

T Southern TIDINGS

FEBRUARY 2022

Plantwise Film Presents

COMPELLING EVIDENCE FOR A WHOLE-FOOD, PLANT-BASED DIET

RECOGNITION
EVENT HONORS THE
LIFE AND LEGACY
OF LUCY BYARD

CONFERENCE,
VOLUNTEERS REACH
THE MAYFIELD
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MIDDLETOWN
CHURCH
EXPERIENCES
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THROUGH BAPTISM
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

SOUTHERN
STUDENT
CONNECTS WITH
FRIENDS, IMPACTS
COMMUNITY

Bubbling Water for a Thirsty World



Ron C. Smith, D.Min., Ph.D.
*President of the Southern
Union Conference*

“The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw,” John 14:15.

The Samaritan woman had the same practical bent as Martha. Even today the women of Africa carry great clay water pots atop their heads. The Samaritan thought of the vast material benefit for her if only she didn’t need to come twice a day to that well. Martha, like her, saw the importance of practical things, such as getting food ready. And, as in the case of Martha, Jesus succeeded in making the woman understand about spiritual values.

Several years ago, a farmer in Tasmania, the island state to the south of the Australian continent, noted water trickling out of a rock face in a remote part of his property. He tried some of the water and found that it fizzed on his tongue.

A few years and countless tests later, one of the great international soft drink companies bought the rights to the spring. Now that naturally sparkling mineral water quenches thirsts in many countries. Similarly, the famous springs of Perrier in France offer refreshment just about everywhere. How much one overflowing hole in the rock can mean!

Jesus applied this idea to the spiritual world. The Samaritan woman had the potential of being a powerful witness in her city. He spoke patiently with her as He explained that the water of life now bubbled out of her very presence. Look at Me, Jesus said, I am the Water of Life. He had judged her rightly. Within the hour a great crowd came out of the city to hear Jesus.

As we endeavor to forge ahead through this North American Division Year of Evangelism, and through this, the Southern Union Year of Multiplying through Reconnection, we need to contemplate extraordinary possibilities. Who knows what springs of hope lie dormant within you, awaiting the infilling of the Spirit to burst forth in the world? Who would have judged the great evangelists Edward Earl Cleveland and Mark Finley of producing such a blessing? Who, looking at the frail and wasted Ellen Harmon, would have thought her capable of inspiring a world movement?

As we search for people who have been circumstantially disconnected from the Church, it is important to remember that a person brought up as a Seventh-day Adventist never forgets his faith completely. Even though he may not be living it, there is almost always a deep-seated respect for truth, and he will even defend its merits in an argument.

Always remember that young people are not hard to win back. Don’t argue with them; don’t scold them; don’t even admonish them. Just let them know you have confidence in them and hope that someday they will return. Urge them not to wait too long. Don’t nag them. Assure them that you will not interfere with their present way of life, but that if your help is ever needed and wanted, you’ll be glad to help. Such assurance wins a young person back much sooner.

Overflowing to bless a community, a family, a nation, may be God’s plan for you. Don’t think it impossible. Listen to Jesus speak to you about what He sees in every one of us: “The water I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life,” John 4:14.

Let’s drink the Living Water so that we can be a bubbling fountain of life to this post-Christian and post-modern culture. -RCS 📍



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COVER: Karene Bejarano, R.N., one of six individuals featured in the film "PlantWise."

PLANTWISE FILM PRESENTS COMPELLING EVIDENCE FOR A WHOLE-FOOD, PLANT- BASED DIET

BY AMA AKOTO-BOATENG WITH INGRID HERNANDEZ

New film features lifestyle medicine experts guiding subjects on a journey of discovery and recovery from chronic illness.

When Eric Adams, the mayor of New York City, received the diagnosis of Type 2 diabetes, it was life changing. He disliked the prospect of losing his vision, possible amputation of his extremities, and having to take insulin shots the rest of his life. Rather than accepting the diagnosis as his fate, though, he decided to try a plant-based diet. The results were astonishing. Three weeks after going plant-based, his vision cleared. Within three months, the nerve damage in his hands and feet disappeared, his cholesterol numbers plummeted, and his blood pressure normalized. Adams had learned the power of plants to change one's health trajectory.

Karene Bejarano had a similar transformation with Type 1 diabetes. She

grew up in the country living a vegetarian lifestyle and only rarely eating meat. As a substitute, she ate a lot of cheese, eggs, and processed foods. Shortly after getting married, however, she started having health issues that eventually escalated with her first pregnancy.

"At the 27-week mark in the pregnancy, the doctor ordered a glucose tolerance test. I failed the test quite significantly," said Bejarano, a registered nurse who works for a west coast hospital.

"After I reversed my Type 2 diabetes I learned it wasn't my DNA, it was my dinner."

Eric Adams

"They told me I had gestational diabetes, and I was going to have to see an endocrinologist and do food counseling. They said, 'But don't worry; it will go away. You'll just have to be careful. If you exercise and keep yourself healthy, you'll be just fine.'"

But after giving birth, Bejarano experienced terrible muscle weakness, intermittent blurred vision, and high blood sugar levels, leading to the diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes.

"It was very disheartening, and I went through a lot of denial," she said. "I was truly grieving a loss. I was losing my health, which is part of what all of us have the right to enjoy in life."

Adams and Bejarano are two of six individuals who share their health transformation stories in the recently released film "PlantWise." In the documentary, the six showcase their struggles with debilitating health conditions often caused by poor lifestyle choices.

The turning point for each of them is the decision to change what they put on



their plate by embracing a whole-food, plant-based diet. For Bejarano, while she couldn't completely eliminate her medication for Type 1 diabetes (an irreversible condition), her improved lifestyle allowed her to lower the amount she needed to take.

"When I made the switch to a whole-food, plant-based lifestyle, I started experiencing significant changes rather quickly," Bejarano recounted. "Within



Karene Bejarano, R.N., is one of six individuals featured in the film "PlantWise."



Through a plant-based, whole food lifestyle, Karene Bejarano was able to improve her chronic conditions and, with guidance from her doctor, reduce her medications.

six months, I had lost 40 pounds. My doctor said my blood pressure was quite low, and that they were going to take me off my blood pressure medication. My cholesterol was dropping too, so he said I wouldn't need my cholesterol medication anymore. In fact, I was able to get off the majority of my medications."

Nearly half of all Americans suffer from at least one chronic disease, which is responsible for 1.7 million deaths every year, according to a study published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. National lifestyle medicine experts believe that exposing the results of unhealthy food choices, and revealing the benefits of a whole-food, plant-based lifestyle could significantly help to slow this trend.

"A plant-based diet is the best diet available for humans. When minimally processed plant food is consumed, it

can be incredibly health-promoting and even therapeutic, to the point of reversing disease," noted George Guthrie, M.D., M.P.H., a lifestyle medicine physician at AdventHealth who is also the author of "Eat Plants, Feel Whole," a health transformation book. "The average American is deficient in potassium, magnesium, and fiber. Those eating a whole-food, plant-based diet do not have this problem."

Bejarano recalled how adopting this healthy eating approach made her feel so much more alive.

"I thought I was free, but I didn't really understand what freedom was until I changed my lifestyle," she said. "You have more energy, you're more vibrant, and you're happier. When you really decide you're going to change your lifestyle and you stand firm with that decision, it radically changes your life for the better, and you'll never want to go back."



Eric Adams, mayor of New York City, is one of six individuals featured in the film "PlantWise."



Adams found a similar freedom after being told for years there was nothing he could do — his disease was in his family history.

“After I reversed my Type 2 diabetes, I learned it wasn’t my DNA, it was my dinner,” he said. “It wasn’t where I was born, it was my breakfast. And it wasn’t my lineage, it was my lunch.”

The film “PlantWise” stems from AdventHealth’s desire to explore using documentary films in inpatient and outpatient settings as a catalyst to inspire patients to make lifestyle changes. It is a powerful motivational tool that can give viewers a new vision and fresh hope for their condition, and help them experience vibrant wellness through embracing a healthy lifestyle.

Speaking on the vision of the film, Todd Chobotar, editor-in-chief at AdventHealth Press and executive producer of “PlantWise,” said the film was created not only to share transformative patient stories, but also detail solutions to chronic health conditions and support physician-patient engagement.

“It is our hope that ‘PlantWise’ will positively impact people’s health when it is viewed by many audiences across the globe, including health care employees, inpatients, outpatients, med-

ical providers, consumers, churches, and other community organizations,” Chobotar noted.

