delegates received and voted on reports from the president, executive secretary, treasurer, auditor, and the constitution and bylaws committee's recommended changes."

Stewardship (Interim)	. W. Aaron Spencer
Trust Services (Interim)	. W. Aaron Spencer
Women's Ministries	Michelle Hill

The nominating committee referred to the executive committee to fill the positions of directors for music, retention and reclamation, Sabbath School, and associate director for Adventist Youth Ministries (young adults).

Pierre E. Omeler, Atlantic Union Conference president and chair of the Bermuda Conference Nominating Committee, presided over the election of officers. Elias F. Zabala, Sr., Atlantic Union Conference treasurer, reviewed the auditor's report on behalf of Todd Mayer, an auditor from GCAS (General Conference Auditing Service), before calling for the report to be accepted. <sup>(1)</sup>

Joi Tyrrell is the outgoing Bermuda Conference communication director.



Delegates, seated in the Bermuda Institute auditorium, listen to the proceedings at the Bermuda Conference third quadrennial constituency session.

# Southern New England Conference Constituency Session Report



Robert Folkenberg, Jr., president



Cesar Perozo, executive secretary



Tom Murray, treasurer



Luz Rodriguez, Adventist Book Center manager

he Southern New England Conference held its 38th Constituency Session on September 11, 2022, in the pavilion on the campground in Lancaster, Massachusetts. Miguel Crespo, New York Conference president, the devotional speaker, asked the delegates, "Is the Southern New England Conference ready to finish the work in your part of the vineyard?" As he reflected briefly on the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the three angels' messages in Revelation 14:1-6, he shared three points for the delegates to consider as they continue the work in their field:

- Tell people the truth before Jesus returns and invite them to accept it.
- Strategize on how to tell the truth in a way that they will consider it.
- If you want to finish the work, you have to be united. You cannot be at cross purposes with people about the mission. Only the power of Jesus, His miracle-working power, is going to make people come around.

While completing the business of the church, the delegates elected Robert Folkenberg, Jr., who previously served as president of the Chinese Union Mission, as president for the next quadrennial term. "My wife and I are looking forward to joining the Southern New England Conference ministry team. It is clear that God has been leading this conference in the past and I am excited to see how He will guide His remnant church in the coming four years. Pray for us as we seek to live out our vision—To Grow the Kingdom of God," Folkenberg said. Delegates also elected Cesar Perozo, executive secretary; and Tom Murray, treasurer, who both served a portion of the previous term.

Representatives from the Atlantic Union Conference who assisted with the session include Pierre E. Omeler, president; Ted A. Huskins, executive secretary; and Elias F. Zabala, Sr., treasurer. Attending the meeting from the North American Division was Jorge A. Ramirez, undersecretary. Todd Mayer from the General Conference Auditing Service presented the auditor's report.

The delegates elected the following departmental directors to serve for the next quadrennial term: Luz Rodriguez, Adventist Book Center Manager; Frankie Vazquez-Nenadich, Adventist Community Services director; Daniel Velez, Adventist Youth, Young Adult, Pathfinder, Adventurer, Family Ministries, and NSO director; Kenroy Malcolm, Ministerial and Evangelism director (newly elected); and Audrey Folkenberg, Planned Giving and Trust Services, and Stewardship (newly elected). The position of superintendent of schools was referred to the newly-elected executive committee.

The delegates voted 15 churches into the sisterhood of churches: Taunton Cape Verdean (Taunton, Massachusetts), Beth-Union Haitian (Lawrence, Massachusetts), Greater Boston Ghanaian (Belmont, Massachusetts), Framingham Temple Haitian (Framingham, Massachusetts), Waterbury Lion of Judah Spanish (Waterbury, Connecticut), Gethsemane



Delegates participate in Southern New England Conference's 38th Constituency Session on September 11, 2022.

Haitian (Leominster, Massachusetts), New Bedford Cape Verdean (New Bedford, Massachusetts), Shaddai Spanish (Lawrence, Massachusetts), Greater Boston Brazilian (Stoneham, Massachusetts), Sychar Haitian (Canton, Massachusetts), Willimantic Spanish (Willimantic, Connecticut), Greater Bridgeport Ghanaian (Bridgeport, Connecticut), Lakeview Ghanaian (Worcester, Massachusetts), Esperanza Spanish (Lynn, Massachusetts), and Springfield Nouvelle Jerusalem Haitian (Springfield, Massachusetts). This brings the number of churches in the conference to 139.

Nine congregations were recognized as church companies that were organized during 2017-2022 with some also becoming organized as churches: One Connection Haverhill, Crosswalk Clinton, New England Luganda, Shaddai Spanish, Taunton Haitian, Sychar Haitian, Renacer Stratford Spanish, Lakeview Ghanaian, Harmony, Bethany Haitian, Hartford Bethel Haitian, Redemption Community, Wallingford Spanish, Fall River Cape Verdean, Lighthouse, and Shekinah II of Fairfield Haitian. Three organizations were disbanded during this quadrennial term: Fall River Spanish company, Torrington company, and West Lynn Spanish church.

