

# VISITOR

CONNECTING COLUMBIA UNION SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019 • VOLUME 124 • ISSUE 1



## Amish to Adventist

Why three Amish families left the only community they've ever known

*Noticias en Español: p. 6*

*Nouvelles en Français: p. 7*

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Hannah Luttrell

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**About the Cover:** Andy Weaver and his daughter, Amanda, were photographed by Michael F. McElroy on their farm in Homerville, Ohio.

## ON THE WEB

### AMISH FACT OR FICTION

Think you know Amish culture? Some widely held beliefs like “The Amish can’t use electricity” may just be fiction.

Read more at [columbiaunionvisitor.com/amishfactorfiction](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/amishfactorfiction).



### JOURNEY TO ADVENTISM

One day while surfing the web at work, Abe Raber, who grew up as part of the Old Order Amish in Holmes County, Ohio, came

across Seventh-day Adventist sermons on YouTube. After studying the Bible further, he began keeping the seventh-day Sabbath in his home while continuing to attend the Amish church on Sundays. Find out how Raber finally got connected to an Adventist church—thanks to technology—at [columbiaunionvisitor.com/journeytoadventism](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/journeytoadventism).

### CHILDREN ARE GIFTS

“Parenting is the most important job in the world, and what we say to our children as parents can influence their destiny,” says Edwina Neely, a member of

Potomac Conference’s Rockville (Md.) church and author of the book *Children Are Gifts*. Read our interview with Neely about her book that contains principles about parenting gathered from 30 years of working in education and childcare at [columbiaunionvisitor.com/childrenaregifts](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/childrenaregifts).



### NEED AN EXTRA CALENDAR?



Need an extra copy of the 2019 *Columbia Union Calendar* featuring Bible stories depicted by Columbia

Union children? Call (441) 259-9578 or email [srowley@columbiaunion.net](mailto:srowley@columbiaunion.net).

# VISITOR

Celeste Ryan Blyden ■ Editor and Publisher  
 V. Michelle Bernard ■ News, Features and Online Editor  
 Ricardo Bacchus ■ Newsletter Editor  
 Kelly Butler Coe ■ Art Director and Designer  
 Sandra Jones ■ Advertising and Circulation Manager

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OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

5427 Twin Knolls Road, Columbia, MD 21045  
 (410) 997-3414 ■ columbiaunion.org

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Volume 124 ■ Issue 1

## Seek First to Understand



Recently during my morning devotions, I came across this quote from Solomon: “Wisdom is in the sight of him who has understanding, but the eyes of a fool are on the ends of the earth” (Prov. 17:24, NKJV). The first secret to gaining true wisdom, Solomon admonishes, is to seek understanding. As author Stephen Covey put it, “Seek first to understand, then to be understood.”

In 1455 Johannes Gutenberg began printing the Bible using a movable type press that he rigged from an old wine press. In doing so, he not only started a printing revolution that led to the Renaissance and the Reformation, he made the Scriptures accessible to people in a way they had not been able to experience before. When the Bible became available to the masses, it helped to increase knowledge and understanding and became a source of spiritual food that nourished hungry hearts and thirsty souls. By reading and meditating on its precepts and promises, people came to know Jesus and gained a greater understanding of His mission and the Great Commission.



### THEN AND NOW

One of my favorite Bible stories, and maybe yours, is the feeding of 5,000 people, as recorded in the gospels. Jesus, showing His compassionate side, saw to it that His audience received spiritual food for their hearts and physical food for their bodies. After He miraculously fed everyone with just five loaves and a couple of fish, the leaders were convinced that

this young Galilean teacher was the One who could lead them to achieve their long-sought freedom and national greatness. As they orchestrated to declare Him king (see John 6:15), He derailed their efforts by sending the disciples to the boats and the people back to their homes.

And then Jesus did something that is too often missed in leadership practice today: He went alone to pray. Not for Himself, but for His disciples, that they might understand His mission. While the leadership of the day had cast a vision for an earthly kingdom of power and control, Christ was attempting to set up a new kingdom based upon the Word of God alone. His mission, which became the Great Commission for His disciples—then and now—wasn’t to rule over their fellow man, but to save them. “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10, NKJV).

As we enter 2019, may our souls be filled with wisdom, as we seek a true understanding of the role we play in our Savior’s mission to save lost people. And may our understanding of His mission be informed, not by human origin, but solely by the Word of God.

*Dave Weigley serves as president of the Columbia Union Conference.*



Shenandoah Valley Academy sophomore Elsy Kersey and freshmen Liz Sanchez help act out the story of Jesus' birth in the school's Journey to Bethlehem dramatization in New Market, Va.

## UNION SETS GOAL OF 3,000 HISPANIC SMALL GROUPS

Spanish-speaking church leaders across the Columbia Union Conference attended Vida GPS Caravan meetings throughout November. The caravan, with speaker/evangelist Alejandro Bullón and Rubén Ramos, the Columbia Union's vice president for Multilingual Ministries, stopped at 24 locations throughout the territory, with the goal of motivating and educating attendees about the essential role small groups play in carrying out the church's mission.

Ramos hopes that by the end of 2019, members will have increased the number of small groups around the union from 900 to 3,000. "The number of baptisms is not the

important thing," says Ramos. "What matters most is that the members get involved in mission."

Attendees received materials to help strengthen their ministries and to prepare for the week of evangelism, April 12–19, 2019, happening across the North American Division (NAD). The NAD Multilingual Ministries event will feature a week of evangelism presentations by Bullón that participants can show in their local groups.—V. Michelle Bernard

## COLUMBIA UNION ASI GEARS UP FOR ANOTHER CONVENTION

The Columbia Union Adventist-laymen's Services and Industries (CUASI) recently hosted their fall convention, themed

"Launch 2018: Not Mine, But Yours," at the Doubletree by Hilton in Columbia, Md.

"From the opening session, we cast an exciting vision forward to each session, which spoke to God's workings in the lives of His people. All in attendance were inspired and empowered to give God their best," says Mark Brown, CUASI president.

CUASI leaders are now planning for the spring convention, scheduled for April 4–6 at the North American Division headquarters in Columbia, Md.—Columbia Union ASI Staff



Teddy Flo, a member of Potomac Conference's Beltsville church-Tech Road Campus in Silver Spring, Md., and Ranela Kaligithi, who attends Chesapeake Conference's Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Md., participate in the fall Columbia Union ASI convention.

## ADVENTIST WOMEN LEADERS INVITED TO CONNECT

The North American Division (NAD) Administrative Committee recently voted to adopt and endorse the Adventist Women Leaders initiative. What started with a lunch for 15 women gathered in a conference room at the NAD Year-end Meeting in October 2017, has grown to more than 180 subscribers to an email newsletter published twice a month.

The goal is to create and foster a nurturing and supportive community for women who serve in leadership capacities of the



Small group leaders from Allegheny West Conference churches in Cincinnati participate in Vida GPS Caravan meetings at the Shiloh church.

Seventh-day Adventist Church, says Debra Brill, NAD vice president, who chairs the committee.



“We are here to say to women in leadership: ‘We see you, we acknowledge your call and accomplishments, we rejoice in how God is working through you, we are here for you and we are praying for you,’” says Celeste Ryan Blyden, who spearheaded the initiative.

Visit [columbiaunionvisitor.com/adventistwomenleaders](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/adventistwomenleaders) to sign up for the newsletter.—*Michele Joseph*

### UNION CREATES NEW COMMUNICATION RESOURCE, VIDEOS

The Columbia Union Conference Communication Services team recently published a communication handbook. The 56-page booklet includes a job description for local church communication leaders, and

# 41,317

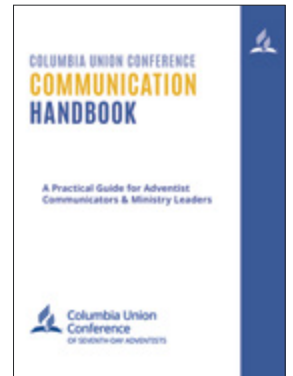
The number of multilingual members among the Columbia Union Conference’s 148,068 members. Of this number, 31,140 speak Spanish; 2,699 speak French; 1,870 speak Korean; 928 speak Portuguese. To see a full list of the groups, visit [columbiaunionvisitor.com/diversecolumbiaunion](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/diversecolumbiaunion).

provides guidelines and practical tips on how to write and edit news articles, take great photos and use social media, video, branding and public and media relations to tell an organization’s story. The staff also filmed nine short corresponding instructional videos, some presented by conference communication directors from around the union.

“We hope this new [resource] will be helpful as you lead workshops, answer common questions and encourage your local leaders to recognize the role and blessing of communication in advancing the mission of Christ,” said project coordinator Celeste Ryan Blyden, vice president of Strategic Communication and

Public Relations for the Columbia Union, speaking to 30 communication leaders who attended the 2018 Columbia Union Communication Advisory, where the resource was introduced.

Copies were mailed to every church in the union last month and are available for free in print and online. Email requests to [srowley@columbiaunion.net](mailto:srowley@columbiaunion.net). Download the PDF and watch the videos at [columbiaunion.org/communicationresources](http://columbiaunion.org/communicationresources).—*VMB*



## CURF TO RETURN \$3.2 MILLION TO CONFERENCES FOR MINISTRY

Twenty years ago, the eight conferences within the Columbia Union Conference provided significant funds to help meet a new North American Division (NAD) policy that revolving funds across the division should maintain a minimum of 25 percent of their monies in capital reserves. Now that the Columbia Union Revolving Fund (CURF) has met and maintained that requirement for many years, the administration will return those funds to the conferences. The funds will total about \$3.2 million, says Emmanuel Asiedu, union treasurer.

The Columbia Union also contributed to the fund between 1996 and 1998, explained Dave Weigley, president of the union, who added that he wanted to find another way to support conference ministry initiatives and evangelism efforts. “Emmanuel suggested that we return these funds to provide a financial boost for use when and where it’s needed most,” Weigley says.

Even after the reversion, CURF will continue to maintain more than the minimum in reserves required by NAD policy, reports H. Candace Nurse, associate treasurer and CURF secretary/treasurer. She adds that no noteholder funds will be used in the transactions, and that they will remain secure.—*Celeste Ryan Blyden*



*H. Candace Nurse (pictured, right) presents a check to Victor Zill, Mountain View Conference treasurer.*

## Noticias

### LA UNIÓN ESTABLECE OBJETIVO DE 3,000 GRUPOS PEQUEÑOS HISPANOS

Líderes de las iglesias hispanas de la Unión de Columbia asistieron a las reuniones de la caravana Vida GPS durante todo noviembre. La caravana, con el orador/evangelista Alejandro Bullón y Rubén Ramos, vicepresidente de Ministerios Multilingües de la Unión de Columbia, tuvo 24 paradas en el territorio de la unión con el objetivo de motivar y educar a los asistentes sobre el papel esencial que desempeñan los grupos pequeños en la misión de la iglesia.

Ramos espera que para fines de 2019, los miembros hayan aumentado el número de grupos pequeños en toda la unión de 900 a 3,000. “El número de bautismos no es lo importante”, dice Ramos. “Lo que más importa es que los miembros se involucren en la misión”.

Los asistentes recibieron materiales para ayudar a apoyar sus ministerios y para prepararse para la semana de evangelismo, del 12 al 19 de abril de 2019, que tendrá lugar en toda la División Norteamericana (NAD). El evento de Ministerios Multilingües de NAD ofrecerá una semana de



Armando Gómez, miembro de la iglesia Hispana de Bridgeton de la Conferencia de New Jersey, y Carlos Torres, director de Ministerios Personales de la conferencia, ilustran uno de los puntos espirituales de Alejandro Bullón durante la parada de la caravana Vida GPS en el Teatro Landis en Vineland.

evangelismo presentada por Bullón que los participantes pueden mostrar en sus grupos locales. Visite [vidagps.org](http://vidagps.org) para obtener más detalles y recursos.—V. Michelle Bernard

### CURF DEVUELVE \$ 3.2 MILLONES A LAS CONFERENCIAS

Hace veinte años, las ocho conferencias que conforman la Unión de Columbia proporcionaron fondos significativos para ayudar a cumplir con una nueva política de la División



Eduardo Muñoz, tesorero de la Conferencia de Chesapeake, y Richard Minty, tesorero asociado, muestran un cheque de CURF.

Norteamericana (NAD) de que los fondos rotatorios en toda la división deberían mantener un mínimo del 25 por ciento de su dinero en reservas de capital. Ahora que el Fondo Rotatorio de la Unión de Columbia (CURF) ha cumplido y mantenido ese requisito durante muchos años, la administración devolverá esos fondos a las conferencias. El monto total es de \$3.2 millones, dice Emmanuel Asiedu, tesorero de la Unión.—Celeste Ryan Blyden

### LA UNIÓN CREA NUEVOS RECURSOS DE COMUNICACIÓN

El personal de Servicios de Comunicación de la Unión de Columbia publicó recientemente un manual de comunicación. Las 56 páginas incluyen una descripción del trabajo para los líderes de comunicación de las iglesias,



y proporciona pautas y consejos prácticos (Foto: Colaboradora Debra Anderson, Conferencia de Potomac) sobre cómo escribir y editar artículos de noticias, tomar buenas fotos y usar las redes sociales, videos, logos, relaciones públicas y de medios para contar historias.

