

VISITOR

CONNECTING COLUMBIA UNION SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2020 • VOLUME 125 • ISSUE 6



Rethinking Christmas

How Dave and Eileen Gemmell Altered Their Christmas
to Make Someone Else's Merry

Why We Need Each Other



For centuries, throngs of people sung Psalm 133 on the road as they made the ascent to Jerusalem for festival worship. Our imaginations readily reconstruct those scenes. How great to have everyone sharing a common purpose, traveling a common path, moving toward a common goal—that path, purpose and goal being God. How much better than making the long trip alone.

As we come to declare our love for God, we must face the reality that, while we are a family of faith, we are not necessarily one big happy family. We do not immediately stop being sinners the moment we first believe in Christ. Most all of us need some degree of remedial help in gracious family living. But if God is our Father, then this is our family.

ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

Psalm 133 presents what we are after. It puts into song what is said and demonstrated throughout Scripture and church history: community/fellowship is essential. Living together in a way that evokes the glad song of Psalm 133 is one of the great and arduous tasks before God's people. Nothing requires more attention and energy.

Important in any community of faith is an ever-renewed sense of openness and acceptance for what God is doing with our brothers and sisters in the faith. We refuse to label each other. Each person in the community is unique. Each is specially loved and particularly led by the Spirit of God. How can I presume to make conclusions about anyone?

How can I pretend to know your worth or your place?

A community of faith flourishes when we view each other with expectancy, wondering what God will do today in this one, in that one. When we are in a community with those whom Christ loves and redeems, we are constantly finding out new things about them. They are new persons each morning, endless in their possibilities. We explore the fascinating depths of their friendship, share the secrets of their quest.

“How wonderful and pleasant it is when [siblings] live together in harmony!” (Ps. 133:1, NLT). Believe it. Practice it.

Rob Vandeman serves as executive secretary, Ministerial director and Human Resources director for the Columbia Union Conference. Read more of Vandeman's thoughts on the Psalms at columbiaunionvisitor.com/journeythroughpsalms.

About the Cover: Dave and Eileen Gemmell were photographed in MacKerricher State Park in Fort Bragg, Calif., by their daughter, Rika Meyer.

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The *Visitor* is a publication of the Columbia Union Conference reaching approximately 64,000 Seventh-day Adventist homes in the mid-Atlantic area and 81,000 online. The *Visitor* provides news and information, inspiration for effective ministry and insight on issues with a spiritual focus to help engage members in experiencing the mission.

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RUN FOR IT!

Brooklyn Chelakadan, Chitra Ganta and Neshael Chelakadan, members of Ohio Conference’s Akron church, were among the 212 participants who registered for the Virtual *Visitor* 5K/1 Mile this fall. Proceeds from the event—in celebration of the *Visitor* magazine’s 125th anniversary—raised \$6,000 to support Adventist Community Services across the union.

2021

The 2021 *Columbia Union Calendar*, themed “Words of Life,” will arrive in your mailbox soon. Join us as we explore passages that bring joy, healing, peace, salvation and hope.

5 Things You Should Know
(columbiaunionvisitor.com/5Things)

- 1** Despite the many ongoing church closures through the end of the quarter in July, God has blessed the Columbia Union Conference, says Emmanuel Asiedu, treasurer. During the pandemic, Columbia Union administrators braced for a significant drop in tithes. However, Asiedu recently reported only a 2.68 percent decrease as of July 31, improved from the 4.5 percent June decrease.
- 2** The union’s strong financial footing has helped support schools in need of extra assistance. Many schools are facing decreased enrollment and have had to cover extra costs associated with reopening (e.g., PPE, safety modifications, etc.). As a result, conferences have laid off nine educators and cut hours for some part-time employees. On the other hand, some schools have experienced increased enrollment due to smaller class sizes and in-person learning options, among other reasons.
- 3** Conferences around the union are continuing to place special emphasis on evangelism this fall, with every conference conducting evangelism campaigns and several hosting Forecasting Hope, a divisionwide digital evangelistic series from SermonView and the Chesapeake Conference.
- 4** In 2021, get ready to dive deeper into the Bible! As part of the Columbia Union’s Year of the Bible initiative, Chaplain Steve Carlson from Kettering College and Kettering Adventist HealthCare in Ohio will share short video devotionals through the *Visitor*’s social media platforms.
- 5** In September, the union Executive Committee set up a search committee to replace Rob Vandeman, who plans to retire at the end of 2020. The candidate will serve in an interim capacity until the Union’s constituency meeting July 10–11, 2021, when officers will be elected for the next five-year term.



“I’m thankful to God for many reasons. He helps me through hard times. God answers my prayers, and He is always there for me.”—Isabella Ruocco, who attends Potomac Conference’s Olney (Md.) church

VICTOR IS AROUND THE CORNER!

Kids, want a free coloring book from LivingWell in Silver Spring, Md.? Play hide-and-seek with Victor the *Visitor* mouse! When you find him, take a picture together, and tag the *Visitor* on Facebook or Instagram.



BE COUNTED! Adventist Community Services leader Idalette John (pictured, on right, with a census volunteer) and others at Allegheny East Conference’s Metropolitan church in Hyattsville, Md., have hosted voter registration drives since mid-August. “We believe it is critically important to ensure that our community has the opportunity to exercise their right to be heard,” says Senior Pastor Trevor Kinlock. They also hosted weekly events to encourage more people in their community to participate in the 2020 U.S. Census.

A PASTOR'S PASTOR TO RETIRE



Rob Vandeman, an administrator and pastor who has ministered for the Seventh-day Adventist Church for almost 50 years, has announced plans to step down at the end of the year from his role as the Columbia Union Conference executive secretary. Vandeman, who has served in his current position since 2011, plans to continue working at the Columbia Union in some capacity until the union's constituency meeting in July 2021.

Vandeman began his pastoral ministry career in 1971 at a church in Denver. He joined the Columbia Union in 1984 as senior pastor of Chesapeake Conference's Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Md.

Dave Weigley, Columbia Union president, who welcomed Vandeman to his officer team in 2011, notes, "Rob is a champion for the grace of Christ and the mission of the Seventh-day

Adventist Church in so many ways. He was a pastor among us. ... His input, wise counsel and ready sense of humor will be missed by all who had the privilege of serving with him."

Throughout his career, Vandeman has been dedicated to supporting high quality music. "I may not be musically inclined, but I do understand music's amazing power to soften, sensitize and produce compassion and caring," he wrote in the February 2015 *Visitor* editorial.

But Judy (pictured below), his wife of 48 years, is musically inclined and plays a strong role in his ministry.

"It's fun to listen to Rob talk about Judy," says Rick Remmers, Chesapeake Conference president, sharing an anecdote Vandeman told him. "He would have churches ask him to preach and also ask if Judy could sing or play her harp. If she didn't happen to be available along with him on a particular date, they would say let's keep on looking for a date when Judy can come. He quickly realized there were places where, yes, they welcomed him, but they wanted her, and he was the bonus."

In addition to his secretariat duties at the union, Vandeman served as chair of the board for WGTS 91.9, the union's radio media ministry, as well as the union's Human Resources director and Ministerial director.

"As Ministerial director, he really exemplified being a pastor's pastor," says Remmers. "He approached what he did with a pastor's heart, and never lost that sense of care for those around him. He carried that pastoral concern for others into his administration roles."



UNION PUBLISHES COMMUNICATION HANDBOOK

Earlier this year, the Columbia Union's Office of Strategic Communication and Public Relations partnered with AdventSource to publish the *Communication Handbook* with articles on copyright law, social media, media relations, video production, marketing, photography, branding, news writing, website design and more. Project coordinator and editor, Celeste Ryan Blyden, vice president for Strategic Communication and Public Relations, notes, "Our goal was to provide tools and ideas to facilitate and enhance efforts to tell our Church's stories and share our message internally and externally."—*Jenevieve Lettsome*



PROMOTED!

Kelly Butler Coe, art director and graphic designer for the *Visitor* magazine at the Columbia Union, was recently promoted to associate director. Along with her design and art direction duties, Coe helps to manage various projects, including this year's Virtual *Visitor* 5K, the union's 2021 Year of the Bible initiative and the annual union calendar.



THE REST OF THE STORY: Read full content at columbiaunionvisitor.com/upfront.

2021

El calendario 2021 de la Unión de Columbia, con el tema “Palabras de vida”, explorará pasajes que traen sanidad, paz, salvación y esperanza.

¡VÍCTOR ESTÁ A LA VUELTA DE LA ESQUINA!



Niños, ¿quieren un libro gratis para colorear de LivingWell en Silver Spring, Maryland? ¡Juega al escondite con Víctor el ratón del *Visitor*! Cuando lo encuentres, tómense una foto juntos y etiqueten a la revista *Visitor* en Facebook o Instagram.

ROB VANDEMAN SE JUBILARÁ

Rob Vandeman, un administrador y pastor que ha ministrado para la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día durante casi 50 años ha anunciado que a fin de año planea renunciar a su papel como secretario ejecutivo de la Unión de Columbia. Vandeman, quien se ha desempeñado en su puesto actual desde el 2011, de alguna u otra manera, planea continuar trabajando en la Unión de Columbia hasta la reunión de electores de la unión en julio del 2021.

Vandeman comenzó su carrera de ministerio pastoral en 1971 en una iglesia en Denver. Se unió a la Unión de Columbia en 1984 como pastor principal de la iglesia de Spencerville de la Conferencia de Chesapeake en Silver Spring, Maryland.

Dave Weigley, presidente de la Unión de Columbia, quien dio la bienvenida a Vandeman a su equipo de oficiales en el 2011, señala: “De muchas maneras Rob ha sido un campeón por la gracia de Cristo y la misión de la Iglesia Adventista del Séptimo Día. Fue pastor entre nosotros. ... Todos los que tuvieron el privilegio de servir con él extrañarán su aporte, sus sabios consejos y su gran sentido del humor.”

5 Cosas Que Debes Saber

(columbiaunionvisitor.com/noticias5cosas)

1 A pesar de los muchos cierres de iglesias que sucedieron hasta el final del trimestre en julio, Dios ha bendecido a la Unión de Columbia, dice el tesorero, Emmanuel Asiedu. Durante la pandemia, los administradores de la Unión de Columbia se prepararon para una caída significativa en el diezmo. Sin embargo, Asiedu informó recientemente que para el 31 de julio hubo solo una disminución del 2.68 por ciento, una mejora desde la disminución del 4.5 por ciento en junio.

2 La base financiera sólida de la unión ha ayudado a apoyar a las escuelas que necesitan asistencia adicional. Muchas escuelas enfrentan una disminución en la inscripción y han tenido que cubrir costos adicionales asociados con la reapertura (por ejemplo, PPE, modificaciones de seguridad, etc.). Como resultado, las conferencias han despedido a nueve educadores y han reducido las horas de algunos empleados a tiempo parcial. Por otro lado, algunas escuelas han experimentado un aumento en la inscripción debido al tamaño pequeño de las clases y las opciones de aprendizaje en persona, entre otras razones.

3 Este otoño, las conferencias alrededor de la unión continúan poniendo énfasis especial en el evangelismo, con cada conferencia conduciendo campañas de evangelismo y varias presentando “Pronosticando Esperanza”, una serie de evangelización digital para toda la división de SermonView y de la Conferencia de Chesapeake.

4 ¡Prepárese para sumergirse más profundamente en la Biblia en el 2021! Como parte de la iniciativa del Año de la Biblia de la Unión de Columbia, el capellán Steve Carlson de Kettering College y Kettering Adventist HealthCare en Ohio compartirá breves devocionales en video a través de las plataformas de redes sociales de la revista *Visitor*.

5 En septiembre, el Comité Ejecutivo de la unión estableció un comité de búsqueda para reemplazar a Rob Vandeman, quien planea jubilarse a fines del 2020. El candidato servirá de manera interina hasta la reunión de electores de la unión del 10 al 11 de julio del 2021, cuando los funcionarios serán elegidos para el próximo periodo de cinco años.



Este otoño, los miembros de las iglesias hispanas Ebenezer y Langley Park de la Conferencia de Potomac en Maryland se encontraban entre los 212 participantes que se inscribieron para la carrera virtual *Visitor* 5K/1 Milla. Las ganancias del evento, en celebración del 125 aniversario de la revista *Visitor*, recaudaron 6,000 para apoyar los Servicios Comunitarios Adventistas de toda la unión.

Nouvelles

V. MICHELLE BERNARD

5 Choses à Savoir

(columbiaunionvisitor.com/nouvelles5choses)

1 Malgré les nombreuses fermetures d'églises en cours jusqu'à la fin du trimestre en juillet, Dieu a béni l'Union de Columbia, déclare le trésorier Emmanuel Asiedu. Pendant la pandémie, les administrateurs de l'Union de Columbia s'attendaient à une baisse significative dans les dîmes. Cependant, Mr Asiedu a récemment signalé une baisse de seulement 2,68% au 31 juillet, ce qui représente une amélioration par rapport à la baisse de 4,5% en juin.

2 La solide assise financière de l'union a aidé à soutenir les écoles qui ont eu besoin d'assistance. De nombreuses écoles font face à une baisse dans les inscriptions et ont dû couvrir les coûts associés à la réouverture (par exemple, équipement de protection individuelle, modifications de sécurité, etc.). Par conséquent, les fédérations ont licencié neuf éducateurs et réduit les heures de certains employés à temps partiel. D'autre part, certaines écoles ont connu une augmentation dans les inscriptions en raison des classes devenues plus petites et des options d'apprentissage en personne, parmi d'autres raisons.

3 Les fédérations à travers l'union continuent de mettre un accent particulier sur l'évangélisation cet automne. Chaque fédération organise des campagnes d'évangélisation et plusieurs hébergent le Forecasting Hope, une série d'évangélisation numérique à l'échelle de la division SermonView et de la conférence de Chesapeake.

4 Préparez-vous en 2021 à vous plonger plus profondément dans la Bible ! Dans le cadre du Programme de l'Année de la Bible de l'Union de Columbia, l'aumônier Steve Carlson du Kettering College et Kettering Adventist HealthCare dans l'Ohio partagera de courtes vidéos de dévotion à travers les plateformes de médias sociaux.

5 En septembre, le Comité Exécutif de l'union a mis en place un comité de recherche pour remplacer Rob Vandeman, qui fait des plans pour prendre sa retraite à la fin de cette année. Le candidat servira avec un statut intérimaire jusqu'à l'assemblée des membres de l'Union du 10 au 11 juillet 2021, date à laquelle il sera élu pour le prochain mandat de cinq ans.