The delegates voted a new conference executive committee, association board, and constitution and bylaws committee that will serve for the next four years. They received reports and other information as outlined in the voted agenda for the session.

At the close of the session, Omeler thanked David Dennis and John Amoah, who served as president and ministerial/evangelism director, respectively, for their dedication and service to the Southern New England Conference.

The Southern New England Conference officers and directors elected for the next four years will provide leadership for about 21,113 members in the states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, along with the churches, companies, elementary schools, academies, a summer camp, Adventist Book Center, and many community-based ministries. ()

Ednor A.P. Davison is the Atlantic Union Conference communication director and GLEANER editor.



Frankie Vazquez-Nenadich, Adventist Community Services director



Daniel Velez, Adventist Youth and Family Ministries director



Kenroy Malcolm, Ministerial and Evangelism director



Audrey Folkenberg, Stewardship Ministries, Planned Giving and Trust Services director

# Atlantic Union Conference Extends Help to Those Affected by Hurricane Fiona

Turricane Fiona was the first hurricane since Hurricane Jeanne in 2004 to directly hit the Dominican Republic. Fiona roared into the area on September 19, causing major flooding, forcing more than 12,000 people to evacuate their homes, and leaving hundreds of thousands without power. (Reuters, "Hurricane Fiona Slams Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico; Three Dead," September 20, 2022). The devastation also impacted Adventist families, churches, and institutions. "The people who had the least lost everything," said Pierre E. Omeler, Atlantic Union Conference president, after a visit to the area with Elias F. Zabala, Sr., Atlantic Union Conference treasurer, to assess the damage in the storm's aftermath.

Administrators from the Dominican Union Conference, Paulino Puello, president; Teófilo Silvestre, executive secretary; and Winston Hiciano, treasurer, met with Omeler and Zabala to discuss how the Atlantic Union could aid them as they rebuild. "Thirty-one Adventist churches suffered damage, and 227 Adventist families were affected in that area," Omeler said.

Omeler and Zabala also met with the leaders and pastors from local conferences hardest hit by Fiona and both Adventist and non-Adventist families during their visit. "A woman named Dorcas, who is also the Dorcas leader for her church, reported water up to her waist," Omeler said. "She lost everything in her home! Thankfully, her house was brick, so the structure stood firm, but she lost all of her belongings."

The Category 2 storm, packing maximum wind speeds of up to 110 mph, ripped the roofs from several churches, leaving the pews, hymnals, and other ministry materials vulnerable to the pouring rain. Insurance coverage for the churches will only replace the roof, Omeler explained. "Those are people who already did not have much. They do not have ways of helping themselves. If they do not get outside help, it will take some of those people years and years-if ever-to replace these items."

For over a decade, the Atlantic Union Conference and the Dominican Union Conference have partnered as sister unions to conduct numerous evangelistic and mission-related activities. Additionally, the Atlantic Union has assisted in raising and building several churches in the Dominican Republic. With this history, Omeler emphasized the commitment of the Atlantic Union Conference administration to continue ministering to the country through various outreach endeavors and will work with the local conferences and local churches in the Dominican Republic as they direct and communicate their needs.

Ellen White penned these words found in GOSPEL WORKERS (1915 edition), p. 465: "To show a liberal self-denying spirit for the success of foreign missions is a sure way to advance home missionary work; for the prosperity of the home work depends largely, under God, upon the reflex influence of the evangelical work done in countries afar off. It is in working to supply the necessities of others that we bring our souls into touch with the Source of all power." This statement motivates the Atlantic Union Conference in its various endeavors outside our territory. "When we help others who are in need and are unable to help themselves, we are blessed in return," said Omeler. "It is our hope that the more we support mission endeavors in areas not a part of our union, the more God will bless the mission endeavors here at home."

—Debra Banks Cuadro, assistant communication director, Atlantic Union Conference



Atlantic Union Conference administrators Pierre E. Omeler, center, and Elias F. Zabala, Sr., left, are with representatives from the East Dominican Conference: Guery Paulino, president, second from left; Junior Felix, executive secretary, right; and Leidi Bastardo, treasurer, at the building site of the Ebenezer church. The unfinished edifice now serves as a primary house of worship after the original church building was severely damaged by Hurricane Fiona.

### ASI Atlantic Union Chapter Members Encouraged to Reach the World Next Door

A dventist-laymen's Services and Industries (ASI) Atlantic Union chapter had its first conference September 8-10 since the COVID-19 pandemic. With almost 50 people in attendance meeting at the Sheraton Hartford Hotel at Bradley International Airport in Connecticut, they all embarked on a threeday journey that one guest described as "the best decision I ever made."