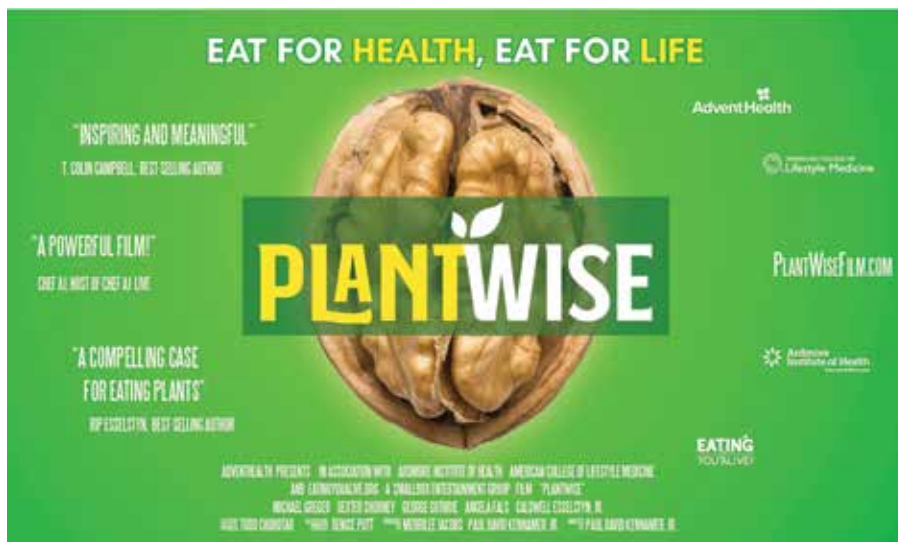
“PlantWise” is a 48-minute film with subtitles available in 18 languages. Sponsored by AdventHealth, Ardmore Institute of Health, American College of Lifestyle Medicine, and EatingYouAlive.org, the film features 18 leading lifestyle medicine experts from 14 specialties and disciplines.

Hans Diehl, Dr.H.Sc., M.P.H., founder of CHIP (Complete Health Improvement Program), calls it “the best plant-based film out there.” And T. Colin Campbell, Ph.D., co-author of “The China Study,” said it’s “inspiring and meaningful — exactly what people should see!”

To view the film as well as additional resources for free, visit PlantWiseFilm.com. 📌

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The film “PlantWise” is available to view for free at PlantWiseFilm.com.

HOW TO SHARE THE FILM “PLANTWISE”

“PlantWise,” a 48-minute documentary film, was created as a gift from AdventHealth to team members, consumers, churches, and the community. Its purpose is to inspire you to make lifestyle changes for yourself, and then to inspire those in the community you serve to do the same. The possibilities for using “PlantWise” are many. Here are a few ways you can use the film in your church or small group.

1. Watch the film yourself, and share the link with your family, friends, and church.
2. Organize a screening of the film. Partner with agencies and others interested in improving the public’s health.
3. Use it as an outreach to the community. Pair it with a plant-based meal or use it to launch a cooking class.
4. Show it in academies and colleges to inspire students and faculty to adopt more plant foods.
5. Launch evangelism in your church by using the film to attract members from the community.

Recognition Event Honors THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF LUCY BYARD

BY CORINNE KUYPERS-DENLINGER

December 10, 2021 was a momentous day for the Seventh-day Adventist Church, Adventist HealthCare (AHC), and distinguished Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), as the life and legacy of Lucille “Lucy” Byard was both recognized and honored. Lucy Byard was a Black Seventh-day Adventist member who was turned away by the Washington Sanitarium in 1943 because of the color of her skin.

Adventist HealthCare leaders unveiled a commissioned portrait of Byard on December 10, as well as a series of significant scholarships in her name that will benefit nursing students at each of the three universities.

The event brought together various church, healthcare, and community leaders and representatives to acknowledge the decades-old indignity and to move toward healing and reconciliation by owning the wrong and taking committed action to ensure it never happens again. “I’m really proud today to be a part of the Columbia Union, and part of a healthcare system that recognizes it’s time to set the record right,” said Dave Weigley, Columbia Union Conference president, and chair of the Adventist HealthCare board.

G. Alexander Bryant, North American Division president, echoed those thoughts via a special video message. “To come together in recognition of Lucy

Byard, who symbolizes the experience of so many African Americans, to commend her life and legacy is extraordinary,” commented Bryant, “especially in a day and age of so much divisiveness and so much racial insensitivity and so much inequality.”

“The recognition of Lucy Byard,” added Ted N.C. Wilson, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, “is an important step in helping people understand that Seventh-day Adventists, not just the institution, but all of us, must truly follow in the steps of Christ and understand what it means to offer respect and dignity to all.”

A Catalyst for Change

Lucy Byard was a devout Seventh-day Adventist woman who by 1943



Artist Simmie Knox and Lisa Sweeney-Walker, great-great-grandniece of Lucy Byard, unveil the portrait during the December 10, 2021, event.

had developed liver cancer together with cachexia, known also as “wasting disease.” Wishing to be treated in a Seventh-day Adventist hospital and, with an introduction from a renowned church leader, Byard traveled with her husband James from her home in Jamaica, Long Island to Washington Sanitarium in Takoma Park, Maryland — the first of the hospitals that now make up the Adventist HealthCare system.

As told by Adventist historian Benjamin Baker, upon arrival, staff members of the Washington Sanitarium became aware of the fact that Byard was Black. It was determined that because of the color of Lucy’s skin, she could not receive the care she needed at Washington Sanitarium, and arrangements were made to have her transferred to Freedman’s Hospital, approximately six miles away.

Byard was treated at Freedmen’s Hospital, now Howard University Hospital. She died some 38 days later.

There is general agreement within the Adventist Church community that Byard’s mistreatment was a key catalyst that sparked the creation of Black-led regional conferences.

Leading the Way to Acknowledgment and Reconciliation

For Terry Forde, president and CEO of Adventist HealthCare, learning that a Black woman had been turned away

PHOTO PROVIDED BY ADVENTIST HEALTHCARE

from a healthcare facility he now leads, was both eye-opening and heartbreaking. August 12, 2016 was “a day I always will remember,” shared Forde. “It was three years before White Oak Medical Center opened its doors and relocated from Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park, Maryland, that I learned that our mission, my mission, one that we hold in great esteem close to our hearts — to my heart — wasn’t able to reach everyone in 1943.”

That moment of realization led Forde to assemble the Lucy Byard Advisory Committee, composed of church, community, and healthcare-system leaders, and invited them to consider how best to honor the life and legacy of Lucy Byard, for herself but also as a talisman for every person of color who experienced then or experiences today inequity and indignities.

Advisory Committee Recommends Portrait and Scholarship

The committee’s work resulted in two recommendations: commission an original portrait of Byard and create a series of three scholarships in the name of Lucy Byard for outstanding nursing students with limited financial means. In the scholarships’ inaugural year, 2022, Adventist HealthCare will work closely with three universities, Oakwood University in Alabama, Washington Adventist University in Maryland, and Howard University in Washington, D.C., to identify candidates.

AHC has pledged \$500,000 in scholarship funds over five years, with the goal of establishing an ongoing endowment.

National Search Leads to Respected Portrait Artist and Niece of Lucy Byard

“The Lucy Byard Advisory Committee had many great ideas, but one in particular gained traction,” explained Anthony Stahl, president of White Oak Medical Center (WOMC), who chaired the committee. “It was the idea of commissioning a portrait of Lucy Byard that could hang in the most highly trafficked area of the hospital ... a place where patients, family members, staff, guests would stop, look,

reflect, and wonder who is this person, and then read her story.”

Finding just the right artist fell to Rob Jepson, chief operating officer of WOMC. Jepson eventually identified Simmie Knox, the first Black artist commissioned to paint a portrait of a sitting U.S. president, as the best and most fitting choice. Knox’s paintings of President William Jefferson Clinton and First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton today hang in the White House. Portraits of such notable figures as Thurgood Marshall, Henry (Hank) Aaron, Oprah Winfrey, and Ruth Bader Ginsburg are among his body of historic work.