Meagan Nims, membre de l'église adventiste de York de la Fédération de Pennsylvania fait partie des 212 participants qui se sont inscrits au Virtual Visitor 5K / 1 Mile cet automne. Le montant recueilli dans le cadre de l'évènement célébrant le 125e anniversaire du magazine Visitor, s'élève à \$ 6000 pour soutenir les services communautaires adventistes à travers l'union. Ce ministère continue de soutenir leurs communautés pendant la pandémie de coronavirus.

VICTOR AU COIN DE LA RUE !

Les enfants veulent-ils posséder un livre de coloriage gratuit de LivingWell à Silver Spring, Maryland ? Jouez à cache-cache en cherchant Victor, la souris de Visitor ! Lorsque vous la trouvez, prenez une photo avec elle et « taguez » le magazine Visitor sur Facebook ou Instagram.



ROB VANDEMAN PREND SA RETRAITE

Rob Vandeman, un administrateur et pasteur qui a exercé son ministère pour l'Église Adventiste Septième Jour depuis près de 50 ans, a annoncé qu'il prévoyait de démissionner à la fin de l'année de son rôle de secrétaire exécutif de l'Union de Columbia. Pasteur



Vandeman, qui occupe son poste actuel depuis 2011, planifie de continuer à travailler pour l'Union de Columbia à un certain titre jusqu'à l'assemblée des membres de l'union en juillet 2021.

Pasteur Vandeman (avec sa femme Judy) a commencé sa carrière pastorale en 1971 dans une église de Denver. Il a rejoint l'Union de Columbia en 1984 en tant que pasteur titulaire de l'église Spencerville de la Conférence Chesapeake à Silver Spring, Maryland.

Dave Weigley, président de l'Union de Columbia, qui a accueilli Vandeman dans son équipe d'officiers en 2011, précise que : « Rob a été un champion de la grâce du Christ et de la mission de l'Église adventiste du septième jour à bien des égards. »

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL



Glory!

This ABC Television special, in collaboration with the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission (IBC), features a Christmas message from Dr. Carlton P. Byrd, Speaker/Director of the Breath of Life Television Ministry and Senior Pastor of the Oakwood University Church in Huntsville, Alabama.

Dr. Carlton P. Byrd,
Speaker/Director



Watch on ABC on December 25, 2020

For a list of stations and times, call 256.929.6460 or visit breathoflife.tv

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CHRISTMAS

RETHINKING

By Sylvia Urrutia

Columbia Union families find new ways to refocus traditions and spread holiday cheer by giving back and connecting with others.

HUNTING FOR THE PERFECT CHRISTMAS

Tamyra Horst, the director of Women’s Ministries, Family Ministries and communication for the Pennsylvania Conference, and her husband, Tim, wanted to make deeper connections with their nieces and nephews. To accomplish this, they started a birthday tradition of giving “adventures” instead of gifts. They discover what each child likes and create adventures they can experience together. As the tradition spread, the children began asking for adventures only.

The Horsts had long participated in the family tradition of present-focused Christmases but started to realize they didn’t really enjoy it. They later tried gift exchange games for a few years, but they still felt the need to do something different. They wanted the whole family to get to know each other a little better and realized Christmas was the perfect time to do so. That’s when Horst created a scavenger hunt focused on the biblical Christmas story.

The adventure begins at her house. Adults are paired with nieces or nephews, providing the rare opportunity to spend time together. Horst gives the teams instructions and sends them on their way. Participants must take a photo of each character in the Bible story and send it to Horst, who is at home cooking Christmas dinner. She places the photos in a PowerPoint presentation, and, after dinner, the entire family watches a slideshow of their adventures. The grandparents then pick their favorite photo, and that team wins a small prize.

“Everyone wanted to keep doing it every year,” shares Horst. “Everyone loves seeing their pictures and

seeing everyone else’s pictures. It’s been very fun to do, but it’s also been great getting to know someone else in the family.”

Horst and her family have seen many benefits to their new way of celebrating Christmas. “Kids today need relationships with adults besides their parents, so this gives an opportunity for that. Tim and I are always looking for ways to connect with the kids in the family and build relationships,” she says. The most important thing for Horst is that, now, instead of gifts, the family is able to “create fun memories and connections—memories they will be able to share.”

TRADING CHRISTMAS FOR MISSION

Yerusi Fajardo, auditor for the New Jersey Conference, grew up in Mexico, where Christmas was the most important time of year, filled with gifts, food and family. However, as she grew up, got married and had children of her own, she knew she wanted her kids to experience Christmas differently. She and her husband, Eliasib, Youth Ministries director for the conference, have always strived to teach their three young children that Christmas is, most importantly, about Jesus’ birth.

During the holidays, the family found local communities in need of supplies, so instead of giving gifts to each other, they took supplies and gifts to those families. “What we have always tried to teach our kids is that Christmas is about remembering Christ’s birth, so He’s the one that should get the gifts. And if when we do something for others, we are doing it for Him, then giving or doing for others is a way to give a gift to Jesus.”



When the couple began looking for mission trip options, serving during Christmas was not exactly what they had in mind. But one day, Fajardo found the perfect trip—it was affordable, and the children would be able to attend and participate in building churches and holding a VBS over Christmas and New Year’s Day. They saw it as the perfect opportunity to truly get away from a conventional Christmas and serve others during Christ’s birthday.

“It was different because we were totally disconnected from a typical Christmas,” says Fajardo. “It was just like any other day. We were up early and off to work at the construction site all day, completing five churches. We even forgot it was Christmas most of the day. There were no decorations or special meal.”

The entire family looks forward to building more

Clockwise: Mason Horst acts out “Away in a Manger” on a family scavenger hunt. • Jereli Fajardo, followed by her mother, Yerusi, and brother, Adriel, help build a church during a mission trip over Christmas. • The Fajardo family and other short-term missionaries gather in front of one of their projects. • Trent Horst finds a manger scene on the family’s scavenger hunt.

churches on Christmas in the future. Fajardo wholeheartedly recommends going on a mission trip at Christmastime, if the opportunity arises. They have realized that serving during Christmas is the perfect way to



Top: Kay Baumgartner, pictured with husband, Earl, shares Christmas hope with community members via homemade Christmas stockings. • Eileen and Dave Gemmell, partnering with their children and grandchildren, seek to make a difference through their Christmas gifts each year.



remove the focus from the “extras” of Christmas, such as gifts. Fajardo leaves this advice: “If going on a mission trip isn’t possible for you, find ways to give to others ... to remind your kids that Christmas is not about us.”

MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR CHRISTMAS

Eileen Gemmell, a member of Chesapeake Conference’s New Hope church in Fulton, Md., grew up in a home where Christmas was very dec commercialized. “My mom underplayed Christmas. I grew up without a whole lot of gifts, and that is fine. And it kind of rubbed off on me,” she says. A few years ago, she and her family decided they wanted to find ways to make a difference in the world—beginning a new family tradition.

Every Christmas, each member of the Gemmell family finds a charity they love and want to support. The money that would normally be spent on gifts instead

goes to these charities. Family members research charities and then pitch them to Eileen and her husband, Dave, an associate director of the Ministerial Department for the North American Division. The couple then chooses which charity will receive the biggest donation, giving smaller donations to the other organizations presented.

Throughout the years, the family has given to various charities: Seventh-day Adventist schools, a Chesapeake Bay clean-up project and an organization that works to prevent sex trafficking, among others. In recent years, the family has made donations by choosing projects through the Adventist Development and Relief Agency’s (ADRA) Gift Catalog.

Now, as grandparents, they encourage their grandchildren to choose gifts from the catalog. “We want them to have that heart of giving,” she says, noting their family value of not going into debt over Christmas.

Last Christmas, the family started yet another new tradition. Everyone, including extended family, prepared a “how-to” presentation on skills and insights varying from weighing the benefits of renting versus buying a home to how to pose for pictures to how to cut hair. Each member not only shared a skill, but learned from each other too.

STOCKINGS FOR STRANGERS

It takes Kay Baumgartner, a member of Pennsylvania Conference’s Lansdale church, an entire year to prepare handmade Christmas gifts for strangers.

Four years ago, she sewed stockings to donate to a local hospital. However, once she called to inquire about donating, she learned that gifts had to be laundered first. Because her stockings had decorative elements, this was not practical. So she decided to share them with the neighbors near her church instead.

She stuffed the stockings with little treats, John Bradshaw’s book, *Confidence in Chaos*, and an invitation to her church’s Christmas program. Then, with the help of her son and daughter-in-law, delivered them to the homes around the church.

She remembers one specific time when she was unsure about leaving a stocking at a home with no Christmas decorations. “I knocked on the door, and when a gentleman answered the door, I asked him if they celebrated Christmas. He said, ‘No, no, we don’t. Why?’ When I told him I had made stockings and I was giving them out, he quickly said that yes he did celebrate Christmas and would take one. Knowing he

Want to participate in your own socially distanced Christmas scavenger hunt this year? Tamyra Horst has two versions of her Christmas Scavenger Hunt online. Visit paconference.org/family-ministries, and click Fun Family Resources.



was getting a stocking made a difference, and then he was interested.”

For three years, she faithfully distributed the stockings to the community. To ensure she did not repeat homes, she marked a street map each year to expand the territory of which she was reaching. Last year, due to family obligations, she was not able to distribute the stockings. But by summer, she had already completed 75, and is considering gifting them to first responders.

Baumgartner says she has two purposes for this project: “First, it gives a way for the community to know the church.” She also hopes this gives each person receiving it the opportunity to know more about God. “Yes, they have to read the books I put in there, but it’s in their hands at least. But God can move them to read it. It is in God’s hands after I deliver the stockings. I still pray for them.”



NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE

Looking for a way to help those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic? Adventist Community Services leaders encourage members to participate in their local church Christmas outreach programs. If your church doesn’t have a program, why not pioneer one? Here are some ideas:

- * Adopt a community family by providing a holiday meal and gifts.
- * Distribute holiday meal baskets for those in need.
- * Gather warm coats, and donate them to your local community center for distribution.
- * Create and share holiday programs with residents at local nursing homes and assisted living facilities.
- * Assemble and distribute personal care packages for people experiencing homelessness.
- * Utilize church facilities for temporary homeless shelters during the winter months.
- * Operate a free hot lunch program in the community.
- * Make and distribute blankets and/or quilts to local hospitals, nursing homes or hospice residents.
- * Donate through ADRA’s Gift Catalog.
- * Fill shoeboxes with items for kids around the world through Compassion International’s Operation Christmas Child, like members (pictured) from Chesapeake Conference’s Iglesia Adventista Hispana Laurel (Md.).



GEMMELL FAMILY PHOTO BY RIKA MEYER



Statement of Policy—Nondiscrimination in Adventist Schools

The Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDA), in all of its church-operated schools, admits students of any race to all privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at its schools and makes no discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, handicap, ethnic background or national origin in the administration of education policies, applications for admission, scholarship or loan programs and extracurricular programs.

The governing body of the Church has ruled officially, and in practice abides by, the following policies:

1. Equal employment opportunities shall be afforded, with no discrimination in recruitment or hiring against any employee or application because of race, color, ethnic background, country of origin, age or sex except where age or sex is a bona fide occupational qualification.
2. Preferential hiring shall be practiced only on the basis of freely chosen adherence to Adventist tenets essential to the operation of an Adventist institution.
3. Compensation and benefits will be administered without regard to race, color, ethnic background, country of origin, creed, age or sex except where age or sex is a bona fide occupational qualification.
4. Decisions for the promotion of employees will be based upon the qualifications of an individual as related to the requirements of the position for which he or she is being considered.
5. Inasmuch as the personal life and professional identity of an individual are inseparable, all employees are expected to conform to the standards of conduct that are in harmony with Seventh-day Adventist practices.

Allegheny East—Baltimore Adventist Academy, Calvary Seventh-day Adventist School, Dupont Park Adventist Junior Academy, Ephesus Adventist Junior Academy, George E. Peters Adventist School, Hillside Seventh-day Adventist School, Jessie R. Wagner Adventist School, Pine Forge Academy, Sharon Temple Academy, Trinity Temple Academy, Wilbert F. Mays Adventist School

Allegheny West—Columbus Adventist Academy, Ramah Junior Academy

Chesapeake—Atholton Adventist Academy, Baltimore-White Marsh Adventist School, Dover First Christian School, Frederick Adventist Academy, Friendship Adventist School, Highland View Academy, Mount Aetna Adventist School, Rocky Knoll Adventist School, Spencerville Adventist Academy, Wilmington Jr. Academy

Mountain View—Greenbrier Valley Academy, Highland Adventist School, Parkersburg Academy, Summersville SDA School

New Jersey—Lake Nelson SDA School, Meadow View Junior Academy, Tranquility Adventist School, Vine Haven Adventist School, Waldwick Adventist School

Ohio—Clifton Christian Academy, Eastwood SDA Junior Academy, Mansfield SDA School, Mayfair Christian School, Mount Vernon SDA School, Northern Ohio Adventist Academy, Piqua SDA School, Spring Valley Academy, Toledo Jr. Academy, Worthington Adventist Academy, Zanesville Adventist School

Pennsylvania—Blue Mountain Academy, Blue Mountain SDA Elementary, Gettysburg Adventist Christian School, Harrisburg Adventist School, Huntingdon Valley Christian Academy, Mountain View Christian School, Pocono Adventist Christian School, Reading SDA Junior Academy, The Northern Tier Christian School, Whitehall Christian School, Wyoming Valley SDA School, York Adventist Christian School

Potomac—Beltsville Adventist School, C.F. Richards Christian School, Desmond T. Doss Christian Academy, Manassas Adventist Preparatory School, Olney Adventist Preparatory School, Powell Valley Christian School, Richmond Academy, Roanoke Adventist Preparatory School, Shenandoah Valley Academy, Shenandoah Valley Adventist Elementary, Stanley SDA School, Takoma Academy, Takoma Academy Preparatory School, Tappahannock Junior Academy, Tidewater Adventist Academy, Tree of Life Christian Preparatory School, Vienna Adventist Academy

ALLEGHENY EAST *Exposé*

Emmanuel Hosts Drive-in Baptism, Communion

Recently, the Emmanuel Worship Center in Alexandria, Va., hosted a drive-in baptism and communion service. Pastor Robert Kennedy baptized three people in a temporarily installed baptistry in a garage on the property the church is renting.