Reaching entrepreneurs

from multiple states, and of various ages and ethnicities, ASI Atlantic Union Chapter created an intimate environment for quality conversation, activities, guidance, and networking, all surrounding the theme of "Reach the World Next Door," based on Leviticus 19:33, 34. Ministries and businesses from different parts of the Atlantic Union Conference and beyond attended the conference and included Advent Lighthouse Ministries, Bethesda Medical Mission, Midnight Cry Media, Oon Jai Foundation, Tekoa Missions, Union Springs Academy, Wellspring



Standing from left are Lance Wilbur, ASI Atlantic Union Chapter general vice president; Greg Perry, previous ASI Atlantic Union Chapter president; and Rico Hill, speaker/director of Beehive International, sharing information about the Beehive International ministry.

Health Ministries, and more. In addition, Andi Hunsaker, ASI president, was present at the end of the conference to discuss some of the benefits of ASI membership. Myra Omeler, wife of Pierre E. Omeler, Atlantic Union Conference president, represented him at the Fridayevening meeting.

The weekend included incredible musicians, spearheaded by Francesco Blackmore, director of music at Connecticut Valley church in South Windsor, Connecticut. They led out



Gina Plata-Nino, president and co-founder of the Oon Jai Foundation, shares information about the ministry.

in the song services that began each session over the three days.

The weekend keynote speaker was Rico Hill, speaker/director of Beehive International. Hill inspired the guests to continue their work in the Lord, even if the Lord isn't moving as fast as they want Him to. Like Jairus' story in the book of Matthew, Jesus is moving at the perfect speed for them individually. They have to keep the faith and trust that His timing is not only ideal but also perfect.

Finding God's purpose for your life was a common thread throughout the event. Coaching was available, and each guest was encouraged to ask questions and get advice on how to solve their individual needs.

Once attendees had a clearer sense of their purpose, the next day was dedicated to learning practical ways to reach others. Through handson workshops and lectures, Gina Plata-Nino, president and co-founder of the Oon Jai Foundation, led attendees to develop an appreciation for the experiences and cultural differences of people from other religions and ethnicities. Participants explored ways to help refugees and international students.

Due to the success of the "Reach the World Next Door" conference, ASI Atlantic Union plans to hold Mastermind Meetups. A Mastermind Meetup offers attendees a combination of brainstorming, education, peer accountability, and support in a group setting to sharpen their business and personal skills. Attendees will challenge each other to set strong goals and, more importantly, to accomplish them.

To learn more about the ASI Atlantic Union Chapter's upcoming events and opportunities, email communications@asiatlanticunion.org. For more information, visit asiatlanticunion.org.

—Megan Blackmore, freelance editor and writer and ASI Atlantic Union Chapter conference attendee

# Northern Caribbean University Honors Two Bermudians at its 99<sup>th</sup> Commencement

longside the more  $A_{\text{than}}$  500 graduands receiving their degrees on August 14, 2022, at the 99th Commencement of Northern Caribbean University in Mandeville, Jamaica, were four candidates for honorary degrees. Among them, Bermudians Edith Van Lowe and Rosemary Tyrrell were conferred Honorary Degrees of Doctor of Humane Letters (Honoris Causa) by University president Lincoln Edwards, D.D.S., Ph.D.

Edith Van Lowe attended West Indies Training College (now Northern Caribbean University), where she completed her diploma in teacher training, a positive experience that she said made her grow to love the people and culture of Jamaica.

Throughout her 44-year teaching career, Van Lowe has distinguished herself as a teacher of excellence. She was the first at Bermuda Institute to receive the Zippora Teaching Award from the North American Division Office of Education. During her almost 40 years at Bermuda Institute, Van Lowe helped prepare many of Bermuda's leaders for their life journeys. At 97, she said, "I feel almost as proud of their success as their parents. I thank God for the opportunity to help develop their children to become the productive men and women they are today."

She has funded a scholarship account at the Bermuda Institute for needy students and, as an alumna of WITC, contributed to student scholarships for the Teacher Education program.



From right, Owen Roberts, NCU representative; Minister of Education, the Honourable Diallo Rabain, JP, MP; Speaker of the House, the Honourable Dennis Lister, JP, MP; Edith Van Lowe, honorary degree recipient; Deputy Governor, Tom Oppenheim; and Sheila Holder, former principal and superintendent of Bermuda Institute.

Van Lowe did not attend the ceremony in Jamaica but was conferred the degree via live stream at the Southampton church. In attendance were Tom Oppenheim, Deputy Governor: Minister of Education, the Honourable Diallo Rabain JP, MP; the Speaker of the House, the Honourable Dennis Lister JP, MP; Sheila Holder, Ph.D., former principal and superintendent of Bermuda Institute, and Owen Roberts. Ph.D., NCU representative.

Rosemary Tyrrell was in Jamaica to receive her award. As a career educator and policy maker, she is a firm believer and supporter of Adventist Christian education.

