

# VISITOR

CONNECTING COLUMBIA UNION SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2023 ■ VOLUME 128 ■ ISSUE 1

The image features two women standing outdoors. On the left is an older woman with short, curly white hair, wearing a teal blazer over a black top with a blue and red floral pattern. On the right is a younger woman with long black hair and glasses, wearing a red textured knit sweater and a black belt with a large gold buckle. They are both smiling slightly. The background consists of lush green leaves and branches, suggesting a park or garden setting. The lighting is bright and natural, indicating daytime.

## ANSWERING THE CALL

Female Pastors Recharged at First-Ever  
Columbia Union Women Clergy Retreat

# VISITOR

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The *Visitor* is a publication of the Columbia Union Conference reaching nearly 65,000 Seventh-day Adventist homes in the Mid-Atlantic area and 75,000 online readers. 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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**ABOUT THE COVER** ■ Linda Farley-Meyer and Chelsy Tyler share a dream of seeing the next generation of women accept the call to ministry without the hesitation and challenges that many women from previous generations have struggled with. Photo by Brad Barnwell.

## Editorial

DAVE WEIGLEY

### Hope Is a Powerful Word



When I used to ride motorcycles, I heard a saying, “There are only two kinds of motorcyclists: those who have been down, and those who will be down.” This is also true in the human experience. There are only two kinds of people: those who have been through a crisis and those who will encounter one in the future. Life is tough, fragile, unforgiving.

Nelson Mandela’s example of perseverance in tough times has always inspired me. He was incarcerated for 27 years for resisting apartheid and other injustices in South Africa. During his sentence, he endured hard labor, toiling in hot, dry conditions without appropriate clothing.

Mandela experienced a joyful moment in prison when his daughter visited him and introduced him to his granddaughter. It was the tribal custom for him—the grandfather—to name her. He chose the name Zaziwe, which translates to “hope.” Her name would have powerful significance to him and eventually the nation. With hope in his heart, he looked to a time when his country would no longer be regulated by apartheid so that his granddaughter and her generation would grow up in a free and equal society.

Hope is a powerful word and can be a beacon for us all. For Mandela, hope for a better future gave him power for a tolerable present.

When faced with challenges in 2023, there are three precious promises in the Bible—our guiding light—that I invite you to cling to:

■ **Live every day in the assurance of the “blessed hope.”**

Titus 2:13 tells us to wait “for our blessed hope, the appearing of ... [our] Savior Jesus Christ” (ESV). One day, Jesus will return as He has promised.

■ **Trust God in each trial we face; He will anchor us with hope.**

“We glory in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope” (James 1:3–4, BLB). Don’t be discouraged when faced with afflictions; instead, rejoice in the Lord, knowing that, with His help, we will come out stronger.

■ **God is with us and has our best interest in mind.** “For I know the plans I have for you’ ... ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future’” (Jer. 29:11, NIV). God’s ultimate goal is to bless

us—never doubt His intentions for our lives.

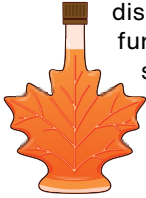
May our hope in God’s everlasting promises give us power to live in the present, no matter the circumstance.

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



**MAPLE SYRUP AND ABOLITIONISM?**

Why did early Adventist leaders promote the use of maple syrup over cane sugar? Michael Campbell, director of North American Division’s Archives, Statistics and Research, recently discovered a connection, further underscoring the strong emphasis in advocacy among early church leaders. Read more at [columbiaunionvisitor.com/maplesyrup](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/maplesyrup).



**COLUMBIA UNION SCHOOLS SEE GROWTH**

Columbia Union Conference’s early childhood education centers, elementary, junior academies, academies and colleges have a combined enrollment of 8,069 this school year, up from 8,027 last school year.

Donovan Ross, vice president of Education for the Columbia Union, says boarding academies are enjoying the highest enrollment rates since 2016, with 558 students at the union’s four boarding schools. Ross also

reports that six schools across the territory are in various stages of building projects.

Amid this recent growth, Ross reports many local schools are finding it challenging to hire much-needed teachers and principals. The union team continues to provide leadership development to help nurture educators, including a recent principals’ bootcamp, with 40 participating principals.

**‘EVERY ADVENTIST IS A COMMUNICATOR’**

Speakers at the recent Society of Adventist Communicators Convention repeatedly shared on the growing need for members to personally witness, especially



**147,350**

The number of members in the Columbia Union’s 856 churches and companies, as of September 30—an increase of 966 members since last quarter.

—As reported by Celeste Ryan Blyden, the union’s executive secretary, at the fall executive committee meeting.

online. “Every Seventh-day Adventist is a communicator,” said Rajmund Dabrowski, longtime communicator.

**UNION FUNDS 61 CHURCH PLANTS**

Frank Bondurant, vice president of Ministries Development for the Columbia Union, shares that in 2022, the union helped fund 61 church planting projects (22 new, 39 existing).

The department has helped secure \$449,500 in funding for local church and ministry projects across the union this year—including urban centers of influence, Adventist Community Services/ Disaster Relief, youth/young adult projects and more, including Allegheny East Conference’s “The Blue Print,” a financial literacy course that teaches financial stewardship and debt reduction in Montgomery County, Maryland.

**MAKE THAT MUSIC**

In her years as a musician and music therapist, Alicia Barksdale, professor and director of the Music Therapy program at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md.—the only Music Therapy program in the Seventh-day Adventist Church system and the state of Maryland—says she has seen some miraculous healing through music. She’s



witnessed people come out of comas after hearing a favorite song; others belting into song after the inability to speak; a patient who worked through grief by playing music when no words could express their pain.

Barksdale says everyone should incorporate music-making into their lives for health reasons. “We all know anecdotally that music helps in daily life,” she says, noting that research shows music can help calm the vagus nerve—part of the system that controls digestion, heart rate and the immune system. She adds that when we’re in a stress response mode, “listening to music can really help to reset that vagus nerve.”

Other benefits of music-making include spiritual and community bonding, increased neuron connections in aging adults, and help in child development.



**Make Music in 2023!**

- Sing! (Why not join a choir? Or sing in the shower!)
- Play or learn to play an instrument
- Create a playlist of music that relaxes you when stressed
- Enroll children in music classes

**THE REST OF THE STORY:** Read full content at [columbiaunionvisitor.com/upfront](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/upfront).

## COLUMBIA UNION MEMBERS REMEMBER HAROLD LEE

Harold L. Lee, president of the Columbia Union Conference from 1998–2006, passed away Wednesday, November 9.

Born in Wellsburg, W.Va., Lee was introduced to the Seventh-day Adventist message in Ohio by his sister Rosa. After he attended Oakwood College (now Oakwood University) in Alabama, he started what would be more than 40 years of ministry



pastoring an Ohio congregation in the Allegheny West Conference.

He also served at the Caribbean Union Conference, North American Division and Allegheny East Conference in the Stewardship departments; in the Department of Church Ministries at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists; and as vice president of Development and Public Relations at (then) Oakwood College in Huntsville, Ala. Prior to becoming president, he also served as the executive secretary of the Columbia Union from 1992–1998.

“We have lost a thoughtful, contemplative leader who gave to our union, during administrative tenure, a positive trajectory in establishing outstanding governance. His legacy continues to make a contribution in providing guidance and governance support for many of our health care institutions,” says Dave Weigley, Columbia Union president.

# 42

THE NUMBER OF  
EVANGELISTIC MEETINGS  
THAT RECENTLY  
HAPPENED ACROSS  
THE PENNSYLVANIA  
CONFERENCE

## KETTERING HEALTH CEO FRED MANCHUR RETIRES

Last month, Fred Manchur, Kettering Health’s chief executive officer (CEO), retired from his position.

“It has been the greatest blessing of my life to work alongside the incredible medical professionals and staff of Kettering Health for more than 20 years. Their accomplishments and the progress we have made as a hospital system are a great source of pride for me in our service to this community,” says Manchur.

Dave Weigley, Columbia Union president and chair of the Kettering Health board, said that Manchur gave talented leadership to Kettering, helping to grow the organization. “He was so creative and out of the box. He made a real indelible mark in extending the Adventist mission of health care in the greater Dayton area.”

Michael Mewhirter, who served as chief financial officer (CFO), was named interim chief executive officer.



## Things You Should Know



■ In a recent report, Emmanuel Asiedu, Columbia Union’s treasurer, said that as of last quarter, the union’s tithe was \$110,566,644. This is a record 2.86 percent increase in tithe since last year. He added that all the conferences are doing extremely well financially. “We serve a God that is powerful, and I believe that He gives us money, not to hoard, but money for the mission, for education. So, Columbia Union, that is what we’ll continue to do,” he said.

■ The *Visitor* team wants to make Seventh-day Adventist news more accessible to readers. Download the Columbia Union Conference app by searching the Google Play or Apple App stores now.

■ Want another 2023 Columbia Union Conference calendar? For the cost of shipping, order extra calendars by calling (800) 545-2449. Ask for the “2023 Columbia Union Calendar.”

■ All Potomac Conference churches recently received funds to enhance their Media Ministries. The *Visitor* staff interviewed Ricard Castillo, Potomac’s Media director, for tips that all churches can use to improve this vital ministry.

**NEW ASSOCIATE TREASURER JOINS UNION**

Robert Chandler recently joined the Columbia Union Conference team as the associate treasurer for Accounting



Information Systems. He previously served as the treasurer at the Northeastern Conference.

“Robert has a rare combination of knowledge and experience in nonprofit accounting and accounting information systems application,” says Emmanuel Asideu, treasurer.

**THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG?**

Lauri Nichols, a high school teacher, offered to tutor Yarelix Rachel Velez (pictured) after Velez started attending the public school where Nichols taught. Velez, a Seventh-day Adventist, was praying for someone she could take to church. Little did Nichols know that her student was



actually “tutoring” and guiding her to a new home church—Mountain View Conference’s Cumberland (Md.) church. Watch their story at [columbiaunionvisitor.com/chickensoregg](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/chickensoregg).

**Kid’s Corner**



**The Story of Anna Knight**

**BUT MOTHER THE BIBLE SAYS SABBATH IS GOD’S DAY.**

**I DON’T CARE! EVERYONE WORKS AROUND HERE! INCLUDING YOU. GET BACK TO WORK!**

**I CAN’T STAY HERE ANYMORE! GOD HAS SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR ME TO DO WITH MY LIFE.**

**WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO GET CLEVER, CHILD? I WAS A SLAVE AND ALL YOU CAN HOPE TO BE IS A FARM-HAND! GO WEED THE GARDEN.**

**WITHOUT MONEY BUT WITH GREAT FAITH IN GOD, ANNA SET OUT TO GET AN EDUCATION. AFTER MANY YEARS OF HARD WORK AND MIRACLES ANNA GRADUATED AS A NURSE.**

**REMEMBERING HER STRUGGLE TO READ AND WRITE, ANNA WENT RIGHT BACK HOME AND BUILT A SCHOOL FOR HER COMMUNITY.**

**GOD DID HAVE BIG PLANS FOR ANNA. SHE STARTED A SCHOOL AND THEN WORKED AS A MISSIONARY IN INDIA FOR SIX YEARS. AFTER HER MISSION WORK ANNA BECAME A BIBLE INSTRUCTOR AND HELPED MANY SCHOOLS GET STARTED. ANNA NEVER FORGOT THAT NO MATTER WHAT OTHERS SAID TO DISCOURAGE HER, SHE KNEW SHE WAS SPECIAL TO GOD AND THAT HE HAD A PLAN FOR HER LIFE.**

**ANNA PERSISTED AND TAUGHT HERSELF TO READ AND WRITE. READING MATERIAL WAS HARD TO COME BY, BUT SHE FOUND A PENPAL WHO SENT HER READING MATERIAL AND BIBLE STUDIES. SOON ANNA GAVE HER HEART TO JESUS AND WANTED TO SHARE HER FAITH WITH OTHERS.**

**I’M SO PROUD OF YOU, CHILD!**

In 2023, we will publish a children’s story in each issue that shares the experiences of the founders and early members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The White Estate provided this story of Anna Knight, the first black Adventist woman to be sent as a missionary.

# Noticias

V. MICHELLE BERNARD



## LOS MIEMBROS DE LA COLUMBIA UNION RECUERDAN A HAROLD LEE

Harold L. Lee, presidente de la Columbia Union Conference de 1998 al 2006, falleció el 9 de noviembre.

Después de asistir a Oakwood College (ahora Oakwood University) en Alabama, comenzó lo que serían más de 40 años de ministerio, pastoreando una congregación de Ohio en la Allegheny West Conference. También se desempeñó en la

Caribbean Union Conference, North American Division and Allegheny East Conference; en el Departamento de Ministerios de la Iglesia de la General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Antes de convertirse en presidente, también se desempeñó como secretario ejecutivo de la Columbia Union.

## EL DIRECTOR EJECUTIVO DE KETTERING HEALTH, FRED MANCHUR, ANUNCIA SU RETIRO



El mes pasado, Fred Manchur, director financiero de Kettering Health, se retiró de su cargo.

“Ha sido la mayor bendición de mi vida trabajar junto a los increíbles profesionales médicos y el personal de Kettering Health durante más de 20 años”, dice Manchur.

Michael Mewhirter, actual director financiero, se desempeñará como director ejecutivo interino.

## LAS MUJERES CLÉRIGOS DE COLUMBIA UNION SE REÚNEN EN UN RETIRO HISTÓRICO

Unas 50 clérigos de toda la Columbia Union Conference se reunieron en el reciente Retiro de Mujeres Clérigos de la Columbia Union.

Organizado por el equipo de liderazgo de la Columbia Union, el evento inaugural, con el tema ‘Refrescado, Renovado, Recargado’, se llevó a cabo en un centro de retiro en Marriottsville, Maryland. El retiro brindó una oportunidad para mujeres pastoras, capellanas, estudiantes y líderes locales de conferencias, hospitales y de la Washington Adventist University (WAU) para compartir experiencias, trabajar en red, desarrollar habilidades y aprender herramientas para aprovechar mejor sus dones y talentos. Y para relajarse.