Knox, now 86 years old, grew up in the Jim Crow South and knew the pain of discrimination, but persevered and earned a rightful place among the great artists of the 20th and 21st centuries. Working from only two existing — and very low resolution — images of Byard, Knox had to “read the details ... from the shadows” to bring Lucy Byard and her story into the light. He explained that portraits make a special statement. He wanted to capture “the church lady,” her piety and her humanity. “It’s the details that create a portrait. Portraits make a special statement,” said Knox. “They say you are special. And this portrait, I think, will be viewed and in a place where it will be seen by many. And, I think it’s a moment of healing.”



Terry Forde, CEO/president of Adventist HealthCare, welcomes attendees to the Lucy Byard Recognition event at the Southern-Asian Seventh-day Adventist Church in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Stahl also felt it important to find a living relative of Lucy Byard so her family would be aware that Byard’s story was being commemorated and immortalized. The initiative proved challenging since Byard did not have children of her own. Walter Hawkins, WOMC director of security and a seasoned genealogist, eventually found an older brother who had had children, which led to Lisa Sweeney Walker, Lucy Byard’s great-great-grandniece.

“I just recently learned of Lucy’s story, and I transported myself back to that time and I could not imagine the challenges that she faced and what she was going through,” said Walker, who has a strong physical resemblance to her ancestor. “From the bottom of my heart and on behalf of my family, I thank all of you for putting this together.”

Recognition Service Both Solemn and Joyful

Attendees characterized the recognition event as both solemn and joyful, filled with shared histories and stories, speeches, music, and prayer. Many invited speakers recounted their own experiences during an earlier time when people of color were routinely disenfranchised and disrespected, while expressing hope for the future.

John Sackett, AHC’s chief operating officer, concluded the service by praying, “Today, we have manifested our desire to reconcile this hurtful moment from the past and to once again commit to serve wholeheartedly those who have been undervalued. Please, dear Lord, bless and strengthen our resolve to never again turn anyone away that needs our care, to always respect and value every person. Let this beautiful portrait of Lucy Byard and the scholarships we award serve as a symbol and reminder of our resolve.”

Reprinted with permission. 📍

Corinne Kuypers-Denlinger
is the director of philanthropy communications at Adventist HealthCare.

CONFERENCE, VOLUNTEERS REACH THE MAYFIELD COMMUNITY AFTER DEVASTATION

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Johnny Rodman, member of Oasis Church, in Portland, Tennessee, was shocked at the immense destruction that surrounded him. He had just come from helping in Bowling Green, Kentucky, after a series of tornadoes swept through Kentucky and Tennessee on the night of December 10, 2021, and morning of December 11. Now, he stood in Mayfield, Kentucky, where extensive devastation left a community wondering how they would recover.

Rodman knew he had to get started right away. Along with other volunteers, they set up a donation center and handed out supplies such as water, food, wipes, diapers, and baby formula. Throughout the following week, Rodman also led a team that helped pick up debris, install generators, box up windows, and tarp roofs. Overall, the group of volunteers helped more than 45 homes.

“While we were there, we were doing what I call ‘putting on a band-aid,’” Rodman, who has volunteered in six other disaster relief efforts, said. “Eventually, the goal is switching from a band-aid to actually fixing the wound.”

The Kentucky-Tennessee Conference

also took an active role in aiding the affected communities. Through the donations of churches, members, and ministries from across the country, Kentucky-Tennessee

was able to provide meals for volunteers, and tools for cleanup and reparation.

As of January 4, 2022, the Conference had raised more than \$43,000 with the



PHOTO COURTESY MIKE HEWITT

Johnny Rodman, a volunteer in Mayfield, Kentucky, stands in front of a house damaged from the December 11 and 12, 2021, tornadoes. Rodman, along with other volunteers, helped pick up debris, install generators, box up windows, and tarp roofs. Overall, the group helped more than 45 homes.



PHOTO COURTESY JOHNNY RODMAN

The Kentucky-Tennessee Conference has been actively involved in the tornado relief efforts in Mayfield, Kentucky, by supporting volunteers and aiding the affected families as they begin the recovery process.

help of more than 75 donors. According to Mike Hewitt, vice president for administration, most of the funds will eventually go to the affected families as they begin the recovery process.

“In the long term, we’ll be looking for families that need our help the most to basically get their life back together,” Hewitt said. “What’s needed the most right now is financial contributions, because the healing process will be long.”

Kentucky-Tennessee did not work alone. They received outpouring support of volunteers from other conferences. Jim Ingersoll, member at Collegedale Community, Tennessee, Church, was one of the first individuals to go. Ingersoll is the program director of 2Serve, a disaster training and response team.

Like Rodman, Ingersoll, along with more than 100 2Serve volunteers, helped set up a Point of Distribution (POD) and helped in the construction and clean-up efforts. In addition, the group offered prayers and distributed pieces of literature such as *Steps to Christ*.

“We didn’t just help them right here and now,” Ingersoll said. “We brought hope with us and a reminder that there’s



PHOTO COURTESY JOHNNY RODMAN

This donation center, set up by Johnny Rodman, held supplies such as water, food, diapers, and baby formula that were handed out to the community. “My biggest take away is that God wants us to be His hands and feet,” Rodman said. “There is no reason for people to feel alone in this disaster ... there’s nothing like helping one another in a time of need.”

more than what this world has to offer.” Both Ingersoll and Rodman hope to return and help the community of Mayfield in the coming months.

“My biggest take away is that God wants us to be His hands and feet,” Rodman said. “There is no reason for people to feel alone in this disaster ... there’s nothing like helping one another in a time of need.”

To make a monetary donation, all funds proceeding to the tornado relief efforts, visit the Conference’s Online Giving page and make a contribution under “KYTN Disaster Relief.”

Paola Mora Zepeda is the communication director at the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference.

MIDDLETOWN CHURCH EXPERIENCES SPIRITUAL GROWTH THROUGH BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

BY MARIUS SERBAN

Marius Serbana, pastor, shares his testimony.

Many pastors and ministry leaders would erase 2020 and 2021 from history if that were possible. However, Middletown Church in Louisville, Kentucky, couldn't be more grateful for what these past two years brought to our congregation. Through a series of divinely orchestrated events, my wife, Pam, and I received a new spiritual experience by allowing the Holy Spirit to fill us every day.

Ellen White wrote, "The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the church is looked forward to as in the future; but it is the privilege of the church to have it now. Seek for it, pray for it, believe for it. We must have it, and Heaven is waiting to bestow it," *Evangelism*, p. 701.

As Pam and I began our Holy Spirit journey in July of 2020, we received a peace and joy that we couldn't keep to ourselves. With excitement, our transformative experience began to permeate every sermon preached and every conversation held. In September 2020 I invited members and friends of Middletown Church to join us in daily baptism



Holy Spirit small group members pose together during the "Hope. Healing. Holy." retreat. According to Marius Serban, pastor, the retreat was designed in such a way that all who attended would experience the holiness and healing of God.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARIUS SERBAN.

of the Holy Spirit. About 52 people signed up. Participants were divided into small groups for a year-long intensive study of Pastor Dennis Smith's Holy Spirit books.

God began attracting new people to Middletown's congregation. We had weekly visitors who were not Adventists, and eventually more Holy Spirit small groups were created. This past year, nine were added to the church membership.

The first ever "Hope. Healing. Holy." retreat, August 20-21, 2021, was designed so all who attended could expe-

perience the holiness and healing of God. Smith joined the group virtually to present emotional healing and spiritual deliverance. I had sermons on God's love and healing. Attendees broke into small groups and shared their deepest wounds, frustrations, and fears. There was also a powerful anointing service.

The next Sabbath Middletown Church conducted its first Holy Spirit Sabbath. The entire service was dedicated to teaching about the role of the Holy Spirit in a Christian's life. Those who had participated in the Holy Spirit small groups shared what they had learned during the past 14 months, the miraculous transformations they had experienced, and the blessings they had received living a life filled with the Holy Spirit.

At the end of the service, an invitation was extended to the whole church to take part in this wonderful spiritual experience. Seven new groups were formed with a total of 63 people — one-third were not Adventists. Despite the pandemic restrictions and obstacles faced by Middletown, the power of the Holy Spirit proved He knows no boundaries and can prevail over any barriers. 🕊

SOUTHERN STUDENT CONNECTS WITH FRIENDS, IMPACTS COMMUNITY

BY ANGELA BAERG

John Kent, a member of the Collegedale, Tennessee, Church, knew only a handful of people when he first arrived as a student on the campus of Southern Adventist University. Instead of being intimidated, Kent was excited to explore the many new opportunities around him to connect and build relationships.