A West Indies College (now Northern Caribbean University) alumna, Rosemary graduated in 1974 with a B.Ed. in History and Secondary Education and began teaching that year. In 1984, the American government, in partnership with the Bermuda Department of Education, offered her a seven-week American cultural studies program, which took her to Capitol Hill, the White House, and various cities and states across America.

She spent five years as principal of Bermuda Institute before joining the Atlantic Union Conference in 1991 as the associate education director. In 2000, as director of education, she was instrumental in introducing a curriculum revitalizing the integration of faith with learning produced for education administrators and pastors at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University. The course outlines the value of Christian education.

In 2005, she returned to Bermuda, where she was employed as Permanent Secretary for the Bermuda Government. Her initial assignment was as Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Education. In 2007, she transitioned to the Attorney General's Chambers, where she was tasked with developing a ministry, bringing together the independent operations of the legislature. In 2010, Rosemary was assigned to the cabinet as assistant cabinet secretary and in 2014 returned as Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Justice (now Ministry of Legal Affairs). She retired from government services in 2017.

Today, the Bermuda Conference salutes Edith Van Lowe and Rosemary Tyrrell for their contributions to education and the broader community.

—Joi Tyrrell, communication director, Bermuda Conference



Lincoln Edwards, Northern Caribbean University president, congratulates Rosemary Tyrrell.

### **Remembering: Eugene Ivan Benjamin Virgil**

(October 16, 1929-August 8, 2022)

Despite Eugene I.B. Virgil being recognized throughout the island for his superb musicianship and artistry on the guitar, a yearning for God stirred within him, and he began to search for truth. After meeting with ministers of various denominations, he concluded that the Seventhday Adventist Church had the only logical message.

Therefore, young Eugene began sharing his faith early. An elder entrusted him with giving Bible studies alone before his baptism. He conducted cottage meetings in the community and gave Bible studies to prisoners at Casemates Correctional Facility. As a result, church members encouraged him to enter the ministry.

After completing his studies at the Seventhday Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University, he officially entered the ministry as the associate pastor of the Hamilton church in Bermuda in 1965 before moving to the Ephesus church in Harlem, New York, in 1966 to be the vouth pastor. These two consecutive assignments laid the foundation for 40 years of service in the Bermuda and Northeastern conferences.

Pastor Virgil, a man of quiet fortitude and unwavering principle, was a trailblazer. He left tiny Bermuda to travel to Alberta, Canada, and became the first Black person to attend Canadian Union College. He was also the first Bermudian to pastor in the Bermuda Conference.

Pastor Virgil ministered with his wife, Ann, and three children, Cheryl Kerr, Ronald, and Todd. The entire family supported him with their culinary skills, musicianship, warmth, and enthusiasm for God's work. What a testament to Pastor Virgil, who valued Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

Pastor Virgil passed to his rest on August 8, 2022, at the age of 93. He is survived by one daughter, Cheryl Kerr; two sons, Ronald (Gina) Virgil and Todd Virgil; five grandchildren,



Eugene I.B. Virgil served more than 40 years in the Seventh-day Adventist Church before he retired.

Racquel Kerr, Sterling Virgil and Brion Virgil, Rashanda Virgil and Rhea Virgil; two brothers, Leon Virgil and Charles Virgil; and extended family.

—Iva Wilson, member, St. David's church

### Warwick Church's Weekly Dinner Program Returns

You can now receive life's spiritual and physical bread at the Warwick church. Yes, the community dinner program is back with a new leader, team, and a few modifications. It has returned and is ready to carry out its mission.

Miranda Lister is presently leading the community dinner program. She was selected as the church's gourmet committee leader in December 2019 and was officially installed in January 2020. Upon becoming the leader, she immediately moved the community dinner program from the Personal Ministries department to the Gourmet department, which resulted in her becoming head of the community dinner program. Lister felt that having the dinner program as a part of the Gourmet department was a logical decision since "the gourmet committee had already been assisting with the community dinners."

Lister was poised to "cook up a storm;" however, she had no idea the storm brewing in 2020 would be the COVID-19 pandemic. In the early days of the pandemic, the accepted conventional wisdom was to stop the spread of the virus by isolating and practicing social distancing. But the lockdown spelled a "recipe for disaster" for a program built on going out to the "highways and byways" and giving out wholesome, freshly-cooked meals. The community dinner program requires social interaction with people in the community but COVID-19 necessitated limitations on interaction. Thus, the program stalled.

While the program was inactive, the committee was able to enhance its facilities. "We had to make updates to our kitchen for some time, and so during the time that the dinner program was stopped, we were able to make them," Lister said. The new updates, as well as new measures to meet COVID-19 regulations, will serve to improve the program.

Lister has a lot of mixed emotions about the reopening saying, "But I know the community needs us, and we need to be there for them. I am excited to get back to serving our community! COVID stopped us from doing what we as a church love to do, but now we are back."