## Cosas Que Deberías Saber



■ El equipo del *Visitor* quiere que las noticias Adventistas del Séptimo Día sean más accesibles. Descargue la aplicación de la Columbia Union Conference desde las tiendas Google Play o Apple App ahora.

■ ¿Quiere otro calendario 2023 de la Columbia Union Conference? Por solo el costo de envío, solicite calendarios adicionales llamando al (800) 545-2449. Solicite el “2023 Columbia Union Calendar.”

■ En un informe reciente, Emmanuel Asiedu, tesorero de la Columbia Union, dijo que, hasta el último trimestre, el diezmo de la unión fue de \$110,566,644. Este es un aumento récord de 2.86 por ciento en el diezmo desde el año pasado.

■ Frank Bondurant, vicepresidente del Desarrollo de Ministerios de la Columbia Union, comparte que en el 2022, la unión ayudó a financiar 61 proyectos de plantación de iglesias (22 nuevos, 39 existentes).

Este año, el departamento ha ayudado a obtener \$449,500 en fondos para proyectos de iglesias y ministerios locales en toda la unión, incluidos centros urbanos de influencia, servicios comunitarios adventistas/ayuda en casos de desastre, proyectos para jóvenes/jóvenes adultos y más.



*En un tiempo especial de oración, las asistentes oraron y alentaron a los líderes de la iglesia mientras guían sus respectivas conferencias.*

TRADUCCIÓN POR DOMITILLA ROSETTE

# Columbia Union Revolving Fund

MAKING MINISTRY POSSIBLE



## Remnant Seventh-day Adventist Congregation Moves to Permanent Home

The Remnant Seventh-day Adventist congregation moved to its newly purchased church complex in November 2018, fulfilling a long-standing need and dream. The new facility, located at 15121 McKnew Road in Burtonsville, Maryland, houses a sanctuary with a capacity of 400, a number of class/meeting rooms, offices, kitchen and a fellowship hall/gymnasium that can hold more than 500 people. Senior Pastor Sujjan John, Youth Pastor Regie Samuel and the church members are immensely thankful to God for His leading and mercies. They request your prayers and goodwill as they have entered a new phase in their ministry and service.

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 \$185 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 | [columbiaunionrevolvingfund.org](http://columbiaunionrevolvingfund.org)



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# Answering THE CALL

By Lori Futcher

FEMALE PASTORS RECHARGED AT FIRST-EVER COLUMBIA UNION WOMEN CLERGY RETREAT

**G**od has called you,” said Dave Weigley, president of the Columbia Union Conference, as he stood in front of a gathering of 50 female pastors, chaplains and theology students at the first-ever Columbia Union Women Clergy Retreat. “You have answered the call. Thank you for your service.”

The three-day, two-night retreat began with Celeste Ryan Blyden (right), Columbia Union’s executive secretary, inviting participants to leave their worries, stresses and duties behind and encouraging her sisters in ministry to follow the direction Jesus gave His disciples to “come rest awhile.”

As women spoke in confidentiality with each other around the tables that first evening, there were tears and hugs. “I’m not in a good place,” one participant said, with her eyes welling. Busy schedules, loneliness, isolation and doubt were among the burdens shared.

“Sometimes when you feel alone, you can go down a path where you start to question things,” says Marilyn Scott, associate pastor at Chesapeake Conference’s New Hope church in Fulton, Md., and a member of the retreat planning team, “so this is a way to rally all of us together as women, to say to one another, ‘We’re going to make it through, because God has called us to do it.’”

The event was also a celebration of the call women in attendance had answered. Since the time the Columbia Union decided to begin ordaining women 10 years ago, the number of female pastors in the union has increased from 20 to 50. “We have grown by 150 percent,” said Blyden in her opening comments, “and we praise God for each of you and for how God is using you for such a time as this.”



## Called by God

Every woman at the retreat, held in Marriottsville, Md., had a story of how God had called her into the ministry, and for many, that story involved a delay in heeding the call, as these women questioned their role in the church.

Tierra Best, a theology major at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md., started college with a major in music therapy, but halfway through her first semester, she wasn’t fitting into the program the way she had envisioned. Meanwhile, her passion for the Bible was becoming evident in the religion class she was taking.

One day, her religion professor confronted her with something she had not told him. “Tierra, you’re struggling right now,” he stated. “You want to switch over.”

“How did you know?” she asked.

“I can sense your passion in class,” he responded. “Why aren’t you a theology major?”

Best admitted, “I’m just scared.”

The conversation helped her realize music therapy had been her plan, but not God’s plan. Despite insecurities that stemmed from not looking like those she saw in ministry, Best decided to comply with God’s calling and switched her major to theology.

Though still a student, Best has already faced the prejudices common to women pastors. One of her peers told her she needs to repent for her choice of major. But Best is keeping her eyes focused on God,

*Berenice Nunes, Kettering Health chaplain, anoints Glauca Teixeira, a certified chaplain and counselor.*





saying, “If I look at God and the mission and how others have been blessed, how am I going to let one person [stop me]?”

Unlike Best, who found her calling at a young age, Lori Farr, now a pastor at Ohio Conference’s Miamisburg church, spent her young adult years outside of the church. At the age of 38, she understood the gospel for the first time. Becoming active in a local church plant, she even began preaching from time to time under the mentorship of her pastor.

When she felt God calling her to Andrews University (Mich.) to prepare for full-time ministry, she resisted. *God, I just, I just can’t*, she argued.

One Sabbath, as Farr finished preaching, a woman she knew came up to her and said, “Last night, God put you on my heart. The Holy Spirit is working on you to do something ... that you’re afraid to do. And God is saying you need to go.”

Tears streamed down Farr’s face. She had told no one of her struggle. But she could not deny the Holy Spirit’s leading, especially when her brother called that afternoon with a similar message. After an hours-long conversation with God, Farr was finally ready to agree to the calling.

Farr didn’t have an easy transition into the ministry. In one of her church districts, she wasn’t even allowed to enter the doors of one of her churches. But she is now happy to be pastoring at a church that welcomes her.

“I didn’t have a lot of confidence coming into the ministry because I couldn’t understand why God would choose this girl,” Farr says. “God has grown me in His confidence. I know it’s not Lori, but it’s God in Lori.”

Marleena Debrough, now a pastor at Allegheny East Conference’s Willow Grove (Pa.) church, has also learned to find her confidence in God. “I don’t have to be received by you. I don’t have to be approved by you, because I already know what God is calling me to do,” she says.

That was not always the case. When she was first asked to become an elder in her church, it took her



a while to accept that call. But a couple years after that, she became head elder.

“You’re going to be a pastor someday,” her pastor told her a couple years after she became head elder.

“I didn’t believe that,” says Debrough, who denied God’s calling for five years. “The call just continued to happen until I finally consented and went to school.”

Debrough graduated in 2015, the same year that delegates at a General Conference Session voted down the question about whether divisions can decide to ordain women pastors. People were questioning if women should serve as pastors or even elders, even though both had been approved decades ago. It was amid this confusion that Debrough was assigned to her first church, which was also her home church.

“A lot of people left the church when I shifted from the head elder to pastor,” Debrough says. “It was very challenging.”

Yet through her ministry, Debrough has seen hearts softened and those who were once against women pastors embrace God’s calling in her life.

“They see the Holy Spirit working in us,” Debrough observes, “because—and I want to make this point very clear—none of us become pastors because we just want to, because it’s a very tough role, especially as female pastors, [there’s] a lot of persecution that comes ... so you have to know that God has called you.”

What is it that keeps these women on a career path where there is so much opposition? Many





*Retreat attendees pray for church leadership, including Charles A. Tapp, Potomac Conference president.*

attest that it is witnessing the Holy Spirit working through them.

“That’s what really put me in the ministry, is looking at people’s transformation ... once they come into the faith,” says Rosalind Beswick, lay pastor at Allegheny West Conference’s Hillside church in Zanesville, Ohio.

## Accepted by God and Others

Even though these women know God has called them, they become weary battling the questioning and the roadblocks.

Linda Farley-Meyer, now a visitation pastor at Ohio Conference’s Kettering church, had been ministering in an unpaid role with her pastor husband for decades. As her husband’s health declined, her responsibilities at the church increased until she was doing ministry full time. Farley-Meyer recognized God’s calling on her heart and asked leaders if the work she was doing at her husband’s church could be officially recognized in the role of associate pastor. Her request was declined.

“It was at that point I realized that I was expected but not accepted,” says Farley-Meyer.

The response she had received led to questioning, *God, why did you call me? Why did you open these doors and then close them?*

Calling a friend at Kettering church, Farley-Meyer asked, “Is ministry something that a woman could do?”

This time the answer was, “Absolutely, yes.”

At an ordination ceremony in 2013, during which Farley-Meyer and Farr, along with two other female clergy, were ordained, a visiting conference president who participated in the service said, “I am regretful that it has taken the church so many years to acknowledge [these women in ministry] ... shame on us that we’ve taken this long.”

Farley-Meyer shares, “You know, just hearing those words ... is an amazing gift.”

## The Next Generation

Farley-Meyer hopes that this kind of recognition will help girls growing up in the church respond to the call faster than she and her peers did. Pastor Chelsy Tyler, a young adult who works with youth and young adults at Chesapeake Conference’s New Hope church in Fulton, Md., shares that dream.

“There was actually a point where I kind of lost hope that the future could change,” Tyler admitted to conference and union leaders at a luncheon held during the retreat where leaders affirmed and encouraged the women clergy, “but when I see leaders and administrators such as yourselves who model the type of leadership that can change the future, it helps flip the script. When I see administrators ... who not only support women but also empower us ... and generally care about us as human beings, giving us spaces like this to retreat with Jesus and nurture for our souls, that helps restore my hope that the future can change [for] the women and younger sisters in Christ whom Christ’s call continues to be extended to.”

It is likely that the number of female pastors serving is only going to continue increasing. Not only are more women entering the ministry, but some female pastors are breaking out of the roles traditionally assigned to women, such as family or children’s pastors, and taking leadership roles as executive or lead pastors.

“While women in pastoral ministry have been diligently preparing and continue to rise to the occasion to serve with distinction, they cannot break the stained-glass ceilings by themselves,” says Lola Moore Johnston, lead pastor at Potomac Conference’s Restoration Praise Center church in Bowie, Md. “We need administrators willing to cut new paths and blaze trails by preparing and assigning women to serve in large church assignments and conference positions.”

At the event, there was a sense that God is multiplying the number of women in ministry to help bring





Leadership coach Leah Dean shared strategies for developing and maximizing strengths.

about the close of the work here on earth.

“What makes [it] possible to reach all around the world ... is the work of men and women of God,” said Eduardo Monteiro, director of the ministerial and evangelism departments for the New Jersey Conference, “and I believe that we will only be able ... to finish the commission that God has given us if we’re working together. If it depends only on men, it will not be possible. ... It is in this effort that we work together.”

Many of the pastors attending the retreat believe with this kind of teamwork—women continuing to be receptive to the Holy Spirit’s calling and men continuing to support their peers in ministry—the church will see the body of Christ working in unity to share the beautiful story of God’s unfailing love with the world around us.

## Together We Can

It was the planning team’s goal to fill the women in attendance with new energy to continue the mission God has given them, not only by uplifting worships and encouraging seminars, but by hands-on activities, such as “Paint and Heal (pictured, left),” led by Regina Johnson, administrative pastor at Allegheny West Conference’s Grace Community church in Cleveland, Ohio, and “Joy in the Journal,” led by Debbie Howell, interim lay pastor at the Potomac Conference Beltsville (Md.) church’s Tech Road campus. Based on comments from those in attendance, this goal was successfully accomplished.

Cheryl Wilson-Bridges, a chaplain for Adventist HealthCare’s Fort Washington Medical Center in Maryland who helped plan the worships for the retreat, says, “It’s wonderful to feel like a part of something larger than just you.”

Pranitha Fielder, administrative pastor for Potomac Conference’s Sligo church in Takoma Park, Md., and member of the retreat planning team, says,

## STRENGTHENING THE SPIRIT

**H**ow can female pastors follow the calling God has placed in their hearts while balancing that with the demands of those around them?

This question of balance was addressed by many of the speakers as part of the retreat’s emphasis on self-care. Here is a glimpse of what the women learned.

**1 RECOGNIZE THAT YOU ARE ENOUGH.** “On one hand, I feel like I’m not enough: I’m not smart enough, talented enough, don’t have enough experience,” said a session speaker Kadi Cole, an author and pastoral trainer, describing a feeling that is common for many women. “On the other hand, we see women who feel like they’re too much. ... Most women feel some combination of both. ... It’s ironic that we feel not enough and too much at the same time. ... You aren’t in ministry by mistake. This is the role that God has for you, and you are the person to fulfill it.”

**2 TAKE TIME FOR THE WALK.** “We are made prisoners by time barriers,” said worship speaker Stephanie Grant, manager of Spiritual Care at Adventist HealthCare Shady Grove Medical Center. “We become busy. Within ourselves we develop an inner sense of rush and haste. ... It takes time to cultivate the mind. It takes time to grow in wisdom. It takes time to savor the qualities of living. ... It takes time to walk with God. If you want to walk with God, the first thing you must do is walk.”

**3 LEAVE THE OUTCOMES TO GOD.** “Are you worried about the outcomes like Jonah?” asked worship speaker Denny Rengifo, Palliative Care chaplain at Adventist HealthCare White Oak Medical Center. “Do you think it’s really up to you? God called you; let Him be in charge. Are you trying to show your worth by volunteering for everything? You can’t earn your call. It’s already been given to you. ... God says to all of us, ‘I know you. I have appointed you. I have equipped you.’”

“The retreat forced me to slow down. Pastoring while a wife, a mom and an adjunct professor can be consuming. ... This retreat gave me just that. It was like a recalibration.”

Berenice Nunes, a chaplain for Kettering Health in Ohio, agrees. “This is what we needed. This is so beautiful because I feel renewed. I feel encouraged.”