He started off by becoming involved in a LifeGroup during his freshman year. Southern's Office of Ministry and Missions provides support for more than 75 student-led LifeGroups that meet weekly, with hundreds of students participating. The theme of Kent's first LifeGroup was "A Healthy Heart," and the weekly studies revolved around different people from the Bible.

"We explored biblical characters such as Moses and Naaman and did case studies to see what it means to have a healthy relationship with God and others," Kent remembers. "Then we looked for ways to apply what we learned to our own lives."

In another LifeGroup called "Masterpieces," Kent explored his creative side. In that art-based LifeGroup, they did activities like painting, drawing with pastels, and making cards for assisted-living homes.

In addition to connecting with friends on campus, Kent wanted to find a way to make an impact on the community. He was thrilled to get a job in Southern's Office of Ministry and Missions, where



Instead of being intimidated by not knowing many people when first becoming a student at Southern Adventist University, John Kent immersed himself in LifeGroups and outreach projects.

he joined the Humanitarian Engagement team. Partnering with The School of Social Work and The Chattanooga Area Food Bank, his team helped coordinate a bi-monthly community food distribution on campus to combat food insecurity.

Kent worked with his office to arrange a weeklong trip to Atlanta, Georgia, during May of 2021. They partnered with Frontline Response, an organization that works to combat sex trafficking and homelessness. Once in Atlanta, the group of Southern students received training and performed three outreach activities every day, including the following:

Street Reach – Making personal contact with the homeless population with water

bottles, hotline cards, reflective blankets, Gatorade, snack bags, gloves/hats, sleeping bags, and encouraging words;

Neighborhood Clean-up – Going into lower income neighborhoods and cleaning up trash to make the area look nice;

God Is – Painting different attributes of God on cardboard signs and going out to encourage those driving by on a busy intersection;

Metro Kids – Visiting different neighborhoods to build relationships and play games with children, ending with a spiritual lesson;

Princess Night – Giving roses and handmade cards to those experiencing sexual exploitation; and

Compassion Night – Passing out meals and hotline cards for individuals to be rescued, and praying with them.

"I was struck by how easy it is for society (including us!) to ignore people in need, such as the homeless people and human trafficking victims we encountered," says Kent, now a junior at Southern. "We forget that they are humans with names and identities as valuable as ours. After all, Matthew 25:40 reminds us that 'whatever you did for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for Me.'" ●

Angela Baerg is a Montessori preschool teacher who graduated in 2006 from Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee.

AdventHealth Hospitals Rank Among Top 5% in Health Care Quality and Safety



A total of 25 AdventHealth hospitals earned an 'A' Leapfrog Safety grade, and 14 were named Top Hospitals.

The Leapfrog Group, a national watchdog for hospital quality and safety, has released their 2021 Top Hospital Award, a competitive recognition that uses stringent criteria to assess hospital safety and quality. The designation is given only to hospitals that meet the high standards of the Top Hospital award's methodology, which considers qualities such as preventing medical errors, maternity care quality, infection rates and more.

In 2021, less than 5% of hospitals evaluated by Leapfrog met the rigorous standards for the Top Hospital designation, 14 of which are AdventHealth hospitals. Of the nation's 149 hospitals recognized

as Top Hospitals, AdventHealth hospitals represent nearly a tenth of the list.

Hospitals that receive the Top Hospitals award must have also earned an 'A' Leapfrog Safety Grade, which was achieved by more than two dozen AdventHealth hospitals in 2021. This additional evaluation analyzes performance related to preventing medical errors, injuries, accidents, infections, and other potential harms to patients in their care. The grading system uses 22 measures of publicly available data focused on hospital safety, and rates more than 2,900 acute-care hospitals across the country two times per year.

"This year has brought many challeng-

es as the pandemic caused operational and strategic shifts that have tested our teams across the country. Even still, our commitment to our patients is unwavering as we strive for high-quality care in a safe environment to help people feel whole," said William Scharf, M.D., executive clinical director of quality and safety for AdventHealth. "Our 'Keep Me Safe' service standard is a vital part of our team member culture, and guides the investments we make to empower our workforce to provide this experience for every person every time." 📍

BY ADVENTHEALTH NEWS

AHU Students Awarded Scholarships to Attend DEI Conference

AdventHealth University (AHU) specially selected 19 student leaders to participate in the first Take Action Conference, scheduled January 2022 in Orlando.

Hosted by the Holocaust Memorial Resource & Education Center of Florida, the Take Action Conference exists to motivate youth to create change on their campuses and in their communities. Major focuses of the Take Action Institute are diversity, tolerance, and social justice.

During the two-day conference, students are given tools and resources, including learning the power of storytelling, media relations training, how to organize a rally, and coalition building.

AHU students selected to participate were Emily Abdon, Nureliz Adorno, Maddison Carmi, Taylor Cox, Shelby Dowda, Lauren Drummond, Samantha Duckworth, Bernard Edouard, Jose Fragoso Ruiz, Ruby Gonzalez, Cristina Hernandez, Cavy Joseph, Alissa Negron, Jemma Raner, Roland Rothe, Hala Saedi, Emily Villar-Dominguez, James Williams, and Danah Williamson.

“AdventHealth University is excited to be a part of this transformative experience for our students and, ultimately, our campus and our community,” said Kendra Presley Van-Houten, director of community and student engagement for AdventHealth University. “As a leader in health care education, AdventHealth University is devoted to developing influential professionals of uncommon compassion, and learning how to work toward equity and inclusion are vital to our mission.”

Conference speakers included Prashan De Visser, founder of Sri Lanka United, the largest youth movement for reconcil-




ADVENTHEALTH UNIVERSITY

AdventHealth University students gear up for the first “Take Action” Conference, focused on tolerance and inclusion.

iation in Sri Lanka, and Holocaust survivor Eva Schloss, stepsister of Anne Frank.

AdventHealth University awarded scholarships for the 19 civic scholars selected to attend. The registration includes a one-year membership in the Take Action Institute. The Take Action Institute serves as a community resource center and a collaborative space for students, activists, community partners, and educators to share knowledge. Its mission statement reads, “Guided by the lessons of the Holocaust and vision for a just and caring community, the Take Action Institute supports student movements that take action against all forms of prejudice and bigotry.”

“The Take Action Institute Conference

brings together 400 of the best and brightest of our youth (16-25 years of age) desiring to root out all forms of prejudice and bigotry on their campuses and their communities,” said Marc McMurrin, Take Action Institute chairman. “It has been encouraging to see all the central Florida major universities and high schools rally around this conference and the ongoing learning available through the institute. The youth will lead the way standing up to injustice while appreciating the differences that makes our community strong.” 

BY ADVENTHEALTH UNIVERSITY NEWS

Little Creek Fellowship Burns 20-year Mortgage

The Little Creek Fellowship Church, Clayton, N.C., set fire to their 20-year mortgage for their sanctuary on December 4, 2021. A mortgage burning is a high Sabbath no matter how long it might have taken a church to pay it off, and thanks to the corona virus this celebration had been pushed off more than a year.

Rick Russell, Carolina Conference treasurer, shared a message placed on his heart, entitled “That They May Be One.” It was illustrated by the true story of shoe companies Adidas and Puma originating as one, but division causing a split. The split was damaging not only to the family involved, but also to the town and employees. It resulted in a different company, Nike, taking the market away from them. He used this illustration to help the members see what can happen when division is introduced.

Following the morning message, as the church leaders began this special section of the morning service, Chad Grundy, Carolina undertreasurer, pointed out the date the mortgage was granted and that it was only seven years prior to pay-off date. A 20-year mortgage being paid off in seven years is a testimony to the members and leadership in their dedication to stewarding God’s moneys. Now that their mortgage has been paid, the members have decided to take part of what they would have put toward the mortgage and invest it in missions outside the United States to help spread the Gospel to all the corners of the world.

After the service, the members had prepared a special meal which was served to all attending, and fellowship spread around the church in classrooms, the fellowship hall, and even the outdoor picnic pavilion, encouraging togetherness while still social distancing. 🍴

BY COURTNEY HEROD



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COURTNEY HEROD



COURTNEY HEROD

Adventist World Aviation Serves the World and Their Backyard

It's said that while there is mission work to be done overseas in foreign countries, that there is plenty to be done stateside in North America, right in each church's backyard. Though, in fact, the whole world can be backyard! Where each makes themselves available to serve in that giant backyard is the deciding factor. While Adventist World Aviation (AWA) certainly does fly over foreign soil, they also fly over home-grown soil in the United States.