-Randall Lister, member, Warwick church

### North Bronx Church Hosts Community Health Fair

Torth Bronx church departmental leaders stood anticipating the arrival of their invited guests to the annual health fair on August 21. As they opened the gates, volunteer greeters dressed in bright yellow and turquoise T-shirts, their faces bright with big smiles, added to the buzz of excitement. Fredrick Nichols, North Bronx church lead pastor; and Clavour Tucker, associate pastor; were bursting with joy and gave God the praise for such an auspicious reopening.

Healthcare professionals lined the parking lot, along with members from various church departments who worked collaboratively alongside the church's Health Ministries department to make the event a success. The objective of this effort was to educate members of the community about the services that are available to them while giving directives on how and where they can access these services.

The purpose was evident as each group further affirmed and promoted their healthy lifestyle, which encompasses physical, mental, social, and



At the health fair. North Bronx church Pathfinders promote the club's ministry.

spiritual well-being. What was most rewarding at the end of the day were the success stories shared by those in attendance.

Services provided for the day included, but were not limited to, general health checks by practitionersblood pressure, blood sugar, and vision screening, and information on nutrition. Representatives from the

Montefiore Medical Center in Bronx, New York, presented information on healthy eating. Monique Rose, founder of MoFit Health Club, promoted health and fitness. The BOLD Program (Bronx Oncology Living Daily), a cancer education program sponsored by the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, provided cancer screening. A lifestyle coach presented information on healthy living. Those who attended also received an assessment and massage from a physical therapist; JASA (Jewish Association Serving the Aged) through Bartow Senior Center enrolled seniors for the senior center: and Health First enrolled individuals for health insurance.

While health needs were attended to, the church's



Police officers from the 47th Precinct, along with FDNY Engine 38, are on hand at the health fair to show their support and share important information.



A physical therapist attends to an individual visiting the health fair.

### **GREATER NEW YORK** CONFERENCE

Personal Ministries department distributed clothing, food, and literature. In addition, the Health Ministries department provided COVID-19 test kits and samples of a fruit smoothie to soothe the palates of guests and members alike.

In addition, the church's Senior Ministries made pertinent information available to the attendees, including information on pre-retirement, social security income, and home safety. Maurice Maitland, Esq., who specializes in taxation and social security, provided information on taxes and social security guidelines. The North Bronx church youth were involved in making announcements and promoting Adventist education while assisting with the distribution of back-toschool supplies provided by the church's Education department.

Police officers from the 47<sup>th</sup> Precinct, along with FDNY Engine 38, were on hand to show their support and share important information. Highlights of the event were captured by the Thunderbolt 12 news team.

—Juilet McFarlane, member, and Dahlia Reid, communication director, North Bronx church



Clavour Tucker, North Bronx church associate pastor, right front, holds the microphone for the Thunderbolt 12 reporter, right back holding camera, who is interviewing Andrea Williams, Sr., North Bronx church Health Ministries director, left front, about the vision of a healthier community through health education, as Fred Nichols, North Bronx church lead pastor, second from left, looks on.

### North Bronx Church Hosts Fifth Annual Community Baby Shower

For the past five years, the North Bronx church in Bronx, New York, in collaboration with the GLO MOM initiative, has hosted community baby showers in the Northeast Bronx community. This year's event was held on August 7 under the theme "Mother Arise." The purpose of these baby showers is to provide essentials for families before welcoming their new babies.

Through the help of social media, community activists, and small business owners, invitations were extended to a broad cross-section of the community. Consequently, they celebrated with more than 30 families and their new or soon-tobe-born babies. The team distributed over 1,500 baby items to those in attendance and provided snacks, dinner, and beverages.

Parents and their families took photo portraits, and mothers chose articles of clothing, baby wipes, car seats, rockers, toys, and even a crib from the Free Baby Bump Marketplace. With God's blessings, the church was able to outfit



these mothers with most of their preand post-natal needs.

Pregnancy is an exciting time, but it can also be very stressful if parents do not have the resources and support in all dimensions of health. Therefore, along with providing tangible items, the community baby shower offered additional support by providing information on topics including autism, gestational diabetes, nutrition, and parenting, followed by a question-and-answer session.

Special thanks to guest presenters Carla Muir and Vjolica Gaga from the WIC program of New York, Mary Ann De Banate, M.D., Karlene Powell, a licensed, certified social worker, and Yolande Tucker, a nurse practitioner.

—Patrecia Davis, elder, North Bronx church

### Joy of Troy Church Continues its Community Engagement

Outreach activities at Joy of Troy church in Troy, New York, are many and varied, involving in-person and virtual outreach.

The church participated in the annual Sacred Sites event on July 23, hosted by the New York Landmarks Conservancy. It is an event held across New York state for religious buildings on the New York Historic Registry.

Joy of Troy church announced in the TIMES UNION newspaper that their church building was open for the event. The church held its International Day on the same day, and many members wore traditional dress and made food from their country or region of origin. They provided food in single-serving-size containers to share with the community and held a potluck outside.