Se enviaron copias a todas las iglesias de la unión y pueden obtenerse de forma impresa gratis (solicitándolas al correo electrónico a [srowley@columbiaunion.net](mailto:srowley@columbiaunion.net)) o de forma electrónica. Descarga recursos en español en [columbiaunion.org/communicationresources](http://columbiaunion.org/communicationresources).—VMB

### NIÑOS ILUSTRAN EL CALENDARIO 2019

El Calendario de la Unión de Columbia 2019 presenta historias bíblicas representadas a través del trabajo artístico de niños en la Unión de Columbia.

Para obtener copias gratuitas adicionales, llame al (443) 259-9578 o envíe un correo electrónico a [srowley@columbiaunion.net](mailto:srowley@columbiaunion.net).—VMB



Dibujito de Christina Santeliz, de 8 años, miembro de la iglesia El Deseado de todas las gentes de Elkton, Md.

FOTO POR JORGE PILLCO

## BIENVENUE À LA SECTION NOUVELLES

Nouvelles, est une rubrique d'informations où nous partageons des nouvelles en français. Visitez [columbiaunionvisitor.com/nouvelles](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/nouvelles) pour des informations en français tout au long du mois. Si vous avez une information intéressante à partager, envoyez un courrier électronique à [visitor@columbiaunion.net](mailto:visitor@columbiaunion.net). (En anglais.)  
—V. Michelle Bernard

## L'UNION SE FIXE COMME OBJECTIF 3 000 PETITS GROUPES HISPANIQUES

Les dirigeants des églises d'expression espagnole de l'Union de Fédérations de Columbia ont assisté aux réunions de la Caravane Vida GPS pendant le mois de novembre. La Caravane, avec Alejandro Bullón comme orateur-évangéliste, et Rubén Ramos, vice-président des ministères multilingues de l'Union de Columbia,



Norma Barahona, Emely Barahona, Emely Hernandez et Maria Hernandez, membres de l'Eglise Paterson South Spanish de la Fédération New Jersey participant au GPS Caravana Vida.

s'est arrêtée dans 24 endroits du territoire, dans le but de motiver et d'éduquer les participants sur le rôle essentiel que jouent les petits groupes dans la mission de l'église.

Ramos espère que d'ici à fin 2019, les membres auront augmenté le nombre de petits groupes de 900 à 3 000. "Le nombre de baptêmes n'est pas le plus

important", déclare Ramos. "Ce qui compte le plus, c'est que les membres s'impliquent dans la mission".

Les participants ont reçu des documents pouvant les aider à renforcer leurs ministères et se préparer pour la semaine d'évangélisation qui se tiendra du 12 au 19 avril 2019 à travers toute la Division Nord-Américaine (NAD).—VMB

## LE CURF VA REMBOURSER 3,2 MILLIONS DE DOLLARS AUX FÉDÉRATIONS

Il y a vingt ans, les huit fédérations de l'Union de Columbia, ont fourni des fonds considérables pour faciliter l'application d'une nouvelle politique de la Division



Nord-Américaine (NAD), selon laquelle les fonds renouvelables à travers toute la division devraient conserver au moins 25% de leur argent en réserves de capital. Maintenant que le Fonds Renouvelable de l'Union de Columbia (CURF) a satisfait à cette exigence et l'a maintenue pendant de nombreuses années, l'administration rendra ces fonds, avec intérêt, aux fédérations. Les fonds totaliseront environ 3,2 millions de dollars, déclare Emmanuel Asiedu, trésorier de l'Union.—Celeste Ryan Blyden

## LES ENFANTS ILLUSTRONT LE CALENDRIER 2019

Le calendrier de l'Union de Fédérations de Columbia 2019 contient des histoires bibliques illustrées par des œuvres artistiques d'enfants de l'Union. Pour obtenir des exemplaires gratuits



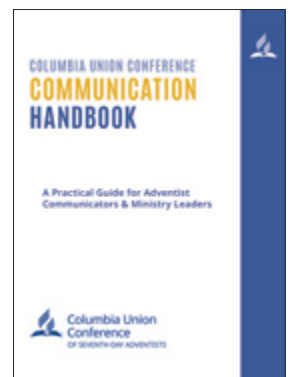
Illustration par Melanie Croft, membre de l'Eglise Adventiste Espagnole Ebenezer de Cleveland de la Fédération d'Ohio.

supplémentaires, appelez le (443) 259-9578 ou envoyez un courrier électronique à [srowley@columbiaunion.net](mailto:srowley@columbiaunion.net).—VMB

## L'UNION CRÉE UNE NOUVELLE RESSOURCE EN COMMUNICATION

Le personnel des services de communication de l'Union de Fédérations de Columbia a publié récemment un manuel de communication. Le livret de 56 pages comprend une description de poste pour les responsables de communication de l'église locale et fournit des directives et des conseils pratiques sur la rédaction et la modification d'articles d'actualité, la prise de bonnes photos et l'utilisation des médias sociaux, de la vidéo, de la stratégie de marque et des relations publiques pour raconter l'histoire d'une organisation.

Des exemplaires ont été envoyés à toutes les églises et sont disponibles gratuitement sous forme imprimée (demandes par courrier électronique adressées à [srowley@columbiaunion.net](mailto:srowley@columbiaunion.net)) et en ligne. Téléchargez plusieurs ressources en français sur [columbiaunion.org/communicationresources](http://columbiaunion.org/communicationresources).—VMB



# Amish to Adventist

*By Hannah Luttrell*





want to be excommunicated.” Delila Glick looked straight at her bishop, her steady voice belying the twinge of nervousness she felt inside. From the outside, Glick looked like any typical Amish woman, her waist-length hair neatly twisted up in a bun and tucked beneath a white prayer covering, and her long, full skirt lightly brushing the floor of the bishop’s house. Yet, what she said was anything but typical. Being excommunicated or shunned from the Amish community was a severe punishment used to pressure a wayward member to repent and return, and asking for such a sentence was definitely not a common occurrence.

“Why would you want that?” the bishop frowned.

“I don’t understand the way you are treating my husband,” Glick explained. “I feel the same way he does, and I want to be shunned as well.” Her husband, John, sat quietly next to Delila, silenced by his status as a shunned church member.

Several weeks earlier, the church had caught John using power tools and a Bobcat® to help a friend. That went directly against the *Ordnung*, or rules of their strict Swartzentruber Amish sect. The only excuse for using power tools, cars, phones and the like was if someone’s life was in immediate danger. “You’re trying to worship two gods: the rules of the church and now the world by using these forbidden equipment,” the bishop had said, inadvertently revealing the level to which he had elevated his church.

The sentence from the council was swift: six weeks of excommunication—no business or social interaction with any Amish church member. For any Amish living within the Lodi settlement in Ohio, the community was their entire world. Excommunication meant no buying or selling of any goods or services, no social gatherings, not even a meal with any member, including their own family. At church on a Sunday, the council told John to go home, but his wife and children were to remain at church.

As John drove his horse and buggy home alone, he never felt so low in his life. The bishop had told John that he could not be forgiven after willfully “sinning,” despite knowing the church rules. “If I am that bad,” thought John, “then why should I be with my wife or kids ever?” The weight of the condemnation bearing down on his soul drove John to consider taking his own life. He wasn’t sure if he could still be saved if he did that, so once he arrived home, he grabbed his German Bible and started reading, searching for a passage that would give God the “right” to let him kill himself.

*Culturally Amish and religiously Seventh-day Adventist, the Glick family, (back row) Delilah (holding Ada) and John; (middle row, left to right) Lovina, Lydia, Henry and Levi; and (front) Eli and Ezra (not pictured), found joy and relief in the Adventist Church’s message of salvation by faith.*



## Amish Fact or Fiction

Think you know about Amish culture? Some widely-held beliefs like “The Amish can’t have electricity” may just be fiction. Read more at [columbiaunionvisitor.com/factorfiction](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/factorfiction).

Yet, as John combed the pages of the gospels, he found anything but that. Instead, he found relief, joy and truth. What he read not only went against a lot of his long-held beliefs, but also showed that the ways of his bishop and church did not match up with the Bible. He shared his discoveries with Delila, and together they began to pray and study the Bible. Initially hesitant, Delila knew that if they continued on this path, they would soon be leaving their family, friends and the only world they had ever known.

Nonetheless, as they continued to study, Delila realized that Jesus had to be first in her life. He was her source of comfort—not her parents, her siblings or even her community. As they neared the end of the six weeks of excommunication and of studying the Bible together, they knew that, despite the consequences, they would have to leave the Amish church—permanently.

“You need to talk to Andy,” remarked John’s cousin, after hearing his dilemma. Andy Weaver was a former Amish church member with whom John had never quite seen eye to eye on his beliefs. But that was before. Just one day after John’s official six weeks of banishment was over and he was reinstated back into the Amish church, the Glicks took a huge risk by parking their buggy behind Andy’s barn and sneaking into his house for a Bible study. Within a few months, John and Delila joined Weaver and his wife, Naomi, not only in the *Bann*—or the state of permanent excommunication from the Amish church—but also in the Amish Seventh-day Adventist worship community in West Salem.

## The Glicks' Journey

John had always assumed that anyone who didn't dress like the Amish was "of the world." But at his first church service at West Salem Mission, when he saw the "English-dressed" worshippers pour out their hearts to God in sincere, heartfelt prayer, John broke down and cried. Seeing people who looked so different from him and yet believed so strongly in the Word of God made him realize just how many of his past assumptions needed changing.

"People think I left the Amish church to get more pleasure, more materials," remarks John. "In some ways, it's partly true—I did want a truck, a phone and a Bobcat®. But now I know I don't even need all that—all I need is Jesus. Actually, if I wanted pleasure, I would go back to being Amish because there is nothing in this world outside of God that can give more pleasure than being with family. But as much as I am homesick for my family, I know I can't put family above the Word of God."

For Delila, being shunned by her family of origin was the hardest part about leaving. Her family had always been close, and, even as adults, the times her parents and 13 siblings spent together were always full of fun. But according to the letter she received from her parents, she was no longer welcome in their house, nor any of her siblings' homes.

Yet, while there was a lot of stress in leaving everything behind, Delila notes that today she has half the stress than she did back then. Says Delila, "I have so much peace knowing that I can come to God as I am and be accepted!"

Life is not worry-free for the Glicks. Leaving the Amish also meant leaving behind John's profitable construction business, as his former Amish customers and workers can no longer do business with or work for him. Business on the outside is very different, and John

struggles to figure out how to run a business and pay people regular outside wages.

Among all the new things John and Delila are learning, the most important is reliance on God. Notes Delila, "Being Amish, you aren't really taught anything about trusting God. It's all about traditions and rules and just doing what you are told. After we first left, there was a weight on our shoulders—from our own salvation to making ends meet. But after we started open prayer—not just praying from the Amish prayer book—our entire outlook changed. We started trusting God that He would lead us. He has, and we know He will continue to do so!"

## Andy's Journey

The turning point of Weaver's life came several years before worshipping with the Glicks. In reading the book, *The Martyr's Mirror*, a compilation of stories of Anabaptists who were persecuted for their faith, Weaver was startled to realize that the same arguments that had been used to persecute the early Anabaptist martyrs were now being used to persecute members of his community who broke the church rules, including things as innocuous-sounding as having a hat of the wrong brim-size. Determined to bring revival and change to the Amish church, Weaver launched a mission to read as many Christian books from other denominations as he could.

A providential encounter with a Seventh-day Adventist at an Amish barn-raising led to his first encounter with Adventist literature. Like many other Amish, the book of Revelation fascinated and troubled Weaver, especially when trying to read it in his German Bible. But upon reading an Adventist commentary of Daniel and Revelation, he was ecstatic to discover that all the answers he was looking for were



## Vision Becomes Reality in Amish Church Plant

With the goal of reaching Amish people, Andy Weaver and some Adventist friends obtained property, and Ohio Conference's West Salem Mission formally opened in June 2015. Today, about 50 former Amish and Mennonite believers congregate there every Sabbath, holding church services on the first and third Sabbaths and personal Bible studies on the second and fourth Sabbaths. Members share their faith mostly through friendship evangelism, especially to those who have left or who are on their way out but haven't found a church they like.

Visit [westsalemmission.org](http://westsalemmission.org) for more information on the West Salem Mission.



*The Weavers, (back row, left to right) Mary, Amanda, Naomi and Andy; (middle row) Emma, Henry, John and Anna; and (front) Daniel and Sarah, were the first family to be banned from their Amish community because of their newfound Adventist beliefs.*



in the Bible. Before this, he had no idea that the Bible explained itself. However, it was Ellen White’s classic, *The Desire of Ages*, that truly converted him. Within those pages, Weaver first grasped the concept of righteousness by faith.