From AWA's Headquarters hangar and office, just outside Raleigh, N.C., God orchestrates some amazing missions that are heart-warming to all who are involved. It inspires and brings transformation! One of those missions was with "Melanie." She's an extraordinary woman of faith who had been battling an incorrectly diagnosed form of cancer. It was killing her, and her only option was a high-risk surgery that would yield one of two outcomes: either she would die on the table, or never walk again. AWA had stayed in contact with Melanie, and when they got the news of how risky this surgery was, they doubled down on their prayers and even called for a team of prayer warriors at church. They placed her in God's hands and waited.

Then the second call came in to prayerful waiting room of faith: Melanie had made it through the grueling 18-hour surgery and was wiggling her toes! She was alive and able to move! She went through about three weeks' worth of rehab while staying with a friend near Johns Hopkins, and when AWA went to pick her up, she was walking with a walker, no more cancer, and ready to see her family she'd been separated from for a month! What a blessed time it was to see her reunited with her family once she was back home in South Carolina.

Little Walter, a young Chippewa boy who had stage 4 neuroblastoma cancer, was flown by AWA last fall. While he



RIC JO SWANINGSON



RIC JO SWANINGSON

has been through trial and fire since then, they have prayed and watched as, in all the many and various treatments, that the little boy hasn't given up or given out. He used to have a tube in his nose for feedings, but now he has no tube and is beginning to look a little healthier. God answers prayers to extraordinary degrees. Though Walter still has a ways to go, he has in fact improved, even if in small increments. That is worthy of joy!

Another recent AWA flight was for a widowed husband and father, "Mr. Butch." His wife had died from complications from Covid and his daughter, "Kris," needed to relocate him from Georgia to her place in Durham, N.C. Ric Jo Swaningson, pastor, came to the rescue with the offer of an angelwing flight, and Butch was taken to live with his daughter. Once he was settled in, the joy and adventure was just beginning. Kris and Butch began doing Bible studies

with Swaningson. They fell in love with the Word of God like never before, and before long both Butch and Kris found themselves standing in the baptistry at the Wilson First Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Wilson, N.C.

The church was sure that angels sang as they were submerged in the baptismal pool and began their committed walk with Jesus. Not long after this, however, Butch fell ill and was in and out of the hospital. The doctors discovered a brain bleed and other troubles from which he would not recover. Butch fell asleep in Jesus May 19 in the VA hospital of Durham. Though hearts were saddened, they also knew that he fell asleep in Jesus, and to him it will be but a moment until he sees his Lord and Savior on the glorious resurrection morn! Kris has that bright hope, and is in awe of how God has used Butch's passing to open the door for witnessing to her other family members.

This is the impact that prayers and donations have on those AWA serves. The supporters keep AWA flying and bringing hope to many. Thank you to all who support and join in being a part of this journey. 🙏

BY REBECCA STEVENSON

Adventist Entities Join in Giving Back

Thanksgiving Celebration 2021 in Apopka, Fla., served all 110 tenants of the Taylor Apartment Complex. Held four days before Thanksgiving, this three-hour celebration saw Adventist entities joining with local organizations to provide activities for children, information booths with gifts for parents and children, and boxes of food.

Florida Conference Children and Family Ministries provided crafts for the children to make, resources for children and parents on mental health, and computer safety awareness for children.

“I enjoyed spending time at this outreach event in giving back and seeing people smile,” said Judy Smith, director of children’s and family ministries. As part of a sponsorship, they contributed \$500 toward the purchase of turkeys, and Efrain Duany, associate director, helped with distribution to each apartment.

Forest Lake Academy students in Apopka, as part of a Caring Day, gathered food items and prepared food boxes to give to the tenants. Recipient families were very appreciative, and the children had great fun with activities provided for them.

This seventh year of the Thanksgiving Celebration was sponsored by Forest Lake Academy, Forest Lake Church Pathfinders, Apopka Church Pathfinders, AdventHealth, Empowered Sister’s Keepers, Florida Conference Children’s and Family Ministries, and Mannaba Counseling Center and Training Institute. 📍



EFRAIN DUANY

Children enjoy crafts sponsored by Florida Conference Children and Family Minis-



EFRAIN DUANY

Forest Lake Academy students unload a trailer of food for residents.

BY JUDY SMITH

Florida Conference Commissions Chaplain

**Annie Nadine Benoit—
December 11, 2021**

Annie N. Benoit is from the beautiful island of Haiti. She was taught the importance of fearing God and having Him as a personal friend by her pastor father and mother, Alourdin and Anne Benoit.

Through marriage, Benoit was blessed to welcome a son, Giovanni. Becoming a mother brought the greatest joy and calling, though a separation left her a single mom to train a son in the godly way of her own childhood. Now 21, her pride and joy attends Walla Walla University.

Benoit worked as a nurse for 15 years, but became obedient to a calling to the ministry



while holding 20 days of prayer as an elder at Bethel French Church in Clinton, Mass.

After graduation from Andrews University with a bachelor of arts in 2013, Benoit joined the M.Div./CPE residency program at then Florida Hospital where she began a process of emotional and spiritual healing. She completed a master of divinity at the Theological Seminary at Andrews University.

Since moving back to Orlando, Fla., Benoit has served 4 1/2 years as an Adventist chaplain for AdventHealth. Her favorite hobbies/gifts are cooking and home decoration. She enjoys using these hobbies as a ministry by cooking meals for friends and strangers, as well as practicing hospitality to those in need. 📍

North Lake Church Honors Faithful Servant

North Lake Church in Leesburg, Fla., recently honored 90-year-old Pearl Nunes with a corsage and a set of harmonicas in recognition for years of faithful service. While serving as head deaconess for many years, this godly woman trained other deaconesses in the work of serving church members and community.

Many in the congregation have been pleasantly surprised when answering the phone on a birthday to hear the “Happy Birthday” song played by Nunes on a harmonica. Even though visually impaired, she still serves in any way possible, including blessing the congregation with singing and harmonica playing. 📍



Honoring Pearl Nunes for her years of service were Cherie Markham (left), music director; Pearl Nunes, honoree; Norman Bassett, pastor; and Marty Matthews, outgoing head deaconess trained by Nunes.

Georgia-Cumberland's ACS Responds in Times of Crisis

It is a terrible tragedy when disaster strikes. Hurricanes, fires, floods: these things can devastate entire communities. It can also be hard to see it on the news somewhere that hasn't been affected, begging the question, "What can I do to help?" The Georgia-Cumberland Conference's Adventist Community Services (ACS) is often called upon to help in these situations.

In late August last year, a record-breaking flood surged through middle Tennessee, taking out roads, cell towers, and phone lines. Luis Biazotto, director of ACS, was contacted by the Tennessee affiliate of Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (TNVOAD) to help with response efforts in Waverly, Tenn.

"When a disaster happens in Tennessee or Georgia, even though we share territories with other conferences, we are the point of contact with Tennessee or Georgia VOAD," says Biazotto. "It was a devastating situation in the city of Waverly. Many people didn't have insur-



Volunteers and civil servants unload a truck of donations at the Waverly Adventist Community Services (ACS) warehouse in Waverly, Tenn. At the request of the Tennessee VOAD, Georgia-Cumberland Conference ACS operated the warehouse that received and managed donations.

LUIS BIAZOTTO

"I was contacted by TNVOAD president, David Sledge. [Georgia-Cumberland ACS] ended up operating the warehouse from September to the first week of December — less than a week before the tornados," says Biazotto.

In early December, a string of deadly tornados hit Kentucky and several parts of Tennessee. It took some time to assess the damage and the needs in the affected areas. Biazotto says that while TNVOAD has not requested the Georgia-Cumberland Conference's assistance with recovery efforts from these tornados, he is in contact with TNVOAD and the Conference is ready to help if needed.

Biazotto says it's important for members to know their donations help other territories as well. "We feel that God has blessed this Conference in a way that we can share with others." 📍

BY RACHEL BEAVER

Media Production Class Assists GCA's "Magnify Worship"

It's been a year since Georgia-Cumberland Academy's Magnify Worship program launched into the world of music and video production, and this year the ministry has expanded its student involvement to include the media production class.

"These students have grown up with cell phones and the ability to make videos on their phones, but there is a whole other level involved in professional video production," said Randy Kelch, direc-

tor of IT and media production teacher. "Working with Magnify Worship gives us hands-on lab experience and involves students in the media ministry that the worship program has embarked on."