Prior to their baptism, Kennedy studied with the baptismal candidates by Zoom and FaceTime. Once they expressed their desire to be baptized, Kennedy went to work to make this possible and to ensure safety protocols were in place and were conference-approved.

On the Sabbath of the baptism, the church held Sabbath School together virtually. At the end of the lesson study, Kennedy interviewed the candidates and called for their vote into membership.

With the joint effort from church elders, deacons and the Health Ministries team, the baptisms took just 43 minutes. “Even though physical distance had to be observed, one could feel the excitement of the members coming together to welcome and support those who were being baptized,” says Kennedy.

Following the baptismal service, communion was held under a large tent. Attendees received



Robert Kennedy, pastor of the Emmanuel Worship Center, baptizes Mark Devonport at the drive-in baptismal ceremony.

prepackaged bread and grape juice emblems.

This event “opened doors” for the church, as two others took their stand for baptism following the service.

G. E. Peters Student Receives Safety Patrol Award

Kiera John-Lewis, a sixth-grader at the G. E. Peters Adventist School in Hyattsville, Md., was recently chosen by the American Automobile Association (AAA) School Safety Patrol program as an outstanding safety patroller in the Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia area. As a patroller, John-Lewis had the opportunity to “play an important role in helping young pedestrians learn and fulfill responsibilities regarding traffic safety,” according to the program’s website.

When John-Lewis heard she would be receiving the award, she was pleasantly surprised and grateful: “I was astounded to have received the award. It means a lot to me knowing that my work is greatly appreciated, and I’m thankful for the support I received to accomplish this award.”

AAA supports 1,379 schools and 37,022 students, and, therefore, does not limit the award to one patroller each year. Instead, they focus on the merits of the nomination and award an Outstanding School Safety Patrol to those patrollers deserving of the award.

A standard rubric is used by a panel of judges to rate each AAA Outstanding School Safety Patrol nomination. The judges’ scores are combined, and the patroller in the top tier or highest score range is selected for their state or district to receive the award. In the D.C. area, consisting of 15,540 patrollers, nine patrollers won the AAA Outstanding School Safety Patrol award. In Virginia, three patrollers won. And in Maryland, four patrollers won—John-Lewis being one of them.



New Jersey Churches Serve as COVID-19 Testing Sites

Three churches in New Jersey: First church in Teaneck; Metropolitan church in Plainfield; and Mt. Calvary church in Salem, recently served as hosting sites for COVID-19 and antibody testing. This was done in partnership with the initiative by Phil Murphy, New Jersey governor.

“We recognize the need for people of color to be tested, but there is a lot of fear in those communities. Churches are typically viewed as safe places, so we put the call out for churches, and they responded,” says Derrick Greene, senior advisor to the governor for diversity, faith, urban and regional growth.

Testing sites were set up in the parking lots of the churches where social distancing and masks were required. Testing was free and open to the public as long as they provided a photo ID and insurance card. Workers at First church administered COVID-19 and



Member Shaundell Morgan volunteers at the Metropolitan church COVID-19 testing site.



The First church served as one of three COVID-19 and antibody testing sites.

antibody testing to 75 people. “The testing was a great success,” says Robert Smith, pastor. “Our community was able to view us as an asset, and we saw it as a great witnessing opportunity.”

Mt. Calvary church tested 100 individuals. Prior to this invitation, Pastor Melvyn Hayden III, had been praying about what else they could do for their community in addition to their food pantry. “When I got the call about the COVID-19 testing, it was great because it was something I had wanted our church to do.” Hayden greeted each individual as they arrived to the testing site.

Metropolitan church tested more than 280 people over a two-day period. “The testing gave us the ability to show that we are connected and committed to our friends and neighbors in the community,” says

Pastor J. Alfred Johnson III, “and it will help us to form relationships that will give us opportunities to not only meet current needs, but to make sustainable change in the lives of the people.”

More churches in the Allegheny East Conference are scheduled to host testing sites in the near future.

Hard at Work

At North Philadelphia church’s community distribution event, member Michael Dawkins organizes a table of school supplies, sponsored by the church’s Education and Community Service Departments.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NORTH CHURCH

Conference Gives Cox Farewell Celebration

Close family members, friends and colleagues recently gathered as the Allegheny West Conference (AWC) family hosted a farewell celebration honoring William T. Cox Sr. A small number of guests attended the in-person gathering, while others joined via Zoom. Well-wishers expressed their appreciation to Cox, his wife, LaTanya, and their family (pictured) for 22 years of service to the conference.

“I served Pastor Cox as his first elder for about 10 years,” said Shirley Benton, AWC Women’s Ministries director. “He’s been more than a pastor or president; he’s been my friend.”

“God prepared Dr. Cox a long time ago to be the president of this conference ... in moving the mission forward. The Columbia Union Conference thanks Dr. Cox and his wonderful wife, LaTanya, for leading this



conference and making a difference for God,” stated Dave Weigley, Columbia Union president, in a video message. “[He’s] a president with a pastor’s heart, leading this field and focusing on soul winning, evangelism and kingdom growth.”

Conference President Marvin C. Brown III, along with Executive Vice President Joel Johnson and Chief Financial Officer Jermaine K. Jackson, presented Cox with a token of appreciation for 22 years of dedicated service to AWC.

Cox thanked the attendees for their support and prayers for his family during his years of ministry in the AWC. “Eyes have not seen, neither ears heard what God will do in the Allegheny West Conference. ... I believe our best days are yet ahead.”



Drive-in Church Service Partners with Community

After four months of online church services, the Dale Wright Memorial church members in Germantown, Ohio, organized their first drive-in worship service in the parking lot. Service participants, wearing masks and maintaining physical distancing protocols, stood under a small tent, while church members stayed in their cars, forming a semicircle around the tent. Worshippers tuned into the service on 88.3 FM, watched on their phones via Zoom or listened from their cars. Some members even brought lawn chairs and sat in front of their cars.

H. Jean Wright II, a clinical faculty and adjunct

professor from Temple University (Pa.), presented a sermon on how to have peace in the pandemic. “It is a natural human phenomenon,” Wright said, “for us to worry and have fears about the uncertainty in this life.”

Each year, the church joins with neighboring churches in the Village of Germantown to provide free supplies to students in the local public school system. The school supply giveaway is part of a community partnership that spans many years. This year, at the end of the service, each child received a book bag with school supplies specific to their school.—*Lisa McDowell*



Shiloh Church Remains Mission-Minded

The Shiloh church in Cincinnati is like so many other congregations impacted by the worldwide pandemic. They have temporarily gone to a primarily online platform. However, they are learning to redefine what it means to “be a church” and “how to stay missionally-minded” in an ever-changing context.

Bryant Smith (pictured), pastor of Shiloh, has been intentionally taking the church on a journey to understand that, while in-person gatherings are on pause, the church belongs to a larger community that still needs the love of Jesus. In speaking with Glenda Brown, a local principal from the Phoenix Community Learning Center in the Avondale neighborhood, the church discovered there were many challenges facing children in returning to school.

“Many of the children in the area do not have access to Wi-Fi, computers and/or iPads to participate in distance learning due to the pandemic,” says Smith. “And the school does not have enough equipment to go around.” Smith and Shiloh members decided to help, but with such a high demand for laptops nationwide, the outlook was bleak. Laptops were on back order at every store they called and wouldn’t arrive in time for the school’s September 8 start date.

After searching throughout the city, a member was



able to locate some laptops. The church family was able to purchase 15 new laptops for the students. Smith presented them to Lauren McCoy (pictured, left), Phoenix’s IT director and computer teacher, and Melissa Brown (right), operational principal.

“We are so extremely grateful for this,” says McCoy. “We will never forget how Shiloh thought of us during this time.” The church continues to build relationships and community partners in this new normal, as they show Christ to the world.

I Found a Healthy Way to Live

When we were teenagers, my grandmother used to urge my sister and I to get out of bed early and get to work. “Stop practicing death,” she would say. She wanted us to enjoy God’s delights for the day.

With three parents between my husband, Kevin, and I who have lived past the age of 80, we’ve found that it is possible to stay healthy longer. And, why shouldn’t we want to? God has given us an opportunity to share the gospel in a healthy way: by being as physically fit as possible.



My husband and I started walking again after he had a heart attack. Many physicians and health coaches report that walking is one of the best ways to stay healthy, along with eating right and getting plenty of rest. Staying physically healthy can and will help us stay emotionally healthy too. And if we eat the right foods, we realize our bodies will be able to cope with stress and fight off illnesses.

Walking also gives my husband and I the opportunity to spend quality time together. It brings us closer to each other and to God.

I’m thankful that the *Visitor* implemented the Virtual *Visitor* 5K/1 Mile Walk/Run event (pictured) so everyone in the Columbia Union could participate. It’s beautiful that God made us to move, and, when we forget or don’t always do what we should, we get help from the Word of God: “For I will restore health to you and heal you of your wounds,” says the Lord” (Jer. 30:17, NKJV).—*Patricia M. Mosby*



CHESAPEAKE CONFERENCE CURRENTS

'Jesus is the Answer!'

We have finally arrived at the closing days of 2020. For so many unanticipated reasons, it has proven to be a watershed year. We know nearly everything in our lives has run into some measure of turbulence, and we don't know when things will settle down or how different they will be in the years to come.

We can be thankful that through it all, Jesus has reconfirmed for us that He is truly the best and only answer to whatever crisis we face. When confronted with hatred and racism, we know Jesus created each person of every race. Jesus loves us as His own sons and daughters. Regardless of the potency of the coronavirus, Jesus is the Great Physician. He has the keys to death and the ability to restore life to those who have fallen asleep.

Jesus does not need to be voted in by election. He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and every knee will bow and worship Him. This is based on the sure word of prophecy and not on any poll or ballot count.

The economy of the universe is in Jesus' hands. While we look at unemployment rates, interest rates and bank account balances, Jesus prepares mansions fronted by streets of gold.

As we approach this trilogy of holidays, we can give thanks to Jesus for the grace and hope He gives to us. We can worship Him, remembering His first advent and anticipating His second. The new year, 2021, gives us the opportunity to tell others of Him. There are many still stunned and numb from the events of 2020. This upcoming year, we can tell them that Jesus is truly the answer.



Rick Remmers
President

Digital Youth Camp Provides Lessons in Media

Recently, the Chesapeake Conference Communication Department, in partnership with the Chesapeake Youth Department, hosted an online Digital Youth Camp for young people. The one-hour digital training sessions, held via Zoom, equipped attendees with media skills to become more effective in reaching people in their communities through the use of technology.

"If you have the right tools, and you have the right motivation, you can create many things," says Jason Frias, freelance audio engineer, who presented on podcasting. "Podcasts are a great way to get your church's message to new audiences."

Trent Truman, a freelance graphic designer, taught the group how to create posters and signs for ministry events. "Graphic design is using words and images to create something that will communicate a message to an audience," says Truman. "I want to challenge you to utilize your talents for God as you begin to serve the church."

Jacklyn Ruth, communication specialist for the Chesapeake Conference, gave tips on reaching church members and the community through social media. "Your church needs your help. Whether you know it or not, your creativity is needed to help move the church forward in social media ministry. Make sure you know who your audience is, that is, the people you are speaking to, so your social media

influence can be the most effective," says Ruth.

"Chesapeake is blessed with so many young people that are bright and talented," says Andre Hastick, communication director for the Chesapeake Conference. "I firmly believe that if we equip our youth to use their strengths in technology for ministry and outreach, we will see our mission advance like never before."



Trent Truman (top) Jacklyn Ruth and Jason Frias teach young people over Zoom how to use media for ministry.

Williamsport Hosts Sabbath School Alive Seminar

Recently, the Williamsport (Md.) church held Sabbath School Alive, a one-day training seminar to equip Sabbath School leaders to create more engaging experiences for class attendees by focusing on prayer, Bible study, fellowship and mission. Guest speaker Ramon J. Canals (pictured), director of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries for the General Conference, trained participants by helping them develop practical plans to make each Sabbath School class vibrant.

“Many Adventists tend to skip Sabbath School and go right to the church services,” says Andrew Choi, Sabbath School superintendent for Williamsport. “We wanted to make a special emphasis on Sabbath School. We invited Dr. Canals to teach us how to draw more people to church through Sabbath School. We have a plan to begin inviting non-church members to small group studies, and then inviting them to a Sabbath School class.”

During the training, Canals emphasized the importance of program simplicity, fostering a praying community and seeing each class as an opportunity for spiritual growth. The Williamsport church is hoping



to turn this into a yearly training event so leaders can continue to learn how to make Sabbath School an instrumental program for church growth.

“Sabbath School is one of the most important institutions in the Seventh-day Adventist Church,” says Canals. “It has a powerful influence in the lives of people. We need to tell everyone that Jesus is coming soon.”

Hispanic Ministries Delivers 40,000 Boxes of Food

The Hispanic Ministries Department of the Chesapeake Conference recently started a weekly food bank, in partnership with 4MyCity, a nonprofit organization. During that time, they helped distribute 40,000 boxes of food throughout the southern, northern and eastern regions of the conference.

“This has been an enriching experience,” says Orlando Rosales, Hispanic Ministries director for the



Chesapeake Conference. “You get to see and feel the gratitude of the people, as well as their interest in knowing more about our church. People are asking for intercessory prayer for their needs, and, so far, seven families have begun attending our worship meetings.”

Javier Moreno, Bible worker for the Baltimore Spanish church, adds, “Ministering to people through this food program has been a blessing to the church and community. We have a group on WhatsApp where more than 141 people are receiving Bible studies and where we also let them know when we are going to take them the food boxes.”

Pastors from each Chesapeake Spanish-speaking congregation took turns volunteering weekly to receive food for distribution, load food in trucks for transport and distribute them at each location.

“God has led us to meet the community by attending to their needs and gaining their trust. Each food box carries a book and church information,” says Moreno. “Today we expect to sow hope in every heart with the security that God will bring an abundant harvest for His eternal kingdom.”

MOUNTAIN VIEWPOINT

Health Ministries Director Fosters Healthy Living

Ginelle Edmondson recently became the new Health Ministries director of the Mountain View Conference.

Born in Guyana, South America, and raised in Queens, N.Y., she always expressed an interest in health. Feeling led to study nursing for her undergraduate career, Edmondson was drawn to public health and mission work. She graduated with a Master in Public Health from New York University (NYU), then traveled to study abroad in Cape Town, South Africa.