Later in the afternoon, Joy of Troy held a choir and organ concert so those from the community could hear the organ play and experience the choir. They encouraged tours of the church throughout the afternoon. They received several visitors from the community, which allowed them to continue to develop their relationship with the church down the street.

Continuing their worship in the community, they hosted church service in the park on August 6. In the evening, the church dedicated their high school students who graduated this year. The students received gifts with items for their dorm room if they were going away to college and gift cards for those attending college near home. William Moody, Joy of Troy church elder, asked the congregation to share words of wisdom, and then he offered a dedicatory prayer for the graduates.

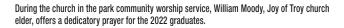
The church provided a free mowing service to the community on August 14. They hung door hangers in the community and asked people to contact them to reserve a spot for mowing their yards. One person sent the church a note saying, "Thank you for spreading your love and taking the time to help mow and take care of my lawn. I can't express how grateful I am for this kind of service and hope to somehow pay it forward. I feel truly blessed."

The church held a prayer walk throughout the Quadrant (a mapped neighborhood around the church targeted for intentionally sharing Jesus). The Quadrant is split into six sections. There are six prayer groups, each prays for a section of the Quadrant. On this day, the six groups went to their sections and hung bags on the doors that included glow tracts on health, a Bible study card, and a schedule of events for the rest of the year.

Each group also stopped at businesses in the area to start a dialogue to see how they might partner with them to serve the community. Each business received a card telling them that the church was praying for them, a map of the Quadrant so they could see the area the church was servicing, and their contact information.

Throughout the summer, once or twice a month, Joy of Troy members visited several assisted living places to sing to the seniors. They visited Diamond Rock Apartments, Peregrine Senior Apartments, and the Bishop Broderick Apartments. It was the group's first time singing this summer and their first time back since COVID-19, and the turnout was three times the usual amount.

The members received a couple of cards from the residents at the Bishop





Joy of Troy church hosts an International Day on the same day that New York state holds its annual Sacred Sites event for religious buildings listed in the New York Historic Registry.

### NEW YORK CONFERENCE

Broderick Apartments, thanking them for their ministry of music and indicating how blessed they were. Linda Dobbert, a Joy of Troy member, has been actively leading a Bible study group for the residents at one of these apartment complexes and is inviting the residents and caregivers to church.

The church continues to host "Tuesdays With

the Doctors" via Zoom on the fourth Tuesday of each month. They feature a doctor who shares information on a specific topic. This year the topics included childhood anxiety, heart health, intermittent fasting, hernias, obesity and bariatric surgery, menopause symptoms, asthma, and stop smoking.

Other upcoming topics include anxiety

and depression, general medicine, and a deathbook seminar on how to create a book with all information for your loved ones once you die. These sessions are streamed live on Facebook and Zoom. Visitors continue to participate in the program, and others can watch the seminars later on the church's website.

During the winter, the church provided "easy-

peasy" cooking classes live on Facebook, with visitors from all over the country, including as far away as California. Classes will continue in the fall.

These are some ways the Joy of Troy congregation has been blessed to serve others. May the joy of His service continually fill your hearts.

—Annette Barnes, elder, Joy of Troy church

### Sandy Creek Church Sponsors a Tent Revival

n a beautiful weekend in September, the little country church of Sandy Creek, experienced the results of a mission conceived in the early spring of 2022. What they envisioned as a small community event with a pop-up tent in the church's parking lot, located in Holley, New York, was transformed by God into a full-blown tent revival delivered after months of prayer and planning. As preparation got underway, all those who were once members of their congregation, but had fallen away, were brought to heart and provided the inspiration for one of their main goals-a Sandy Creek Homecoming.

Lessons delivered by guest speaker Stuart Bauer, senior pastor for New York Conference in the Central New York region, were based on the Psalm 23 and the life of Paul. His sermons were enlightening and entertaining. Bauer's presentation of the children's story, complete with tools of the trade for a shepherd, kept the children fully involved. The lesson from the Roman Centurion in full attire kept the entire audience fascinated on Sunday morning, as part of five services over the weekend that extended from September 9 to September 11.

Jeff Hunt, a well-known Christian musician, provided the music, inviting people to trust Jesus. The Lord's name was exalted and proclaimed in this year's tent revival with a down-to-earth style and a simultaneous food/clothing drive during the weekend.

In the months leading up to the revival, Sandy Creek church went out into the community, often taking along a grill and food to feed the body. As church members visited homes, they prayed with people and ministered to their needs. Hanging posters, knocking on doors, placing door hangers, and an aggressive social media drive also helped the church in its endeavor to invite the community to the tent revival.

—Donna Kepler, treasurer, Sandy Creek church



Members Jeff and Emma Hunt, center, are recognized by Donna Kepler, Sandy Creek church treasurer, left, and Sharon Turlington, Sandy Creek church clerk, right, during the last session of the tent revival.