Students are often surprised about the amount of work that goes into video production, but it's also a lot of fun. "The hardest part of the video shoot was looking at the same multiple days in a row," said Raiden Scott, a senior whose band recorded the song "Death Was Arrested." "But,

in the end it was really rewarding. As a band we all had to be vulnerable singing on camera, but we were in it together and the candid shots in the video really show that we had fun doing it. The whole process really bonded us as a band."

In addition to training students in video production, students who work in the recording studio are gaining experience in the area of audio engineering, recording each of the 10-11 band members.

"We tell our students all the time that

God has blessed us with a unique ministry opportunity and it's not about us and all about Him," said Mark Torsney, co-director of Magnify Worship. "It's our mission to share God's love through music and videos to impact this generation."

In one year, Magnify Worship's music has been played or watched more than 22,000 times. "We're thrilled to be reaching so many people, but like Jabez, we're praying that God would continue to expand our territory and reach across all generations, but especially our youth who need a message of hope and an example of their peers involved in ministry," said Torsney.

Raiden said the youth group at her



GCA media production students record one of Magnify Worship's latest songs. The media production class records and edits the audio and video for the songs that students hope will reach anyone, but especially other youth who need a message of hope.

grandmother's church in Florida plays Magnify's videos for Sabbath School. "Music can often reach teens better than a sermon. The lyrics we sing are powerful and straight from the Bible. I hope other teens can see how passionate we are about what we're doing."

Magnify Worship's music can be found on the major social media and streaming platforms, including YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, Apple Music, and Spotify, among others. 📌

BY **KALIE KELCH, GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND ACADEMY ASSISTANT CHAPLAIN**

Calhoun Hispanic Members Accept, Share Health Challenge

Fibromyalgia, high triglycerides, energy depletion, extreme fatigue, and other debilitating health conditions used to be part of Norma Utz's daily life. Utz, who had been a very active member of the Calhoun Hispanic Church, felt helpless and frustrated.

Utz's prayer of finding a way to overcome her conditions was recently answered, and led to something much larger than she first envisioned. Working with a health coach, Utz began making small changes in her lifestyle and soon she regained lost energy, slept better, and was able to walk again without her cane.

Being used to serving and helping in her church, Utz felt God was leading her to share her experience with others who were suffering similar health issues. From this desire, Health Warriors was started: a health group that, assisted by her health coach, promotes lifestyle changes to improve health.

Health Warriors started "Back to Life," a 21-day faith-based health challenge to regain health and wellness. Originally,



Members of the Calhoun Hispanic Church participated in "Back to Life," a 21-day health challenge developed in part by Norma Utz, one of the members. The program was such a success there are plans to host this type of program in nearby churches.

about 15 women accepted the challenge, but during the 21-day challenge, husbands, children, and friends who were not Adventist joined as well.

Through weekly meetings, daily devotionals, and constant motivational support, each participant took baby steps by exchanging unhealthy practices for new and healthy habits.

By the 21st day, many pounds were

lost, body measurements became lower, and many participants reported more energy and better-quality sleep. They were moving and exercising, learned how to prepare new foods, and began eating healthy and tasty meals that their families also enjoyed. Furthermore, these warriors reported that they regained and strengthened their daily connection with God.

For Utz, a few weeks after the challenge, her blood work came back with extraordinary results. For the first time in years, her triglycerides were back to normal levels!

With the help of the Calhoun Hispanic Church and René Hernández, pastor, Health Warriors started with the desire of helping others regain health. But, it will not end in Calhoun. Hernández has invited Health Warriors to come to other churches in his district to bring spiritual, physical, and emotional health back to life. 📌

BY **WALESKA GONZÁLEZ**

Daniel Claudet Joins Gulf States Communication Department



Daniel Claudet stands with his wife, Miriã, and their children, Louis, 6, and Lauren, 4. He joined the Gulf States Conference as of February 2022.

Daniel Claudet, general manager for Hope Channel Southeast Asia, has accepted the call to serve as communication director for the Gulf States Conference, and is planning to start the position in February 2022.

Claudet was born in Peru to a pastoral family. As a result, he learned the value of ministering where you are, and the importance of going where God calls. Following his studies in audiovisual communication in Peru, he accepted the call to work for Hope Channel Brazil in 2003, initially in Rio de Janeiro and later in São Paulo when the ministry shifted operations. He worked as a television producer, video editor, switcher director, and filmmaker during his time there.

In 2010, Claudet accepted the media coordinator position for Hope Channel Mid-

dle East in Lebanon, where he served until 2014 when he moved to Serbia to serve as production manager for LIFEConnect, the localized version of Hope Channel for the region. In 2015, he moved back to Peru to serve the local Hope Channel as their television director.

In 2017, Claudet took on a new role of establishing Hope Channel in a new region, southeast Asia. Based in Thailand, this ministry produces content in eight different languages to reach seven separate countries. While the Hope Channel brings consistent outreach results in places where it is implemented, it can take time for the positive reputation to build. “When this ministry started, we were operating with the expectation that we may not see significant results within ten years,” says Claudet. However, he counts the experience of plan-

ning for long-term ministry as a blessing because immediate results aren’t always a reality in this type of work.

Along with his wife, Miriã, and their children, Louis, 6, and Lauren, 4, the Claudet family continues to follow God’s calling as the opportunity from the Gulf States presents itself. With an evident passion for media ministry, which benefits both Church members and the unchurched, Claudet is driven by the positive change that is wrought out in the lives of those who utilize these ministry resources. Claudet is also passionate about training and believes that in 2022, Church members have an unprecedented opportunity to become digital evangelists. 📌

BY SHANE HOCHSTETLER

Last-Minute Miracle Experienced at Thanksgiving

Members from the Phenix City Church in Phenix City, Ala., gathered on November 17, 2021, for one cause — to be the hands and feet of Jesus! They helped the Laurel Manor Mobile Home Community, for the second year, by providing food for 100 families.

Such an initiative takes lots of planning. Dwayne Campbell, pastor of Phenix City, contacted the community manager to set the date and distribute flyers. Laree Daniel, food pantry director and local elder, worked with the food bank to set aside canned goods, dry goods, and turkeys for that big day. Then, on Sunday, November 14, volunteers assembled 100 bags of food for loading on the food giveaway day. The youngest member of the team, 10-year-old Elijah Crawford, contacted the local television station and newspaper to ask them to cover the event, and they said, “Yes!”

The big day arrived! Volunteers met at the church to transport the bags to the community. Angel Lassalle, first elder, and Daniel headed to the food bank to pick up the turkeys. When they arrived, there were no turkeys, only hams. Lassalle said, “I’m so sorry. We can’t use the hams.” The church members proceeded to share their convictions on clean and unclean foods that the Bible outlines for consumption. Without this additional food, however, the giveaway bags would be lacking. With only 30 minutes before the giveaway was to take place, clients were already lining up, and local media representatives were setting up for the event. The church volunteers needed another plan.

The two volunteers whispered a prayer, and although 100 turkeys would cost more than \$1,000, they headed to the local grocery. While checking out with two baskets loaded with turkeys, Daniel received a call from the food bank. The



Church volunteers combined their efforts to distribute 100 meals during the 2021 Thanksgiving holiday.

voice said, “Hi, are you the lady who was here a few minutes ago requesting turkeys?” “Yes, I am,” Daniel said. The woman from the food bank said, “Well, we unexpectedly received a pallet of turkeys. You can pick them up now.”

“Praise the Lord!” shouted the two elders as they ran out of the store. “It was a miracle!” recalled Daniel, “God provided the turkeys right on time!” They were able to pick up the miracle turkeys, save \$1,000, and head to Laurel Manor just in time. Daniel later said, “We hope people leave with more than just a bag; we hope they leave with the love of Jesus.”

More than 60 people requested Bible studies, and the pastoral team is making

plans now to go back into the community to give the studies. “And the Gospel is not just preaching the Word, but also acting in doing the deeds and the good things that Christ would have done in bringing healing and restoration for the lives of the community,” said Campbell. Please pray that the Laurel community will also receive the Bread of Life as the Bible studies are given. Local media coverage is available at www.gscsda.org/gsc-today/phenixthanksgiving21. 📌

BY LAREE DANIEL

Madison Campus Church Puts on Christmas Musical With Volunteers

Madison Campus Church, Tenn., presented a Christmas production titled “The Deliverer,” on December 11, 2021. The musical, which had been in the works for more than two years, showcased the story of the Great Controversy, and was made possible with the help of more than 120 volunteers.