Weaver knew that while the Amish could look “pure” on the outside, they have their share of moral issues and dysfunction. While some sins were brought to the bishop during ritualistic confessions, many more by laity and clergy, including accusations of sexual assault and incest, were conveniently avoided or never dealt with fully. Beneath their broad-brimmed hats and hand-spun clothes lay a crushing burden of guilt, shame and despair. They believed that not only would they have to pay for their own sins, but there was no way they could become holy on their own. When Weaver discovered that Christ had both lived the perfect life and died the perfect sacrifice in his place, and that through a



*Two of the Weaver children perform chores on their farm.*

relationship of faith in Him, he could be both justified and sanctified, it was an unbelievably liberating experience.

Weaver went on to read the fundamental beliefs of the Adventist Church and was convinced that it all aligned with the Bible. “It was as plain as the broadside of my barn,” he says. “Everything in there was true.”

Subsequent conversations with his Amish leaders led to the inevitable *Bann* of his family from their Amish church, family and community. With no access to their usual Amish bulk food stores and eight children to feed, there were some hungry days, but Andy and his wife were determined to follow their newfound truth, despite the consequences.

Weaver's first visit to an Adventist church, however, threatened his resolve. The culture shock going from an Amish worship experience to an Adventist one was severe enough to tempt him to return. Discouraged, he prayed, "Lord, I believe this church has the truth. If it is your will, help me to start an Amish Adventist church where we can reach out to the Amish people. We can keep our lifestyle and dress and sing our German songs, but we will teach the Word of God." Weaver knew that his newfound faith should pose no threat to the simple Amish lifestyle, and that once shown the truth, the Amish would be as committed to it as they were to other aspects of their lives.

It wasn't long before God made Weaver's vision a reality. With the help of some Adventist friends, he obtained nearby property, and the Ohio Conference's West Salem Mission was formally opened. Today, about 50 former Amish and Mennonite believers congregate there every Sabbath to worship and fellowship together. Members reached some through friendship evangelism, while others, already disillusioned with the Amish religion, also joined the church.

## The Raber Brothers' Journey

Vernon Raber moved to Florida at the age of 20, in an effort to get as far away from his Amish upbringing as possible. Being overweight as a child, Raber had been ruthlessly mocked by his Amish schoolmates and church peers and wanted to escape as soon as he could.

Florida brought its own share of challenges, however, and Raber found himself embroiled in drugs and alcohol. He moved back to Ohio, but decided to attend a Mennonite church instead.

Several years later, Raber's mother passed away. Having been taught all his life that when someone died, they went straight to heaven or hell, he couldn't help but wonder if his mother had made it to heaven. The mental picture of his mother screaming and writhing in the eternal fires of hell almost drove him out of his mind. With subsequent deaths in his family, the mystery of death kept gnawing at Raber and led him to begin searching for answers.

Around this time, his brother Abe discovered Adventist sermons on YouTube and began sharing them with Vernon. When Vernon discovered that the Bible did not teach an eternally-burning hell, but a swift, just punishment after the close of time, his sense of relief was indescribable.

Then after learning on YouTube about West Salem Mission, Abe asked Vernon to drive him there. Vernon



PHOTOS BY MICHAEL F. MCELROY/AP IMAGES



*Abe and Vernon grew up in an Old Order Amish community and initially found out about the Adventist message through YouTube.*

was happy to oblige. The moment Vernon walked into the worship service, he was awash with a strong sense that this was where he was supposed to be.

As a devoted steak-eater, the only thing he did not like was the after-church potluck. “Man, that vegetarian food is awful,” he complained to Abe after their first visit. Now, one year later, not only is the potluck fellowship one of his favorite things about the church, he has lost more than 30 pounds by following the Adventist health message.

“I used to dread going to church,” shares Vernon. “Even when I was attending the Mennonite church, it was always a toss-up between going to church or Bob Evans [restaurant], and often Bob Evans would win out. Now going to West Salem, I can’t wait for Sabbath to come so I can go! It’s been an education like I’ve never had in my life.”

Abe agrees. Growing up, “I was taught it was keeping church rules that saved me, and if I sinned, I would just have to confess it to my bishop. Since becoming acquainted with Adventists and studying the Bible for myself, the best thing I’ve learned is to have a real relationship with Jesus Christ, and that is what really saves,” he says.

## Understanding Amish Culture

Where did the Amish come from, and how do they differ from Mennonites and Anabaptists?

The Amish originated from the Anabaptists. The word “ana” is Greek for “again,” and the Anabaptists rejected the infant baptism that many of them had been subjected to, believing instead that the only valid baptism was one that was freely chosen after confessing belief in Jesus. Menno Simons was a former Catholic priest who embraced Anabaptism in the 1500s and became a prominent leader, with his followers becoming known as Mennonites rather than Anabaptists.

In 1693 there was a split after a prominent leader, Jakob Ammann, advocated greater separation from the world and stricter discipline with shunning of disobedient members. His followers became known as the Amish. Later, schisms led to groups like the Old Order Amish and New Order Amish.

Today many Mennonite groups have assimilated into general society. They still believe in living simply but do not believe in avoiding all modern conveniences like most Amish do. Some Mennonite groups, like the Old Order Mennonites, are more similar to Old Order Amish, who refuse to use vehicles and most modern machinery and have a more distinctive way of dress, including clothes that fasten with hooks and eyes rather than zippers or buttons. Within the Amish are also different sects that vary slightly in the rules they choose to enforce as decided collectively through their council of elders.





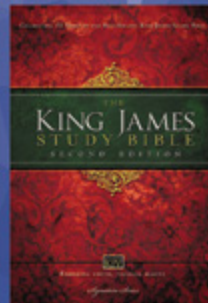
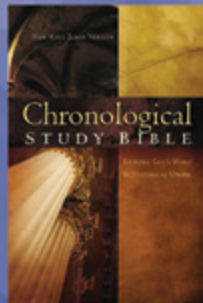
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# ALLEGHENY EAST

# Exposé

## George E. Peters Launches STEM Program

This year faculty members of the George E. Peters (GEP) Adventist School in Hyattsville, Md., have exposed their PreK 3 to eighth-grade students to the STEM program. “Our mission is to prepare scholars for this life and the life to come, and the STEM program is our way of actively working toward our mission,” says Shanel Marchany, principal.

David Penny, STEM instructor for GEP, shares this commitment. “School programs [such as this] are what got me excited about the STEM field as a child,” he says. “I was involved in after-school and extra-curricular activities that focused on STEM.” Today

Penny holds a degree in mechanical engineering from Andrews University (Mich.) and is pursuing a masters in robotics from the University of Maryland, College Park. “I’m excited to give back to this generation of learners. I hope to ignite their passion for STEM.”

This April GEP scholars plan to participate in the Robotics LEGO League held at several buildings on the campus of Allegheny East. “We are excited that our school will be able to participate this year,” says Marchany. “It is never too early to prepare scholars for the work field.”

## Revival Nets 70 Baptisms at North Philadelphia Church

The North Philadelphia church recently hosted the Breath of Life Television Ministries for its 2018 Fall Revival, resulting in 70 baptisms. This evangelistic campaign featured Breath of Life Speaker/Director Carlton P. Byrd, who for two weeks preached nightly on the foundational doctrines of the Adventist message.

Over a two-year period, Pastor Marquis Johns and the North Philadelphia members prepared for this revival using several initiatives: a prayer conference call twice a week; a community block party; a free dental and optical clinic; financial literacy classes; free babysitting services (certified by the American Red Cross); and a “thank you” dinner for first responders in the local community.

Also, in preparation for this campaign, Breath of Life Bible instructors began canvassing the community six weeks prior to the revival, soliciting Bible studies and praying with residents.

In addition to the preaching ministry of Byrd, nationally renowned music artists Kurt Carr and the Kurt Carr Singers, Maurette Brown Clark and other local musicians, shared their music ministry at the event. Revival attendees also received regular meals, grocery giveaways and valet parking to circumvent on-street parking challenges. Byrd says, “The vast majority of urbanites have no church affiliation. Innovative public evangelism is key.”

Although the series is finished, the work at the North Philadelphia church has just begun, as they’ve established a new discipleship class, and leaders are



*Carlton P. Byrd (right), Breath of Life speaker/director, prepares to baptize Nasir Narvaez, while Marquis Johns, pastor of North Philadelphia, waits to baptize Nasir's grandmother, Maria Rodriguez.*

planning to launch a new emotional health ministry.  
—Christopher C. Thompson

## Pastor Produces Bible Study Series

**E**mil Peeler, pastor of the Capitol Hill church in Washington, D.C., felt that although there were a lot of solid Bible study resources available, there was need for a fresh, concise and simple approach. Consequently, *FaithFacts* (pictured) was birthed. “I specifically designed them to be used for baptismal preparation and as introductory studies for those new in their Christian journey,” says Peeler.

The Bible series, engineered to be used in small group settings or individually, is arranged in three tiers, with eight lessons in each level. The first is the Gold Level (referred to as “Common Ground” themes), which covers basic subjects such as grace, prayer, the Bible, praise, forgiveness, faith and temptation. The next level is the Emerald series (referred to as “Uncommon Ground”), which aims to prepare individuals for baptism. Ruby is the final level (referred to as “Higher Ground”), which explores lifestyle themes, last-day events, the three angels’ messages and more.

The lessons “are crafted to be simple enough for new believers to understand, but challenging enough for those who may just be revived in their faith,” says Peeler.

The Capitol Hill church used the *FaithFacts* lessons during their two-week Bible Conference last summer. More than 60 people finished the lessons and received completion certificates. Forty people have been baptized, with more to come.

The ministry is still growing and more resources will be added, including books, DVDs and meaningful, thought-provoking blogs. The church also plans to offer tips and tools for Bible study, preaching, witnessing, church growth and discipleship.

For more info, visit [emilpeelerministries.com](http://emilpeelerministries.com), email [faithfacts@emilpeelerministries.com](mailto:faithfacts@emilpeelerministries.com) or call (202) 543-1344 or (202) 741-4589.



## Young Adults Engage in Weekly Bible Study

**T**he Bible study group at Emmanuel-Brinklow church in Ashton, Md., began shortly after Shantel Smith, assistant pastor for youth, joined the congregation. “I saw a clear need for young adult life, community and connection,” she remembers. She gathered young adults between the ages of 23–29 and



singles 40+ for a potluck and honest discussion.

Smith listened to the members’ concerns and vision for spiritual growth and opened her home to host weekly Bible studies. “I wanted them to know that I am willing to open up my life and home to them in hopes that they would be willing to be open and vulnerable with me,” she shares.

The group consists of nearly 30 young professionals from varying backgrounds. “The Bible study has re-motivated me to begin reading my Bible more intentionally,” shares member Kyla Simone. “Also, I appreciate that we can ask hard questions without judgment and can discuss them candidly, while using the Bible as our ultimate guide.”

*Young professionals from varying backgrounds and religions gather weekly for Bible studies in the home of Shantel Smith, youth pastor at the Emmanuel-Brinklow church.*



## 340 Attend Health Expo at Calvary Church

The Calvary church in Gordonsville, Va., recently partnered with a couple of community organizations to host a free health expo, aimed at increasing the quality of health care for the citizens of Virginia. At the health expo, 340 people received dietary



education, as well as medical, dental and vision care. Some individuals were fitted for and prescribed eyeglasses. Six weeks later, 21 people returned to Calvary to pick up their new glasses.

René Cannon, pastor of Calvary, made it a point to pray with the attendees, as other church members distributed gift bags containing the books *Steps to Christ*, *The Desire of Ages* and *The Great Controversy*.

Following the event, church members have continued to intentionally reach out to the community. At one follow-up event, members volunteered to facilitate a bread baking class, in which nine from the community attended. They poured ingredients, kneaded and shaped bread, before enjoying the loaves together. "The Calvary church is very glad that God chose to use us to be a blessing to our community!" says Cannon.

*A community member tries on a pair of glasses at the Calvary church's health expo.*

## Southeast Church Mobilizes Voters

The Southeast church in Cleveland hosted a "Get Out To Vote" rally the Sabbath prior to Election Day. Guests included Charles Clark, National Outreach coordinator for the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO); Tony Minor, state director for the African American Ministers

Leadership Council; and Harriet Applegate, executive secretary of North Shore AFL-CIO.

Jerome Hurst, senior pastor of Southeast and also the Public Affairs and Religious Liberty director for the Allegheny West Conference, spoke for the divine worship service. He encouraged and challenged attendees to vote, tell five people to vote and drive five people to the voting polls. This rally was just one of many initiatives Southeast has been a part of in preparation for Election Day.

Prior to Sabbath, members canvassed the surrounding neighborhood and encouraged people to register and to verify their registration. Church members also volunteered to give rides during the early voting period.

Erin Kelly, a young adult member and canvasser, expressed how being involved in this initiative was important to her because of the sacrifices that had been made for her to have the right to vote. "I want to do all I can to motivate and educate individuals on their responsibility to cast their vote. We as a race have not always had the right to vote. I want people young and old to be engaged in the process because this is how their voice is heard," she says.