Edmondson said witnessing the AIDS crisis in Africa firsthand “was a life-changing experience.” She returned to NYU to complete her coursework and to intern at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Her internship landed her a job at the agency as a foreign service officer.

Later, with three children and her devoted husband, C. W., they enjoyed military life for several years. Over the next decade, she cultivated her proficiency for the quality and analytical side of health care.

For the past six years, Edmondson has served as the Health Ministries leader at her local Frostburg (Md.) church. She continues to learn more about healthy living and how to make practical lifestyle changes.



Edmondson encourages all to prayerfully take “baby steps” when considering a healthy habit. At health talks, she encourages others to willingly share what they have learned with others. Her sincere hope is that they would undoubtedly see that bringing healthy life practices into harmony with the laws established by God provides physical, mental and spiritual benefits.

Daniel Morikone was the former Health Ministries director, holding this position for nearly 20 years.

Morikone Retires After 20 Years of Local Ministry

Graduating from Pacific Union College (Calif.) in 1974, Daniel Morikone worked as a registered nurse in California, Kentucky and Michigan prior to becoming a literature evangelist (LE) for the Michigan Conference.



During that time, he received a call to be the assistant manager of an Adventist Home Health facility in Kentucky in 1982. This brought about the purchase of six acres across the Kentucky border in the state of West Virginia, where he and his wife, Valerie, built a house and raised their son, Greg, and daughter, Janelle. Members of the Williamson (W.Va.) church, it wasn't until 1997 that Morikone returned to the LE work with the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference, having a territory of 17 counties. On September 1, 2000, he was asked to pastor the Williamson and Logan churches.

As a pastor in the Parkersburg and Toll Gate district, Morikone recently completed his 20th year and stepped into retirement, concluding his pastoral ministry in Mountain View Conference. As Valerie continues to work at the conference office, the couple will reside in the area as they continue “friendship ministry” among their neighbors and nearby community, looking for opportunities to share God's love with others.

COVID-19 + Children's Ministries = Creative Events

"He's Able," "My God is So Big" and "He Will Take Care of You"—these are the songs members teach children to sing during Sabbath School and family worship. They read them Bible stories of how God protected His people and keeps His promises. God promises in Psalm 91 that He will deliver His people "from the deadly pestilence," "not [to] be afraid ... of the pestilence that stalks in darkness" and "[no] plague [will] come near your tent" (NAS).

The question is, are believers claiming these promises amid COVID-19? Are children in the church's sphere of influence witnessing this unwavering faith and trust? They may not be able to do ministry like they used to, but that's a good thing! God is waiting to open church members' eyes to other options that we never considered.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Bonnie Cutright, a pastor's wife from the Mountain View Conference (MVC) Buckhannon (W.Va.) church, began a "Children's Bible Story Hour" each Sabbath afternoon via Zoom, reaching children in her church, district and other states.

In the same vein, Diane Gregg, Children's Ministries director for MVC, shares, "I sought God's guidance on what to do in our area, and He impressed me to hold



an outdoor Vacation Bible School at the city park. This inspired those helping me to continue with 'crafts in the park' on Sabbath afternoons. My husband and I also began hosting 'outdoor movie nights' in our backyard for families in our neighborhood."

Gregg believes that God will bring good out of COVID-19 for we have a God who is "So Big, So Strong, and So Mighty," that there's nothing He cannot do *for you and through you!*

Our Pathfinder Clubs Are Still Active for Jesus

I am excited to see what the Lord has in store for the Mountain View Conference (MVC) Pathfinders. During this challenging time in our lives, we need to show the love of God. I am happy to say that we have four active Pathfinder groups in the MVC. And I had the privilege to recently attend the Moorefield (W.Va.) Spanish church with our newest Pathfinder group—the Moorefield

Amishadai. Director Virgilia Lopez has 15 Pathfinders willing to share their love of Jesus with the community. The Parkersburg Panthers and Grafton Montoni clubs graciously welcomed our newest group to the MVC.

COVID-19 has affected the way our groups meet, as Zoom is the new way of gathering. As the new season has started, clubs are slowly getting back to meeting in person. The Parkersburg Panthers are committed to doing outreach with The Salvation Army and the Wood County Historical and Preservation Society. The Frostburg Navigators missed out on the Pathfinder Bible Experience (PBE) due to COVID-19 restrictions and are eager to return to this year's PBE.

We missed out on so much the last half of our Pathfinder year. But we serve a mighty God, and through it all, He has provided ways for us to communicate, share and show our love for one other.

I thank the Pathfinders, staff, youth division, church members and our conference for the support and prayers they give to our Pathfinders.—*Beth Ackman, MVC Pathfinder Director*



The Moorefield Spanish church Amishadai Pathfinders are the newest club in the conference.

NEWS NEW JERSEY

The Great Commission Is Not in Quarantine

From the moment the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic, we began to experience a global crisis. Some parts of the world were in lockdown and quarantined. Phrases like “stay at home,” “wear masks” and “social distance” were and still are our new normal. For a period of four months, churches were closed, and some will not reopen for the rest of the year. But the focus is on the reopening of business, malls and restaurants, with the message: “Come in. We are open.”

Jesus gave us the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18–20, a charge not affected by a pandemic, for the Great Commission is not in quarantine. We must preach and share the good news of salvation “in season and out of season” (2 Tim. 4:2, NIV). In the reopening of churches, we have the risk of focusing on the buildings and regulations and forgetting about the mission to reach the world. The church cannot be like a restaurant: “Come in. We are open.” We have a mandate from God: “Go, therefore.” The mission is not to stay or go into temples; it is to preach the everlasting gospel to those who dwell on the earth—“to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people” (Rev. 14:6, NKJV).

“As a people we greatly need to humble our hearts before God, pleading His forgiveness for our neglect to fulfill the gospel commission. ... Let us now take up the work appointed to us, and proclaim the message that is to arouse men and women to a sense of their danger. If every Seventh-day Adventist had done the work laid upon him, the number of believers would now be much larger than it is” (Ellen White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 25).

God’s mission is not in quarantine. It is always open. “Therefore, go!”



Jorge Agüero
President

La Gran Comisión no Está en Cuarentena

El 11 de marzo de 2020, la Organización Mundial de la Salud declaró al COVID-19 como pandemia. A partir de ese momento, impuso una crisis global. Algunas partes del mundo estaban cerradas y en cuarentena. Frases como “quédate en casa”, “usa máscaras” y “distancia social”, fueron nuestra nueva normalidad. Durante más de cuatro meses, las iglesias estuvieron cerradas, y algunas no volverán a abrir durante el resto del año. Pero la atención se centra en la reapertura de los negocios, centros comerciales y restaurantes, con

el mensaje: “Adelante. Estamos abiertos”.

Jesús nos dio la Gran Comisión en Mateo 28: 18–20, un cargo que no se ve afectado por una pandemia, porque la Gran Comisión no está en cuarentena. Debemos predicar y compartir las buenas nuevas de salvación “a tiempo y fuera de tiempo” (2 Tim. 4: 2, NVI). En la reapertura de iglesias, corremos el riesgo de centrarnos en los edificios y las regulaciones y olvidarnos de la misión de llegar al mundo. La iglesia no puede ser como un restaurante: “Entra. Estamos abiertos”. Tenemos un mandato de Dios: “Ve, pues”. La misión no es quedarse ni entrar en los templos; es predicar el evangelio eterno a los que moran en la tierra: “a toda nación, tribu, lengua y pueblo” (Apocalipsis 14: 6, NKJV).

“Como pueblo tenemos gran necesidad de humillar nuestros corazones ante Dios, implorando su perdón por haber descuidado su mandato misionero. ... Pongamos mano a la obra asignada, y proclamemos el mensaje que debe hacer comprender su peligro a hombres y mujeres. Si cada adventista del séptimo día hubiese cumplido su parte, el número de creyentes sería ahora mucho mayor.” (Elena de White, 9TI 21.3)

La misión de Dios no está en cuarentena. Siempre está abierto. “¡Por lo tanto, id!”—*Jorge Agüero*



PHOTO BY AARON BURDEN

Trenton Spanish Prays, Cares for the Hurting

The Trenton Spanish church is a large family that cares for its surrounding community. In these recent times of uncertainty, many turned to Trenton Spanish for financial and spiritual help, and leaders gathered to create a plan of action.

At the beginning of quarantine, Trenton Spanish distributed funds to members and nonmembers who needed food, medicine and more. With the help of other contributing families in the community, members gathered and distributed truck-sized food donations to families that were in need. Leaders formed prayer chains three times a day, and many felt supported and loved.

Unfortunately, some members lost their lives, and the church continues to support their families. Elders attended and led funeral services for these families.

Humans tend to create attachments to physical things, so when they physical church closed, many struggled with their faith. Members offered gratitude to their tech team that created online services to reach people worldwide. Members understand how easy it can be to be distracted by what is happening in the world and forget to be thankful to God. This situation reminded them that their Savior is still and always will be good, for He hurts with them.



As the promise in Philippians 4:6–7 states, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (NIV). Trenton Spanish holds onto the Lord, who forever is good, for when they hurt, He hurts.—*Yelitza De Leon, Trenton Spanish Youth Leader*

Maranatha French Stays Strong in Pandemic



Just like many churches around the world, the coronavirus challenged the Maranatha French church in Newark to trust in God, leadership and the solidarity of their church members. As they witnessed loved ones pass away due to COVID-19, as well as murders worldwide and natural death, they encircled the grieving homes with songs, prayers, banners of hope and encouragement, cards and flowers.

Nurses who are members of Maranatha French worked around the clock taking care of the sick, making natural medicines, picking up prescriptions and providing medical equipment to their patients. Many have witnessed sadness but also miracles.

While there is still a long way to go, Maranatha French has a burning desire to do more in the community, as they continue to hold drive-through prayers, worship outdoors, serve the community through their food pantry and complete the new church building.

Despite the challenges, God has blessed them and continues to do so. In the end, together they can proudly say, “We are Maranatha Strong.”—*Peggy Filossaint, Associate Pastor of Maranatha French*



PAINTING BY HAENLEY PIERRE

Hispanic Ministries Celebrates 2020th Baptism

When Peter Simpson, the Ohio Conference Hispanic Ministries coordinator, and other pastors began planning the 2020 evangelism season, their goal was to baptize the 2020th member within the year. Prior to this, 1,734 Hispanic members had been baptized since the Hispanic Ministries Department was created in 1970.

Despite challenges brought on by the pandemic, the department continued working toward their goal and transitioned to virtual evangelistic campaigns, utilizing the infrastructure already in place, courtesy of their online radio station, Stereo Adventista.

In April, Octavio Manuel Ogando Garcia, a listener from the Columbus area, became intrigued by the messages he heard online and reached out to a local pastor. After just their first meeting, he requested to be baptized. As a result, Garcia became the 2020th person baptized during Ohio Conference's Hispanic Camp Meeting at Camp Mohaven in Danville. Bob Cundiff, Ohio Conference president, was privileged to immerse him into the water (pictured below).



Ohio Conference's Executive Secretary Oswaldo Magaña pins Springfield Spanish church member Yuli Escalante for leading five people to Christ.



In the afternoon, 71 lay members who had led 135 souls to Christ during the virtual campaign participated in a parade. Dressed in white robes, they received numbered pins representing the number of people baptized as a result of their efforts (pictured right).

The historic event marked the first time all three officers of the Ohio Conference; the Hispanic Ministries coordinator; and Rubén Ramos, the Columbia Union vice president for Multilingual Ministries, shared the same stage. On Sabbath, Ramos expressed that it took Ohio Conference's Hispanic Ministries Department about 45 years for the first 1,000 people to be baptized, and only five more years to double that.



Members Stay Connected During Pandemic

Who doesn't love receiving a card in the mail? A text from a friend? Maybe even a call from a dear family member? Though many church facilities have reopened, not everyone has returned to in-person worship. To that end, members have found unique ways to reach out to church family and stay connected to those worshipping from home.

Ohio Conference's Communication Department asked church members to consider reaching out to members who, for one reason or another, haven't physically returned to church since the pandemic. It is in times like these where at-home worshippers need to know they are being thought of and prayed for. Suggestions included mailing cards to senior members, texting and checking up on college students or calling friends just to say hello.

Recently a group of young people and their parents from the Hillsboro church, located southeast of Dayton, decided to run with this idea and visited a member who had been confined to a nearby assisting living facility. Carol Clark, an 88-year-old church member, expressed how she was "missing the young people terribly," so, despite significant rain, these young adults gathered outside her window to sing several songs for her. Clark requested they sing "Jesus Loves Me," and many of the young people "touched" her hand through the windowpane.



Hillsboro youth member Carter Stingley "touches" fellow member Carol Clark's hand through the glass at her assisted living facility.

"Our hearts are full," says Heidi Shoemaker, former communication director, whose husband, Fred, pastors the Hillsboro church. "What a blessing the younger members and/or in-person worshippers have been to the so-called older members who are not worshipping in person yet, and a blessing the in-person worshippers have received in return."

This is yet another example of how #MinistryDoesNotStop in the Ohio Conference.



Understanding that Hillsboro church member and friend Carol Clark missed seeing her "young people," youth of all ages and their family members gathered outside her window in the pouring rain to sing "Jesus Loves Me" and other songs to her.

Prayer Emphasis Day

The Ohio Conference will begin 2021 with its annual "Prayer Emphasis Day" January 2—the first Sabbath of the new year. Visit ohioadventist.org for resources and more information. Conference leadership thanks the members and churches for their support, dedication and prayers.

Pennsylvania Pen

Great Is Your Faithfulness

“The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness” (ESV). We have seen this promise in Lamentations 3:22–23 lived out this year. God has blessed our conference, our churches, our schools and has drawn more than 150 people to commit their lives to Him and join the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

We thank our members, teachers and pastors for their faithful stewardship to God. During the pandemic lockdown, they continued to give Bible studies, hold evangelistic meetings and celebrate God’s faithfulness through baptisms. Adventist education did not stop as teachers continued educating, praying and guiding students and families through this confusing time. Members also continued to give generously to God’s work. Halfway through the year, when many expected tithes to fall, faithful giving resulted in a 2.73 percent tithe increase year-to-date over the previous year. Laurel Lake Camp has been operating in the black since 2018, but there were concerns about how COVID-19 would impact finances this year. God has provided abundantly above all we expected or imagined! Through His provision, we are now in the same financial position as though we had held summer camp, and will again finish the year in the black.