The show follows a mother on her death bed who tells her daughter the story of Satan’s rebellion, man’s fall to sin, and God’s plan for redemption.

“We are not just celebrating the birth of Christ, but the whole plan of salvation,” said Amanda Kelly, stage master.

More than 400 people came to watch the show, which was performed twice that morning. In between, Madison Campus Church also hosted its annual Christmas Brunch.

“The Deliverer” was first written as a youth camp play, and tweaked for the church play by Ken Wetmore, former Madison Campus senior pastor. The mu-



PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

The cast of the “The Deliverer” stand on stage for the last scene of the musical. The production, which had been in the works for more than two years, was presented at Madison Campus Church on December 11, 2021.

sic was composed by current worship pastor, Daniel Bondaczuk. The musical was originally scheduled for Easter of 2020, but it was cancelled after in-person services were closed due to COVID-19.

“The world shut down, and we did not get the chance to do [the show],” Bondaczuk said. “After the church re-

opened, and the choir and orchestra resumed activities in August of 2021, we saw this window of opportunity to finally do the play on Christmas.”

Bondaczuk described the show as a 360° immersive experience, with the action happening on stage and the music coming from the church balconies. In



PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Mary, played by Mia Bush, learns her role in God’s plan for salvation. More than 400 people came to watch “The Deliverer,” which was performed twice the morning of December 11, 2021.



PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Eve, played by Rose Perez, gives Adam, played by Kris Perez, the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. In total, more than 120 volunteers helped make the musical possible, including an estimate of 40 people involved in the drama, 40 in the choir, 40 in the orchestra, and 15 more in the technical team.

total, more than 120 volunteers helped make the musical possible — including an estimate of 40 people involved in the drama, 40 in the choir, 40 in the orchestra, and 15 more in the technical team.

“I think the most rewarding part was seeing how many people volunteered,” said Aaron Mays. Mays has been the Christmas drama director at Madison Campus Church since 1999. “Seeing [volunteers] get excited about the process ... and [telling] the story of Jesus, that’s a blessing.”

To see a recording of the event visit @madisoncampuschurch on Facebook. To listen to the shows’ soundtrack, search “The Deliverer” on your preferred streaming platform. 📍

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA



PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Lucifer challenges God’s power in Heaven. “The Deliverer” follows the story of a mother on her death bed who tells her daughter the story of Satan’s rebellion, man’s fall to sin, and God’s plan for redemption. Lucifer was portrayed by Abner Fuentes and God was played by Don Brown.

Tullahoma Church Distributes More Than 900 Christmas Gift Bags to Incarcerated

During the month of December 2021, the jail ministries team of the Tullahoma, Tenn., Church distributed more than 900 gifts bags to prisoners in five different jail counties.

The Tullahoma Church jail ministry, which has been operating for more than three years, partnered with “Christmas Behind Bars,” a nonprofit organization that, according to its website, aims to reach the souls of the incarcerated for Christ. The gifted Christmas bags contained groceries such as flavored chips, health bars, ramen noodles, cereal, and more.

“So, the bags are not identical because it depends on the donations that we get,” said Flo McIntyre, church member and personal ministries leader at Tullahoma



PHOTO COURTESY OF FLO MCINTYR

Tullahoma Church jail ministry members pose with Grundy County, Tenn., jail administrators. The items on the cart are part of the packages from “Christmas Behind Bars” that each incarcerated person receives.

Church. “But, they have basically the same things in them. Overall, we just want [the incarcerated person] to know that someone is thinking of them.”

In each bag is a card signed by the volunteers who helped assemble the gift. In addition, there are order forms for Bible studies with several organizations such as Amazing Facts, It Is Written, and Your Story Hour. The incarcerated person can order these studies for themselves or for their families outside.

The Tullahoma Jail Ministries team, which consists of eight individuals, personally delivered the Christmas bags throughout a two-week period. They visited five jail counties: Coffee County Jail, Moore County Jail, Grundy County Jail, Franklin County Jail, and Bedford County Jail.

“Normally people don't reach out to [the incarcerated],” said Cliff McIntyre, Tullahoma Church member and part-time pastor at Decherd, Tenn., Church. “That's the whole point to this. If nobody does [this ministry], they may never get the Gospel.”

Tullahoma Church started its jail ministry in 2019. Since COVID-19 hit and health restrictions were put into place, the team had not been able to visit the prisons in person. However, in Decem-



Cliff McIntyre, Arland Ratleph, and Flo McIntyre were at Ratleph's graduation from “Be the Bush Ministries,” a faith-based reentry program. Ratleph is now working in ministry.



Brian Milano, pastor, Ralph Shimmel, and Coffee County Jail trustees unload “Christmas Behind Bars” packages. The Tullahoma Jail Ministries team, which consists of eight individuals, personally delivered the Christmas bags throughout a two-week period.

ber of 2021, the Bedford County Jail allowed them to enter and personally deliver the Christmas gifts. In addition, despite the pandemic restrictions, the volunteers never stopped hosting Bible studies through video calls. McIntyre says that since they started the jail ministry, four people have made a decision for Jesus.

“My hope is that [the prisoners] that we reach will get eternal life and that they will keep it going,” McIntyre said. “They can tell their families; they can talk to other inmates or other people that maybe I can't reach.”

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Madison Academy's Gymnastic Team Throw Christmas Banquet for Foster Families

On the weekend of December 11 and 12, 2021, Madison Academy, Tenn., welcomed community members to its annual Foster Family Party and Nashville Rescue Mission Banquet. The Christmas celebration included a special meal, gifts, and a show performed by the school's gymnastic team.

The Foster Family Party was held on Saturday night, December 11, where more than 20 children and their families attended. Along with dinner, the guests got to participate in a cookie decorating activity. The following day more than 50 women from Nashville, Tenn., Rescue Mission also got to experience a similar program.

Entertainment was provided by Madison Academy's gymnastic team, Acros. Saturday they worked in collaboration with Acros Hawks, and Sunday they were joined by Gymnix — Madison Campus Elementary and Highland Academy's gymnastic team, respectively.

“I hope that the visitors experienced joy



PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Visitors from Nashville Rescue Mission smile as they pose with Santa Claus. The Christmas celebration included a special meal, gifts, and a show performed by the Madison and Highland Academy's gymnastic teams.

in the gifts we offered them and that they saw God's love through that," said Joshua Taylor, Madison Academy freshman.

The student gymnasts also helped set up, clean up, and act as servers during the meal.

"As teenagers, of course they love

the applause they receive [during performance]," said Kris Fuentes, Madison Academy principal, "but they also love serving a plate, filling up somebody's cup with juice, handing out an apple pie, hugging the children, and sharing a smile."

These Christmas celebrations were

made possible through the donations of various organizations, including Walmart, Publix, Olive Garden, and Nourish Christian Market Place. Madison Academy parents also made monetary donations to purchase gifts for the visitors, and some even assisted during the event.

"I believe that you should take any opportunity you have to serve," said Jennifer Downs, mother of a senior at Madison Academy. Downs and her husband, Brandon, served food during the Sunday program. "That's what I want to teach my son: It's so much fun to give. It's actually more fun than Christmas itself because you're just getting to give Christmas to somebody else."

This is the fifth year Madison Academy hosted the Nashville Rescue Mission Banquet and the second year it prepared the Foster Family Party. The school was awarded the Volunteer Tennessee Award of Excellence on December 3, 2021 — a recognition given to K-12 schools actively engaged in public service. ●

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA



PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Acros and Gymnix, Madison Academy and Highland Academy gymnastic teams, respectively, put on a show for the women of Nashville Rescue Mission. The student gymnasts also helped set up and clean up, and acted as servers during the program.

Tabernacle Celebrates Its Diversity

Flags from more than 50 countries adorned Tabernacle Church, Miami, Fla., parking lot as they celebrated their annual International Weekend and Homecoming. For more than 55 years, Tabernacle has celebrated various countries that are represented in its membership. Various nations in the Caribbean, South America, Central America, North America, and Europe have been highlighted through the years. This year's featured country was Haiti. Many of the members of the church hail from Haiti, and Tabernacle chose to capture the beauty and culture of the first Black-led republic and first independent Caribbean state. Janice Marshall, activities ministries leader, shared, "We as members of Tabernacle are also concerned as to how the Christian members of that country are dealing with recent disasters. We want to share ways to help heal our brothers and sisters."