To watch a video of the Columbia Union Women Clergy Retreat, visit [columbiaunionvisitor.com/retreat](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/retreat).

*Lori Fitcher is a freelance writer who met and married her husband in the Columbia Union Conference and now lives in Nampa, Idaho.*

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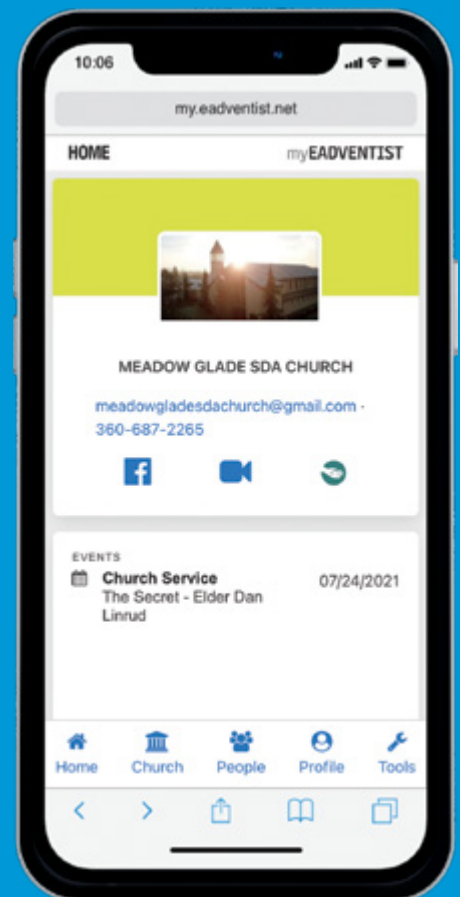
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# ALLEGHENY EAST *Exposé*

## New Officers Elected at Quinquennial Constituency

At the recent Allegheny East Conference (AEC) Second Quinquennial Constituency meeting, hosted at the Metropolitan church in Hyattsville, Md., delegates and guests reflected on the conference's challenges and opportunities during the previous term.

During the session, delegates elected Marcellus T. Robinson as president (pictured, center) and Gary Wimbish as vice president for administration (pictured, left). Lawrance E. Martin was re-elected as vice president for finance (pictured, right). Upon being voted, Robinson stated, "I want to humbly thank you for this opportunity. By God's grace, I look forward to serving you as we work together to do God's will."

Anthony Medley joined the team as the new Health Ministries director, replacing Leah Scott, who retired after serving for 19 years.

AEC and Columbia Union Conference leaders expressed appreciation to Pete Palmer and his wife, Dahlia, for their service to the conference the past year.

Palmer, who served as president since Henry J. Fordham, III's tragic passing in 2021, shared a report consisting of video interviews with departmental



leaders, as well as a video tribute to Leah Scott, celebrating her service to health ministry. There was also a tribute video and a moment of silence recognizing Fordham, who began the term in 2017.

Wimbish's video report highlighted the growth and dips in membership over the term, while Martin highlighted how the conference remained financially vibrant during the pandemic.

Delegates also voted on policy changes, made recommendations to the bylaws and voted on a report from Pine Forge Academy (Pa.). Visit [visitaec.org/constituency](http://visitaec.org/constituency) to view video presentations from the session.

## Campostella Heights Church Celebrates 105 Years

The Campostella Heights church in Norfolk, Va., recently celebrated its 105th church anniversary. Prior to the formation of the Allegheny East Conference, Campostella, previously known as the



*Following an appeal by Pastor David B. Franklin (holding mic), two gentlemen take a stand to be baptized, with support from Pastor Ishmael S. Wade (far left) and church elders.*

Bethel church, was already serving what is now known as the Tidewater area.

During their anniversary celebration, current and former members and faith partners had the opportunity to fellowship. Speaker David B. Franklin, pastor of the Miracle City church in Baltimore, presented the message, followed by two individuals who took a stand to be baptized.

The location of Campostella provides several areas of impact to the community. The church is planning to expand its food pantry, collaborate with the Norfolk Public School District through their faith-based partnerships initiative, form new partnerships with other community organizations, and continue its Community Fun Day.

Ishmael S. Wade, Campostella's pastor, shared his vision for the church moving forward. "I see [our church as] more than just *in* the community," he says, "but a church that is *for* the community and a church that is *with* the community."

## Mount Zion Miracle Station Celebrates 30 Years

The Mount Zion Miracle Station church in Wilmington, Del., recently celebrated its 30th anniversary. Guest speaker Jimmie Gibson, who served as pastor from 2019–2021, presented the message. Carlos McConico, current pastor, presented a plaque to Yolanda Wise-Wesley (pictured), an elder and the lone charter member.

Mount Zion has various ministries for church and community members. One is a vibrant van ministry in which volunteers take church members to various appointments and outings as needed. The church also provides transportation to students at the Sharon Temple Adventist School in North Wilmington, Del. The church currently operates a food pantry on the third Sabbath of every month. Community members and families can either pick up items at the church or have them delivered to their homes.

Under the pastoral leadership of Melvyn Hayden, II, who served from 2015–2022, the church established the “Temple Plan.” This plan sponsors most, if not all, of the tuition needs for students who attend Sharon Temple. Currently, there are 10 children sponsored. The church also established the Melvyn and Denise Hayden Scholarship in 2022 to be awarded to a worthy student. As a result of this partnership with Sharon Temple, 10 individuals have



been baptized.

During the service, Richard Reeves, who pastored from 2006–2014, and his wife, Sheryl, shared warm reflections. Reeves was the catalyst for the church moving to its current location in 2006.

Prayerfully, Mount Zion is looking forward to carrying on its legacy of service to the community. “I pray that the blessings of God on Mount Zion Miracle Station continue to flow from the ‘Mount’ to all of Delaware and the world,” shares McConico. —*Jimmie Gibson, Former Mount Zion Lay Pastor*

## Baltimore Extended Area Pathfinders Hold Investiture

The Baltimore Extended Area Pathfinders recently held its first in-person investiture service since the pandemic, bringing together more than 100 young people and parents to the Truth



*Pathfinders from the Living Springs, Miracle City and Truth Tabernacle clubs take part in an in-person investiture.*

Tabernacle church in York, Pa. The pandemic presented numerous challenges running the Pathfinder program since most activities are hands-on. While many clubs across the globe were unable to run full-scale activities, three clubs in the Baltimore area managed to run activities uninterrupted: Living Springs, Miracle City and Truth Tabernacle.

These clubs pulled staff resources together and conducted joint virtual instruction using the Moodle platform, provided by Allegheny East Conference’s Youth Ministries Department. For the past two years, these clubs have covered the Pathfinder curriculum and have invested Pathfinders to the next level.

“We have about nine clubs in the area, and our goal is to have an active and vibrant club in each of our church congregations in the area,” says Truphena Choti, Baltimore Extended Area Pathfinder coordinator.

## ‘Walk With the Pastor’ Takes Off

Kwesi Gyimah, pastor of the Columbus (Ohio) All Nations church, began “Walk with the Pastor” events in spring of 2022 to incorporate physical activity and interaction outside of the church while discussing spiritual matters. “Our church has potlucks every Sabbath, and during our fellowship, members often use the time to ask me questions related to the sermon or on topics they have been thinking about,” says Gyimah. “I realized there’s a lot that people want to know, but that 25 to 30 minutes from the pulpit or in Sabbath School is sometimes not enough.”

Gyimah says the walking activity has allowed for conversations with members ranging from Seventh-day Adventist doctrine to family life and relationship issues. “One of the conversations that stands out is on the nature of God and His attributes of being all powerful and all-knowing, yet allowing bad things to happen,” he says. “Others have been about relationships with one another and how we treat people.”

According to Gyimah, people are more comfortable asking these types of questions in a social setting than in a church group setting. “I think this



*Columbus All Nations church members Ruby Sefa, Anna Ezekiel, Pastor Kwesi Gyimah and Miriam Ongera “Walk with the Pastor.”*

platform makes it easy to ask any question, so members look forward to walking with the pastor,” he says. “We meet at the Westerville Sports Complex every other Sunday at 8 a.m., and all are welcome.”

## Ethan Temple Welcomes Associate Pastor

Ethan Temple church members in Clayton, Ohio, recently welcomed Daniel Golovenko as the new associate pastor. Golovenko was born and raised in



*Joel Johnson (far right), the conference’s executive vice president, commends Ethan Temple’s new Associate Pastor Daniel Golovenko, as his father, Pastor Alex Golovenko (far left), and Ethan Temple’s Senior Pastor John Trusty look on.*

Canada. After high school, he discovered Oakwood University (Ala.) while on a trip with his father, and he immediately enrolled. He served on several Campus Ministries teams and worked as a resident assistant and a Biblical Languages tutor. A recent graduate from the university, Golovenko accepted the call to join the Allegheny West Conference.

Members say Golovenko has a quiet, unassuming demeanor that conveys a winsome and approachable humility, much like how Jesus is described in the Bible. The atmosphere about him invites souls to “come and see.” Members add that his love for God and God’s Word is evidenced in his careful treatment of scripture and skillful message delivery, and his explanations and examples make the ancient texts relevant.

Ethan Temple members believe the Lord has great plans for Golovenko’s life and ministry, as well as the church’s congregation and community.—*Camille Lewis, Communication Leader*



## Shiloh Hosts International Food Festival

The Shiloh Cincinnati (Ohio) church recently hosted an International Food Fair to conclude its “We are Family” international weekend. The weekend was a celebration of the diversity and culture represented within the Shiloh church family. Shiloh’s Family Ministries Department organized the event with church member Amanda Smith.

Members prepared dishes from their native countries and wore traditional attire or colors of their flags. Thirteen countries were represented during the food fair, including Ghana, Italy, Dominica, Haiti, Jamaica, Canada, the United States, and the Philippines.

Approximately 100 people attended the public fundraising event. A portion of the proceeds will go to MORTAR Cincinnati, a nonprofit organization that offers mentoring and resources to entrepreneurs starting or growing their businesses.

The Family Ministries Department leaders say the International Food Fair was a great way for Shiloh to connect with the community and implement the



*Grandmother Francine Graham Sr., daughter Francine Graham Jr., and granddaughter Dawcin Sanders tend the United States booth at Shiloh Cincinnati’s International Food Fair.*

mission to impact the city of Cincinnati.—*Tiffany Forde, Communication Leader*

# Share Your Testimony

# 3

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- **TEXT** the word **TESTIMONY** to the number **84576** to receive a callback.
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The AWC Communication department is currently looking for testimonies, life experiences and stories told by our church members that reveal God’s power to save and transform lives.

\*\*\* No writing necessary\*\*\*



Seventh-day Adventist Church  
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Communication Department



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## The Inside Edge for the New Year

If you're thinking that things in this world don't appear to be making much sense these days, you're not alone, and it's because they don't. The confusion and societal upheavals we are witnessing and experiencing today—which may seem new and unheard of—are just the current versions of what has been going on long before any of us came onto the scene. The difference today is that, unlike previous generations, we have instant, digital access to virtually everything in real time, including what's happening around the world.

As we know, since sin was allowed into this world by the first humans millennia ago, nothing on this planet has been what God originally intended it to be. And while thousands of generations have come and gone, the root problem remains the same: Sin has never made much sense in light of the great controversy between good and evil. Living contrary to God's will has brought incomprehensible heartache and sadness to this planet and has destroyed the lives of countless millions. The bad news is, as God's Word makes clear, this pattern of destruction will continue and intensify until Jesus comes and eradicates sin entirely.

The apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:13, "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the sight of God" (NASB). And that's why things in this world don't make sense. There is excellent news, though, for anyone who is in Christ Jesus. Here it is in 1 Corinthians 2:14–16: "The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, for, 'Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?' But we have the mind of Christ" (NIV).

In that last phrase, Paul is essentially saying that we, Christians, have the inside edge when it comes to truly understanding where we are in earth's history, why things are the way they are, and where all things are going to ultimately wind up. So, let us live in the Spirit and by the Spirit this new year.



**Jerry Lutz**  
President

## Rocky Knoll Breaks Ground on New School



*Tom Boggess, Planned Giving and Trust Services director; David Livergood, Martinsburg church pastor; Jerry Lutz, president; Melissa Bagget, Rocky Knoll principal; Mark Walker, retired associate education superintendent; and Janesta Walker, education superintendent, commemorate Rocky Knoll's upcoming facility.*

The Rocky Knoll School, located in Martinsburg, W.Va., recently held a groundbreaking ceremony to commemorate plans to construct a new state-of-the-art facility. Attendees included Martinsburg Mayor Kevin Knowles and representatives from the Chesapeake Conference, Rocky Knoll and the Martinsburg church.

The new facility will sit on a 12.37-acre property adjoining the Martinsburg church. The building will encompass more than 26,000 square feet and feature a large gymnasium, commercial kitchen, two fully equipped playgrounds and modern classrooms.

"We are here today because of the sacrifices others have made and because of the vision others have had of the value of Adventist education," said Jerry Lutz, conference president, during the ceremony.

Construction documents for the new building are currently being finalized. School officials say they hope to begin full-scale construction in the spring of 2023 after selling the school's existing facility.

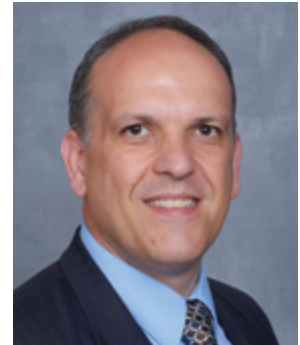
## New Directors Appointed to Lead Youth Programs

The Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee recently approved a reconfiguration of the conference's Youth and Young Adult Ministries Department and the Children's Ministries Department. The committee appointed two new directors: Kenia Reyes de Leon as Youth and Young Adult Ministries director and Shawn Paris as Camp Ministries and Missions director. Ann Reynolds will now serve exclusively as the Children's Ministries director.

"The combined experience, unique skill sets and spiritual gifts of these three directors will be the catalyst for the growth and expansion of their respective ministries," says Jerry Lutz, president.