As we come to the end of 2020, we invite you to continue supporting the vital mission God has given us. First Corinthians 4:2 challenges us, “Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful” (NKJV). Let us continue to put our trust in our loving Lord to grant us all we need to safely navigate these challenging times and to empower us to unite together to fulfill the mission.



Carlos Charnichart
Treasurer

Conference Votes to Move Headquarters

Delegates to the Pennsylvania Conference Special Constituency Session recently voted plans to move the conference headquarters to a new Mission and Evangelism Center on the campus of Blue Mountain Academy in Hamburg, Pa.



‘Power the Mission’ Strategic Initiative

God powers His last-day mission through our faithful return of tithes, offerings, bequests and other gifts. Generosity opens the way for abundant blessings upon us and others. Investing in God’s work in these last days lays up treasures in heaven.

PHOTO BY TOM SHEWBROOK

Answered Prayer Affirms God's Leading

Members of the Williamsport church are selling their building and constructing a new combined church and school facility. Between the sale price of the church and funds already donated, they have more than 60 percent of the funds needed to build the new facility on the campus of Mountain View Christian School (MVCS).

Educating young people is a priority mission for members who invest time, resources and prayers into their growing school. Enrollment at MVCS has grown from 13 in 2019 to 45 this year—the highest mark in the school's history! Construction plans for the new facility were created based on 50 students, but those plans are now being modified.

While preparing for a business meeting to vote on the proposed building plans, Roy Weeden, pastor of Williamsport, spent time praying. He recalled how God had led the church and school so far. As he prayed for the Holy Spirit to guide the business meeting, he asked God to affirm His leading and the direction the church was preparing to go. "Within hours, my phone lit up with texts and phone calls that culminated in a check for our school in the amount of \$30,000!" Weeden shares. The gift came from a



Students from the Mountain View Christian School enjoy class outdoors.

previously unanticipated source and had been 11 years in the making. Weeden explains, "The call came hours after my sincere request. A token of faith sent by God to validate our steps."

Richard Becker Leaves Legacy

Richard Becker enjoyed seeing people connect and gather with family, friends and God. This passion fueled his desire to help young people learn and grow at Blue Mountain Academy (BMA) in Hamburg.

Becker grew up poor. He learned the value of hard work and commitment to God. He believed it was God's blessings that enabled him to start and grow Becker Homes Sales/Services and Communities in



Walnutport. Throughout his life, he shared that blessing with others. Becker was generous in his giving to BMA, especially to students in need.

"He wanted to do whatever he could to make a BMA education possible for students," shares Ruben Olm, vice principal for Enrollment and Development. "He loved our young people, and it showed. He impacted many lives for eternity."

Becker passed away this spring. He was a longtime member and head deacon of the Walnutport church, as well as a member of Adventist Laymen's Services & Industries, the Portage Metropolitan Housing Authority and board emeritus of BMA.

Becker never saw the need for public recognition. He was just a grateful man sharing God's blessings. BMA and hundreds of students are grateful for his life and eternal impact.

Richard Becker impacted the lives of countless BMA students, such as Miguel Couto and Daniel Falcao, through his generous giving, partnering with families to ensure that tuition was paid.



Navigate Uncharted Territory Together

As we reflect on the extraordinary events of 2020, we understand our lives have dramatically changed. The pandemic shut down the economy, prohibited public gatherings and closed churches and schools. Leaders everywhere scrambled to stay connected—who would have thought Zoom, face masks and social distancing would become part of everyday life?

In these unprecedented times, I'm reminded of Tod Balsinger's book on adaptive change and leadership, titled *Canoeing the Mountains*. Balsinger uses the illustration of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Their goal was to find a route to the Pacific Ocean. They assumed the unexplored geography of the West was like the charted territory of the East and planned to find a water passage in their canoe. Explorers never anticipated the vast Rocky Mountains standing in their way—in this crisis, they needed to adapt and change their methods in order to survive and achieve their goals.

As we navigate our own uncharted territory, it's critical that we work together, remembering the goal of introducing people to Jesus and making disciples. The message has not changed. While there is certainly an emphasis on connecting virtually, we cannot abandon the ministry of in-person connection—our solutions should maintain a “both/and,” not an “either/or.” Hebrews 10:25 reminds us to “not neglect meeting together, as is the habit of some, but to encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (ESV). Let us pray for guidance as we explore and discover new methods to achieve our goal of reaching people for the kingdom.



Rick Jordan
*Vice President for
Pastoral Ministries*

Youth Olympics Challenges 31 Days of Health

This year, Potomac's annual Youth Olympics that usually draws more than 1,500 participants to Shenandoah Valley Academy's campus in New Market, Va., looked a little different. “We were not able to do our regularly scheduled Olympics Games, due to COVID-19,” explains Youth Director Josant Barrientos,



While hiking with his daughter, Emma, Josant Barrientos, Potomac's Youth Department director, goes live with conference youth during the 31-day Health and Spiritual Challenge.

“but that is not an excuse to not exercise and take care of our bodies!”

Instead of a one-day event, the Olympics grew into a 31-day Health and Spiritual Challenge. “The program encouraged participants to spend time with God and exercise their bodies, applying the Eight Natural Remedies,” says Barrientos. “The challenge included reading a chapter of Proverbs each day, and doing a different set of daily exercises. Each Sabbath, youth were encouraged to spend an hour or more alone with God.”

In order to qualify for prizes and receive points, every day the 500-plus participants, ranging from ages 5 to 70-plus, logged their activities online and posted to social media what they learned in their Bible reading for the day.

“Our intent with doing the Olympics this way was to motivate our young people to be more physically and spiritually active and mindful,” says Barrientos. “Many young people are not good at ‘unplugging.’”

Barrientos says this event also opened new doors and strengthened family units, with families participating in reading the Bible and exercising together. As a result of this challenge, several youth have started taking Bible studies and others have made decisions to be baptized in the coming months.

Food Bank and COVID-19 Testing Site Helps Hundreds

With the Virginia Beach/Hampton Roads area accounting for more than one-fourth of all COVID-19 cases in the state of Virginia—at one point totaling 280 cases a day—members of the Peninsula Spanish church in Newport News, Va., set out share their resources with higher risk communities—minority groups and those with no access to health care.

“We spent the last few years cultivating a robust relationship with the community by establishing a biweekly food bank through Todos Comemos, our church’s food ministry, as well as doing annual health fairs,” explains member Elias Llerandi. Pre-COVID-19, members developed connections with major corporations that donate pallets of quality, often organic food, and household items. With the demand for assistance being higher since the pandemic began, members have gone from serving an average of 30 to 40 families to 120 to 150.

“Recently, our Sabbath School lesson focused on the importance of making friends with the community,” Llerandi reflects. “In it, we learned how Jesus worked things out to satisfy peoples’ needs, making them more receptive to the message of salvation. We strive to put into practice what Matthew 10:8 says—as you have received much, so shall you give—and Galatians 6:9, which tells us to not get tired of doing good.”

With these networks and trusted relationships



As part of the Todos Comemos ministry, volunteer Yimena Espinel prepares food for the recipients.



Peninsula Spanish member Domingo Flores takes advantage of the free COVID-19 test during the food bank event, administered by a local agency worker.

already established, Llerandi and other members worked to plan an event with the state’s Health Department, the local Sentara Hospital and several city agencies, like the fire department and emergency response teams, among others. These entities provided free COVID-19 testing and additional resources, like hand sanitizer and face masks, and families in need could pick up food.

“In addition to our regular food bank recipients, we focused our efforts on those in need, like minority groups, those with language barriers and the uninsured—those who have difficulty accessing proper and routine medical care and city services. At this event, we were diligent in providing on-site translators to help individuals get the answers they needed in the required language,” says Llerandi.

With the large annual Tidewater Community Health Fair canceled this year, which includes member participation from nine Potomac churches in the area, Llerandi and others helped coordinate a smaller event that included free mammogram testing this fall and have plans for additional, smaller community outreach events in the future.



Blue Mountain Academy COMMUNIQUE

God Has Been Faithful to Us

As the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Blue Mountain Academy (BMA), our team worked on the 2020–21 budget. Not knowing what the future would hold, we based our finances on 80 students. And we prayed, knowing that God is faithful.

Through the process, the administrative staff has learned to trust more deeply in God's power. We did all we could to work through the challenges and changing restrictions COVID-19 brought. We relied on God's continued faithfulness to enable us to offer in-person and distance learning options, while again seeing the spiritual transformation and revival we experienced during the 2019–20 school year.

We continued to pray, and, by the end of registration, 90 students were calling BMA home. As I write these words, we now have 105 precious young people growing academically and spiritually. Others are still preparing to join us for our second semester. We are excited about the year ahead, believing that God will impact our students' lives, their families and our staff, as we prepare for His soon return.—*Burney Culpepper, Principal*



God Answers a Mother's Prayers

Sending her son to Blue Mountain Academy (BMA) was a hard decision for one single mother, but one that was necessary. Although she didn't know how she would pay for his tuition, she wanted more for him and his life, so, in faith, she enrolled him. And then prayed. And prayed.

Throughout the first semester, she lived on beans and prayers, asking God to not only provide a strong academic education for her son, but to transform him spiritually.

One day, she received a call from him: "Mom, sorry I haven't called more often," he excitedly said. "Thank you for sending me here. I've discovered God. I just want to serve Him!"

The call brought this mother to tears. God had heard her prayers and honored her sacrifice! At Christmas break, she couldn't believe her son's transformation. He shared what he had been learning about God at school. She witnessed how God was using BMA to help him, but still the question remained: How was she going to afford to keep him there? She fell to her knees again.

During the break, Gabriel Morales-Burgos (pictured), BMA's treasurer, called her with a miraculous answer

to her prayers: "A family was so impressed by your son and what God is doing in his life and through him to impact other students," he explained, "that they have fully paid for the rest of the school year!"

BMA is a place where parents are seeing their deepest prayers for their children answered. For more information, visit bma.us, email info@bma.us or call (484) 662-7000.



Campus Stays Together as Family

In March 2020, Highland View Academy (HVA) faced a dilemma—how to keep their campus family of faculty and students connected as they faced an uncertain future with a pandemic quickly taking over school and personal life. What started as a canceled Week of Service, followed by the inability for students to return after spring break, turned into a nightmare of Zoom classes, what ifs and unpredictability about the future. Using all known tools to maintain communication seemed to be the answer: emails, Facebook and Instagram posts, phone calls and mailed care packages to HVA students and parents.

Instagram posts focused on new ways of being social, including weekly Prayer and Praise Zoom meetings, Friday evening vespers and Bible treasure hunt activities via Instagram Live and encouraging videos shared by HVA’s Campus Ministries Committee, comprised of class and Student Association pastors. HVA students were encouraged to keep going, praying and having fun together, exemplified by two particular posts (pictured) that were the most liked on their Instagram page.

Concentrating on different ways to unite, Facebook posts consisted of YouTube videos advertising the Music Department, new campuswide recruitment



videos and prayer requests offered and shared with one another. These posts also served to announce new COVID-19 opening procedures to alumni and parents, ways to virtually tour the campus and watch the “Best of HVA” videos.

Part of HVA’s strategy to stay linked included mailing care packages to students, such as “Popcorn Wednesday” microwave popcorn parties, new HVA stickers for students’ computers or mobile phones and notes of encouragement from faculty. This, combined with daily or weekly HVA email updates from Principal Harry Janetzko about opening procedures, helped HVA faculty and staff stay connected with current students and showed future students what their lives would look like upon joining the academy the following year.

Now, as the new school year has begun, HVA is still using the same social media platforms to unite students and families. They are offering in-person and online learning until the pandemic restrictions ease so that they can *all* be physically together again. Until then, HVA is implementing proper CDC and Health Department guidelines. School life now consists of daily health assessment surveys, social distancing, wearing masks, temperature checks and Zoom class meetings for online students and in-person activities.

They continue to hold Zoom prayer meetings, Instagram Live programs and Sabbath School and church worship on YouTube and Facebook. HVA invites any student or family interested in joining their family to visit hva.edu.com for more information.





the LEGACY

OUR JOURNEY

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF LAKE NELSON ADVENTIST ACADEMY

God Blesses ‘The Road Back’ to School

“The Road Back” to Lake Nelson Adventist Academy (LNAA) has been an interesting journey. In March, staff and students had no clue they wouldn’t see each other for nearly six months. But, by God’s grace, they were able to reopen school this fall.

“The Road Back”—the committee formed to place a variety of safeguards and procedures in place—has helped keep students, families, faculty and staff as protected and healthy as possible. Students and staff are slowly adjusting to the new daily routines: temperature checks, frequent sanitizing of hands and surfaces, mask wearing, social distancing, desk guards.

In addition to these security measures, the New Jersey Conference leadership lent them a camp meeting tent to serve as an outdoor classroom space. On top of this, a local school donated chairs and bleachers for additional seating for outside learning in nature.

Teachers have worked tirelessly to prepare for the students’ return, both those joining in person and via Zoom. In an effort to ensure virtual students have access to learning, the school purchased additional laptops and other resources.

As God continues to bless and protect, LNAA’s school theme, “It Starts from Within,” is especially fitting, as the year looks different from any other year. Above all, the school is claiming this prayer in these



Sixth-graders at Lake Nelson Adventist Academy learn with protective barriers and masks.

uncertain times: “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Ps. 51:10, NIV).

“No matter the challenges we may face or the new routines or instruction changes, they ask for God’s hand to guide the students, families, faculty and staff through the school year and beyond, continually being renewed in Him,” says Principal Elisa Maragoto.



Kindergarten teacher Lilia Torres instructs her class outside.



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PFA POST



Visit us online at PINEFORGEACADEMY.ORG. *Excellence is no accident.*

Academy Family ‘Prays Until Something Happens’

For the 2020–21 school year, Pine Forge Academy’s (PFA) theme is “Pray Until Something Happens” (PUSH), for it is by prayer that God has led and continues to lead.

Prior to the campus closing in March due to the pandemic, God had already begun to answer prayers. Leadership was inspired to develop a plausible plan on how to safely reopen for the fall semester.