*Jerome Hurst, pastor of the Southeast church, and a team of canvassers display "pro-voting" signs prior to Election Day.*



## Childhood Center Feasts on Food, Appreciation

The Little Footprints Early Childhood Center, located in the basement of the Shiloh Cincinnati church, wanted to do something special for families during the Thanksgiving holiday. The 44-person childcare facility decided to show their appreciation to the families who work hard every day and bring their kids to the center.

“We have parents who work long hours, who bring their little ones early in the morning, and we wanted to show them our appreciation,” says Denise McCloud, the center’s administrator.



Children from the Little Footprints Early Childhood Center and their families attend a Thanksgiving event.



Adventist and community staff members, including (left to right) Samara Meatchem, Venice Rodgers and April Williams, provide care for 44 kids during the week.



Hand in hand, church members and attendees pray for God’s blessings.



Families feast during the Thanksgiving appreciation meal.

Two weeks prior to Thanksgiving, the facility provided a special meal for the kids and their families, including parents, aunts, uncles and grandparents.

At the event, staff distributed gift cards, played games and honored parents for all they do for their children. Bryant Smith, pastor of Shiloh, and some of the church elders attended and interacted with the families. “It was such a blessing meeting and getting to know families that are in our community, who are not connected to our church but are being blessed by our center,” says Smith. He and other church members closed the event by praying for the children and their families.

## The Added Value of Adventist Education

I am forever grateful my parents taught me about Jesus and made the sacrificial decision to enroll me in an Adventist school. During my most formative years, I was blessed to be influenced and mentored by teachers; Miss Hodder (first and second grade), Mrs. Mosher (third and fourth grade), Mr. Studley (fifth and sixth grade) and Mr. Thompson (seventh and eighth grade). I remember them well because they made such a positive impact on my life.

My first teachers were followed by many other educators at boarding academy and college. I learned a lot from them academically, but I also learned about life and leadership. Most importantly, they taught me about faith in Jesus and modeled the practical applications of biblical truths. This provided spiritual guidance and insights that continue to impact my life and ministry today.

There are many schools around us with high academic standards, but Adventist education offers much more than demonstrated academic quality. The added value is an open emphasis on introducing students to Jesus Christ and integrating a Christ-centered perspective into every area of study. Ultimately, students are able to apply this Bible-based approach to service and careers where they can be positive change agents in the world.

Adventist education is one of a few selective priorities for the Chesapeake Conference. You may not currently have a child in Adventist education, but there are still ways that you can make an impact. Pray for our Adventist schools, teachers and each of our students. Every day exciting challenges are met and much wisdom is needed.

You can also thank an Adventist educator for their willingness to engage in this specialized ministry. They devote incredible energy and passion into their work and deserve our appreciation and support. Lastly, I ask you to give to student scholarships so more students can receive the added value of Adventist education. It truly is educating for eternity.



**Rick Remmers**  
*President*

## Hispanic Churches See Growth During Outreach

During the recent Reach Chesapeake coordinated evangelistic campaign, 23 Hispanic churches throughout the Chesapeake Conference participated in spreading the Adventist message of hope in their respective communities.

In preparation for the meetings, each Hispanic congregation engaged their community through small groups, says Pastor Orlando Rosales, director of Multilingual Ministries for Chesapeake. These Bible-based small groups met in members' homes and focused on felt needs of friends and family members. After the small group gelled, members invited participants to an evangelistic series. This served as a natural bridge for recently connected newcomers.

As a result of the doctrinal and relational prework, new attendees were able to make decisions to accept Christ and the Advent message just after one week of seminars, says Rosales.

Prior to the meetings, Clarisa (pictured, with Rosales) accepted an invitation from her mother to attend the Baltimore Spanish church. Though she worked on Sabbaths, she began attending church regularly and also joined the choir. When the congregation

launched a 40-day prayer plan and daily call, she joined in with them. As a result, when the time came for the Reach Chesapeake meetings, Clarisa exclaimed, "I felt a direct call from God, and I gave my life to Him."

On one Sabbath alone, 18 people joined the Baltimore Spanish church, in addition to numerous other baptisms during the conferencewide evangelistic outreach.



## Fourth Annual STEMfest Draws 600

Chesapeake Conference's Highland View Academy (HVA) recently hosted STEMfest 2018 in Hagerstown, Md., drawing more than 600 participants to experience interactive STEM stations and activities (pictured). Ophelia Barizo, conference STEM coordinator, organized STEMfest with the help of HVA STEM teachers Colleen Lay, Lisa Norton and Myrna Nowrangi.

Thirty booths from local and federal STEM organizations filled the school gymnasium, offering students and adults alike the opportunity for learning and fun. HVA STEM students staffed stations that featured many hands-on activities.

Kelly McCarthy, a program manager for the American Geophysical Union (D.C.), led a breakout session where she shared her experience of making expeditions to both the North Pole and Antarctic regions. Maria Esquela, president of e-NABLE Maryland, a nonprofit that empowers volunteers to create free 3-D printed hands and arms for those in need of an upper limb assistive device, demonstrated sample hands used to equip those in need around the world. Ben Roy, president of Science Zone and host on 3ABN's *Kids Time*, concluded the event



with an extended, interactive large-group session showcasing experiments with gas, hydraulics and other STEM elements.

"Our younger children need to be exposed to STEM since it encourages creativity, critical thinking, communication and other skills to be a successful person in this century," says Barizo. "STEM also helps us understand and appreciate God's creation more."

## Retreat Empowers More Than 330 Women

More than 330 women recently attended the annual Chesapeake Conference Women's Retreat in Hershey, Pa., for encouragement, fellowship and spiritual renewal. Themed "The Woman Is A Warrior," Kandace Zollman, director of Women's Ministries for the Chesapeake Conference, along with the retreat



*At the women's retreat, Marci Corea, a member of Highland View church, leads a breakout session on engaging the community for Christ.*

committee, planned a full schedule of activities with the purpose of bringing women from different backgrounds, ethnicities and ages together to be equipped in their everyday lives as spiritual warriors for the Lord.

Participants attended breakout sessions covering personal Bible study, community outreach ministry, how to navigate personal and spiritual battles and more.

Retreat-goers gathered and packaged donated supplies for the Shalom House, a 21-bed women's shelter in Hersey, giving the participants the opportunity to not just receive over the weekend, but to give back. Additionally, attendees raised more than \$1,000 in donations to help a greater number of women join the women's retreat planned this fall.

More than 60 young women in high school also attended the retreat, participating in a special youth track that trained teens on putting on the whole armor of God as they deal with the issues of society. "Through the guidance of our sponsors and speakers, we were all able to grow together as women of God," says Kamila Oster, a Spencerville Adventist Academy senior. "This past weekend ... reminded us that we must all put on the armor of God, and He will equip us in our battles."

# MOUNTAIN VIEWPOINT

## Pathfinders ‘Armor On!’

Pathfinders are thriving this year within the Mountain View Conference (MVC). With eight clubs, and with children eager to participate and be a part of these clubs, our conference provides many opportunities to stretch and grow our young people,” shares Joel Stecker, MVC Pathfinder director. “One of our most recent events was the annual Pathfinder Camporee held at the Valley Vista Adventist Center.”

Featuring the theme, “Armor On,” Stecker introduced each part of Roman armor (Eph. 6:10–17) to the young people. He explained the use and importance of each piece, both to the Roman soldier and to the Christian. Stecker encouraged the Pathfinders to make this theme a part of their lives.

The weekend also featured a flag retirement ceremony where young people participated in an official ceremony of burning a worn American flag. Pathfinders who participated in full dress uniform at the ceremony earned a special patch for their sash.

Pathfinders later assembled goody bags to distribute at the annual Mountain State Forest Festival



*Zora Edmondson, a Frostburg Indians Pathfinder Club member, and other Pathfinders, lead the “Parade of Children” at the Mountain State Forest Festival, an honor they have held for the past several years.*



*Pathfinders participate in a special flag retirement ceremony during the Mountain View Conference Pathfinder Camporee.*

(W.Va.) parade on Sunday. These bags contained information about Pathfinders, the Highland Adventist School (W.Va.), the conference Ingathering “Campaign for Community” program, a GLOW tract, coupons, candy and more!

On Sunday, clubs participated in the festival by leading the “Parade of Children” as the color guard for more than 2,000 young people. The parade kicked off the weeklong festival, which drew people from across the U.S. and Canada.

“This is a huge way to feature Pathfinders in this particular community, and I am very proud of them. They did a great job!” says Stecker.



*Pathfinders representing four clubs assemble goody bags to distribute during the “Parade of Children.”*

## Frostburg Club Active in Outreach

When the Frostburg (Md.) Indians Pathfinder Club began the new year, holding a Pathfinder Sabbath was one of the first orders of business, led by Kenneth and Eileen Bloom, C. W. and Ginelle Edmondson and Doug McKenzie. The three Pathfinders, Zora Edmondson, D. J. McKenzie and David Sipes, participated in the program by posting the colors and reciting the Pathfinder pledge and law. In his sermon, Mountain View Conference (MVC) Pathfinder Director Joel Stecker asked the audience, "Who are you?"

As part of their outreach program, the Pathfinders and their families distributed bags throughout the community with notes saying they'd be back to collect canned and nonperishable food for the church's food pantry. After the Pathfinders picked up, sorted and counted the food donations the following Sunday, they enjoyed hot chocolate and fellowship.



Frostburg Indians Pathfinder club members David Sipes and D. J. McKenzie enjoy organizing the food donations they received from the community collection event.

## God Never Disappoints Parkersburg Panthers

God has blessed more than I could ever expect," says Beth Ackman, Pathfinder director for the Parkersburg (W.Va.) Panthers Pathfinder club. "In 2013 the Parkersburg Pathfinder club started back up with three Pathfinders and three staff. Fast forward to 2018, we are up to 21 Pathfinders and five staff. God never disappoints."

The Parkersburg Panthers worked on achieving the backpacking honor this fall with eight Pathfinders who are now working on their advanced backpacking honor. The group hiked in West Virginia's Cranberry Glades for four days. They endured 30-degree nights, rain

and a dusting of snow throughout the duration of their 30-mile roundtrip hike.

Endurance and teamwork got these Pathfinders through the backpacking trip. Abbe Ackman, 14, says, "It was hard work, but I like how we had to incorporate our Christian team building honor into our backpacking honor. We all had to work together to achieve getting our sleeping area set up or cooking done and even crossing some of the creeks."

The Panthers had an Induction Service in September, with seven new Pathfinders joining the club. Pathfinder Evangeline Tellez, 12, says, "Pathfinders can be challenging, but I enjoy everything it teaches me about other Pathfinders, God and myself."



Parkersburg church's growing Pathfinder club stand together at the Panthers recent Induction Service.

### Pathfinder Clubs and Directors

Charleston River City, *Laura Hoffman*

Elkins Black Bears, *Jason Johnson*

Frostburg Indians, *Eileen Bloom*

Grafton Mountaineers, *Dennis Murphy*

Lewisburg Mountain Lions, *Robert Tavares*

Moorefield Amishadai (People of the Almighty),  
*Aida Aguilar Mendoza*

Parkersburg Panthers, *Beth Ackman*

Summersville Warriors, *Jaime Rodriguez*

# NEWS NEW JERSEY

## Get Connected!

The next time you go to a restaurant, take a moment to look at the people around you. Pay close attention to a family, and you might see a husband, a wife and their kids, all seated at the same table but each holding a cell phone or another electronic device—connected to the world, but disconnected from each other.

Social media has impacted our society positively and negatively. Despite the advantages that can be wielded to connect us via social media, it has brought a deterioration of close, personal relationships that affect families most of all. The tendency is to communicate more and more by computer or cell phone instead of face to face.

You might be a church member who is connected to the world but disconnected from God and His mission. He invites us to connect to Him, just as the branches are connected to the vine. If we are disconnected from Him, we cannot bear heavenly fruit (John 15:1–5).

Our motto for 2019 is “Get Connected! Sharing Hope: Jesus Is Coming!” Let us resolve to dedicate more time trying to connect with our family members and to God through a devotional prayer life and Bible study. I invite you to connect to God’s mission, explained in Matthew 28:18–20. Connect with people. Make new friends. Share the hope that Jesus is coming!



Jorge Agüero  
President

## El Faro Experimenta Milagros Modernos

En la obra de Dios todos somos útiles y Él nos puede utilizar. En Nuestra iglesia El Faro en New Jersey están sucediendo cosas maravillosas o dicho de otra manera estamos experimentando milagros. Nuestros hermanos han entendido que Dios nos está llamando a trabajar en su causa para acrecentar su reino, los hermanos traen sus amigos a las actividades de la iglesia; nuestros Aventureros visitan a la comunidad invitándolos a que asistan a los diferentes programas que desarrollamos.

El departamento de Escuela de Verano organizó su VBX “Mar de Milagros” siguiendo las pautas de la División Norte Americana. Una linda familia aceptó la persistente invitación de los niños para que asistieran a dicho programa de Escuela de Verano.

Fue muy grato y muy placentero para los niños ver sus esfuerzos premiados pues esa linda familia compuesta de cuatro personas, por la gracia de Dios llegaba a nuestra actividad, siendo gratamente impresionados con un lindo y organizado programa que desarrolló el equipo del VBX de nuestra iglesia. Para gloria de Dios el hermano Amado, su esposa Lily y sus dos niños terminaron bajando a las aguas bautismales testificando que Dios es grande y que su poder se

glorifica cuando la iglesia se levanta para cumplir la misión a través de sus departamentos.