Reyes de Leon comes to the conference from the World Headquarters of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Silver Spring, Md., where she has served as a senior editorial assistant in the Youth Ministries Department since 2019. During her time there, she also appeared as a TV host on Hope Channel's Bible HelpDesk and as a regular anchor on Adventist News Network's *ANN World News*.

Paris' newly created position involves leading the conference's summer camp ministry at the Mt. Aetna Retreat Center in Hagerstown, Md., and directing FLAG camps at church locations around the conference. Paris will also be responsible for



overseeing conference mission trips.

Paris has pastored in the Chesapeake Conference since 2008, most recently as the pastor of the Willow Brook church in Boonsboro, Md. Paris previously served as the senior pastor of the Atholton church in Columbia, Md., and the youth pastor at the Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Md.

Paris says he believes the new configuration of these ministries will provide more opportunities to disciple young people. He says the goal is to find new ways to empower ministry at the local level by "putting the resources of the conference into the hands of the local congregation."

## Boguess to Serve as Association Secretary



The Chesapeake Conference Executive Committee recently voted to appoint Tom Boguess as association secretary and Planned Giving and Trust Services director. Boguess has worked in the department for the last six years as the Trust Services field representative and assistant director. Boguess fills the position previously held by Sean Robinson, who recently accepted a position at Hope Channel.

In addition to his experience in trust services, Boguess brings an extensive background in pastoral

ministry to his new position. Boguess served as the pastor of the Martinsburg (W.Va.) church for 18 years, and, until recently, pastored the Prince Frederick church in Port Republic, Md., part-time. Boguess previously worked for more than 10 years as a pastor in the Potomac Conference.

"Tom will provide solid, spiritual leadership and careful management of the business affairs of the association," says Jerry Lutz, conference president.

The conference has been growing, and so there's been a lot more activity in buying and selling," Boguess says. "I think that's going to continue and [more churches] are going to be in the process of wanting to buy, and we want to be ready to help them do that."

# MOUNTAIN VIEWPOINT

## Lending an Evangelistic Hand



Mountain View Conference's (MVC) goal to "Tell Somebody About Jesus" has extended beyond their own borders. In August 2022, four pastors and one of their wives left their own districts and made their way across state lines and conference borders to Columbus, Ohio.

There they joined forces with pastors from the Allegheny West Conference (AWC) to assist them in their evangelistic series, "Impact Columbus"—Sharing Hope Revival, hosted by guest speaker G. Alexander Bryant, president of the North American Division (NAD). Although the pastors were from different districts, states and even conferences, they joined as one big family with one big mission.

Eddie Reyes, one of the four pastors from MVC, says, "It wasn't just an evangelism effort for the community, but it was also spiritual growth for us." Reyes pastors the Lewisburg and Rainelle churches, as well as the Marlinton company—all located in West Virginia.

Being part of this effort with other Bible workers and pastors throughout the NAD was perhaps the greatest blessing. Bible instructors paired with pastors to canvas Columbus by distributing flyers, visiting contacts and following up on already existing interests. Sharing with the communities, witnessing God's power, and seeing people accepting His message inspired team members.

As the three weeks progressed, the team started referring to their meeting place as the "Canvas Cathedral," feeling an ever-increasing presence of the Holy Spirit. Not only did they see a demonstration of what heaven will be like, they also experienced a reawakening of their first love experience with Jesus and a reminder of what God has called them to do. They were impressed and reminded that evangelism knows no boundaries or limitations, they said.

"What a powerful reminder that the church's mission to take the gospel to the farthest corners



*Leaders from the Mountain View and Allegheny West conferences baptize more than 90 people at the evangelistic series.*

of the earth extends well beyond our perspective territories," shares Marvin C. Brown, III, AWC president. "We were absolutely thrilled to partner with my beloved friend and colleague, Pastor Tim Bailey, [MVC president], who graciously supported this collaboration, and the extraordinary staff, Miguel Bernedo, [pastor of the Parkersburg Spanish church plant and Spencer church], Jose Luis Espinoza, [pastor of the Clarksburg Spanish, Morgantown Spanish and interim pastor of the Elkins and Parsons churches], and his wife, Carmen, as well as D. W. West, [pastor of the Point Pleasant church], and Pastor Eddie Reyes. These men and women worked both prayerfully and tirelessly in tandem, joining hand in hand with us. To date, we have had over 90 baptisms and 20 professions of faith. ... We look forward to future corporate evangelistic endeavors."

West says, "It was a blessing to be a part of so many different lives that were changed for eternity. As pastors, we love when one person gives their heart to the Lord, but when you can be a part of several, it is just amazing!"

Reyes agrees, "We continue to fervently pray that this spirit of evangelism does not stop here, rather that it can spread around our conference and around the world."

## Women Learn to Share Jesus at Retreat

Women from across the Mountain View Conference (MVC) territory recently made their way to Valley Vista Adventist Center in Huttonsville, W.Va., to attend the 31st annual Women's Retreat. This year's speaker Elizabeth Talbot, speaker and director of Jesus 101 Biblical Institute, taught the women that Jesus was and is their "Goel"—Kinsman Redeemer—in the themed event, "Jesus, In Times Like These."

The women enjoyed the usual blessings of the weekend, including physical and spiritual food, fellowship with old and new friends, and fun activities, but what they really came for was another, even higher, reason: to develop a closer walk with Jesus and to learn how to share Him with others. With a record of 33 first-time attendees—and at least 10 who were not Adventist—a total of 100 women gathered at the retreat.

Amber West, administrative assistant at the MVC office in Parkersburg, W.Va., says the retreat was and is like an evangelistic effort in her life. "When I went to the Mountain View Conference Women's Retreat in 2020, I was apprehensive about attending because I wasn't a Christian and I had left the church as a teenager," she says. "By the end of the



Women from across Mountain View Conference find a "house built on sand" during a scavenger hunt held at the 31st annual Women's Retreat.

retreat, I spoke with God through prayer, something I hadn't done in years. That moment changed my heart and life forever. The yearly women's retreat offers an escape from the day-to-day life to focus on what matters most."

## Cumberland Hosts Officer Training

Forty-eight church officers recently traveled to the Cumberland (Md.) church to attend the first of four officer training events given by the Mountain View Conference (MVC). The event opened with a



Walter Cardenas, assistant to the conference president, introduces new Bible Study guides to church officers.

presentation by Tim Bailey, MVC president, on the topic of church mission action planning.

The program then separated into individual seminars, where officers could go to the class that applied to them. Seminars included training for church elders, treasurers, deacons and deaconesses, Children's Ministries leaders, Sabbath School teachers, and church clerks. Speakers encouraged members to use their God-given spiritual gifts, as mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:27–31, while the speakers attempted to show them better ways to use those gifts.

"I felt that the officer training event was a great opportunity to get together with fellow church leaders and learn from one another," says Melodi Powell, the clerk at the Wheeling church. "I think it is vitally important that our more experienced leaders take time like this to help guide less experienced leaders so that we all may be the most effective workers for God's church."

# NEWS NEW JERSEY

## New Opportunities

In Philippians 3:14, the apostle Paul writes, “Forgetting those things which are behind” (NKJV), a concept that can be applied to us spiritually and also by looking at the occurrences of the past year.

We cannot live in the successes or failures of 2022. Instead, our past can teach us how we can do better in 2023 and beyond. God has given us a new year, a new beginning, a new opportunity to do better this year.

As a church, there are at least two lessons we can learn from 2022:

1. We must obey the mandate from Jesus in Matthew 28:19 to go and make disciples no matter what is happening in the world. In previous years, a pandemic shut down businesses, schools, sports and even churches. Who knows what’s in store for us this year? But one thing’s for sure—Jesus cannot be stopped, so we must continue following the great commission He gave to the church. God is going to open new doors, windows and opportunities for fulfilling His mission.

2. We need to look for new ways to stay connected with people. The pandemic taught us that churches cannot depend on the traditional ways to reach others. We need to use any platform possible to reach people, the best method being Jesus’: “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with people as one who desired their good. He showed sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He invited them, ‘Follow Me’ (Ellen White, *The Ministry of Health and Healing*, p. 73).

In Philippians 3:14, the apostle Paul adds, “And reaching forward to those things which are ahead” (NKJV).

The second coming of Jesus is ahead of us, now more than ever. Let’s take this time—given to us by God—as a new opportunity to accomplish the mission. In 2023, I have decided that “I Will Go: Making Disciples.” How about you?



**Jorge Agüero**  
President

## Conference Celebrates Departmental Directors

At the recent New Jersey Conference (NJC) Executive Committee meeting, delegates appointed or reappointed 13 departmental directors.

Carl Rodriguez, the conference’s new Youth and Young Adults director, has more than 27 years of experience in this area. Rodriguez has a Master of Business Administration from Frostburg University (Md.), a Master of Divinity from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary (Mich.) and is working on his Doctor of Ministry in Urban Ministry from the same institution.

Jean-Michel Etienne is the new director of Sabbath School, Stewardship, and Health Ministries. He has served as a senior district pastor for more than 20 years. He obtained a bachelor’s degree in Theology and Leadership from Cairn University (Pa.), a master’s degree in Pastoral Ministry from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, and a doctorate degree in Marriage and Family Counseling from Newburgh Theological Seminary (Ind.).

Samuel Jerome serves as the senior pastor of the Maranatha District and new Prayer Coordinator for the conference’s Franco-Haitian Ministries. After graduating from Atlantic Union College (Mass.) with a bachelor’s degree in Theology, Jerome received a master’s degree in Pastoral Ministry from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

Elisa Maragoto has served at Lake Nelson Adventist Academy in Piscataway for 28 years—15 as principal—and now adds superintendent of schools to her plate. She has degrees in Elementary Education and Social Studies and has a Master of Education from Montclair State University (N.J.). Currently, she is pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership from Andrews University.

Carlos J. Torres, Personal and Family Ministries director, who was reappointed, received a bachelor’s degree in Theology at Universidad Adventista de Venezuela. He later received a master’s

*(continued on next page)*

## Conference Celebrates Departmental Directors (cont.)

degree in Pastoral Ministry from the University of Montemorelos in Mexico. After that, he earned a Doctor of Ministry from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

Juliana Frida Marson, who received her master's degree in Pastoral Ministries from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, is the new Women's Ministries director. Marson currently pastors the Grace Place and New Birth churches, which she planted. She is currently pursuing her doctorate in Evangelism and Church Planting from Liberty University.

Wilman Polanco continues to serve as the Tranquility Camp director. He obtained his bachelor's degree in Biblical-Pastoral Theology at Antillean Adventist University and a master's degree in Business Administration from NUC University, both in Puerto Rico. Prior to coming to the NJC, he served as the senior pastor for the Western Conference in Puerto Rico.

With more than 27 years of service in the Adventist Church, Daniel Cabezas serves as the new Spanish Prayer Ministries coordinator. He received his bachelor's degree in Theology from Universidad Adventista de Venezuela and a master's degree in Pastoral Leadership from Seminario Teológico Adventista Interamericano in Venezuela.

Anthony Ponterio Jr., currently serves as a pastor in the Tranquility district and the new English Prayer Ministries coordinator. He obtained his bachelor's degree in Theology at Andrews University and is currently pursuing his master's degree in

Pastoral Ministry, also at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary.

Amalia Aguero has been serving as the Ministerial Spouses director for the last five years and will continue for the next quinquennium. She also serves the conference as a junior accountant and ARM representative, among other duties.

Working in Children's Ministries at the local church for more than 30 years, in 2018, Cinthia Portanova became the Children's Ministries coordinator for the conference and is now the director. She is also the administrative assistant for the Communication and Youth and Young Adults Department. Portanova received a bachelor's degree in Nursing from the University of Texas and a master's degree in Business Administration with an emphasis on Leadership from Southwestern Adventist University (Texas).

Eduardo Monteiro was reappointed as the Ministerial and Evangelism director. Previously, Monteiro has pastored English, Spanish and Brazilian churches. He holds a bachelor's degree in Theology with an emphasis in Pastoral Ministry from the Latin-American Adventist Theology Seminary in Brazil, and a master's degree in Family Relations from Montemorelos University in Mexico.

Mario Thorp is the new Adventist Community Services/Disaster Response director. A native of Costa Rica, Thorp has served the church for 29 years as district pastor, evangelist, youth leader, departmental leader, and most recently, NJC's executive secretary.



*For the next quinquennium, the New Jersey Conference leadership team is comprised of (pictured top row, left to right) Wilman Polanco, Anthony Ponterio Jr., Jean-Michel Etienne, Carl Rodriguez, Eduardo Monteiro, Carlos J. Torres, Daniel Cabezas, (bottom row, left to right) Mario Thorp, Elisa Maragoto, Cinthia Portanova, Treasurer Carlos Portanova, President Jorge Aguero, Executive Secretary Stephen Lee, Amalia Aguero, Juliana Marson and Samuel Jerome.*

## Hispanic Ministries Celebrates ‘Festival of Miracles’

Around 3,000 years ago, the prophet Isaiah used metaphors to encourage a nation’s growth by saying to them: “Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes” (Isa. 54:2, NIV). The same God who desired to make His kingdom grow then is seeking the expansion of His church today.

This year, the conference’s Hispanic Ministries Department has initiated a strategy called “2023 Miracles” with a goal to baptize 1,000 people during 2023. Hispanic Ministries continues to celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in and through its Ohio Conference members. Over three consecutive Sabbaths, members gathered across the territory, praising God during the year-end event, “Festivals of Miracles.”

The first of these festivals took place in Wauseon, where more than 400 people worshipped together. The Holy Spirit convicted 13 individuals to surrender their lives to Jesus through baptism.

Pastors dedicated three children to God and recognized leaders for their hard work in bringing people to Jesus, and the event finished with a baptismal ceremony in which 35 people surrendered their hearts to Him.

At the final festival, more than 400 people from the Cleveland area attended. Pastors recognized members for leading people to God’s kingdom,



As part of the Hispanic Ministries initiative, “2023 Miracles,” 13 individuals give their lives to Christ at the “Festival of Miracles” in Wauseon.

and 35 more people decided to follow Jesus and be baptized.