In June, Principal H. Clifford Reynolds, III, formed and chaired the Health and Safety Task Force to plan and prepare for PFA’s reopening of the new school year. The uncertainties surrounding the spread and contraction of COVID-19 were being disputed nationwide. Accordingly, the task force, comprised of school personnel and physicians, turned to prayer and sound medical expertise from Joseph Cheatham, M.D. (’93), and Charlyce Wallington-Reynolds, M.D., both parents of current students.

While public school systems debated what equipment was necessary to keep students and staff safe, PFA took advantage and placed orders ahead of them. God helped establish connections integral to the success of the reopening plans, including unexpected funds to help pay for the new equipment. Prior to the



Juniors Angel White (left) and Amber Monk sport their face masks.

students’ arrival to campus, leadership had safety protocols and equipment in place: UV light sterilization in the dorm rooms; plexiglass splash shields in classrooms and offices; HEPA filtration ventilation systems in dorms and all campus buildings; zone pods in dormitories for students exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms; face masks; and social distancing decals.

The hybrid curriculum was offered via online tele-teaching or in person for students on campus, and off-campus instruction was eliminated to reduce the chances of infection. Added protocols included daily temperature checks, health screening questionnaires and physical distancing requirements. Attention was also given to the students’ socio-emotional health. The campus incorporated outdoor classes and built new basketball and volleyball courts outside to allow for more physical activity. Students also returned to find renovated science classrooms with a new chemistry lab.

On August 24, PFA started its first day of classes with a community of students and staff who began their second 14-day quarantine to ensure everyone’s safety.

The PFA community prayed and believe something remarkable happened.



To meet social distancing requirements, Kohren Joseph’s biology class has a minimized number of students.

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Spotlight on Spencerville

Highlights from Spencerville Adventist Academy

LOVE TO LEARN
LIVE TO SERVE
ALL FOR CHRIST

Senior Authors Diary-Like Book on Queen Esther

Charis McRoy, a senior at Spencerville Adventist Academy, has enjoyed writing poetry to express her emotions and experiences ever since the third grade. Through the years, she decided to author a book on the Bible story of Esther. Remembering what she had learned about Esther in Sabbath School, she wanted to journey deeper into that Bible story.

“Esther struck me as quite the heroine to look up to. While she could have simply relished in the pleasures of being queen, she lived selflessly and defended others, even at the risk of her own life,” says McRoy. “Her story moved me, and I felt the urge to share it—as Esther might have told it.”

McRoy wrote the book in a diary-like format. She hopes readers leave with a sense of calling and purpose for their lives.

“It was God who enabled Esther to rise amid the obstacles and trials of her life and become a star shining in the darkness,” comments McRoy.

McRoy believes that God will use anyone who is willing to be an instrument in His hand to bring about change in the world.

“The question I pose to the reader is, ‘Are you willing to let God do the same for you? Will you realize that you have been called for such a time as this?’” McRoy explains.

“This experience really helped me to grow as a writer and as a person,” she adds. “As I wrote about this great woman of faith and courage, some of those qualities rubbed off on me. Ultimately, as I wrote her story, I began writing a new one for myself. I wouldn’t trade this experience for anything.”

Published in 2019, McRoy’s book, *The Star*, can be found at thestarbycharismcroy.wixsite.com/mysite.



STEM Teacher Presents Webinar

Earlier this year, the Professional Speakers Association of Bangladesh invited Spencerville Adventist Academy’s (SAA) high school STEM teacher, Myrna Biswas Nowrangi, to present a webinar to address the importance of STEM education and STEM careers. She spoke about how STEM education is significant, not just in America but especially in developing countries. STEM education can boost a country’s economy and solve other problems like health care and a country’s infrastructure. She also answered questions concerning which STEM fields have a greater demand in America than others.

“Students trying to get into STEM should do their research on what STEM fields are most needed in their local area or state,” says Nowrangi. “I ended the webinar inviting Bangladesh to open up STEM schools.”

SPRING VALLEY ACADEMY_{.ORG}

CONNECTIONS

INSPIRING STUDENTS TO KNOW FOLLOW SHARE JESUS

Academy Shows Resilience in Difficult Times

The 2020–21 school year is off to a very different, yet successful start.

Due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements, Spring Valley Academy (SVA) began the year on an A/B schedule. Half of the students attend Mondays and Wednesdays, and the other half Tuesdays and Thursdays, with Fridays rotating between the two groups. SVA also elected to provide a “full virtual” option for families who wanted to keep their children at home. Each grade grouping has a teacher dedicated to the virtual learners.

While staff members miss having everyone together in one place, this arrangement allows for proper spacing, as classrooms only have between nine and 12 students.



Maintenance Director Steve Erickson disinfects a classroom with an electrostatic sprayer.

SVA has reworked every aspect of the students’ day to protect their safety. In compliance with the mask requirement set by Ohio, all students wear masks while inside. Additionally, staff has implemented proper distancing during lunch with the purchase of additional picnic tables to encourage students to eat outside whenever possible. Electrostatic sprayers are used to sanitize buses and classrooms each day. Students and teachers wipe down desks and workspaces between every period, and liberal use of hand sanitizer is encouraged. They have staggered dismissal times to ensure hallways aren’t crowded at the end of the day.



School nurse Trixi Johnson checks senior Natalie Cook’s temperature, a required protocol for daily entrance.

“These are unprecedented times, and yet we are encouraged by the resilience of SVA’s students and parents, and the dedication of the faculty, staff and the leadership of the board of trustees,” says Darren Wilkins, principal. “Difficult times present obstacles, but also opportunities. Through this storm, we’ve learned that we have a supportive and generous community that comes together as God leads us. What a blessing that is!”



Left to right: Sophomore Jayson Howard, Chaplain Justin Janetzko and seniors DJ Hill and James Martinez enjoy lunch on the new picnic tables.



IMPACT Shenandoah

Serve God – Value Knowledge – Accept a Life of Service

‘Faith Bomb’

Two weeks prior, sending my middle son, Sam (pictured), to boarding school 3,000 miles away from our home in Oregon never crossed my mind. I went to bed unsuspecting of what the night would bring. Little did I know, God was about to drop a “faith bomb.” I tossed and turned and could not sleep. Did I accidentally drink caffeine? Why can’t I sleep? Then I realized God was trying to communicate with me. At 11:30 p.m. I got on my knees and started praying. An hour or two later, I jumped into the Word to figure out what God’s message to me was, landing on Exodus 22:29:

“You shall not delay to offer the first of your ripe produce and your juices. The firstborn of your sons you shall give to Me” (NKJV). *But Josh is our firstborn*, I expressed to God. *Why are you saying Sam?*

When morning came, it was clear. I fell to my knees and sobbed. Really, God? This makes no sense. Sending our son to a boarding school on the other side of the country during a pandemic? And why Shenandoah Valley Academy (SVA)? There are boarding schools here. I don’t understand.

I made calls to three different schools that day. Lord, if it is within Your will, is it OK to ask for a sign? May the school that offers to pray with me on the phone be the school.

SVA was the only school that offered to pray with me.

Wow, OK, God! But there is no way my son or husband will agree. Holding onto this promise, “‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’ says the Lord of



Sam Renton’s mom says, “The Holy Spirit led us. We didn’t have to make God’s plan happen—He did it.”

hosts” (Zech. 4:6, NKJV), God had a plan, and He was faithful to see it through. After conversations, phone calls and much prayer, Sam was very excited to go to SVA, and my husband agreed.

Sam started classes at SVA a week after the “faith bomb” dropped. I now realize this seemingly last-minute plan was anything but. Could it be the framework was laid the moment I stepped onto SVA’s campus 25 years ago? Perhaps the answers to years of prayers are culminating in a beautiful story on the campus of SVA? The revelation might’ve been last minute, but certainly not the plan itself, for “everything is possible for one who believes” (Mark 9:23, NIV).—*Jennifer LeVos Renton* (’95)



officers (pictured) led the voting to gift the remainder of the class fund to help worthy students. These \$20,000-\$20,000 gifts will impact SVA students for many years to come!

Graduates Invest 20-20 in Academy and Worthy Students!

The Class of 2020 announced a \$20,000 class gift for the Zirkle Gymnasium Improvement Project honoring a canceled Alumni Weekend. The unprecedented gift helped SVA receive important dollar-for-dollar matching, the doubled gift providing \$40,000 for the project. Recognizing an opportunity to do more, class

www.ta.edu TATO DAY

News you can use from Takoma Academy

Academy Expands Opportunities in Virtual Setting

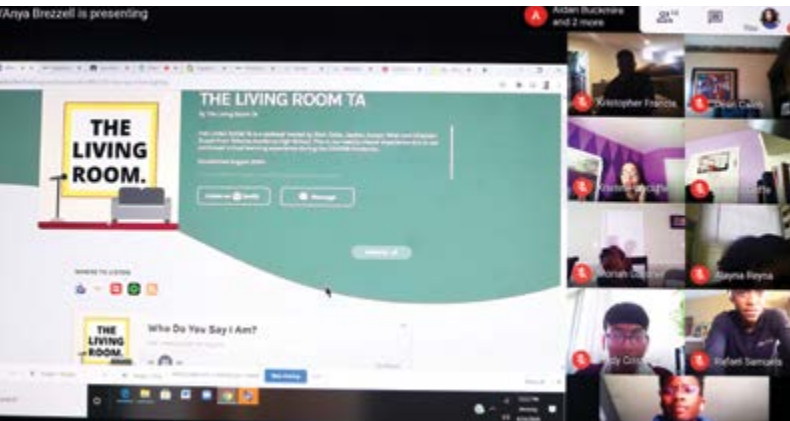
Takoma Academy (TA) began the year in a virtual-learning setting. Faculty and staff continue expanded opportunities for students to learn in a rigorous, yet accommodating structure. Teaching and learning in a remote environment, however, can pose challenges. TA recognizes these concerns and spent the summer

bolstering their ability to offer effective virtual learning and additional supports for students academically, spiritually, socially and emotionally.

With the plan TA has set forth, students are now able to complete more classes in a semester using the Google Classroom platform to effectively and efficiently facilitate student-learning and progress. Dual credits are still being offered from Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md., and Andrews University (Mich.).

Extracurricular opportunities provided for students include Virtual Vegan Cooking; Creative Writing; Debate Team; HOSA–Future Health Professionals; NSBE Jr. (National Society of Black Engineers); Drama; Social Media; Podcast Internships and Community Service Opportunities with Chaplain B. Leah; and more.

“Takoma Academy is blessed to have families, students, faculty/staff and administration on board to present and receive an engaging curriculum that meets the needs of our students,” emphasizes Principal Carla Thrower.



Junior Shares Quarantine Experience

Takoma Academy (TA) student Inioluwa Jobi shares her journey through quarantine:

To say it was shocking that the coronavirus overtook the world is an understatement, and the effects on our lives have been weird as the world got locked down. It was an unforgettable journey that brought a new way of life. The short transition we had to get used to online learning was stressful, but I learned more about myself and grew closer in my relationship with God. I surrendered to Him and changed a lot of things in my life—social, physical, emotional.

I took a class this summer to keep myself afloat. I also exercised and started a meal plan. I learned how to bring out my style and use my voice for change. Unfortunately, I was not able to peacefully protest this year, but I posted my thoughts on social media.

TA has been a blessing to me ever since the lockdown started. The Friday Night Live program with

Chaplain B. Leah was beautiful, and teachers worked with us to complete the semester. I appreciate TA for everything, and, above all, I'm most excited about my new classes this year.





WGTS Listeners Are Helping Families With Food

"Having enough food in the pantry or the fridge is a challenge many families are facing right now, especially during a time when the coronavirus is affecting people," says Jitesh Ram, WGTS community engagement director. As a way to make sure families are receiving the food they need, WGTS and the listeners joined the McLean Bible Church over the summer months to collect food.

Called "Operation Fill the Pantry," this Hands and Heart campaign has been successful, thanks to the generosity of many WGTS listeners. During seven stops throughout the DMV area, over 14,500 pounds of food was collected and prepared for distribution. About 480 families were given a 30-pound box that would feed their family for a week.

"Our listeners have been so generous and we are so thankful for their participation," says Ram. We had about 100 families come to each place, including the children, who have been excited to help out as well. Ram says, "We are looking for ways to help families during these tough times, and this is a wonderful way to be the hands and heart of Jesus."



Morning Hosts Share Videos of Hope

WGTS has just released two new Words of Hope videos from our morning show hosts Jerry Woods and Blanca Vega. In the messages, they share this good news: God is with us and He will not change. He can use this time of uncertainty in our lives to bring us closer to Him and to each other. To see these videos, come to our website at wgts919.com and select the box on the front page that shows our latest "Words of Hope" videos.

91 minute challenge

Need a boost today? We invite you to listen to WGTS 91.9 for 91 minutes and help replace stress and anxiety with calm and hope. Take these minutes while you're cooking, walking, driving or just hanging out with your family. We pray that you'll be encouraged during these tough times like Linda. She shares,

I was on the way to my mom's retirement home. She's in her 90s and is in relatively good health, thankfully. I have been able to see her after receiving an all-clear on my COVID test. My car radio was set to WGTS 91.9 and I was considering the news or another station, but decided to listen to WGTS. Thank you. It was very comforting. I'm joy-filled and grateful after listening.

KETTERING COLLEGE



Associate-degreed nurses can now complete their bachelor's degree at Kettering College for a lower price.



Kettering College Division of Nursing Resets Tuition for the Online RN-to-BSN Degree Track

By Lauren Brooks

Kettering College's online Bachelor of Science in Nursing completion degree track (RN-to-BSN) will roll out a tuition reset beginning January 2021.

The tuition for the RN-to-BSN degree will be \$325 per credit hour. This reduced tuition combined with Kettering College's strong academic reputation will allow Kettering College's online RN-to-BSN program to serve more registered nurses at Kettering Adventist HealthCare and elsewhere, as they continue their education journey to completing a bachelor's degree.

The RN-to-BSN degree track at Kettering College is designed for working registered nurses who have an associate degree or its equivalent to complete their bachelor's degree. The program is flexible and can be completed in one year, or in up to three years depending on whether the student chooses a full-time or part-time pace of study. Classes begin every semester and are delivered in manageable accelerated seven-week sessions. All coursework is offered online to ensure access to eligible students wanting to pursue a bachelor's degree.

"We're lowering our price for this program to be more affordable and confirm our mission of helping our students affirm their higher calling of

helping people through health care," said Adam Brown, dean of students at Kettering College. "By being priced competitively, we believe that students will be able to attend Kettering College and grow academically, professionally, and spiritually."