Stuart Bauer, senior pastor for the Central New York region, and his wife, Lisa, center, are recognized by Donna Kepler, Sandy Creek church treasurer, left, and Sharon Turlington, Sandy Creek church clerk, right, during the last session of the tent revival.

### More Than 1,000 Baptized During Conference-Wide Evangelistic Meetings

t its core, the Great Commission, evangelism, is sharing the good news of salvation, forgiveness, and grace. Without those things, we would all be lost without hope, without a Savior, and would have to endure the consequences of sinwhich is death. Evangelism is vital to the integrity of Northeastern Conference's mission and the church's growth. The question has always been the method.

Over time, evangelism has seen many forms. Yet, at the start of their new quadrennial, the Northeastern Conference was set to make evangelism one of their top priorities and even utilize methods that seem archaic to some. In an interview for the Atlantic Union Conference's union-wide workers meeting in the spring, Abraham Jules, Northeastern Conference president, sat with his communication director and mentioned, "I



In the Brooklyn south area of New York, members and friends gather for the Impact 2022 evangelistic meetings.

want to caution everyone who has criticized the old way [when asked about evangelism]. Until people have a better system and gain the traction and numbers that some of the older [methods] have done, don't criticize it."

Jules had the vision to do something in the Northeastern Conference that hadn't been done in over 30 years—regional tent campaigns. After a two-year pandemic, the simple methodology of tent campaigns was the strategy for 2022. The idea of getting local churches within each region to team up and execute major evangelistic campaigns was "just what the doctor ordered" in Northeastern.

Following their English camp meeting themed

"We Will Go," teams went to work launching campaigns and series throughout the territory. Jules and his administration gave resources to each campaign—from Boston to Buffalo. It was one of the largest evangelistic efforts the conference has done in its long and eminent history.

Seasoned evangelists were called from across the



Abraham Jules, Northeastern Conference president, delivers the message during the Impact 2022 evangelistic series in the Brooklyn south area.



People gather for the evangelistic meetings in Queens, New York, with Claudius Morgan, evangelist.



New England north area pastors, baptize people during the evangelistic series with Ron Smith, evangelist.

globe to preach the gospel: Claudius Morgan for the Queens campaign, Glen Samuels for Brooklyn north, Jesse Wilson for Bronx/ Manhattan, Emil Peeler for Rockland/Westchester, Conklin Gentry for Long Island, Rupert Bushner for Connecticut south, Calvin Watkins for Connecticut north, Ron Smith for New England north, Marquis Johns for the Rochester/ Western New York area. and Carlos Blake for Buffalo. The Northeastern Conference Personal Ministries director. Walton Rose, spoke for the Hudson Valley/Albany area; Marty Vargas spoke for Staten Island; Jules spoke for the Brooklyn south area.

Several campaigns reported massive attendance—some during record heat waves. Each campaign was supplied with greeters, ushers, Bible workers, deacons, and deaconesses from the supporting churches. Volunteers from the Northeastern Conference Youth Ministries Medical Missionary Corps were deployed to provide security and medical assistance. Each pastor put personal goals aside and served the kingdom of God—together.

Ministers agreed on how new members would be assigned to a church factoring location, church resources, and familiarity. Each pastor played a role in the success of their campaign—volunteering in everything from audiovisual to Bible work to prayer warriors. In addition to



With seating at full capacity under the tent, there is overflow seating around the outside as well.

credit. Members from every church are working together, praying together, [and] sitting together to support this. God is getting the glory and its beautiful."

By the moving of the Holy Spirit, the Northeastern Conference baptized more than 1,000 people, with one campaign still ongoing. New members were won from interests within the church as well as people who single mothers, substance abuse victims, and more. The advent message ran loud in the hearts of many.

Undoubtedly, this has been a tremendous year for Northeastern in the area of evangelism. The name of Jesus was lifted. As the conference moves into a new year, it was a great reminder of what the servant of the Lord said in CHRIST OBJECT LESSONS, p. 299, "The people

"In addition to powerful preaching, music, and seasons of prayer, campaigns took time to address community health concerns with on-site health screening and health updates on diet and exercise. The spirit at each tent was one of positive collaboration and spirituality."

powerful preaching, music, and seasons of prayer, campaigns took time to address community health concerns with on-site health screening and health updates on diet and exercise. The spirit at each tent was one of positive collaboration and spirituality. One usher said "People are just here to do the work of the Lord. No one cares who gets the randomly attended from the community. Notable stories during these campaigns include the baptism of "The Mighty Sparrow"—widely considered "the calypso king of the world." Sparrow, whose given name is Slinger Francisco, was taken into the water of baptism by Claudius Morgan in Queens, New York. Other stories are compiled from atheists, of the world are worshiping false gods. They are to be turned from their false worship, not by hearing denunciation of their idols, but by beholding something better. God's goodness is to be made known." Mission accomplished.