Ohio Conference’s Hispanic Ministries has experienced considerable growth in the last decade. Recently, leaders have created four new districts, have organized new churches, and now there are 32 congregations when only 10 existed previously.

“May the abundant grace of the Lord keep pouring out over the Hispanic Ministries,” praises Peter Simpson, Hispanic Ministries coordinator.



Thirty-five individuals choose to follow Christ at the “Festival of Miracles” event in Cleveland.

## What Does Your Gift Look Like?

When you give to your conference's endowment funds, what does your gift look like?

At first, your gift may simply look like a check in the mail or a one-time online donation. It might look like an organization offering to match your gift or a small monthly contribution. But that's only what your gift looks like today.

Tomorrow, it may look like a father and son deciding to get baptized together at summer camp. Your gift may look like students learning STEM skills needed for careers of tomorrow. Or your gift can be used for new generations of leaders to grow churches together in faith.

The Ohio Conference has six endowments, one ministry fund, and one campaign designed to support the work of the church as funds generate interest income: the Fryling Monthly Giving Club, Harding Mental Health Endowment, Youth Endowment, Education Endowment, Camp Mohaven Endowment, Disciple Ohio Endowment, Evangelism Endowment, and the Vision Ohio Giving Campaign.

Today, your gift to your local conference's endowment funds may look like a simple donation. But tomorrow, your gift may change lives for generations to come.



## Beavercreek Hosts Community Guest Day

Prayer is the answer to every problem in life was the message Delthony Gordon shared during the Beavercreek church's recent Community Guest Day. Gordon, pastor of the church, encouraged the church and community leaders to follow the critical "If My People" steps to restoration, outlined in 2 Chronicles 7:14.



*Cameron Barron celebrates with Delthony Gordon, pastor of the Beavercreek church, following his baptism.*

Attendees included Jo Ann Rigano, president of the Beavercreek Board of Education; Bob Stone, Beavercreek mayor; Brian Lampton, state representative; Jared Keresoma, vice president of Operations for Greene Memorial Hospital; Julie Arias, Family Room program director for Ronald McDonald House Charities Dayton; and several Beavercreek city council members.

Members of the church board joined Gordon for a special prayer and the laying of hands on the city's leaders.

The highlight of the day was the baptism of Cameron Barron, the newest member of Beavercreek, and Jazzper Marantal, who accepted Christ by profession of faith. Barron and his wife, Debbie, had been attending Beavercreek since April 2022 after learning about the church through the Serpentine Prophecy seminar the church hosted with the Voice of Prophecy.

"Herein lies the reason for the church's existence," says Gordon, "to win souls to the honor and glory of God."



# Pennsylvania Pen

## Impact One

After entering church leadership years ago, I realized something vital was missing in my spiritual life. The spark just wasn't there. As I prayerfully considered this, God directed me to a principle of spiritual vitality from Ellen White: "Truth that is not *lived*, that is not *imparted* to others, loses its life-giving power, its healing virtue" (*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 47, author's emphasis). In the busyness of administration, I had stopped personally sharing the gospel. The result was lukewarm faith.

I asked God to help me find others who were interested in studying the Bible. Within a week, He had led me to Al and Billie. We began studies that resulted in their baptisms—and to my faith reigniting. That's when I discovered this dynamic reality—if each member reaches one person a year for Jesus, we will not only come alive spiritually, but we will double the number of people in our churches!

This is the purpose of our conference-wide initiative called Impact One. In 2023, we are challenging every member to go on an adventure with the Holy Spirit, asking Him to use them to eternally impact one other life for Jesus.

One of the great things about Impact One is that we will do this together. We recently recorded the Winsome Witnessing training program in the TV studio at our new Mission and Evangelism Center. These videos are being used in our churches to inspire and instruct members on how to impact one other person for God's kingdom. You can be a part of a Winsome Witnessing group and experience a faith on fire and the joy of leading someone to Jesus.

My wife, Sherilyn, and I again asked God to use us, and it wasn't long before we each had Bible studies going. We are excited to see what God is going to do in 2023—in our lives, your life and in our churches!



**Gary Gibbs**  
President

## 'Jesus Loves Philly'

Five churches. One city. Nearly 240,000 people in the Hispanic community. "'Jesus Loves Philly' is a movement created by Hispanic Ministries as a strategy to share the gospel in Philadelphia," shares Saud Elias, Pennsylvania Conference's Hispanic



*Saud Elias, Pennsylvania Conference's Hispanic Ministries coordinator, baptizes a new member at the Reading Hispanic church following the "Jesus Loves Philly" evangelistic meeting.*

Ministries coordinator. "Our objective is to reach the population in this area that is close to 240,000 Hispanics that need to know that Jesus loves them."

Members and pastors of the Juniata, Lawndale, Maranatha, Philadelphia 1, and Philadelphia 2 churches recently kicked off the initiative with a Hispanic Festival, complete with food and a parade. The five Philadelphia Hispanic churches followed up the event with shared evangelistic meetings. At the conclusion of the two-week event, 15 people decided to be baptized.

"Our baptism goal for 2022 was 300 baptisms in our Hispanic churches. We expect to exceed the goal by the end of December," says Elias.

Members play a huge part in this work. They invite friends, family and neighbors to small groups in their homes and to evangelistic events. "Our churches are always thinking about growing and connecting with new people," adds Elias. "As each member shares their testimony with others and studies the Bible with them, united with the power of the Holy Spirit, lives are impacted."

## New Treasurer Joins Conference Team

The Pennsylvania Conference is excited to welcome Kevin Costello as the new treasurer.

A graduate of Southern Adventist University (Tenn.), Costello joins the conference from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD) in the Philippines, where he served as the associate executive secretary and Human Resources director. As Adventist Volunteer Services director, he coordinated and ministered to more than 120 missionaries. Prior to serving in SSD, Costello was the vice president of Finance for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference. Costello also served as a conference treasurer for the Oklahoma and Texico conferences, as well as the Guam-Micronesia Mission.

“We are excited God has led Kevin to serve as our new conference treasurer,” shares Gary Gibbs, president. “He brings incredible experience, not only in finance, but in administrative leadership, serving as an officer here in North America and around the world for more than 30 years. He is passionate about equipping and caring for members and employees. His commitment to evangelism and sharing the gospel are evident in his love for conducting evangelistic series. He is also dedicated to mentoring children and young people. He served as a Pathfinder director for churches and conferences, and helped plan a Pathfinder camporee.”

Costello and his wife, Teresa, have been married for 34 years and have lived in the Philippines for the past 14. They have a daughter who graduates from college this year.



### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**January 14:** The Winsome Witnessing training series kicks off. Learn simple skills to lead people to Christ, insights to revitalize your church, a proven strategy to give interesting Bible studies, and energize your own relationship with God. Churches across Pennsylvania will join us at 2 p.m. for this live first session. Contact your local pastor for more information.

**February 18:** Forever One, a one-day marriage conference, with Pastor Ruber and Ketty Leal, Family Ministries directors for the Texas Conference, will energize and strengthen your marriage. Learn more and register at [paconference.org/events](http://paconference.org/events).

**February 26:** She Shares is a training event for women wanting to share the gospel with others. It will be held at the Pennsylvania Conference Mission and Evangelism Center in Hamburg. Learn more, and register at [paconference.org/events](http://paconference.org/events).

**March 2-4:** Music Fest brings students in grades five through eight together to learn music and perform for a Sabbath concert. Our guest conductor, Anwar Ottley, is an assistant professor of music and the director of Choral Activities at Washington

An advertisement for the 'Winsome Witnessing' training series. The top half features a red and orange background with the text 'Join us for Winsome Witnessing with Gary Gibbs' and a small portrait of Gary Gibbs. Below this, a blue section contains the text: 'Watch our first session live on January 14, 2022 at 2:00 pm via Zoom at your church as members across Pennsylvania unite together for this powerful event in demand by churches across the globe. Discover dynamic ways to share your faith!' A circular inset image shows a man and a woman looking at a book. The bottom section has a dark background with the text 'Register at your church today!' and 'For more information, contact your pastor or Lillian Torres at [ltorres@paconference.org](mailto:ltorres@paconference.org)'. At the very bottom, there are logos for 'PENNSYLVANIA CONFERENCE of Seventh-Day Adventists' and 'IMPACT ONE SEEK • TEACH • WIN'.

Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md.

**June 9-17:** Camp Meeting 2023 will feature Pavel Goia, editor of *Ministry Magazine* and associate ministerial secretary for the General Conference, and Doug Batchelor, senior pastor of the Granite Bay Hilltop church in California and president of Amazing Facts.



# PotomacPeople

*growing healthy,  
disciple-making churches*

## ‘Moving Beyond the Walls ... TOGETHER!’

For the past several years, our mission here at the Potomac Conference has been to grow healthy disciple-making churches. That is because we believe our denomination’s foundation lies within the local church’s success. That, in a nutshell, is the reason we exist.

Recently, we have adopted the motto “Moving Beyond the Walls” because, regardless of how good a mission statement might be, success might easily evade our grasp without a way to achieve our goal. Moving beyond the walls means that here, in the Potomac Conference, we are no longer content that our churches merely have services inside its walls; instead, we are encouraging them to seek creative ways to assist others by moving beyond their walls. As devastating as the COVID-19 pandemic has been, it has provided us with the necessary “push” to go into our communities as never before so that we might become the salt and light that Jesus has admonished us to be. As we all know, salt is only effective when it leaves its shaker.

By God’s grace, this year we are determined to move beyond the walls and to do it as a TEAM: Together, Everyone Achieves More! We believe this mission should not be left up to our churches alone; to make this a reality, it will take a cooperative effort from our schools, conference administration and every member. Let’s achieve this goal together!



**Charles A. Tapp**  
*President*

## BEElieve It!

There’s a sweet ministry going on at the Far West End church in Rockville, Va. Under the leadership of church member and apiculturist Valeriy Tsvetkov, congregants have taken up the hobby of apiculture—the scientific practice of raising honeybees or beekeeping.

Tsvetkov says, “The spirit and the principles of how the beehive functions should be a blueprint for how we can build community, serve others and start to understand that the spiritual work we do is part of an ecosystem.”

Currently, there is one hive on the church campus with the intent of adding four more by the spring. The church plans to use the hives as part of its mission to go “beyond the walls” to reach the local community by giving them honey.

Through the example of the honeybee, members are learning several lessons that apply to the ethos of the Potomac Conference. First, bees are communal. While they do operate autonomously, they do not function in isolation. Second, the fundamental mission of honeybees is “beyond the walls” of the hive. Just as the honeybee leaves the hive to collect pollen from flowers to make honey, Christians are called to collect the good deeds and words of God to make a sweet spiritual life. Third, the honey

produced in the hive is a byproduct of the mission to go into all the world, spreading pollen and collecting nectar. That’s much like faith sharing among people with different spiritual beliefs.

By giving honey to their neighbors, church members say they wish to convey the sweet savor of a risen Savior. In this way, “beeing” a good neighbor is part of this unique ministry by the Far West church.



*Apiculturist Valeriy Tsvetkov gently handles bees from a beehive on the campus of the Far West End church.*

## Pastors, Educators Meet at Development Conference

After a three-year hiatus due to the pandemic, pastors and educators from the Potomac Conference were able to recently gather in Chantilly, Va., for a professional development conference, themed “To Boldly Go.”

Marvin Wray, former Ministerial director for the Potomac Conference and former interim pastor of the Beltsville church (Md.), opened the conference by addressing what all pastors and educators need: an authentic, deep, personal and transparent relationship with God.

Later, Charles A. Tapp, president of the Potomac Conference, shared wisdom from 41 years of ministry in classrooms and pulpits. He reminded listeners that “there are no lost causes with God, and when we pray, God will open our eyes to see church members and students from His point of view.”

With wit and wisdom, Todd Whittaker, an author of more than 50 books and leading presenter in the field of education, demonstrated positive communication strategies to employ with students.

Karen Cress, who consults and coaches church leaders through her business, Culture Shift, LLC, spoke on conflict. She emphasized that conflict is inevitable, and lessons can be extracted from them when met with positivity and optimism.

A moving and powerful devotion on gratitude was skillfully delivered by Ann Steimer, the first- and second-grade teacher at the Tree of Life Christian Prep School in Fredericksburg, Va.

John Nixon II, the conference’s assistant Ministerial director for the northern part of the territory, addressed the issue of burnout appealing to pastors to practice introspection, self-care and



*Prayer was a central part of the professional development conference.*

emotional well-being when engaging in the full-time work of ministry.

Therezinha Barbalho, pastor of the Silver Spring (Md.) church, shared her story of juggling ministry while mothering a special needs child. Hers was a testimony of trust that God journeys with us when we plow through the overwhelming demands of life.

Darlene Anderson and Stephanie Powell, instructors at Shenandoah Valley Academy in New Market, Va., told the audience about Sources of Strength, a peer leaders’ program at the school, in which student leaders interact with their peer group in suicide prevention, bullying and substance abuse by connecting them with trusted adults or other self-help strategies.

The conference was not all work; attendees played pickleball, watched Monday Night Football on a big screen, and enjoyed downtime with friends.

Damein Johnson, pastor of the Seabrook (Md.) church, left the two-day conference feeling inspired and informed. “The presenters delivered practical, relevant content that gave me plenty to consider,” he says. “I appreciated the seminars even more because I didn’t feel overstuffed with information. It was wonderful to enjoy great fun and fellowship with colleagues.”

Loretta Cak, principal of Tidewater Junior Academy (Va.), reflects, “Catching up with old friends and meeting new ones was a blessing. We all came away refreshed, reenergized and ready to touch the lives of our students and families in new and exciting ways.”



*Attendees enjoy praise and worship at the professional development conference.*



# THE BMA EXPERIENCE

## BLUE MOUNTAIN ACADEMY

### Students Enjoy Learning—and Teaching—Together

Sponsored by Blue Mountain Academy (BMA) and the Pennsylvania Conference Education Department, students from across Pennsylvania recently enjoyed fine-tuning their skills in basketball, volleyball and football at Sports Fest, a one-day event for grades five through eight, held on BMA's grounds.