Previously, the RN-to-BSN degree track largely served the needs of associate-degreed nurses hired by Kettering Adventist HealthCare, but with a strategic plan for growth, Kettering College and Kettering Adventist HealthCare want to provide more access to eligible registered nurses across the United States who want to complete a bachelor's degree.

Kettering College's program is unique as it focuses on whole-person care, is faith-based, and has flexible learning for working adults.

For more information about the online RN-to-BSN degree track or to apply, visit kc.edu/bsnc



ONE UNITED VOICE



An amazing opportunity for unity has been presented to us in the form of a pandemic. As we mourn for the many who have been lost to COVID-19, we search for a way forward. In the history of the United States, tragedy has served as a means to unite us against a concerted foe. At this moment, our enemy isn't just the virus, but the ongoing and gathering scourge of racism, inequality, and abuse in our communities. Our mandate at WAU is toward celebrating our diversity and the colors, cultures, and vibrancy that come with our campus of students, faculty, and staff.

It can be easy to fall under the weight of so much injustice, divisive rhetoric, and abusive aggression. It can be simple to go silent and hope that the storm will pass. However, we have not been commissioned to stay silent and hidden; we have been commissioned to go out to the world and spread the brilliance and glory of Jesus Christ. We endeavor to reflect His light, His compassion, His joy for life, and His love to everyone around us. As a community of believers, students, and educators, we must stand up in the face of adversity and speak clearly.

Washington Adventist University exists to educate and enlighten generations to serve our world in unique ways. Our graduates are exceptional, not because they are excellent and talented, which they are. They are not uncommon because they carry some cards of membership. They are unique because they blend the extraordinary love of Christ with the excellence of a higher education gathered in the light of that unique love, nurtured in the unique soil that is our home in the D.C., Maryland, Virginia region.

As we seek to unite towards a common goal, our focus must be an enduring and consistent voice. Our shared voice is strengthened by the resolve of all the generations nurtured, edified, and developed for the past and present reality that each of our alumni has faced after graduating through the Gateway To Service. The institution's name on each diploma only signifies the path that this hallowed ground has birthed with the blessing of God. WAU is now stronger because of the strength of our alumni presence around the world.

With resolve, our students, faculty, and staff, present and past, have an opportunity to join in one voice that seeks to unify under the banner of Christ's love. The support WAU requires in these crucial moments is paramount to the future successes of our students. Can we speak in one voice? Can we join together as a community under the Gateway and serve our present and prospective students so they may bring forward a new, unified ideal to this ever-changing world.

How will you join our voice? Are you a prayer warrior? Are you an alumnus with a story to share? Are you prepared to stand up for your beliefs and ideals? Are you ready to support our students through a financial gift? Are you prepared to make a commitment that will last generations and offer the love of Christ to a world that needs another perspective on what it means to honor justice, civility and show the world what Christ's love can do for a world in turmoil?

THIS IS WASHINGTON ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY!



Weymouth Spence, President

WAU & ADVENTIST HEALTHCARE RENEW ONGOING PARTNERSHIP



The new White Oak Medical Center provides the excellent care you've come to expect from Adventist HealthCare in a modern facility at a new, convenient location in Silver Spring that offers, 180 private patient rooms, state-of-the-art equipment and technology, calming nature views and natural light, more than 1,000 parking spaces.

Washington Adventist University and Adventist HealthCare have renewed their long-held partnership toward enhancing education, training, and, ultimately, care for the community.

The world of healthcare is tumultuous on its best days. Adventist HealthCare is a strong presence in the DMV community and beyond. As the pandemic has spread across the region, Adventist HealthCare has been a significant resource for the surrounding states and municipalities, offering support to a populace in need of quality healthcare. Washington Adventist University has become a resource for Adventist HealthCare by providing quality candidates for nursing and other healthcare field jobs.

Adventist HealthCare President Terry Forde says, "The evolution of how education has grown and changed over the years has been a very significant support to the healthcare ministry. One of the things that we rely on is a rich source of talent from our universities. Particularly, Washington Adventist University has been a big part of that source. We hire over 2000 nurses in our system. That's an incredible amount of talent and people that we need to hire every single year. So being able to partner with a local university like WAU is significant. It poses a significant source of resources and people for us."

WAU's focus is to educate strong moral leaders for today's workforce. The pride WAU has in the nurses and health pro-

professionals currently working within Adventist HealthCare is profound. The healthcare professionals at WAU are offered a chance to be nurtured in an environment that will allow them to integrate into a unique workforce like Adventist HealthCare.

Dr. Cheryl Kisunzu, WAU's Provost, has been working diligently to engender a deeper relationship between Adventist HealthCare and the university. "We want to express our deep appreciation for the intentionality that Adventist HealthCare is portraying through their generosity toward excellence in Christian education and care for the community." The Provost continues, "Our programs will be strengthened to provide distinctive Christ-centered nursing care through excellence in Christ-centered Nursing Education."

In the coming year, the partnership will offer nursing students a chance to have more generous support through scholarships and the provision of an endowed chair, showing strong leadership towards the excellence of education and training.

Dr. Kisunzu plans to continue to explore ways that the two institutions can continue to strengthen each other as the partnership evolves.

Terry Forde says, "We are very excited to be a part of it... and ensure that the nursing program grows and continues to push towards excellence as you have been over the last many years."

The Path of Hope

Nearly 100 years ago, in 1921, Chinese essayist Lu Xun wrote, "Hope is like a path in the countryside. Originally, there is nothing – but as people walk this way again and again, a path appears."

If you come across a path in a woods, or across a field, you may ask: "Where does this path lead?" or "Why is there a path here?"

Paths don't just come out of nowhere. Sometimes they exist because people started walking there for a shortcut. Sometimes they exist because someone planned them out on a map and set about creating them. In either case, someone had to pave the way.

If you've ever been out on a hike and suddenly the path disappeared, you know how disquieting that can be. The best paths are those that have been strengthened by the repeated use of other travelers. They are the paths that are created, as Lu Xun says, "as people walk this way again and again."

These paths take time and persistence. They are walked day after day, season after season. They become so clearly defined by constant use that there is no danger they might disappear.

At this moment, when there is so much uncertainty in the world, I love the idea that hope is a path. Our hopes endure each day because we are not walking alone; there are others walking this path with us and sharing the journey. One of the reasons that I am hopeful – even in the midst of the pandemic – is because I know who shares the pathway with me.

Our Mission statement describes a path of hope: "We extend God's care through the ministry of physical, mental and spiritual healing." Let "extend" become "build a pathway," and our Mission is "to build a pathway of God's care..."

We don't accept or believe in fate – we believe in God's leadership and care. Life has meaning and purpose – and that purpose is to extend God's care in a way that creates pathways and hope. We believe in a God who created us in His image, a Divine Being filled with love and grace, who urges us along a pathway in which we extend that same love and grace to those around us.

The prophet Isaiah expressed it thus: "Cease to dwell on days gone by and to brood over past history. Here and now I will do a new thing ... I will make a way even through the wilderness and paths in the barren desert" [Isaiah 43:18-19, NEB].

Time to follow it – and find out where it goes!

Terry Forde
President & CEO
Adventist HealthCare



* Quoted in "A Path Appears: Transforming Lives, Creating Opportunity," (2014).

Honored for Excellence

Adventist HealthCare has been honored as one of America's Best-In-State Employers 2020 by Forbes and Statista Inc., the world-leading statistics portal and industry ranking provider.

The award comes as Adventist HealthCare navigates COVID-19, ensuring a safe and stable working environment for its 6,500 team members, many of whom have been on the front lines of the pandemic. While COVID-19 has taken an economic toll on the healthcare industry, Adventist HealthCare has retained its full workforce and enhanced programs to support the emotional and financial well-being of its team members during these challenging times.

The recognition falls in line with a key Adventist HealthCare organizational goal of being the "Best Place to Work and Grow."

"This award recognizes the dedication, care and compassion that each one of our team members extends not only to our patients, but to each other as well," says Brendan Johnson, senior vice president of Human Resources at Adventist HealthCare. "This is a significant step forward in our journey to extend world-class healing to all in our community and an award that every one of our team members can feel proud of," adds Terry Forde, president and CEO of Adventist HealthCare.

The Forbes and Statista America's Best-in-State Employers award is based on an independent survey of approximately 80,000 U.S. employees working for companies employing at least 500 people in their U.S. operations. Direct and indirect employee recommendations were evaluated on a state level. The study assessed each company according to Atmosphere & Development, Company Image, Working Conditions, Salaries & Wages, and Diversity.



National Baldrige Excellence Program Recognition

Adventist HealthCare has been steadily and intentionally pursuing a goal of world-class excellence across the organization – an aspiration recently recognized by the National Institute of Standards in Technology (NIST) and the prestigious Baldrige Performance Excellence Program.

Since 2016, Adventist HealthCare has applied for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award – the highest national recognition for performance excellence that an organization or business can achieve. This year, Adventist HealthCare has earned a site visit – a coveted and distinct recognition earned by only nine companies in the United States.

“We received the news with great excitement,” says Terry Forde, president and CEO of Adventist HealthCare. “The recognition symbolized by the site visit is a key indicator that our team members across our system are passionately committed to improvement in every area and to delivering world-class care to all members of our communities.”

“[The] site visit is a key indicator that our team members across our system are passionately committed to improvement in every area and to delivering world-class care to all members of our communities.”

– Terry Forde, president and CEO of Adventist HealthCare

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award began as a study to improve the effectiveness and competitiveness of US organizations. NIST scrutinized the best companies in the world and the methods they used in order to achieve high levels of performance. A framework, or criteria, for excellence emerged as common themes began to be recognized.

“As a faith-based healthcare system, we ought to subject ourselves to



Adventist HealthCare caregivers offer high-quality care with compassion to promote healing.

the highest scrutiny and strive to achieve excellence,” says John Sackett, Adventist HealthCare’s chief operating officer. “What better way than by using the Malcolm Baldrige framework? If you’re doing God’s work, there’s no excuse for mediocrity.”

Once a year, companies that are pursuing the Baldrige Award submit a 50-page application to the Baldrige Program. Emily Miller, Adventist HealthCare’s director for Performance Excellence and Strategic Planning, explains that “Baldrige examiners

spend more than 40 hours reviewing [the company’s] processes and results, then provide the organization with a score and its top strengths and opportunities for improvement.” If its score meets the performance threshold of the judges’ panel, the organization earns a site visit.

If it does not earn a visit, the organization is mailed a feedback report discussing strengths and opportunities to help it improve for the next year.

Earning a site visit is an honor because the examiners observe processes in action and provide even better feedback.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Sackett says Adventist HealthCare administrators will take examiners on a virtual guided tour through healthcare facilities. During the visit, the experts will have the opportunity to interview employees and view key performance indicators posted in each department.

Adventist HealthCare is the first multi-hospital health system in the Maryland/Washington, D.C./Virginia region to have ever earned a site visit. “Every single employee is responsible for this accomplishment,” emphasizes Miller. “It takes tremendous discipline and process management to achieve improved performance year-after-year.”

Sackett agrees. “This is a team sport. When processes are put in place, the whole company knows exactly what we are trying to achieve and each employee puts their shoulder to the wheel.”

Regardless of whether Adventist HealthCare wins the award this year, Sackett says, “Success for us is when we achieve our Mission which is ‘to extend God’s care through the ministry of physical, mental and spiritual healing’ on a world-class level to every person, every time.”

YOUR HEALING MINISTRY

KETTERING ADVENTIST HEALTHCARE NEWSLETTER

Soin Medical Center Grows to Serve the Community

By Christina Keresoma

When a brand-new building opens in a community, it may take years to become established. People do not rush in to new things unless they feel comfortable with the company. When Soin Medical Center opened

its doors to Beavercreek and the surrounding cities, it was backed by the reputation of Kettering Adventist HealthCare. Employees that filled the new hospital came from surrounding facilities within the network, so the culture carried through seamlessly. Since its opening in 2012, Soin has continued to grow. The emergency department expanded to meet the high demand for care, and the shelled space on the fifth floor was finished with more patient rooms. Next was an expanded infusion center and new clinical exam rooms.

This year a new five-story, 170,000-square-foot tower was completed in September.



The expansion added space for the operating rooms, ICU, sterile processing, surgery prep/recovery, and an intermediate care unit. A pre- and post-operation recovery unit will be expanded in January 2021.

“Soin was always built with the future in mind,” said Rick Dodds, president of Soin Medical Center and Greene Memorial Hospital. “The loyalty and quality of our staff is what has driven the success here at Soin and allows us to create this expansion to meet these needs.”

To protect the safety and well-being of our community and our teams, Kettering Adventist

HealthCare started using new ways to share new spaces with the community while maintaining social distancing. Virtual tours and ribbon-cutting events have been one way Kettering showcased our new spaces to our communities. These virtual events have been well-attended and people have enjoyed interacting with the new space in a different way.



 **KETTERING**
Adventist HealthCare.

THE NEWS

KETTERING ADVENTIST HEALTHCARE NEWSLETTER

Advanced Technology Enhances Care at Kettering Medical Center

Kettering Medical Center is the first and only hospital in the Midwest to use Brainlab Cirq® Robotics arm for minimally invasive spinal surgeries. The robotic arm is a lightweight, surgeon-controlled device designed to increase precision in navigated spinal surgery procedures.

The robotic arm easily mounts directly onto a standard operating room bed rail to provide an avenue for precise spinal drilling and pedicle screw placement. Patients that have an operation using the robotic arm have several advantages for their recovery including lower surgical complications, smaller incisions, less exposure to radiation and a lower chance of needing additional surgeries.



New Program Supports First Responders' Mental Health

Kettering Adventist HealthCare launched a new program to help support emergency personnel's mental health. Offered at Kettering Behavioral Medicine Center, the program is open to



helping firefighters, police officers, corrections officers, EMS/EMT, and health care workers.

"Our first responders face struggles and stress every day they put on the uniform," said Julie Manuel, clinical program manager at Kettering Behavioral Medicine Center. "Our goal is to help these heroes deal

with, process and accept the trauma they've experienced, as well as help them build some resilience so they can successfully continue their work."



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EMPLOYMENT

STALLANT HEALTH, a rural health clinic in Weimar, Calif., is accepting applications for an optometrist to join the team. Interested individuals should contact Marva by email: marva@stallanthealth.com.