—Duddley Francois, communication director, Northeastern Conference

### **Transformed by God's Word**

Patrick Safali challenged the idea that there really is a God when visited by Lisa Gott, White Memorial church Bible worker, and Janet Warren, elder, in March 2021. However, after more than two hours of thoughtful discussion, Safali conceded that Bible studies would be a good idea, if he could pick the topics.

Within a few weeks, he began attending Sabbath School and church. After Gott's service at the Portland church ended and she returned to her home in Oregon, Glenn Holland, a pastor at White Memorial church, continued studying the Bible with Safali for more than a year. He had lots of questions that he wanted answered.



Glenn Holland, pastor, baptizes Patrick Safali.

Safali grew to love attending Sabbath School and engaging in Bible discussions with other members and guests, but still he was opposed to organized religion. Over time, that changed, too, and it was indeed a high day when Safali determined that he wanted to be baptized and become a member of the church. He was baptized on September 3, 2022, by Pastor Glenn and became an official member of the White Memorial church.

Safali is already sharing his faith with friends and sometimes brings them to church. Please pray for Patrick Safali as he shares what he has learned with others.

—Pastoral staff, White Memorial church

# White Memorial Church Sponsors its First Teen Bible Sports Camp

Eliana Tardiff, a recent graduate of Pine Tree Academy in Freeport, Maine, led the first-ever Teen Bible Sports Camp at the White Memorial church in Portland, Maine. Twelve teens showed up, mostly non-Adventists. The event was similar to a Vacation Bible School (VBS); in fact, it grew out of VBS.

Last summer, 40 kids attended VBS, and a sizable number were teens. However, the teens thought that some of the crafts were very elementary for them, so the church decided to plan something just for teens. They would not have any crafts but more time for sports they liked. So, they participated in different sports: basketball one evening, soccer another, and elimination dodge ball another.

The kids also had Bible and snack time each evening because teens love to eat! The group had a wonderful experience beginning the Sabbath together on Friday night with the non-Adventist teens, who did not know anything about the Sabbath. They enjoyed a beautiful pink sunset and talked about the meaning of the Sabbath. From all indications, everyone had a wonderful time. The only complaint was that the 10- to 12-yearolds were jealous and wanted their own Junior Bible Sports Camp next year. So, the plan is to have something similar for the juniors next year in addition to VBS and Teen Bible Sports Camp.

—Donna Holland, pastor, White Memorial church



Eliana Tardiff, who led White Memorial Church's first-ever Teen Bible Sports Camp, plays volleyball.

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	Dec. 2	Dec. 9	Dec. 16	Dec. 23	Dec. 30	Jan. 6	Jan. 13	Jan. 20	Jan. 27
Bangor, ME	3:54	3:54	3:55	3:58	4:03	4:09	4:18	4:27	4:37
Portland, ME	4:04	4:03	4:05	4:08	4:13	4:20	4:28	4:37	4:46
Boston, MA	4:12	4:11	4:13	4:16	4:21	4:28	4:35	4:44	4:53
South Lancaster, MA	4:14	4:13	4:15	4:18	4:23	4:29	4:37	4:46	4:55
Pittsfield, MA	4:20	4:20	4:21	4:24	4:29	4:36	4:44	4:52	5:01
Hartford, CT	4:20	4:19	4:21	4:24	4:29	4:36	4:43	4:51	5:00
Providence, RI	4:15	4:14	4:16	4:19	4:24	4:30	4:38	4:46	4:55
New York, NY	4:28	4:28	4:30	4:33	4:38	4:44	4:51	4:59	5:08
Albany, NY	4:21	4:21	4:22	4:26	4:31	4:37	4:45	4:53	5:02
Utica, NY	4:26	4:25	4:27	4:30	4:35	4:42	4:49	4:58	5:07
Syracuse, NY	4:30	4:29	4:30	4:34	4:39	4:46	4:53	5:02	5:11
Rochester, NY	4:35	4:35	4:36	4:39	4:44	4:51	4:59	5:07	5:17
Buffalo, NY	4:41	4:40	4:42	4:45	4:50	4:57	5:05	5:13	5:22
Keene, NH	4:15	4:14	4:15	4:19	4:24	4:30	4:38	4:47	4:56
Manchester, NH	4:11	4:10	4:12	4:15	4:20	4:27	4:35	4:43	4:52
Portsmouth, NH	4:08	4:07	4:09	4:12	4:17	4:24	4:32	4:40	4:49
Brattleboro, VT	4:16	4:15	4:17	4:20	4:25	4:32	4:39	4:48	4:57
Burlington, VT	4:13	4:12	4:14	4:17	4:22	4:29	4:37	4:46	4:56
Rutland, VT	4:15	4:14	4:16	4:19	4:24	4:31	4:39	4:48	4:57
Hamilton, Bda	5:13	5:14	5:16	5:19	5:24	5:29	5:35	5:42	5:48



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