“Si cada uno de vosotros fuera un misionero vivo, el mensaje para este tiempo sería rápidamente proclamado en todos los países, a toda nación, tribu y lengua” (Elena G. de White, *Testimonios para la Iglesia*, tomo 6, p. 438–439).



Amado Sierra, Lily y los niños Elien y Samuel tomaron la decisión de bajar a las aguas bautismales.

## Fall Evangelism Efforts Result in 134 Baptisms

In just one week during the New Jersey Conference Fall Evangelism series, more than 134 individuals chose to be baptized. More than 40 churches participated in this special evangelistic program, themed “Sharing Hope: Jesus Is Coming,” that included guest speakers, local pastors, administrators and conference departmental staff.

“During the week, we saw miracles. It was a great joy to baptize a lady who grew up in church and never wanted to be baptized until today. More than 50 years later, Yolanda Nolasco, decided to surrender her life to Jesus,” says Jorge Aguero, conference president. In an emotional gesture of gratitude toward heaven, sibling Beatriz Nolasco, member of the Port Elizabeth Spanish church, raised her voice in a song of praise as Yolanda was submerged into the water. Ten others became members through baptism.

This year conference administrators have focused on these four pillars:

1. Reaching their communities by any means possible.
2. Working with departments to strengthen and inspire members, children, youth, women and couples.



*Enock Bouzy, lay pastor of the Collingwood Park church, baptizes a woman during the fall evangelism initiative.*

3. Training members to accomplish the mission of the Lord. Since June 2018, lay members have received classes on how to preach and share the hope of Jesus Christ’s return.
4. Preaching and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. The conference exists to fulfill this mission.

“Not only are the churches doing the mission of baptizing; our schools are doing the mission of the Lord,” adds Aguero. “We are so thankful for our lay members, leaders, pastors, lay pastors, teachers and our guest speakers for this special week. But more than that, we are so thankful to our God for helping us to be focused on the mission of our Lord.”

*Jorge Aguero (left), president of the New Jersey Conference, acknowledges Yolanda Nolasco (fourth from the right) and three other baptismal candidates and their families at the Port Elizabeth Spanish church.*





## Miamisburg Celebrates Daycare's 20th Anniversary

Miamisburg church members and guests recently celebrated the 20th anniversary of their daycare ministry, the Miamisburg Christian Learning Center (MCLC), with a special commemorative service.

The daycare opened in the Miamisburg church November 30, 1998, only a year after the new church was built on the Sycamore Medical Center campus. Builders gave special attention to exit doors and sinks in each classroom, a commercial kitchen, playground equipment and other details to meet the daycare requirements.

Director Beverly Martin's professional leadership has been key to the daycare's success since its inception



*Beverly Martin displays the Nathan Greene portrait, "Storytime," given to her at the anniversary celebration.*



*Dave Seidel, board chair, presents an award to Beverly Martin, 20-year employee and director of the Miamisburg Christian Learning Center.*



*Former teacher Sarah Velazquez holds the children at rapt attention during her story.*

20 years ago. In special recognition for her service, Dave Seidel, MCLC Board chair, presented Martin with an inscribed plaque at the event.

As Miamisburg Pastor Lori Farr presented Martin with a flower bouquet, she noted, "[Bev] has a real connection with the children and loves each one of them." For the past 20 years, hundreds and possibly thousands of children have been part of the daycare family. Martin said, "I sometimes get to attend graduations and weddings for former students, now all grown up."

Later, Martin unveiled the Nathan Greene portrait, "Storytime," given to her as a keepsake for her multi-faceted service, which through the years has included administration of finances and staff, classroom teaching, kitchen assistance, cleaning and even driving the bus, as needed.

Former students Jones Lindo and Hayden Seidel helped celebrate with piano solos, and current MCLC children sang for their visiting families, staff and church family. Sarah Velazquez, a former staff member, traveled from Michigan to tell the children a special story.

When Kettering church members planted the Miamisburg church fellowship in 1979, no one could envision the journey it would take. Seidel notes that MCLC not only serves the community and the Kettering Health network employees, but was key in paying off the new church building just 10 years after it was built.—Lynda Seidel

## Conference Launches 2019 With Prayer of Emphasis

As I pause and realize that Ohio Conference's annual Prayer of Emphasis Day is fast approaching, I would like to invite you to make January 5, 2019, more than just another day of prayer and fasting. If prayer is the breath of the soul, we as Christians must breathe deep and often. Colossians 4:2 reads: "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving" (ESV).

Below are suggestions to make this day memorable for all ages in your church.

### 1. Set up "Prayer Stations" around the church:

- A Prayer Wall
- A Bread of Life station (with bread to eat)
- A Water of Life station (with water to drink)
- A Thanksgiving station: Notes may be written on dried leaves.
- An Altar: Burdens of surrender may be written on rocks and left behind.
- A Requests station: Prayer requests may be written on egg-shaped cards with promises on the other side and left in God's care to "hatch" in His time.

### 2. Use writing prompts for prayer:

Find a notebook to dedicate as a prayer journal. List 31 prompts to help you focus on specific subjects (perhaps a goal for the month or a person who is hard to love). Remember to pray for your church and someone who needs salvation. Write down anything you want to talk to God about—it's up to you!

### 3. Young families often use M&Ms or Skittle prayers. The color you pick suggests the prayer you focus on. Assign candy colors to represent:

- Prayers for family
- Prayers for church
- Thanksgiving
- Prayers for sick and hurting
- Praise prayers

### 4. Doughnuts. Pick up a dozen for your home or office, and "doughnut forget to pray."

There are many more ideas; this is just a sampling. Most importantly, the notion is to make the day meaningful, memorable, experiential and full of God's presence. I hope you and your family will utilize one or more



*During the last Pastor's Meeting in Dayton, conference pastors pray for each other, their constituents and for God's work in Ohio to spread like wildfire in 2019.*

of these ideas as we pray for God's blessings upon the Ohio Conference during our Prayer of Emphasis Day.

—Buffy Halvorsen

### Hispanic Ministries Priorities for Prayer of Emphasis Day

**1. Pastoral Families:** We want to uplift every pastoral family in prayer as they are on the frontline of the battle, bearing the heaviest part of the work.

**2. Church Growth:** We want to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit over every church and congregation that will lead us to an exceptional year of church growth within our territory.

**3. Youth Empowerment:** Our cry will be that God will impress the heart of the youth and empower them so that they may have a leading role in our church to revitalize our faith and mission.

—Peter Simpson

# Pennsylvania Pen

## Officers Re-Elected for Five Years

Delegates to the Pennsylvania Conference's sixth Triennium Constituency Session recently re-elected conference officers and departmental directors. The leadership team, Executive Secretary Will Peterson, President Gary Gibbs and Treasurer Carlos Charnichart, will serve for five years, as delegates voted to move to a quinquennium moving forward.

"God has called us to reach the world, and He has assigned us this corner of Earth's real estate. This is why our new mission statement is 'Reaching Everyone, Everywhere,'" Gary Gibbs, president, challenged delegates. "This is not just my mission. It is yours too. It is all of ours. That's why it is all about Total Member Involvement—united together, we can fulfill the mission."

Attendees listened as conference leaders shared how God has blessed in the last three years. Carlos Charnichart, treasurer, reported a 5.85 percent tithe increase. Laurel Lake Camp, the conference's youth camp and retreat center, has steadily increased the number of people attending various events and saw record attendance during 2017's summer camp program.

Will Peterson, executive secretary, reported more than 550 people joined churches across Pennsylvania in 2017—a 2.62 percent growth in membership. Delegates



Delegates re-elect leadership team: Executive Secretary Will Peterson (pictured with wife, Darlene); President Gary Gibbs (Sherilyn); and Treasurer Carlos Charnichart (Liz).

engaged in discussion regarding the challenges of operating a boarding school in today's world. Conference leaders shared several new initiatives to help parents and students afford an Adventist education, including creating a new recruiter role at Blue Mountain Academy in Hamburg, Pa., and beginning a literature evangelism program for all schools that would create opportunities for parents and students to raise funds for tuition.

## Outreach Results in Baptisms and Small Groups

This is the first activity of this nature in Pennsylvania aimed to reach the Hispanic community with ... Revelation 14," shares Cesar Mercado, a Pennsylvania Conference volunteer lay pastor. He is talking about "Lunch and Learn," a seven-month outreach

ministry that recently partnered with the Adventist WholeHealth Network (AWHN) in Hamburg to reach Hispanic churches in Reading with the good news of salvation through the health message. The course ended with three baptisms and the creation of two new small groups.

Participants from various nationalities enjoyed a vegan lunch together and received Bible studies, health seminars and vegan cooking classes. "Knowing about the original diet and God's plan for our salvation was amazing," says Janneth, a Colombian woman who never missed a meeting and decided to give her life to Jesus through baptism.

The healthy lifestyle course and Bible studies ended with a health evangelistic series. Eleven people graduated and received healthy lifestyle certifications. "I feel privileged to work for God and very blessed to see the results," says Paola Franchini (pictured with four of the graduates), AWHN Hispanic Ministries coordinator.



## Ministry Designed to Transform Lives

The Pennsylvania Conference is excited to launch CORE, a nine-month mission training program designed to immerse young adults into the CORE of Christianity and to tackle the biggest questions they are asking: Why am I an Adventist? How do I take this message to my demographic? How can I find an experience with God worth sharing?

This new initiative will allow young adults to experience a deeper relationship with Christ by engaging in Bible studies; literature, digital media and health evangelism; and city and overseas missions. The program is designed to connect students with Christ and equip them to share the gospel message to the world.

“It’s so awesome to be a part of a program that addresses the real issues that I believe can keep our young people in the church and empower them to participate in the finishing of the Great Commission,” states Dee Casper (pictured), CORE director.

This program partners with Adventist universities, allowing students to earn college credits. Tuition



covers room, board, learning and class fees. A canvassing and/or agriculture work-study option is offered that can reduce and potentially cover the full tuition.

To learn more, visit [paconference.org/core](http://paconference.org/core).

The Pennsylvania Conference invites couples to:

# Marriage

## *A Great Adventure*

**February 22-24, 2019**  
Sheraton Harrisburg Hershey  
4650 Lindle Rd, Harrisburg, Pa.

with Eric and Ann Marie Bates  
Family Ministries Directors  
Carolina Conference

Learn more & register for this fun and inspiring adventure at [paconference.org](http://paconference.org).

A photograph of a couple sitting on a rocky ledge, looking out over a misty mountain landscape. The scene is framed by a large, dark, irregular opening in a rock formation, creating a natural frame for the text and image.



# PotomacPeople

*growing healthy,  
disciple-making churches*

## Potomac Unveils New Brand Identity

The Potomac Conference administration recently revealed their new brand identity—the product of more than a year of thoughtful development. The contemporary design speaks to Potomac’s mission of “Growing healthy, disciple-making churches.”

Debra Anderson, assistant to the president for communication, explains, “In developing the brand, we were looking for more than a logo; we envisioned an identity that reflected a clear representation of who we are and why we exist.”

The new identity includes the fundamentals of Christianity and Adventism: the Bible, a church and people. Anderson describes that the Bible represents the foundation—the Word of God; the church symbolizes a place of refuge and nurturing; and the image of two people seen to be firmly planted and rooted in the Word by the church exemplify the growth of disciples reaching outward to the community and upward toward heaven.

“We believe the symbols in this brand can stand



as an introduction to the mission of Potomac’s churches and the communities they desire to serve,” says Anderson. “We looked to create a symbol that represents the diversity of individuals throughout our territory—from rural communities in the south to busy metropolitan communities in the north.”

## Raúl Rodríguez Retires After 49 Years

After 49 years of uninterrupted service in ministry, Raúl Rodríguez (pictured) has announced his retirement. Rodríguez began his pastoral work in 1969 and became an integral part of Potomac Conference’s pastoral team in 1997.

Within his time at Potomac, Rodríguez founded several Spanish churches in Virginia and Maryland; established a social assistance program for people in the Maryland communities of Takoma Park, Hyattsville and Wheaton—later extending this program model to Latin American countries to offer support in evangelism, education, philanthropy and health; helped develop the Adventist Center for Evangelism and Discipleship in Temple Hills, Md., a program designed to train laity in evangelism, which



to date has reached nearly 350 students; and passionately served as a district pastor, resulting in many baptisms and positive financial commitments and growth.

Before coming to Potomac, Rodríguez served for 11 years in his home country of El Salvador as a district and departmental pastor in the areas of youth, stewardship and lay-people. He later worked as field president, helping to establish schools that prepared about 350 volunteers to preach throughout the El Salvador Union Mission. This resulted in 1,325 baptisms in a single day and 2,000 during the culmination of an evangelistic campaign led by evangelist Carlos Aeschlimann.