ADVENTIST HEALTHCARE

Show your care and compassion as a registered nurse, and join the Adventist HealthCare family in Maryland. Bring your experience and passion to make a difference in the lives of our patients. For information and to apply: AdventistHealthCare.com/Careers

MISCELLANEOUS

CASKETS FOR ADVENTISTS:

High quality, 20-gauge steel. Includes picture of the second coming of Jesus in the head panel; picture of the Ten Commandments on either side; I Thess. 4:13-18 below the head panel and the three angels' messages at the end of the casket. Under \$800. For more information, call our office: (865) 882-0773, (865) 809-1428 or (865) 804-2388.

FLORIDA LIVING RETIREMENT COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE/VIRTUAL TOUR:

Open House drive-thru, 11/12/20 from 10 a.m.-12 p.m., 600 Edgehill Place, Apopka, FL 32703. Phone: (407) 862-2646. Includes apartment tour, gift bag and sack lunch. Also, Virtual Open House via Zoom, 11/12/20 at 10 a.m., 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. Join Zoom Meeting

ID: 840 4484 7401. Passcode: 397575. Zoom tour will include a special discount for a one-year contract. Check our website: FloridaLivingRetirement.com.

REAL ESTATE

TENNESSEE/GEORGIA

REALTOR: Specializing in buying or selling affordable homes in the Collegedale, Chattanooga, N. Georgia or surrounding areas. Howard Karst, Realty Specialists of Ooltewah, (423) 238-7325, is your best partner for experienced professional service. Phone: (301) 332-8471, or email: tsrak@msn.com.

TOWNHOUSE FOR SALE—

PITCAIRN PLACE, Burtonsville, Md. Available for immediate occupancy. Above grade, 1,744 sq. ft., 3 BR, 2.5 BA, large deck and a real brick wood burning fireplace and wood stove. The entry level, partially below grade in the back, has a one-car garage in the front and a walkout basement in the rear, plus another 1,000 sq. ft. of living space, a full bath, bonus room, main entrance with closet space and a recreation/living room and a finished open laundry area and furnace room. New roof, windows and back sliding glass doors to deck, and a new exterior HVAC unit. Sabbaths are quiet and respectful, as most of the neighbors do, or have worked for the church. This townhouse is part of a co-op or Greencastle Park Corporation with homeowner's association guidelines, insurance and tax perks. Asking \$319,000. Motivated seller. Contact Rick, rdahlbergjr@gmail.com, or (804) 647-3173.

CHOICE MOUNTAIN LAND

inside Cherokee National Forest in beautiful East Tennessee. Four tracts ranging in size from 10-50 acres. Large creek, cleared land, mixed forest with mature trees. On county-maintained road; utilities on site. Fifty miles to Southern Adventist University. Sixty miles to Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Near scenic rivers, lakes and trails. Ideal retreat, country living, retirement. Call, text or email for more information and pictures: (301) 332-8237 or Kathyr777@gmail.com.

SERVICES

MARYLAND ADVENTIST

DENTIST, DAVID LEE, DDS, FAGD, AFAAID, FICOI, FAACP, has practices located in Silver Spring and Columbia, Md. He is extensively trained in implant, cosmetic, TMD/TMJ, sleep apnea treatment, sedation and laser dentistry. Dr. Lee is an Associate Fellow of the American Academy of Implant Dentistry, as well as having many other certifications. For appointments, call (301) 649-5001 or (410) 461-6655. Mention this ad and receive a 10 percent discount on all services, excluding third-party payers. We welcome new patients!

ELTERNHAUS ASSISTED

LIVING, Adventist family-owned and -operated, provides specialized care from independent to total-care residents in a family setting. Delicious vegetarian food, activities, Friday night vespers and a shuttle to church Sabbath morning, just to name a few of the many options. Visit us at elternhausalf.com. Elternhaus also offers a great work environment for Adventist caregivers, LPNs and RNs. Call Tim Mayer, (240) 286-3635.

MARYLAND ADVENTIST OPHTHALMOLOGIST, PAMELA D'SOUZA-DAVID, M.D.,

is a board-certified eye surgeon with additional fellowship training in glaucoma. She offers routine eye exams, as well as cataract and glaucoma evaluations and surgery. Her office is located in Laurel, Md., and she is accepting new patients. Call: (240) 917-2770 for appointments.

MARYLAND ADVENTIST

PODIATRIST: Dr. Scott Nutter, highly trained, experienced and board certified, is available in several locations to help your foot/ankle problems, including arthritis, heel pain, spurs, diabetes, callouses, ingrown nails, sprains, fractures, warts, bunions, etc. Surgery, if needed,

at Adventist hospitals. Offices in Laurel and Maple Lawn/Fulton. Call (301) 317-6800.

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LEGAL NOTICES

POTOMAC CONFERENCE CORPORATION THIRD QUINQUENNIAL MEETING.

Legal notice is hereby given, that the Third Quinquennial Meeting of the Potomac Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists will convene at 10 a.m. Sunday, March 14, 2021, at Hylton Memorial Chapel, 14640 Potomac Mills Rd., Woodbridge, VA 22192.

The purpose of this meeting is to receive the corporation's 2015-2019 report, elect executive officers, vice presidents and members of the Executive Committee and other board and committee members; consider recommendations for amendments and revisions to the Constitution and Bylaws of the Potomac Conference Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists as well as Board of Education, Shenandoah Valley Academy and Takoma Academy Bylaws; and to transact such other business as may come before the delegates.

The Organizing Committee will meet Sunday, February 7, 2021, at 10 a.m. at the Richmond Evangelistic Center located at 5300 Walmsley Blvd, Richmond, VA 23224. The Nominating Committee will meet Sunday, February 28, 2021, at 10 a.m. at the Potomac Conference Corporation office located at 606 Greenville Ave., Staunton, VA 24401.

William K. Miller, *President*
Jose L. Vazquez, *Secretary*

OBITUARIES

BANFE, Jerrald R., born May 17, 1945, in Portage, Wis.; died

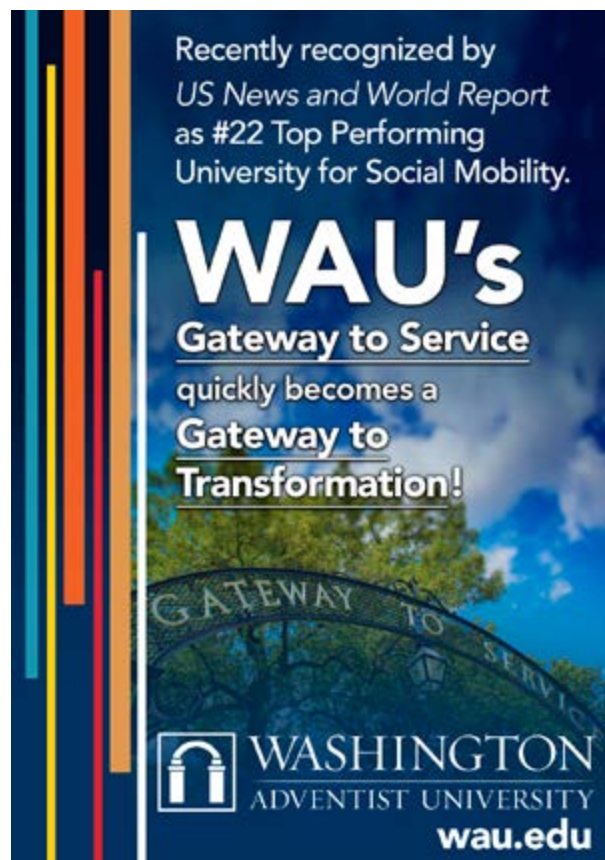
Bulletin Board

May 18, 2019, in Hagerstown, Md. He was a member of the Hagerstown (Md.) church. Jerry worked at the Review and Herald Publishing Assn., in Hagerstown, for many years before his retirement. He was an avid fisherman, gardener and craftsman. He enjoyed long walks on the beach and collecting seashells. He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Linda; his sons, Dale of Stillman Valley, Ill., David of Hagerstown, Timothy of Lindale, Texas, and Eric of Smithsburg, Md.; five grandchildren; a sister in Minnesota; and a brother in California.

HOFFER, William F., 76, of Bowling Green, Va. Born June 11, 1943, in Cleveland, Ohio, to Frank and Lucile Hoffer; died Thursday, July 11, 2019, surrounded by his family. Bill was raised in the Lakewood (Ohio) church and was a graduate of Mount Vernon Academy ('61). After serving in the U.S. Army as a medic during the Vietnam War, he graduated from Columbia Union College ('69) in Takoma Park, Md., now Washington Adventist University, where he was honored as Alumni of the Year in 1994. Bill was a gifted communicator and storyteller who authored countless magazine pieces for nationally renowned

periodicals and more than 20 popular nonfiction books. Many of these works became New York Times bestsellers, gained international notoriety and were chosen to become motion pictures. Titles include *Midnight Express*, *Not Without My Daughter*, *His Name is Ron*, and *Freefall*. Bill is remembered for his brilliant mind; written works; side-splitting humor; fearless risk-taking; boundless generosity; independent spirit; love of fun and games; horrible and legendary puns; and his unbending love for his family. He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Marilyn Mona, and is survived by daughters Jennifer (Raimund) Valacka and Amanda (Michael) Turner; his step-children, Caroline (Sam) Frye and Joseph (Lorena) Schmidt; six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his brothers, Pastor James (Ruth) Hoffer and Dennis (Lorie) Hoffer; and his sister, Alice Hoffer (Mike) Sinyard.

Interested in placing an obituary?
Visit columbiaunionvisitor.com/obituary to download an obituary submission form.



Sunset Calendar

	Nov 6	Nov 13	Nov 20	Nov 27	Dec 4	Dec 11	Dec 18	Dec 25
Baltimore	5:00	4:54	4:48	4:45	4:43	4:43	4:45	4:49
Cincinnati	5:32	5:26	5:20	5:17	5:15	5:15	5:17	5:21
Cleveland	5:16	5:09	5:03	4:59	4:57	4:57	4:59	5:02
Columbus	5:24	5:18	5:12	5:09	5:07	5:07	5:08	5:12
Jersey City	4:47	4:40	4:35	4:31	4:29	4:29	4:31	4:34
Norfolk	5:03	4:57	4:53	4:50	4:48	4:48	4:50	4:54
Parkersburg	5:20	5:13	5:08	5:05	5:03	5:03	5:05	5:08
Philadelphia	4:53	4:46	4:41	4:37	4:36	4:36	4:37	4:41
Pittsburgh	5:11	5:05	4:59	4:55	4:53	4:53	4:55	4:59
Reading	4:55	4:49	4:43	4:39	4:38	4:37	4:39	4:43
Richmond	5:07	5:01	4:56	4:53	5:02	5:02	5:04	5:08
Roanoke	5:17	5:11	5:07	5:03	4:52	4:52	4:54	4:57
Toledo	5:23	5:16	5:10	5:06	5:04	5:04	5:06	5:09
Trenton	4:51	4:44	4:39	4:35	4:33	4:33	4:35	4:38
Wash., D.C.	5:03	4:56	4:51	4:48	4:46	4:46	4:48	4:51

Columbia Union Revolving Fund

MAKING MINISTRY POSSIBLE



Reaching Hearts International, Laurel, Maryland

When we started our journey with a vision for a new church plant in the year 2000 we were worshipping in a tent in Spencerville, Maryland hoping to soon have a church of our own. Under the leadership of our then conference president, Elder Charles Cheatham, working closely with Pastor Michael Oxentencko, myself the treasurer, and few others, we finally prevailed in a landmark religious liberty victory in federal court that changed the law of the land and that opened up the providential door for us to build our church on 17 acres of fertile farm land in West Laurel, Maryland. All of our prayers to God in every hour of struggle leading up to the legal victory would have been for naught if the Columbia Union Revolving Fund had not come to our rescue at the last hour. Our friends at the Columbia Union Revolving Fund, working hand in hand with the executive officers of the Allegheny East Conference under the leadership of Elder Henry Fordham and Elder Lawrence Martin, found a way for us to realize our long held dream. Today we worship in a beautiful facility with a large cross that reaches high toward the sky showing the whole world that our church is a gift from God.

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 \$182 million resource that makes ministry possible.

By providing loans for more than 2,000 projects to date, CURF has helped further the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church all across the Columbia Union.

Learn more: (866) 721-CURF /
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CURF



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

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Degrees WAU Offers

Washington Adventist University offers academic programs leading to the following degrees.

Two-year Program Leading to Assoc. Degrees

Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) Radiologic Technology

Four-year Programs Leading to Bacc. Degrees

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)

Biology
Early Childhood Care and Education †
English
General Studies
Music
Psychology
Religion
Urban Ministry *
Theology

Bachelor of Music (B.M.)

Music Performance
Music Therapy **

Bachelor of Science (B.S.)

Accounting
Biology
Business Administration
Entrepreneurship *
Finance*
International Business *
Management*
Marketing *
Business Administration (Newbold College, England, only)
Computer Science
Counseling Psychology
Fitness & Sport Science
General Studies
Health Care Administration †
Health/Fitness Management
Health Science
Information Systems
Medical Imaging
Nursing
Nursing (RN-BS in Nursing) † *

† Offered only through School of Graduate and Professional Studies.
* Concentration or track
** 5-year program (min. 60 months)

Honors College

WAU has established the Honors College for those pursuing a bachelor's degree, whereby students can pursue Honors Interdisciplinary tracks, which contain a unique curriculum for students to enhance their individual degrees.

Programs Leading to Graduate Degrees

Master of Arts

Master of Arts
in Clinical Mental Health Counseling
Master of Arts
in Counseling Psychology
Master of Arts
in Health Care Administration

Master of Business Administration

Master of Business Administration

Master of Education

Master of Education in School Counseling

Master of Science

Master of Science
in Nursing and Business Leadership
Master of Science
in Nursing and Business Leadership (RN-MS in Nursing) *



WASHINGTON
ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

Washington Adventist University is located in Washington DC, our nation's capital. The university offers a dynamic blend of professional and liberal arts undergraduate and graduate degree options as essential for today's career opportunities. WAU also offers opportunities for spiritual enrichment and growth through its ministries and Sligo, our University Church. Founded in 1904 in scenic Takoma Park, this institution provides a distinctive learning environment through which Christian education is experienced by students from diverse global communities. Its location allows proximity and access to professionals and internships where critical decisions are made. Our vision is to provide a "Gateway to Service" for graduates who bring competence and moral leadership to our world.

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