"More than 150 students and chaperones from [the conference's] day schools and more than 40 students and staff from BMA and the conference office played and worked together as a team during our annual Sports Fest," shares Leona Bange, Education superintendent. "Students were invited to be a part of God's team and keep Him in their hearts in everything they do."

After the Sports Fest, BMA students traveled to help teach outdoor school in four locations.

- Students from Pocono Adventist Christian School, Wyoming Valley Seventh-day Adventist Elementary School, and Whitehall Christian School experienced outdoor school at Carbon County Environmental Education Center in Summit Hill, Pa.
- Students from Huntingdon Valley Christian Academy enjoyed hiking at the Briar Bush Nature Center in Abington, Pa., while Reading Junior Academy students spent the day at Nolde Forest in Reading, Pa.
- Students from York Adventist Christian School, Harrisburg Adventist School, Blue Mountain Elementary School and Mountain View Christian School explored Kings Gap Environmental Center in Carlisle, Pa.

At each location, BMA students and a leadership team led worship and shared testimonies. "It felt good to share what it would be like to come and study at BMA with the younger students. I believe Adventist education is important and provides a better environment to grow spiritually and academically and learn our church doctrine," shares Lucas Mangum, a BMA junior.

"The importance of connecting our day academy [elementary students] to our older BMA teens is critical," says Burney Culpepper, BMA's principal. "Younger students look up to the older ones, making these events eternally impactful."



*Blue Mountain Academy students—and a friendly dinosaur—play a game similar to kickball.*

BMA students and staff are looking forward to several events this spring that will again give them opportunities to partner with the conference's other students and educators:

- Music Fest, March 2–4, brings students in grades fifth through eight to campus to learn music and perform together for a Sabbath concert, conducted by Anwar Ottley, assistant professor of music and director of Choral Activities at Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md.
- BMA Experience, April 17–18, gives young people the opportunity to participate in classes, activities and even living in the dorm.
- Outdoor School, May 8–10, at Laurel Lake Camp in Rossiter, Pa.

Learn more about BMA's upcoming events at [bma.us](http://bma.us).

**ALUMNI WEEKEND will be held April 28–30, celebrating honor years 1958, 1963, 1968, 1973, 1978, 1983, 1988, 1993, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013, 2018, 2022, and Lake Ariel and Philadelphia academies.** For updates, please visit [bma.us](http://bma.us), or contact your class agent. Inquiries may be sent to [bmaalumniassoc@gmail.com](mailto:bmaalumniassoc@gmail.com). The annual Alumni Association business meeting will be held Sunday, April 30, at 9:30 a.m.

## Educating for Eternity and Serving With a Smile

When you visit Highland View Academy’s (HVA) campus or website, it’s hard to miss that the school is “Educating for Eternity.” In other words, HVA prioritizes the gospel blueprint, laid out by Jesus in Matthew 28:19–20.

HVA believes that teaching the importance of service and modeling it within one’s personal life is foundational. When you provide opportunities for students to both serve the local community and those nearby, teaching and modeling is exercised. When this is repeated weekly, monthly and over four years, it becomes part of who the students are.

This year, more than two-thirds of the student population has chosen to join a touring group, aka “mission group.” These groups—Handbells, Band, Choir, Highlanders (select choir), and Aerials (gymnastics team) will travel throughout western Maryland and the Mid-Atlantic region. The goal? To fulfill the great commission. Yes, Jesus said to baptize, but He also said to teach others to “observe” the things He has commanded. When they serve others, their actions tell others to “look closely” at what, or Who, makes them different. In today’s world, we need all the “different” that Jesus can provide.



*The Highlanders provide morning worship at the North American Division headquarters in Columbia, Md.*



*Freshmen Aerials Julianne Paris, Samantha Bitner and Karen Gomez learn a new move.*

“Educating for Eternity” isn’t only for those who join a group. Each year, in early March, the academy dedicates a week to service. During this week, the campus stops traditional classroom education and provides “Service with a Smile,” in which every student and staff member chooses a project to serve others.

This year, our projects include assisting local community members, service-oriented nonprofits, local families in need, local church groups and more. HVA also has a group headed to Chile to assist and minister to that community, and another group headed to Mount Pisgah Academy (N.C.)—our sister school—to minister at their spring Week of Prayer.

In April, the Music Department will travel to Costa Rica to help spread the good news of Jesus and His soon return. Students and staff will be able to spend time in ministry and relationship-building, hopefully forming bonds that will last for eternity.

Ultimately, HVA leaders hope other members will join them in this goal to give “Service with a Smile” by going into your communities and sharing Jesus with others.



# the LEGACY

## OUR JOURNEY

A PUBLICATION OF LAKE NELSON ADVENTIST ACADEMY

## The Academy Church—A Place for All

Lake Nelson Adventist Academy's (LNAA) spiritual leaders desired to further expand their ministry to their students. What emerged from their discussions was the vision of a church plant on LNAA's campus: the Academy church.

The Academy church's main objective is to lead others to Jesus and create an environment for discipleship and transformation. Using Christ's model of creating personal connections, Webster Sterling, LNAA's chaplain, seeks to create opportunities for the youth to build godly relationships, leading to personal transformations. It is a welcoming space for young people to grow and use their talents to serve God and the community.

The Academy church was recently dedicated. Attendees included Jorge Aguero, New Jersey Conference's (NJC) president; Mario Thorpe, former executive secretary; Carlos Portanova, treasurer; and Carlos J. Torres, Personal and Family Ministries director. The celebration included the baptism of two LNAA students, siblings Sabrina and Lucas Maragoto, with a special blessing from their grandfather, Leonel Garcia, a retired pastor.



*At the Academy church's dedication, siblings Sabrina Maragoto, a senior, and Lucas Maragoto, a sixth grader, celebrate their baptisms with their parents, Principal Elisa Maragoto and Alden, as well as Jorge Aguero, president of the New Jersey Conference (on right).*



*First-grader Emillio Walker, fourth-graders Serena Sterling and Aiden Lalittle, and eighth-grader Meghan Valcine prepare for baptism at the Week of Prayer's culminating church service.*

Sabrina explains the experience of getting baptized and joining the new Academy church: "I felt very welcomed by the new church family. It was such a blessing to be a part of this new church plant. I'm so thankful for my church and school family."

The Academy church later had another reason to celebrate. At the conclusion of Week of Prayer, led by Sterling and the Class of 2023, LNAA rejoiced over four young people who gave their lives to Jesus by deciding to be baptized.

Sterling says, "We believe at Lake Nelson that education and redemption are one. Every day within the classroom, our teachers are ministering to our students and helping them to grow spiritually. The Week of Prayer was a climax of those classroom experiences. We praise God for the opportunity to [bring about] this church plant to continue to allow God to expand our territory and ministry within our families and the community."

# PFA POST



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

## Seeds Sown in Students Reap Harvest

Pine Forge Academy (PFA) holds two weeks of prayer during the first semester of the year: a “Back to School Revival” and a “Fall Week of Prayer.” This past fall, the school community witnessed 19 students make a decision for Christ at the conclusion of Week of Prayer.

Using the theme, “Vibecheck: Cultivating Imitators of Christ,” Max Gomez, the associate pastor of Allegheny West Conference’s Hilltop Community Worship Center in Columbus, Ohio, enhanced PFA’s ministry already fostered by Ja’Chin Holness, school chaplain, and Stephen Richardson, pastor of the Pine Forge (Pa.) church.

The academy is known for its vibrant worship and praise services, as well as the family-like bonds between students and staff. One of these students, Ryann Samuel, a senior, came to PFA from South Carolina after her mother found the academy through an internet search for a private school.

Samuel was raised in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. The family concluded that public school introduced her to too many negative influences and provided her with no safe space to explore a more spiritual path. So she attended the 2019 Pine Forge Academy Day and enrolled as a sophomore the following school year.

Samuel describes navigating her social and emotional development at PFA as “rocky,” but found purpose and enjoyment in working with the spiritual life

team. “I found that working behind the scenes made worship services more meaningful to me,” she says. “I wanted to get baptized my sophomore year, but my mother told me to not do anything half-heartedly and to fully understand what I was committing to.”

Samuel, who is studying to get baptized, admits she doesn’t know everything about the Seventh-day Adventist message and lifestyle, but she says, “I understand Jesus’ sacrifice, and I am sure that I want to commit my life to Him. I’m looking to learn more about Jesus and Adventism, so I’ve decided to delay my baptism until I know more.”

Elijah Tyler, also a senior, grew up in the Adventist Church. In fact, his father, Keenan, pastors Allegheny East Conference’s Coastal Shores and Cedars of Lebanon churches in Virginia. Following some of his friends’ examples, Tyler was baptized when he was 8 years old.

Planning to be rebaptized at one of his father’s churches, Tyler says, “I know my baptism was real, but I still always had a lot of questions about why there were so many rules with Adventism that I didn’t want to follow. I’ve had many of my questions answered and now know that my decision for Christ is my own. No one forces me to go to church. I go because I want to go. PFA has helped me establish a real relationship with God. God no longer feels ‘like a class.’ ... I’m glad that this time the decision to get baptized is 100 percent my own.”



*Pine Forge Academy students and one teacher are voted into the Pine Forge church membership following their baptisms.*

PFA Post is published in the *Visitor* by the Pine Forge Academy ■ P.O. Box 338, Pine Forge, PA 19548  
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# Spotlight on Spencerville

*Highlights from Spencerville Adventist Academy*

LOVE TO LEARN  
LIVE TO SERVE  
ALL FOR CHRIST

## ‘Musicianaries’ Serve Community With Praise

Psalm 57:7 is one of many texts in the Bible that reference music—a powerful gift from God: “My heart, O God, is steadfast, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music” (NIV).

This year at Spencerville Adventist Academy (SAA), Jesus’ voice is being shared through music. Eighty percent of the student body are involved in music classes and music groups, including bands, strings, bells, choirs and drama.

“We are excited about the opportunities for ministry from our Music Department!” says Tissiana Bowerman, principal. “SAA is blessed to have dynamic and talented music teachers who are dedicated to praising God through music and challenging students to reach their highest potential.”

Jane Lanning and Lisa Froelich, department chair and band director, respectively, are happy to welcome Felipe Garibaldi, guitar and general music teacher, and Emilie Flores, high school choir and middle school strings director, to the music team this year.

Music groups have performed at school events this year, such as Grandparents’ Day, Fall Festival, and Christmas concerts, and have traveled on music



*The Adventist Children’s Choir, founded by Jane Lanning, gives students the opportunity to learn many of the older, beautiful hymns.*

tours to places like the Washington D.C. Temple Visitors’ Center. The Spencerville Ringers even participated in Ringfest in Toledo, Ohio. The groups have also performed each month during divine services at the Spencerville church in Silver Spring, Md.

“Many may not realize that musicians can be like missionaries, using their music and talents to bless others and make a difference,” says Froelich. “Vice Principal Robert Martinez coined the phrase ‘musicianaries’ to describe their service, and that’s exactly what we encourage our students to be. As a band teacher, it warms my heart to see them enthusiastically share the talents God gave them. When the band participates in church services and the congregation sees the students leading them in praise and worship, it leaves such a blessing.”

To view SAA’s performances, scan the QR code to access SAA’s YouTube channel.



*The Concert Winds use their musical talents to enrich a church service at the Spencerville church.*

PHOTO BY DENISSE HERNANDEZ

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

INSPIRING STUDENTS TO KNOW FOLLOW SHARE JESUS

## Senior Named in National Merit Scholarship Program



Spring Valley Academy is pleased to announce that senior Rebekah Shull has been named as a 2023 semifinalist from among the 1.3 million program entrants that entered the 2023 National Merit Scholarship Program (NMSPP). By taking the 2021 Preliminary SAT/ National Merit Scholarship

Qualifying Test, which served as an initial screen of program entrants, Shull is among the nationwide pool of semifinalists—representing less than one percent of United States high school seniors, which includes the highest scoring entrants in each state.

From the 50,000 high scorers nationwide, these academically talented high school seniors have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some

16,000 National Merit Scholarships worth more than \$32 million that will be offered this spring. To be considered for a Merit Scholarship award, semifinalists must fulfill several requirements to advance to the finalist level of the competition. Qualifying scores vary from state to state and from year to year, but the scores of all semifinalists are extremely high. NMSPP provides scholarship application materials to semifinalists through their high schools. To be considered for a National Merit Scholarship, semifinalists must advance to finalist standing in the competition by meeting high academic standards and all other requirements explained in the information provided to each semifinalist.

Shull is the daughter of Ted and Sonya of Dayton, Ohio. The academy's faculty and staff extend their congratulations to her on this most prestigious scholastic achievement!

## Seniors Survive the 'Wilderness'

On a chilly fall morning, the senior class of Spring Valley Academy (SVA) boarded a bus headed from Dayton to Danville, Ohio, to spend five days in the wilderness at Camp Mohaven for the annual Senior Survival experience.

Without the pressures and distractions of school, work and technology, the seniors enjoyed an outdoor opportunity that few received in 2022. Using the few resources of tarps, duct tape and rope, they built makeshift shelters, hoping that would keep them dry from rain and provide them with warmth over the course of four cold nights.

The days consisted of team building activities, worship programs, journal writing and moments to simply relax and connect with one another and God. The trip, themed "Wilderness," gave students and staff the opportunity to contemplate on how God used wilderness experiences throughout the Bible as a way to prepare people for something important in their lives.



While the living conditions seemed a bit rough and unfavorable, the consensus was that Senior Survival was a valuable addition to the school year.

Senior Alexis Dulan says, "My experience at Senior Survival was unforgettable and allowed me to gain a sense of closeness with God and my classmates that I never had before."—*Justin Janetzko, Chaplain*



# IMPACT Shenandoah

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

## Self-Discipline: Our Freshman Are Gaining Life Skills

Mrs. Laura Short, the teacher of the Freshman Life Skills class, invited me to meet with the young men's section. The semester, themed "Do Hard Things," includes discussion of challenging subjects and practical handyman skills. I admit, we drifted from the suggested topic, as I shared my personal rehabilitation journey from COVID-19 pneumonia. I had been home for 15 months, after being discharged from a 3 1/2-month hospital stay.