Additionally, Rodríguez served in Venezuela as a pastor; in Colombia as president of the Alto Magdalena Association; an evangelist; and a pastor in the New York Conference, where he founded a church in Syracuse.

“There are few who demonstrate the same passion of bringing people into a saving relationship with Jesus as Raúl Rodríguez,” says Bill Miller, president. “He has been instrumental in church planting and has been tireless in the mission set out in Ephesians 4:12 of ‘equipping the saints for the work of ministry.’”  
—Jose Esposito

## Forestry Class Explores Nature—God’s Second Book

Catching butterflies, looking at worms under a microscope, constructing forest homes and digging in dirt happen to be part of the Virginia-based Manassas Adventist Preparatory School’s (MAPS) curriculum this year. As part of a pilot program, students in kindergarten and first grade are taking time to explore God’s second book of nature as part of a new forestry class.

“I believe young children need to be spending more time in nature,” says Ruth Davis, the MAPS teacher who initiated the program. “With the rise of technology and many of my students living in the city, most don’t get a lot of time outdoors. Children learn as they play, and, more importantly, in play, children *learn how to learn.*”

Davis attended several seminars at a teachers’ convention held last fall, inspiring her to see how she could implement the concept in her own school. Currently the 13 students spend two 45-minute class periods in the forestry class, which begins with a short lesson and review of guidelines for exploration. Then the students set off to discover, observe and investigate nature, armed with a wagonload of tools—nets, bug cups, shovels and rakes.

Davis says she notices a difference in her students when they have more outside time. “This outlet to explore creatively and use their imaginations increases their focus and attention in the classroom,” she shares. “On the days we have forestry class, my students are not as easily distracted. Kids are also getting more courageous. Those who were afraid of bugs are now expert bug catchers. Kids who didn’t want to get messy now have mud on their hands, and those who were cautious before are now foraging new paths in the woods.”



*Two students catch a moth during forestry class, experiencing nature up close.*



*A discovered turtle leads to an impromptu lesson by kindergarten and first-grade teacher Ruth Davis.*



*Manassas students work together to catch and study bugs.*

Ellen White says, “The fields and hills—nature’s audience chamber—should be the schoolroom for little children. Her treasures should be their textbook. The lessons thus imprinted upon their minds will not be soon forgotten” (*Child Guidance*, p. 48). Davis wholeheartedly agrees with this and is excited to see the difference it is making in her students.

Davis and school administrators are working to find grants to help fund an outdoor classroom area to include items like a music wall, mud kitchen, STEM water station, dinosaur dig sandbox, gardening area and more.



# Blue Mountain Academy COMMUNIQUE

## Academy Announces Transition, New Principal

Former Blue Mountain Academy (BMA) Principal Dave Morgan (pictured) has transitioned to a new role of director of enrollment, effective January 1, 2019. Morgan last filled the role of recruiter from 2005–07. He shares, “I am excited with the new opportunity to utilize my 30-plus years of education experience in Pennsylvania



to promote BMA, positive parenting and how parents can enhance their child’s education.” Morgan led BMA as principal for the past six and a half years, having formerly served as vice president of Education for the Pennsylvania Conference, vice principal at BMA, principal of Reading Junior Academy (Pa.), principal/teacher of the Mountain View Christian School (Pa.) and head teacher of the former Coudersport Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School (Pa.). Morgan will be responsible for both international and domestic recruiting. “This strategic transition will allow me to engage a passion of mine—connecting young people with the quality Adventist education BMA offers,” he says.

As a result of this transition, the BMA board and Pennsylvania Conference leadership announced Burney Culpepper as the new principal of BMA. Culpepper,

who joined the team January 1, has a master’s degree in Education, 20 years of experience in boarding academies and six years of practice as a principal and vice principal. Gary Gibbs, Board of Trustees chair and Pennsylvania Conference president, shares, “We are very happy to have Burney Culpepper join our excellent teaching staff at BMA. He is a committed Seventh-day Adventist with a passion for providing an Adventist education where students are safe and have opportunities to grow deeper spiritually and stronger scholastically.”

Culpepper, who moved from Colorado with his wife, Jennifer, and their four children, Bradley, Gracelyn, Gwynavere and Brielle (pictured), expresses, “I am excited to bring my education, academic experience and Adventist camaraderie to the mission of BMA. At the risk of sounding trite, my immediate thoughts turn toward the spiritual side of learning. I have experienced that this is what makes Adventist education the most effective. Spirituality, like our devotion to God, must be first in whatever it is we do. While important in any Adventist education setting, this is particularly critical in an academy institution where students are at such an important time of their lives.”



## Musicfest Coming Soon!

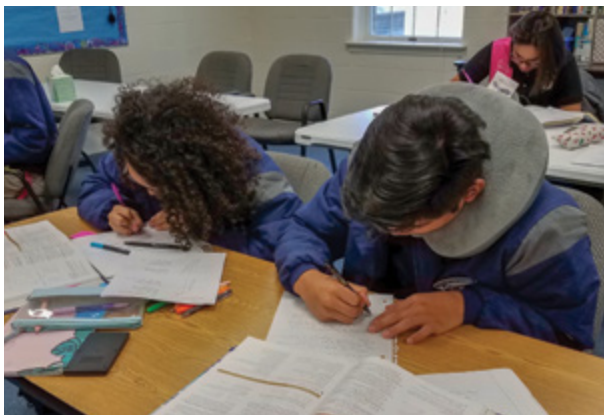
March 1 and 2, the Elementary Musicfest is open to students grades 5–10. This includes homeschool, Adventist school and public school students. Musicfest is under the direction of Lawrence Galera, director of music at BMA. The two-day event includes vocal and instrumental workshops, as well as group performance and an afternoon showcase of individual performance. For more information about how your school, student or co-op can participate, contact [info@bma.us](mailto:info@bma.us).

## Faculty's Professional Development Impacts Students

Highland View Academy (HVA) is blessed to have well-qualified faculty members. Approximately half of the teachers hold master's degrees or higher in their subject areas, qualifying them to teach dual-credit college classes in which students earn both high school and college credits for their coursework. This year HVA's teachers are offering 21 college credit hours on campus. As experts in their subjects, faculty engage in a variety of professional development activities as they continually seek opportunities to improve their teaching.

Last summer, history teacher April Lutz (pictured), who has a master's degree in history, interned at the George Washington Teacher Institute (Va.), where she learned how to better discuss race and slavery in early American history. Examining the issue with professionals in the field helped expand her own knowledge of how museums and professors work to bring true and just history to students, instead of glossing over the unattractive parts.

This experience has made a real impact on her teaching. Lutz explains, "I have become even more diligent in my classroom language, topics, readings, projects, discussions and environment in order to foster multi-storied and inclusive historical analysis." Her students regularly connect historical characters, ideas and policies to current issues surrounding race and discrimination in the U.S. today, and they use primary documents to uncover myths and stereotypes surrounding such topics.



Math teacher Lisa Norton, who holds a master's degree in math, spent last summer taking a class on how to apply growth mindset theory to a mathematics class. There she discovered recent research showing that brains grow a new synapse when we make a mistake. To encourage students to embrace mistakes in math rather than hiding them, she requires students to complete all assignments in pen (pictured) to show all of their work, not just the work that leads to a correct answer. As Norton explains, "Mistakes show learning is happening." She says this year she is also "guiding students to think for themselves, find connections and search for understanding, not just 'the answer.'"

Last fall, English teacher Lori Zerne, who has a Ph.D. in English literature, presented her most recent research on early nineteenth-century British fiction at the annual meeting of the East-Central American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, this time held in Virginia. She used the process of preparing for and participating in the academic conference as an opportunity to model scholarly work to her students. Not only has she discussed note-taking, drafting, revising and presentation skills with them, but she has also pointed out that "sharing ideas, discoveries and insights is a vital aspect of all professions." Zerne also learned new ways to engage students in talking about literature.

These are just three examples of HVA teachers seeking fresh ideas to implement as part of their continual endeavor to impact student learning.



# PFA POST



Visit us online at [PINEFORGEACADEMY.ORG](http://PINEFORGEACADEMY.ORG). *Excellence is no accident.*

## Students Learn, Practice Law in Symposium

Pine Forge Academy recently hosted its inaugural Law Day Symposium, in which several practicing jurists came to share their expertise with the students, including Sherwin Campbell, chief judge of the East Orange Municipal Court in New Jersey and former PFA student; Walter Carson, vice president of General Counsel and Public Affairs and Religious Liberty for the Columbia Union Conference; Ronald Colbert, a parent of recent PFA graduates, whose private practice is in Washington, D.C.; Herbert James, transaction grant manager for the Department of Housing and Urban Development and parent of a PFA graduate; Lisette Shirdan-Harris, a judge in the Court of Common Pleas of Philadelphia and PFA graduate; and Dennis Williamson, parent of a recent PFA graduate and current student, whose private practice is based in Nashville, Tenn.

Some 35 students were exposed to topics including Law and the Seventh-day Adventist, Law and Gender, How to Become a Lawyer and the Path to the Bench. Students later had the opportunity to have a Q&A time with the attorneys. The jurists also took the students aside in small groups to help teach them how to “become lawyers.”

In the afternoon, the entire student body was part of a “courtroom” for a mock trial held in the



*Reese McKoy, who played the role of attorney during the Law Day Symposium, presents his case.*



*PFA Senior Tyina Jackson presides over the courtroom during the mock trial.*

gymnasium (pictured, above). Students Simeon Ferguson, Nana Ossei-Wusu and Brianna Hayden played the part of prosecutors. Reese McKoy and Joya Hairston acted as defense attorneys, and Tyina Jackson presided over the case. Attorney Williamson prepped the students for their roles.

Students, staff and attorneys seemed to benefit from the experience and will hopefully serve as an eye-opener into the world of law, one day bearing positive fruit in the lives and careers of benefit to our society.

—Michael Jones

# Spotlight

## on Spencerville

*Highlights from Spencerville Adventist Academy*

### Students Dress for Success

Spencerville Adventist Academy (SAA) high school students recently participated in the first of this year's four Dress for Success days. Ellenor Paul-O'Neil, high school vice principal, explains, "Dress for Success Day is intended to teach students how to dress for a professional, business environment. Employers have indicated that many applicants for jobs do not understand how to dress for professional business events such as a job interview or other professional activities. Additionally, it is critical that youth



know how to effectively represent themselves in a professional manner."

These special days are not only about dressing up nicely or giving students a break from their uniforms. Rather, they are days that emphasize success in college and career readiness. During the first Dress for Success Day, students learned about balancing success as Christians and gained helpful tips to personally implement.

Attorney Glenn Bergmann of Bergmann & Moore, a Bethesda, Md., law firm that specializes in veterans' benefits, spoke at a special chapel. He shared his personal journey of balancing career, faith and resources, and urged the students to stay grounded in their faith so they would not be unduly influenced by money and recognition.

"Overall, we want to foster a culture of professionalism at SAA and afford scholars an opportunity to prepare for the real world and find their voice while doing so," says O'Neil.

*Vice Principal Ellenor Paul-O'Neil (pictured, right) recognizes Peter Moses ('21) and other students who dressed professionally during a special chapel on Dress for Success Day.*

### National Honor Society Inducts New Members

The SAA chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS) is proud to announce the induction of 28 new members and three transfer members from other schools at the recent induction ceremony. This brings the total number of active NHS members to 76. Members are chosen for excellence they exhibit in the four pillars of the NHS: scholarship, leadership, service and character.

"I am very proud of the students who were inducted as new members of the NHS," says sponsor Nathan Hess,



"and I look forward to seeing each of them continue to use their gifts for leadership and service to improve our SAA community."

*Forty-seven members of the SAA National Honor Society chapter are shown during this year's induction ceremony.*

# SPRING VALLEY ACADEMY<sup>ORG</sup> CONNECTIONS

INSPIRING STUDENTS TO KNOW FOLLOW SHARE JESUS

## Golden Gala Glitters Success

Spring Valley Academy (SVA) hosted “The Golden Gala” last fall, as the school celebrated its 50th anniversary. “The past several years, we’ve held the auction at off-campus locations,” says Darren Wilkins, principal. “But with the 50th anniversary and our new Worship and Performing Arts Center completed, we really wanted to hold the event at the school.”

The last four galas have raised money for the just-completed first phase of the new center, and this event gave SVA the opportunity to show gala sponsors, donors and volunteers how their gifts were used. With the first phase of this new facility costing around \$5.5 million, the gala was one of the major donors to this campaign, contributing more than \$1 million.

The evening featured a silent auction and appetizer hour in the newly renovated science labs. The auction, led by Kathleen Cabansag and Rhylma Villegas, members of the SVA Gala Committee, raised \$25,000 toward the event total. Cabansag and Villegas organized a team of people to solicit, collect and assemble more than a hundred silent auction items.



SVA students Mia Cabansag, Noah Hahn and Gisela Harter serve appetizers during The Golden Gala's silent auction.



Guests later enjoyed a concert in the Fritzsche Worship and Performing Arts Center, featuring the high school band, under the direction of Donald Huff (pictured, below). “Decades Rewind,” the concert theme, took the audience on a musical trip through the 50 years of SVA’s existence, interspersed with videos featuring alumni from each decade.

Following the concert, guests enjoyed dinner in an almost unrecognizable gymnasium (pictured, above). The creative vision of committee members Jennifer Bouz and Jennifer Reed transformed the space into a beautiful banquet hall with gold accents and flowers arranged by SVA grandparent Jimemah Perez. The SVA stage band played music from 1968—the year of SVA’s founding.

To cap off the evening, SVA auctioned off several trips and experiences for a total of \$42,000, and they raised more than \$84,000 through the live appeal which followed. In total, the event raised more than \$310,000. A minimum of \$200,000 is committed to the new center, and a donor-restricted \$25,000 will be applied toward the center circle plaza project.

This event was made possible through the volunteer efforts of the SVA Gala Committee, led by Board Chair Frank Perez, the 47 corporate and individual sponsors and 350 event attendees who purchased items and gave generously to the appeal. SVA thanks all who worked together to make this event a success!

**Correction:** In the December Connections, students from the Radiologic (not Radiology) Sciences & Imaging Department of Kettering College, supervised by Idamae Jenkins, associate professor and clinical coordinator (not department head), visited the academy.



# IMPACT Shenandoah

*Serve God – Value Knowledge – Accept a Life of Service*

## Our Senior Survival

It was finally Senior Survival—the event every senior class anticipates with excitement, and some distress, but always ending with the same result: a more unified class. Arriving at camp, we divided into Teams A, B and C. Everyone was already in competition mode for the winning title and prize: a team meal at a favorite restaurant back in “civilization.”

The boys and girls pitched their camps, setting up shelters with plastic, tape and twine. Building a shelter is stressful, especially when it is raining. Several hours later, we enjoyed dinner prepared by alumni couple Dennis and Shellie Campbell. For worship, Shane Anderson, head pastor of the New Market (Va.) church, introduced the weekend’s theme: “The Great Controversy.” The first night was rough adjusting to sleeping in hammocks and paranoia that creatures would attack in our sleep!

Waking each morning at 7:30 a.m., both camps cooked breakfast over campfires and rushed to clean up in time for worship. We spent the day in group activities to develop team building skills, learn about edible plants and build a fire and proper shelter.



The team building challenges were the highlight, with each skill learned bringing a new sense of care for each other. Each challenge included an object lesson we applied to real-life scenarios. We scaled high walls, crossed cold waters, ran up mountains and over boulders and fell into the arms of our teammates. We loved it and will never forget the fun we had.

Pastor Shane’s in-depth worship talks about the final days intrigued us. The Friday night vespers message was a call to prepare for Christ’s soon coming. It was a special night that ended with roasting smores and gazing into a sky full of twinkling stars. The boys surprised us with a special Italian-themed dinner Sabbath evening. They seated each girl with care, one by one. It was touching to see the effort and thought they put into it. That evening we voted on class officers, designed T-shirts, sang songs and shared many laughs.

The school song competition was the final activity Sunday morning. Teams creatively performed “Our Shenandoah,” and winning Team A even made the alumni judge cry. After that, we could finally say we had survived! The blood and sweat of the challenges and back pain from sleeping in hammocks quickly were forgotten with the realization that this was one of the “lasts” us seniors will accomplish together before graduation. It was an unforgettable experience my classmates and I will cherish forever.—*Johana Villatoro ('19)*

*Come home to Shenandoah for the greatest reunion this side of heaven!*

**Shenandoah  
Valley Academy  
Alumni Weekend**  
*April 19-21, 2019*

### *Honor Classes:*

1919 1929 1939 1949 1959 1969  
1979 1989 1994 1999 2009 2019

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Phone: (540) 740-3161 ■ [shenandoahvalleyacademy.org](http://shenandoahvalleyacademy.org) ■ Principal, Donald Short ■ Editor, Janel Haas Ware

## Faculty Member Releases Devotional Book

**K**elli Raí Collins has been the data specialist at Takoma Academy (TA) for five years, and is a proud parent of three: current TA student Solomon ('20), TA alum Zoie ('18) and Oakwood University (Ala.) student Mykel. Collins, a third generation Seventh-day Adventist, has always been dedicated to giving her children the Christian education she received.

The youngest of three girls, Collins was born in Georgetown, Md. When she was two, her father, Reginald Robinson, became an Adventist pastor, and the family moved to Newbury Park, Calif. Her mother, Patricia, supported her in everything Collins aspired to do. Her father always told her, "God always wants to hear from you no matter what you're doing in your life." Collins currently applies this to her life.

In 2005 she began writing and sending out devotional emails. She expresses, "I was tired of getting chain devotional emails that said, 'Send this to 10 people to be blessed or have good luck.' It took away the sincerity of the message." After writing so many devotional thoughts, her friends and family encouraged her to compile them into a book.

Collins released her devotional book, *Happy Mail*, last October, and encourages those who feel alone or are struggling with their Christian faith to allow her words to uplift them in their relationship with God. Her devotionals originate from her personal experience. "God said to me, 'You need to send this out; someone else needs to hear it!'" Collins views life "as something that we should help each other



*Math teacher D'Anyia Brezzell (right) shares her thoughts about Kelli Raí Collins' new devotional book.*

with. If I have an issue or problem, I am ... transparent enough to help someone else that is in the same position, so that they know they are not by themselves."

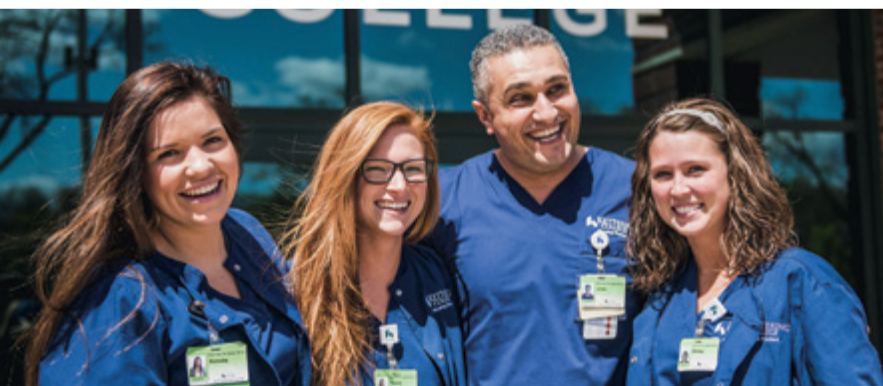
Collins greatest fear was that her devotional book would be just another devotional collected on a shelf and not read. While writing, her greatest challenge was self-sabotage. However, learning to trust God and to be obedient when others gave her assignments prepared Collins and guided her to write this book. "The more obedient I am, the easier it gets to step out in faith," she says.

Ultimately, she says, "As Christians, we try to make it seem like our life is perfect, when that is not realistic. If we are not transparent and willing to share our struggles or help someone who is in need or in crisis, it really takes away from what Christianity is. Jesus came to help other people, and we should model our lives behind His life, not what [humankind] has set in place."

To purchase *Happy Mail*, visit [smile.amazon.com/ch/27-1885583](http://smile.amazon.com/ch/27-1885583).



# KETTERING COLLEGE



*Kettering College Division of Nursing adds an additional admission entry point as well as entering into a partnership with Burman University to address the growing need for more student nurses.*

## Kettering College Division of Nursing Adds Start Term and Enters International Partnership to Accommodate Growth

By Lauren Brooks

Kettering College recently announced two changes to the Division of Nursing, allowing for more opportunities for students.

Beginning in January 2020, the Division of Nursing will offer an additional admission entry point into the program for students who have completed their prerequisites. This means prospective students can choose between a fall or winter semester start term, which allows a 26% increase from 95 to 120 students across both cohorts.

“We recognized the growing need for more student nurses in response to the greater rate of retirement from the profession in contrast to recruitment, the aging of baby

boomers, and the expansion of the scope of practice for nurses,” explains Deleise Wilson, director of the Division of Nursing at Kettering College. “This change will not only increase how many nursing students we enroll each year, but it will also facilitate a smaller faculty to student ratio and increase the flexibility of available program courses.”

Kettering College also announced an international partnership with Burman University in Lacombe, Alberta, Canada. This partnership provides the opportunity for Burman University students to obtain a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) degree at Kettering College. Students will begin their degree for their first three semesters at Burman and then finish their degree at Kettering

College for their final two years.

“We’re thrilled about this new international partnership between Kettering College and Burman University,” said Kettering College President Nate Brandstater. “Kettering College continues to look for innovative ways that create unique opportunities for students to earn a healthcare degree, which also opens the door for future employment at Kettering Adventist Healthcare.”

To apply for fall or winter nursing cohort, visit [www.kc.edu/apply](http://www.kc.edu/apply)

To contact admissions, email [admissions@kc.edu](mailto:admissions@kc.edu)



# YOUR HEALING MINISTRY

KETTERING ADVENTIST HEALTHCARE NEWSLETTER

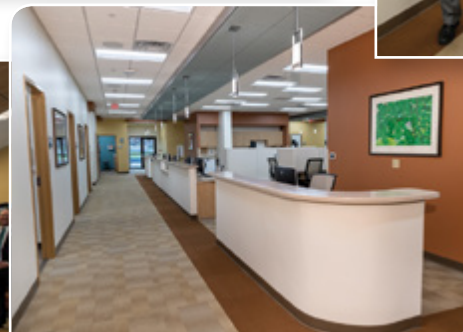
## Approaching Health Care in a New Way

By Christina Keresoma

As a faith-based organization, Kettering Adventist HealthCare believes everyone deserves exceptional, innovative care. Kettering Adventist HealthCare has taken a 22,000-square-foot building and turned it into a medical facility designed specifically to care for baby boomers and those who are older. The Years Ahead Health Center doors opened in December, and the community has shown great support and appreciation for this special kind of service.

The Years Ahead Health Center includes services and programs designed for people 55 years and older, including primary care physicians specializing in internal medicine, along with outpatient lab and imaging services. The health center will also offer visitors and patients education and exercise classes. The space also includes a community room, which allows for socializing and events.

“As more of our baby boomers reach retirement age, we saw an opportunity to change how we provide health care to them in a way that meets their unique and specific needs,” says Fred Manchur, CEO of Kettering Adventist HealthCare. “As people age, they interact with the health system differently than they did when younger. The Years Ahead Health Center is designed to help older adults smoothly navigate that change with a focus on health and wellness—all under one roof.”



# THE NEWS

KETTERING ADVENTIST HEALTHCARE NEWSLETTER

## Reaching Out to Churches in West Dayton

With the recent closure of a competing hospital in West Dayton, people are facing the question of where to go for health care. Grandview Medical Center, located just 2.5 miles away, seems like a logical choice. But it isn't always an automatic one for residents, which is why, in addition to targeted marketing campaigns, network leaders are making a concerted effort to reach out to the community, one church at a time.

Since June 2018, Becky Lewis, MSN, RN, president of Grandview Medical Center, and Peter Bath, DMin, MBA, network vice president for Missions and Ministry, have been visiting West Dayton churches to worship and share the good news about all that



*Becky Lewis, president of Grandview Medical Center, and network leaders are making concerted efforts to connect with the West Dayton community.*

Grandview Medical Center has to offer. During the service, Lewis speaks about Grandview from the podium for about five minutes. Pastor Bath is often asked to participate in the service itself, whether by leading the call to worship, celebrating communion, or offering a prayer.

"Kettering Adventist HealthCare has a great opportunity to work with West Dayton churches and become a partner in ministry, addressing every dimension of life—mind, body, and spirit," says Pastor Bath. "This is our

mission as an Adventist organization, and our call to care for every person in need."

## Working with Kroger Health's The Little Clinic

Kettering Adventist HealthCare and Kettering Physician Network are teaming up with 10 of Kroger Health's The Little Clinic locations to offer consumers improved access to health care services and physicians.

This clinical collaboration connects 10 of Kroger's in-store clinics with Kettering Physician Network's 600-plus board-certified physicians and advanced practice providers with an extensive range of medical specialties. Whether someone needs the convenience of after-hours care for a minor illness or injury, vaccinations, physicals or a chronic condition, Kettering Adventist HealthCare, Kettering Physician Network, and The Little Clinic are working together to improve access

to medical care. Convenient availability will help reduce visits to the emergency department.

"This partnership is part of our shared vision to offer quality health care at a lower cost," says Fred Manchur, CEO of Kettering Adventist HealthCare. "Now our patients have the choice of getting care at The Little Clinic close to where they live."





## HEALTH PROFESSIONS NICHE

In a recent conversation I had with WAU Provost Cheryl Kisunzu, she stated that “Here at Washington Adventist University, we believe that our nursing students and graduates are an extension of Christ’s ‘ministry of healing’”. As 21st Century caregivers, representative of global cultures—through the delivery of patient care in the clinical setting as students or as direct providers of patient care—with each encounter they speak words of healing or extend actions which affirm “life in its fullness” (John 10:10, TLB). We



**Weymouth Spence**

are so very pleased that in 2016, our undergraduate (BSN) and graduate nursing programs (MSN and RN-to-MSN) achieved full, maximum 5-year approval from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education.