I told the young men I choose daily to exercise. I have learned if I want to gain strength and increase pulmonary function, I must work at it. Feelings don't have a vote, because if I don't do, I won't do. I cannot ride my bike or miss a CrossFit session just because I don't feel like it. Every day, I decide to work out, even if I don't feel like it. I choose to do what's best for my healing and recovery.

Which moved the discussion to the importance of self-discipline. That's when Emmanuel Matagaro



*Left: Buz Menhardt, associate pastor of the campus church, gives Emmanuel Matagaro a side hug.*

*The Freshman Boys Life Skills class sits with Buz Menhardt.*



raised his hand and wanted to know how he could learn to be self-disciplined. I paused and affirmed him for asking such a mature question. Often, we best learn self-discipline when others hold us accountable and keep us focused on our personal, spiritual and academic goals. As class ended, I asked Emmanuel if I could email his mother and share with her our class conversation. He agreed. Here is the email exchange with Lillian, Emmanuel's mother:

Hello Lillian,

I must tell you, when I visited Emmanuel's Life Skills class on Tuesday morning, he asked a very mature question. We were discussing self-discipline, and he wanted to know how he could best learn self-discipline when he would be out on his own. His own house ... etc.

I told the young men that coming to a boarding school was the beginning of learning how to be disciplined, how to follow a routine of success. I'm sure if you ask him about the class discussion, he will tell. He seems to be doing very well. Blessings to my friend.

*Here is Lillian's reply:*

It is true. As soon as he came home [for home leave], after dinner he washed the dishes. I was pleasantly surprised.

Then he sat down and wrote his To-Do list for tomorrow. He even went to bed without a fight. Oh, he is a changed young man. I like the new him. I cannot thank every member of SVA enough.

God bless you all and give you strength to encourage and mold the youth in their life journey.

Sincerely,  
Emmanuel's Mom

I am thankful Shenandoah Valley Academy is a place where young people learn about God in such practical ways.—*Buz Menhardt, Associate Pastor of New Market Church*

# www.ta.edu **TATODAY**

News you can use from Takoma Academy

## Adventist Education, Faith, and God's Plan

Many alumni say that one of the best things about Takoma Academy (TA) is the fruit that it bears in the form of successful individuals making an impact on their communities and the world. Professionals of all disciplines have begun their journey to medical and law school, the technology industry, education and many other career paths after completing their high school years at TA.

Anna Cobb ('16) is just one example. Cobb entered Tuskegee Institute (Ala.)—one of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities—as her first step toward a career in science.

Reflecting on her days in college, Cobb states, “The most important thing I learned in college is that every relationship is a steppingstone. God places people in your life for specific reasons and seasons. Every relationship I made in college, whether it was a professor or a friend, was designed to create the path that I am currently on.

“The best advice I would give a student at Takoma Academy would be to not be so hard on yourself at this early stage in your life. Explore everything—every option for college, every major and degree choice and every job. Just explore! You never actually know what you want to do until it just appears. Your footprint on earth has already been planned out for you; it is just for you to walk in the steps!”

Cobb shares a moment at TA that impacted her current career path: “While in the 11th grade at Takoma Academy, I was given the opportunity to take AP environmental science. For someone who knew nothing about the environment, bugs or plants, I was fearful of struggling in this class. My teacher was the first person I ever met that showed so much love for the environment and bugs! The way he was able to convey environmental practices made everything seem so simple. Because I had a great teacher, I fell in love with the topic. After taking this course and excelling, I knew I wanted to pursue a bachelor's in Environmental Science.”

And that's exactly what she did. In 2020, Cobb graduated from Tuskegee with a Bachelor of



*Anna Cobb holds a “bottle greenhouse” that she used for soil research in Costa Rica.*

Science in Environmental Science: Plant and Soil.

Since then, Cobb founded Vegan Queen Cuisine, a plant-based alternative company. The juices that her company sells, Rejuvenation, are 100 percent plant-based and can be found in grocery stores in the Washington metropolitan area and on Amazon.

“Never in my life would I have ever thought I'd be saying I was CEO of anything, but God had other plans,” she says. “The impact of great professors, amazing staff and my Adventist family has allowed me to reach success at a young age. I owe it all to God, my family and my wonderful teachers!”

**Editorial comment:** In the Nov/Dec 2022 publication of *TA Today*, it was incorrectly stated that Whitney Mack graduated from Southwestern Adventist University in 2017. She graduated in 2007. We regret this error.

## Rejoice and Be Glad

Every morning, as part of my “start the day” routine, I spend a few minutes in contemplation and prayer. One of the scriptures that I often think about during this time is found in Psalm 118:34: “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.” The verse contains three concepts that I have found to be so valuable.

The first concept is the recognition that each new day is a gift from God: “This is the day that the Lord has made.” There is something so powerful in recognizing each morning that God has provided the new day. I think of this as an anchor for life – knowing that each day arrives right on time and is already filled with God’s presence, grace and blessing.

The next concept is “let us rejoice.” There are so many things that vie for our attention – our “To Do List” is long and our calendars are full. But we are called to look at the many interactions, tasks and obligations of our lives with hope. A spirit of rejoicing – of looking toward the future with optimism – impacts how we approach everything in life. However, in particular, our challenges, difficulties, heartaches and disappointments are best confronted and transformed through a rejoicing spirit.

The final concept contained in the Psalm is to “be glad in it.” To be glad is both a state of the heart and a state of the mind. Gladness expresses itself in delight, cheerfulness, gratitude and joy. Each day we can be glad for the opportunity that we have at Adventist HealthCare to extend God’s care through the ministry of physical, mental and spiritual healing. We are so blessed to have this sacred work of serving our community!

How do you start your day? I hope that as part of your morning routine that you also begin each day feeling comfort in the thought that life itself is a gift from our Creator and that we can respond to the events of life with a spirit of rejoicing. And I hope that being a part of our Adventist HealthCare family enables you also to feel grateful and glad for the myriad ways that God works through us – and in us – each day.

**Terry Forde**  
President & CEO  
Adventist HealthCare



## Promoting Children’s Mental Health

Adventist HealthCare The Lourie Center for Children’s Social & Emotional Wellness works to improve the social and emotional health of young children and their families through prevention, early intervention, education, research and training.

To support this powerful work, a group of high-achieving, professional women formed Champions for Children in 2021 to help raise awareness about the crisis in children’s mental health and trauma.

On Oct. 12, 2022, to honor the Lourie Center’s 40th birthday, the Champions for Children held an inaugural recognition ceremony to award six outstanding advocates who were honored for their body of work ensuring that at-risk children and their families get the services they need. WUSA TV 9 profiled The Lourie Center the night before and news anchor Lesli Foster emceed the event. The honorees were:

- **Lifetime Champion Award**  
**Congressman Chris Van Hollen** – Senator who champions education and job training, as well as helped pass the ABLE Act for families of children with disabilities
- **Outstanding Public Service Award**  
**Congressman Jamie Raskin** – Stalwart supporter of children and families as well as endorsed author by the Supreme Court Historical Society on the constitutional freedoms of students, families and teachers in public schools
- **Outstanding Public Service Award**  
**Congressman David Trone** – Co-chair of the Bipartisan Addiction and Mental Health Task Force leading multiple bills for affordable mental healthcare to our nation’s youth
- **Reginald S. Lourie Award**  
**Dr. Bruce Perry** – Child psychiatrist, author, and expert on the impact of abuse, neglect and trauma on the developing brain
- **T. Berry Brazelton Award**  
**Kai-Lee Burke** – Childhood expert who developed resources for trauma-sensitive, relationship-focused learning environments
- **Champions for Children Award**  
**Cynthia Germonatta** – President of the Born This Way Foundation that she co-founded with her daughter, Lady Gaga, which supports mental health in young people

## *Living Our Mission to Extend God's Care*



### **Applications Open for the Adventist HealthCare Lucy Byard Scholarship**

The Lucy Byard Scholarship was created to honor the legacy of Lucy Byard and to reaffirm Adventist HealthCare's commitment to treat all people with respect and dignity. The scholarship will provide needed funding to gifted nursing students of limited financial means. In this way, Adventist HealthCare will contribute to the greater effort to close the health-disparities and economic-inequity gaps among people of color. Learn more at [AdventistHealthCare.com/LucyByardScholarship](https://AdventistHealthCare.com/LucyByardScholarship).



### **Best Rehabilitation in Region!**

Adventist HealthCare Rehabilitation's care and expertise have been recognized by Newsweek as a top physical rehabilitation center in the nation and the number one in the region! The ranking was determined by surveys sent to over 4,400 experts and data from Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC).

The scoring factored many considerations including the quality of care, management of risk, provider consultations, outpatient therapy and amenities. Additionally, a commitment to both improvement and research in order to meet the unique needs of each person and promote the best quality of life were part of the ranking assessment.

"This recognition from Newsweek is a testament to the skill, hard work, and compassionate care provided by our dedicated team of professionals," says Brent Reitz, President, Adventist HealthCare Post-Acute Care Services.



For the third consecutive year, Adventist HealthCare has made the list of America's Best-In-State Employers 2022 in rankings by Forbes and Statista Inc. The award is based on an anonymous survey of approximately 70,000 U.S. employees who ranked their companies on criteria such as workplace safety, compensation and advancement opportunities. They also were asked how likely they would be to recommend their employers to others. Adventist HealthCare is committed to being the best place to work and grow – and milestones like this help affirm that culture of respect, inclusion and opportunity.

### **FUN IN THE SUN AT OUR REHAB PIZZA PARTY**

On a sunny Friday last fall, Adventist HealthCare Rehabilitation hosted an outdoor pizza party for 52 patients that were recuperating from strokes, amputations, cardiac incidents, spinal cord injuries and more. The pizza party was not only a major psychological lift to be enjoying nature, music and fun with our Rehab "family," but also conveyed important physical therapeutic benefits through spreading dough, adding toppings and interacting with others. One highlight of the day was when one individual suffering from pronounced aphasia excitedly exclaimed "PIZZA!" at the sight of what was happening. This event is just one way Adventist HealthCare extends God's care to support total health and healing.



## Health Nights for Healthier Lives

By Christina Keresoma

Kettering Health physicians and Kettering Adventist Church teamed up to teach members and the community on how to live healthier lives. Harvey Hahn, MD, cardiologist, has a strong passion for healthy living and promoting a healthy lifestyle. So much so, he created a community initiative called Health Night. Health Night is a series of health-related talks Dr. Hahn started in late 2021. Since then, attendees have learned about intermittent fasting, exercise, sleep, skin, stress and anxiety, and building better habits.



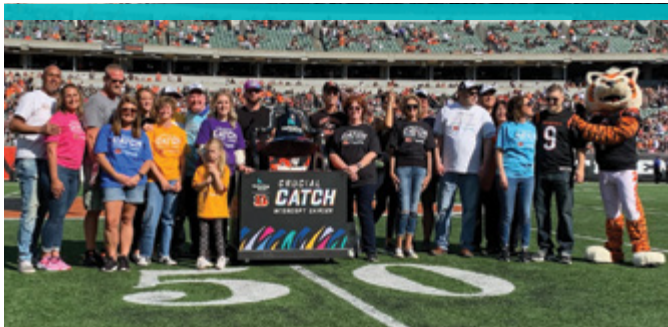
Health Nights exist to solve an obvious but complex problem: most people live with unhealthy habits. Many of us know how it goes: we choose the easy route—grabbing quick snacks, skipping exercise, and overlooking a good night’s sleep. At Health Night, attendees learn from expert guest speakers, get cooking tips through a live cooking presentation, and ask questions about how to start living healthier. Along with learning about healthy habits, participants taste healthy treats and learn that healthy food can be easy to cook and taste good.



*“Many look at health recommendations as restrictions to their lives. But it’s the exact opposite.” –Harvey Hahn, MD*

Health Night’s focus is to help people live life healthier and more abundantly, as the Lord has designed and invited us to do. “Many look at health recommendations as restrictions to their lives. But it’s the exact opposite. If you follow the ‘laws’ of health, you will have a more free and abundant life—just as Jesus promised in John 10:10,” says Dr. Hahn.

**Visit Kettering Adventist Church Facebook page to view videos**



## Crucial Catch Cincinnati Bengals Game

During Breast Cancer Awareness month last October, the Cincinnati Bengals joined forces with Kettering Health to highlight the importance of early detection through the Crucial Catch program. They committed time during the game to honor those impacted by cancer: those who have survived; those who are currently fighting; and the legacy of those who have passed.

Nine survivors took to the field at halftime for an emotional bell-ringing ceremony to honor their fights against cancer—backdropped by the cheers of 70,000 fans!

There was hardly a dry eye in the stadium during this powerful moment, and we were blessed to be a part of it. During the month of October, these efforts helped Kettering Health double the number of mammograms scheduled online compared to the previous year.



## New Option for Breast Cancer Patients After Mastectomy

Kettering Health surgeons at Kettering Health Main Campus completed the first laparoscopic-assisted breast reconstruction in the Dayton area that uses a patient's own tissue from the lower abdomen to reconstruct breast tissue lost to cancer.

Plastic and reconstructive surgeon Nicololay Markov, MD, with the assistance of general surgeon Riyadh Tayim, MD-MS, successfully performed a deep inferior epigastric artery perforator (DIEP) flap procedure using minimally invasive techniques to collect tissue for breast reconstruction.

This approach removes excess skin, fat, and blood vessels from the abdomen with minimal damage. The tissue is then used to reconstruct the breast post-mastectomy.



Successful completion of the first laparoscopic-assisted breast reconstruction highlights the skills and expertise of Kettering Health's reconstructive surgical team and opens the door for additional minimally invasive and robotically assisted surgeries.





## Kettering College Holds Inaugural Homecoming Weekend

By Rebecca Ingle

Kettering College recently hosted its inaugural Homecoming weekend to welcome back alumni and reconnect with them. Mindi Collins, director of alumni relations, reports that alumni from the past five decades attended events throughout the weekend, catching up with each other and touring the campus. Several of these alumni continue to give back to the college by being scholarship donors.

After Friday night's food-truck kickoff event, alumni gathered for Sabbath services at the Kettering Seventh-day Adventist church where alumni led worship and shared testimonies of their experiences from international medical mission (IMM) trips they experienced while studying at Kettering College.

Steve Carlson, students ministry chaplain, began the special discussion by reminding the congregation that when we serve, we are doing Jesus's work. The alumni panel who attended the IMM trips testified that the trips forever changed them as students moving into professional careers of service.

Afterward, a special luncheon and tea was held in the Anna May Café on campus where President Nate Brandstater offered up some Kettering College trivia to alumni and current faculty. Photographs and yearbooks from the past were on display

at the lunch so alumni could reminisce and share memories of their time on campus. Kettering College alumna Katherine Ferrell, who is now a nursing professor at Kettering College, was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award for her service to students and the field of nursing.

To end the Homecoming weekend, the college teamed up with Kettering Health Foundation to host their second annual Scholarship Reception and Dinner to celebrate all scholarship donors and student recipients. Tina Howard, giving officer, said, "Donors were able to meet their scholarship recipients and talk with them about their educational experiences and career aspirations. Scholarship recipients were honored to meet their donors and thank them in person."

The dinner was held in the newly renovated auditorium, with about 100 attending. Howard said, "The donors were very impressed with all our renovations throughout the college and with our outstanding students!" Mindi Collins said, "We had a wonderful time celebrating 55 years of Kettering College! We look forward to seeing our amazing alumni again next year!"



## Making a Difference at the Drive-Thru

What if a few minutes and a few dollars could change your day and someone else's? That's the purpose of the *Drive-Thru Difference* that happens every Thursday on WGTS 91.9.

This *Hands and Heart* ministry has been a staple at WGTS for more than a decade and each week, our staff look forward to hearing the stories of how listeners paid for someone going through the drive-thru or how they discovered another creative way to help someone—which blessed them and the receiver. A listener called with her experience.

*I was at Chick-fil-A. When you first enter, there are two lines that then merge into one as you get closer to the window. Well, there was a misunderstanding, and I unintentionally pulled in front of another car. The lady was so angry and upset. I decided in that moment that I would pay for her order with the WGTS Drive-Thru Difference instead of letting her reaction make me upset too. I placed my order and paid for mine, as well as hers. In a few minutes, I looked up and realized she was smiling, waving, and happily honking at me. A simple misunderstanding, but a what a difference I was able to make for her—and me.*

Request *Drive-Thru Difference* cards through our website ([wgts919.com](http://wgts919.com)) or call and we will send you some. Thank you for making a difference in someone's life with the *Drive-Thru Difference*!

## Listeners Share Thankful Thoughts

Expressing gratitude makes us happier, research shows. Focusing on the good things helps us feel more content and satisfied with what we already have instead of feeling like we need more. Recently, on the WGTS website, dozens of listeners shared what they were grateful for via a digital gratitude wall. Here are a few entries that were especially encouraging.

*I am thankful for rest. The Lord knew we need it and provided times for it. I'm also thankful for some encouraging words from a friend right when I needed it.*

*I am grateful for the highs and the lows because the lows help me remember I can't run this race alone and the highs because it helps me see God has never left me.*

*I'm grateful I get to spend another day with my 94-year-old mom.*

*I'm grateful for warm clothing, shoes, and working heat in my home and car... plus heat in the office.*

## Bringing Joy Through Toys

In spite of a rainy start to the morning, generous WGTS listeners donated toys for the Toys for Tots toy drive in Arlington, Va., set up near the Iwo Jima Memorial. More than 10,000 toys were given for this WGTS *Hands and Heart* project, and will be distributed in area counties by the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve. Toys for Tots has provided toys to children for 75 years.

Another 1,500 toys were collected for distribution this season the evening before at the Casting Crowns concert. "Spreading joy, whether it is with toys, pajamas, or meals, to families and children in need, is the purpose of the *Hands and Heart* projects WGTS does. We are thankful to the listeners, who are wonderfully generous each time," says Kevin Krueger, president and CEO.



# NEWS FLASH: GATEWAY TO CHANGE



In order to keep up with providing relevant academic career offerings and career development in the 21st Century, Washington Adventist University recently launched its fully online non-credit Professional Workforce Development Program to the local and international market.

Washington Adventist University was established in 1904 in Takoma Park, Maryland, and operates as a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Our vision is to continue to produce graduates who bring competence and moral leadership to their communities. At Washington Adventist University we believe that an educated workforce is at the heart of a company's success and research reinforces that mindset. Our programs are designed to directly impact the professional careers of individuals and the desired outcomes of organizations.

The mission of Professional Workforce Development at Washington Adventist University is to meet employer demand in the greater Maryland area and beyond to prepare individuals to advance or change their careers. We are offering fully on-line

non-credit certificate programs aimed at providing high-quality education and the ability to earn 21st Century industry-recognized certifications.

Professional Workforce Development was established to meet the needs of employer demand in key growth areas:

- Fill the gaps for in-demand jobs in high-growth sectors like healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, professional/technical and supply chain/logistics
- Advance employee skills and competencies through industry-recognized certifications
- Develop a robust and high-performing talent pool poised for long-term growth

Gateway to Change means adopting to the changing deliver methods of how corporations and individuals are expecting and experiencing career development through high-quality online certificate programs. The initial program offerings are:

## HEALTHCARE

- Dental Assistant
- EKG Technician
- Healthcare Administration Professional
- Healthcare IT Technician
- Health Unit Coordinator
- Medical Assistant
- Patient Care Technician
- Pharmacy Technician Professional (ASHP/ACPE)
- Phlebotomy Technician
- Physical Therapy Aide and Administration Specialist
- Sterile Processing Technician

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- Cyber Security
- Data Science
- Software Developer

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Project Management



Our programs are designed by industry experts and the majority of the programs culminate in employer preferred certifications. Our mission has always been to provide an education that provides our students for whatever they may face in the workforce. That is why we have begun providing organizations with industry standard, up-to-date training that leads to employer-recognized certifications.

Visit our website: [Professionalworkforcedevelopment.wau.edu](http://Professionalworkforcedevelopment.wau.edu)

This is Washington Adventist University!

Weymouth Spence, President

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- BA History (Honors)
- BA Political Studies (Honors)

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- BA Honors Interdisciplinary

### SCHOOL OF GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

- BS Business Administration
- MBA Business
- BA Early Childhood Care Education
- M ED School Counseling
- AS/BS General Studies
- BS/Master Healthcare Administration
- MA Clinical Mental Health Counseling
- RN-BSN Nursing
- MS Nursing and Business Leadership
- MS Nursing Education
- RN/MSN Nursing Leadership
- BS/MA Counseling Psychology
- MA Public Administration
- Leadership

### SCHOOL OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS, SCIENCE & WELLNESS

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- BS Biochemistry
- BS Health/ Fitness Management
- BS Health Science
- BS Fitness & Sport Science
- AAS Medical Imaging
- BS Medical Imaging
- BS Nursing

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# Bulletin Board

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## EMPLOYMENT

**WASHINGTON ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** is seeking a circulation librarian to manage the operation of the circulation department of Weis Library. The position involves managing the circulation functions of the integrated library system; supervising student library assistants; processing course reserves, consortium borrowing, and inter-library loan requests; and providing reference assistance to library users. This is a faculty position with assigned rank dependent on qualifications of the selected candidate. To view the full posting and to apply, visit [wau.edu/careers](http://wau.edu/careers). (Click on *Employment Opportunities*, and search for the position.)

**UNION COLLEGE**, Lincoln, Neb., is seeking applicants for two positions in our academic library: Director of Library and Reference and Instruction Librarian. We also have other faculty and staff opportunities with generous benefit packages. See job descriptions and application instructions at [ucollege.edu/employment](http://ucollege.edu/employment), or email Human Resources at [lisa.r.forbes@ucollege.edu](mailto:lisa.r.forbes@ucollege.edu).

**THE UNION COLLEGE COMMUNICATION PROGRAM** is searching for applicants for a communication professor. This is a full-time, faculty, exempt position starting June 1, 2023. Please see the full job description and instructions for application at [ucollege.edu/employment](http://ucollege.edu/employment), and contact Bruce Forbes at [bruce.forbes@ucollege.edu](mailto:bruce.forbes@ucollege.edu) for more information. Benefit package includes tuition subsidy for eligible dependents and other generous benefits.

**UNION COLLEGE** is seeking applicants for the position of plumber. This person is responsible to maintain the flow and drainage of water, air, and other gases by assembling, installing, and repairing pipes, fittings, and plumbing fixtures campus wide. Prefer five or more years of plumbing experience. Must be knowledgeable of plumbing repairs, maintenance, installation techniques, and plumbing codes. Please see the full job description and

instructions for application at [ucollege.edu/employment](http://ucollege.edu/employment). Contact Paul Jenks at [paul.jenks@ucollege.edu](mailto:paul.jenks@ucollege.edu) for more information.

**ANDREWS UNIVERSITY** is seeking a salaried staff therapist to provide individual, couple and group counseling for after-office hours, clinical consultations and student crisis interventions. Should maintain an assigned caseload and provide consultations on issues related to mental health. Reports to the director of the Counseling and Testing Center. For more information and to apply, please visit: [andrews.edu/admres/jobs/show/staff\\_salary#job\\_7](http://andrews.edu/admres/jobs/show/staff_salary#job_7)

## REAL ESTATE

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## SERVICES

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## TRAVEL

**ADVENTIST TOURS 2023.** Israel in Jesus' Steps, April 16-25 and June 4-13 with Andy Nash, and June 18-27 with Clifford Goldstein; Egypt & Exodus, April 6-14; Revelation's Seven Churches/Patmos/Greece, March 22-April 2;

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## LEGAL NOTICES

### QUADRENNIAL MEETING OF THE OHIO CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

The 43rd regular constituency meeting of the Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will convene at 10 a.m. (registration begins at 8:45 a.m.) on Sunday, June 4, 2023, at Worthington Seventh-day Adventist Church, 385 E. Dublin-Granville Road, Worthington, OH 43085.

The purpose of this meeting is to elect officers and committees, consider recommendations for revisions of the articles and regulations, and to transact such other business as comes before the conference.

*Bob Cundiff, President*  
*Oswaldo Magaña, Exec. Sec.*


## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**THE BURLESON SEVENTH-DAY CHURCH**, Burleson, Texas, will celebrate their 50th Anniversary, April 21-23, 2023. Activities include: *Friday* evening supper and church history presentation; *Sabbath* breakfast, lesson study by Pastor Keith Gray, sermon by Pastor Mike Tucker, lunch at Burleson Adventist School, afternoon fellowship, supper at the church with musical concert by Steve Darmody; *Sunday* morning golf. Call (817) 295-7141 with questions.

## OBITUARIES


**KOVALSKI, Joan**, born September 1, 1932, in Passaic, N.J., to the late John Haliniak and Agnes Szymanski; died September 4, 2020, in Ooltewah, Tenn. In addition to her daughter, Linda Peck, she is survived by her son, Paul Kovalski, four grandchildren: Rebecca Mills, Jessica Peck, Paul Kovalski and Joanna Kovalski; and one great-granddaughter, Adelaide "Adi" Mills. She was preceded in death by her husband, Paul, and her two sisters, Virginia and Audrey. Joan was a registered nurse and loved gardening, cooking and her cats. She was a member of the Hightstown Adventist church in New Jersey for years until she and Paul retired to North Carolina and attended Mt. Pisgah church. They then moved to West Virginia and were members of the Martinsburg church. After Paul passed away, she moved to Tennessee with her daughter Linda.

**MARTIN, Sandra Lou Shafer**, born November 20, 1946, in Johannesburg, South Africa; died February 28, 2020, in Hagerstown, Md. She was a member of the Hagerstown (Md.) church and served as the director of the Hagerstown Adventist Community Services Center, taking over after her father, Carl Shafer, died. She graduated as a nurse from Kettering College in Dayton, Ohio. She worked at the Williamsport Nursing Home as the night supervisor. Survivors: her sister, Carla-Vel Keastead; her nephews, Dwayne Deeds and Tony Keastead; her niece,




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Cindy Krause; and two step-daughters, Deyette McIntyre and Anita Martin-Byers.

**STRANG, Joyce A.**, born October 29, 1931, in Bradford, Pa.; died March 16, 2020, in Hagerstown, Md. She was a member of the Hagerstown (Md.) church. Joyce worked many years as an adult foster

care provider in both Takoma Park and Hagerstown, Md. Joyce was preceded in death by her husband, Earl F. Strang. Survivors: her son, Barry Strang, her daughter, Debbie Miller; granddaughters Tina Poole and Kim Wareham; two great-grandchildren: Aiden and Kethri Wareham, and her sister, Gloria C. Roys.

## Sunset Calendar

Sunset times listed below are for the cities in which our conference headquarters reside. For a full listing of sunset times in the Columbia Union territory, please visit [columbiaunionvisitor.com/sunset](http://columbiaunionvisitor.com/sunset).

	Jan 6	Jan 13	Jan 20	Jan 27	Feb 3	Feb 10	Feb 17	Feb 24
Boyertown, Pa.	4:51	4:58	5:05	5:14	5:22	5:31	5:39	5:47
Columbus, Ohio	5:21	5:28	5:36	5:44	5:52	6:01	6:09	6:17
Columbia, Md.	4:59	5:06	5:13	5:21	5:29	5:37	5:45	5:53
Lawrence Twp., N.J.	4:43	4:50	4:58	5:06	5:14	5:24	5:32	5:40
Dayton, Ohio	6:09	5:33	5:41	5:49	5:57	6:06	6:14	6:22
Hamburg, Pa.	4:51	4:58	5:06	5:14	5:23	5:32	5:40	5:48
Staunton, Va.	5:10	5:17	5:24	5:32	5:40	5:48	5:56	6:03
Parkersburg, W.Va.	5:17	5:24	5:32	5:40	5:48	5:56	6:04	6:12

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