Established in 1904 as Maryland’s first accredited school of nursing, our program continues to experience the support of the Maryland Board of Nursing (MBON). Our nursing license examination results provide clear evidence of our commitment to meet and exceed MBON’s performance expectations. Of WAU graduates taking the exam for the first time, 83.33 % passed, exceeding the overall state passing rate of 79.03%.\* WAU nursing graduates reported 100% job placement, having found employment in settings such as Adventist HealthCare, MedStar Health, the Veterans Administration, and Doctors Hospital.

We are also very proud of our nursing faculty. One hundred percent of our graduate program instructors are doctorally prepared, while 90% of the faculty in our BSN program have either attained their doctorate or are currently enrolled in doctoral studies. Most important of all, these faculty and staff model the richness of Christ’s love through their instruction and their affirmation.

This is Washington Adventist University.

—Weymouth Spence, President

\*Source: “NCLEX-RN 1st Time Candidate Performance for Maryland Schools, FY 2017: July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018.”

## BUILDING COMMUNITY: ACROSS CHURCHES, ACROSS CULTURES

The Latino Student Union (LSU), one of the many active student clubs on the WAU campus, highlights our school’s cultural diversity. Over the years they have sponsored many multicultural events showcasing the music, food, customs, and native dress of the many cultures represented on campus with a special emphasis on the Latin American countries.

The LSU Club recently hosted a Latino Night event featuring students, faculty, and staff representing about 15 countries. Over 150 members of the WAU community ate tasty traditional dishes and desserts, enjoyed live music performances, and played an international version of musical chairs in the gymnasium. The Latino Night program topped off a day of worship and fellowship that began early Sabbath morning with exceptional services at the Washington Spanish Adventist Church, followed by potluck at Sligo Adventist Church, and Vespers in the university Activity Center.

Alvin Fuentes, professor of the Health, Wellness, and Physical Education, emceed Latino Night. “I learned so many things—from different Spanish words for the same ingredient, to the varied talents so many of our students shared with the community,” he said.

“Our diversity makes us stronger, both academically and in the church,” he went on to say. “This is a refreshing reminder that, although from many different backgrounds, we are all part of the body of Christ! Or, as President Spence likes to say, ‘We’re all God’s children here at Washington Adventist University.’”



**A WAU Latino Night guest literally wraps himself in his national flag.**

## JUMPING ON FAITH: *One Student's Leap from Cape Town to Washington*

Washington Adventist University is a microcosm of the world. With over 40 countries represented, this "right-sized" university is home to over 1,100 students. Spend some time on our campus, and you will encounter students from various backgrounds and languages all with a story to tell.

Meet Ambrose Martin. When you first hear him speak, you quickly realize that he is many miles from home. After listening to Martin share his testimony one Friday night at Campus Vespers, we decided to talk to him, and here is what he had to share.

### Where are you from and how did you hear about WAU?

I'm a graduate student from Cape Town, South Africa. I heard about WAU from a previous lecturer who knew that I wanted and needed to further my studies. She suggested I look at WAU.

### Why did you decide to study at WAU?

I decided that it's a wonderful door of opportunity that would ground me with a solid foundation in my academic and professional careers and it was also an opportunity for me to experience a whole new world, a different culture and way of living.

### What are you studying and what did it take for you to come to WAU?

I'm currently doing a Masters in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. It took a lot of prayer, faith, and guidance from God. If I hadn't included God in the whole process, none of



**"Stepping out into the unknown," is how Ambrose Martin describes his journey from South Africa to WAU. We see him exploring Helderberg Mountain near his undergraduate alma mater, Helderberg College, the first SDA college established outside of North America.**

this would've been possible. At the beginning of the year, I had started another postgraduate program in education because I was unsure on whether the WAU option would've worked out. I had no funding; I had no assurance on whether I'd be able to get a student visa either, or even how I would be able to afford flight tickets and the rest of my tuition. But this has been a faith journey from the get-go. I needed to drop the course I was studying, and trust that God will provide. And so far God has proven faithful! I know He has a special plan for me, and I'm willing to be used by Him wherever He leads me.

### What do you hope to gain and learn in your time here?

I wish, first, to grow in my relationship with God, one that I never really had before. I want to be in service for Him wherever I can, be it at church or in school or out in the community. I hope to gain proficient knowledge in my course of psychology to better work with people's understanding of life and the various realities they experience.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Anna H. Wang Presidential Concert Series Saturday, January 26, 8:00 p.m.

James T. Bingham Rehearsal Hall  
 Leroy and Lois Peters Music Center, WAU Campus  
 Featuring Madison Leonard, soprano

### Week in Spiritual Emphasis (W.I.S.E.) January 28–February 2

Sponsored by the Student Association  
 Featuring WAU Student Speakers

## Save the Date:

**Spring Revival: March 24-30**

**Alumni & Parents Weekend  
 Thursday–Sunday, April 11–14**

**Family Fun Festival  
 Sunday, April 14, noon–5:00 p.m.**

WAU Campus

**Commencement Weekend: May 3–5**

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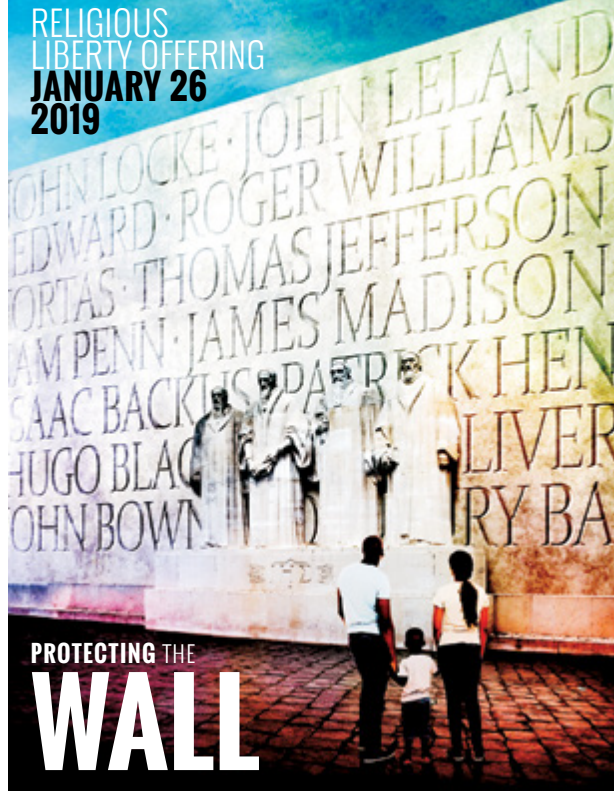
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Luz Naciente, Pennsylvania

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## EMPLOYMENT

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** seeks full-time teaching faculty for the School of Music. This position will provide curricular oversight to and teach lower- and upper-division courses in area of primary expertise—either music history or music theory. Master's degree in Musicology, Music History, or Music Theory required, doctorate preferred. Full job description, [southern.edu/jobs](http://southern.edu/jobs).

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** seeks dean for the School of Education and Psychology (SEP) who is responsible for planning, organization, staffing, direction and evaluation of the academic disciplines of the SEP. The SEP Dean is also responsible for continuous development of the SEP's strategic plan. An earned doctorate in the field of education or psychology is required. Full job description, [southern.edu/jobs](http://southern.edu/jobs).

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** School of Nursing seeks a full-time faculty to join a mission-focused team. Teaching responsibilities will be primarily at the undergraduate level. An earned doctorate is preferred. Requisite qualities include successful teaching experience, interest in research, flexibility and commitment to Adventist nursing education. The candidate must be a member in good and regular standing in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Send curriculum vitae or inquiries to search committee chair, Christy Showalter, at [cshowalter@southern.edu](mailto:cshowalter@southern.edu). SAU School of Nursing, P. O. Box 370, Collegedale, TN 37315. For a full job description, please visit [southern.edu/jobs](http://southern.edu/jobs).

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** seeks full-time teaching faculty for the Chemistry Department. Teaching responsibilities may be expected to include organic chemistry lectures and labs and chemistry for nursing and allied health majors. A master's or doctoral degree (Ph.D. is strongly preferred) in organic chemistry (or a closely related field) is required, with demonstrated knowledge of and experience in applying best practices for teaching chemistry at the undergraduate level, and a commitment to teaching from a biblical foundation. Full job description, [southern.edu/jobs](http://southern.edu/jobs).

**UNION COLLEGE** seeks Seventh-day Adventist, full-time nursing faculty member. Teaching and/or clinical experience in medical-surgical nursing and pathophysiology preferred. Additional information can be found at [ucollege.edu/faculty-openings](http://ucollege.edu/faculty-openings). Send CV and references to Dr. Nicole Orian, [nicole.orian@ucollege.edu](mailto:nicole.orian@ucollege.edu).

**UNION COLLEGE** invites applicants for a management teaching faculty position. Qualified applicants will have a master's degree in a related field and should be a committed member of the Adventist Church. A doctorate is preferred. Find more information at [ucollege.edu/faculty-openings](http://ucollege.edu/faculty-openings) or contact Lisa L. Forbes at [Lisa.L.Forbes@ucollege.edu](mailto:Lisa.L.Forbes@ucollege.edu).

## MISCELLANEOUS

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**MARRIAGE RETREAT:** "Love to Last a Lifetime: Letting God Lead the Way," February 15-17, Dunes Manor Hotel in Ocean City, Md. Barb Jacques will be the presenter of the sessions,

running from Friday evening to Sunday morning. For more information, peglites@comcast.net, or contact Mark and Peggy Lee, (301) 801-2344.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE:** In the December issue, we said that Sarah Frodella wrote most of the songs on her new album. She only wrote the first song.

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## Sunset Calendar

	Jan 4	Jan 11	Jan 18	Jan 25	Feb 1	Feb 8	Feb 15	Feb 22
Baltimore	4:56	5:02	5:10	5:17	5:26	5:34	5:42	5:50
Cincinnati	5:28	5:34	5:42	5:49	5:58	6:06	6:14	6:22
Cleveland	5:09	5:16	5:24	5:33	5:41	5:50	5:59	6:08
Columbus	5:19	5:26	5:33	5:41	5:50	5:58	6:06	6:15
Jersey City	4:41	4:48	4:56	5:04	5:13	5:21	5:30	5:38
Norfolk	5:01	5:07	5:14	5:21	5:01	5:07	5:14	5:21
Parkersburg	5:15	5:22	5:29	5:37	5:45	5:54	6:02	6:10
Philadelphia	4:48	4:55	5:02	5:10	5:19	5:27	5:35	5:43
Pittsburgh	5:06	5:12	5:20	5:28	5:37	5:45	5:54	6:02
Reading	4:50	4:57	5:04	5:12	5:21	5:29	5:38	5:46
Richmond	5:04	5:10	5:17	5:25	5:33	5:40	5:48	5:55
Roanoke	5:15	5:21	5:28	5:35	5:43	5:51	5:58	6:06
Toledo	5:16	5:23	5:31	5:40	5:48	5:57	6:06	6:15
Trenton	4:46	4:52	5:00	5:08	5:16	5:25	5:33	5:41
Wash., D.C.	4:58	5:05	5:12	5:20	5:28	5:36	5:44	5:52


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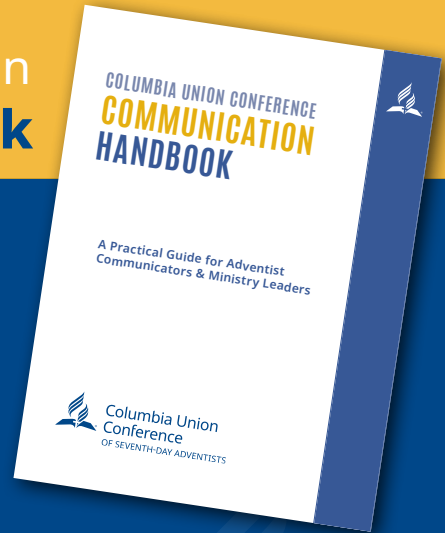
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[gioannou@pattisonsign.com](mailto:gioannou@pattisonsign.com)  
Toll Free: 1-866-635-1110 #2611

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# COLUMBIA UNION REVOLVING FUND

## MAKING MINISTRY POSSIBLE

With a CURF loan, Ohio Conference's Good Neighbor House purchased and renovated an 11,105-sq.-ft. facility in Dayton that houses a food pantry, a department of clothing and household items and a community healthcare center with dental, medical and eye care for underserved and underinsured people. In 2014 this Adventist Community Services center provided health and human services to more than 20,000 neighbors in need.

By providing loans for more than 2,000 projects to date, CURF is helping the Seventh-day Adventist Church to be the hands and feet of Jesus in South-west Ohio and all across the Columbia Union.

Learn more:

(866) 721-CURF | [columbiaunion.org/CURF](http://columbiaunion.org/CURF)



Since 1968 the Columbia Union Revolving Fund (CURF) has been providing low-interest loans and financing for Seventh-day Adventist church and school building and renovating projects so as to facilitate growth. What started as a \$200,000 fund with investments from members has grown to a \$168 million resource that makes ministry possible.

# CURF

Helping Finance the Gospel Mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church



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