Friday night opened Sabbath with two Tabernacle families who have been a part of the church for several decades. The White and English families shared their Friday night worship with the church. Ruth White and Esther English had worshipped together as siblings in their home in Jamaica. The families used this service to lift their voices in song, testimonies, and prayers of thanksgiving for another homecoming celebration. Their worship was shared to help gain a better understanding of the theme of the weekend, "History through Song."

Tabernacle has a rich history of music in its 44 years as a church. The programming throughout the weekend delved into the impact music has in lives today. The Sabbath School program discussed the role music has in the church. Longtime Tabernacle member Lenward McCalla spoke of the physiological impact that music has on many during the Sabbath School presentation. "There is a physiological response when we hear music and when we sing. It makes us feel



More than 50 flags were displayed to represent Tabernacle Church's diversity.



Melvin Warfield, pastor, speaks during Tabernacle Church's 44th homecoming celebration.

better and reduces depression. It reduces stress. God set it up that way so when we praise Him, we get a physical, mental, and spiritual benefit." Melvyn Warfield, pastor of the Community Praise Center in Alexandria, Va., was the guest speaker for the weekend. His sermon, "Songs in the Night," continued the theme of history of songs as he shared how music can change one's spirit to do right.

Various artists that consider Taberna-

cle their church home were interviewed. They shared how their start with music and their early musical interests with their home church had made an influence in their lives. For some it was a particular event, for others it was a person who made them know music was their career. 🎧

BY ROXANE GRANT

God Inspires Drive-in Church

It was just a few minutes after 12 p.m. It was “game time.” There was no turning back now. He grabbed his iPad from the table, and made his way toward the doorway. James Doggette, pastor of Patmos Chapel, Apopka, Fla., took a deep breath and began to make his way down the steps toward the podium. He set his iPad down on the metal podium and looked out across the parking lot at the cars, minivans, SUVs, and pickup trucks. He took hold of the mic and welcomed those in attendance. Car horns blared in unison. Music to his ears. The first drive-in church service had begun.

Days earlier, Ron DeSantis, governor of Florida, issued a Stay-At-Home Executive Order for the entire state aimed at slowing the spread of COVID-19. Doggette immediately started brainstorming ways to maintain the worship experience with a network of young pastors he mentors. He reminded them that the solution had to obey the governor’s restrictions and keep members safe. One of the young pastors, James ‘JD’ Doggette Jr., suggested that his father hold drive-in church services, and informed him of a church in Daytona Beach, Fla., that was already holding drive-in church services long before the start of the pandemic. The next day Doggette made the drive to Daytona Beach to meet with the pastor of the church who had been holding drive-in services. The meeting proved very informative and productive. As he made his way home, Doggette realized, “We can do this.”

Working with the elders of the church and other church leaders, a worship service was designed so that it would not replicate an indoor church service. Instead, the service was trimmed down to include the mainstays of divine worship — opening prayer, praise and worship, offering, and the sermon. One thing hasn’t changed: the Holy Spirit is present for each and every service. “The ex-



Aerial view

CURTIS WALTERS



Cameraman captures the service.

CURTIS WALTERS

perience has been exciting and exhilarating,” says Doggette. Week after week there are an average of 180 vehicles in the parking lot for drive-in church and

an average of 3,000 online viewers.

Though drive-in church has proven to be a success since early 2020, it presented some challenges. One of the

greatest challenges was finding innovative ways to meet the spiritual needs of children and youth while drive-in church is going on. “Creativity requires improvement instead of maintenance,” states Doggette. “We have grown lazy and have become entitled. This virus [COVID-19] is forcing us to be involved in the process of creating the new normal. It’s possible that sanctuaries will no longer be a place church members congregate on Sabbath. Churches may eventually become studios to stream services to people across the world. We must be part of that change. [Church] leaders will have to think differently for the future. There are new opportunities to invest in ministries and outreach.”

Fast forward to September 2021. Drive-in church has evolved from a singular weekly service to a dynamic weekly experience that caters to all ages. A video screen was installed on the building facing the parking lot to improve viewing for attendees of the divine worship service. Church members and leaders joined forces to streamline and differentiate the worship experience to meet the spiritual needs of all attendees, with the addition of The Droplet and The Drip. The Droplet is an hour-long church service full of singing, activities/crafts, and a meaningful lesson designed just for children ages 12 and younger. The Drip is an interactive weekly experience designed for ages 13 to 22, and includes singing, prayer, and relevant discussions all geared toward deepening their relationship with God. Drive-in church at Patmos Chapel continues to be an innovative, spirit-filled worship experience as many congregations across the world seek new ways to spread the Gospel in the midst of a pandemic. 📍



CURTIS WALTERS

James Doggette, pastor of Patmos Chapel Church in Miami, Fla., preaches during the “Drive-In” worship service.



CURTIS WALTERS

The “Drive-In” worship service is viewed on the giant screen.

BY BARRINGTON MAXWELL

Bethel Church, Cocoa Branch, Reaches Out



Bethel Church in Cocoa, Fla., has several programs running for the upcoming months as they focus heavily on the importance of outreach ministries. As churches are slowly transitioning back to live worship and in-person ministry, Bethel has made an impact in the community by partnering with SALT Outreach and Chick-fil-A. SALT (Service and Love Together) is a non-profit organization led by young adults invested in spiritual growth, evangelism, and service. Collaborating with SALT has allowed the community service ministry team at Bethel to give the homeless access to the church where they are provided free showers from SALT's mobile shower trucks. New clothes, food, and toiletries are also provided to meet other essential needs.

Aside from the service provided through SALT, the church's ministry team goes out every week to bring bag lunches to the homeless, serving around 500 individuals monthly. These meals are often served courtesy of Chick-fil-A, which helps prepare them.

New outreach initiatives are being planned to form a bridge between the



church and the surrounding areas. As of October 21, 2021, tutoring services are being provided every Wednesday at the church to help the neighborhood children with their education. Entertainment events are also being planned, such as a community cookout that will be held every quarter, and a community Super Bowl party every February.

An anticipated upcoming event is the

revival series called Soul Detox, which combines the ministry of music and message to bring the Word of God to the people who need it most. They prepared for 50 baptisms from the revival at the Dr. Joe Lee Smith Recreation Center from November 6 to November 20, 2021. The speaker was Gregory Hines, pastor. Guest musical artists were Jessica Reedy, Keyla Richardson, and the UCF Gospel Choir, along with other local artists who shared their gifts. In 2022, Soul Detox will be a quarterly event to go along with the continuous Bible studies and outreach in the church.

Evangelism cannot simply be an event; it must be a way of life. To impactfully spread the Gospel today, the church must stop doing "in reach" while calling it "outreach." Outreach means exactly just that — reaching out to those beyond the four walls of the church building, meeting them where they are, addressing their needs, and showing them the powerful love of Jesus. 📌

BY HAKEEM BROWN

Oakwood Students Share Good News During Mission Trip to Little Rock

Eleven students under the leadership of Medgine Bonzil, Oakwood University (OU) chaplain, spent November 3-8, 2021, in Little Rock, Ark., for the “Good News: Hope and Purpose” mission trip. Students’ majors include theology (3), biomedical sciences (2), business and marketing (2), and social work (1).

The students organized into mission teams that made the ministry in Little Rock possible, along with the support of the Office of Spiritual Life, Oakwood University staff, and administrators. During the six days in Little Rock and by God’s grace, Oakwood students engaged in relationship-building with sister HBCU Arkansas Baptist College (ABC) against Black-on-Black violence; community beautification with Brighter Yards project; a three-night evangelistic meeting at Little Rock Shiloh Seventh-day Adventist Church; delivery of 200 gallons of detergent in various neighborhoods; and a special OU Ambassador visit to Shiloh Excel Academy.

The mission trip started with a visit



Worship leader Ryan Washington, theology student at Oakwood, shares a morning devotional thought with his peer missionaries.

to the Arkansas Baptist College, where the director of ABC’s Derek Olivier Research Institute (DORI), Edmond Davis, professor, and staff warmly greeted the group. The main goal was to begin the process of establishing a sustainable relationship between ABC and OU with the goal of bringing value and hope to urban communities. While at ABC, OU students were invited to the ABC Buffalo Radio Station where they shared how Oakwood is contributing to the community of Huntsville, Ala., through educa-

tion, Healthy Campus Healthy Community outreach, and the Community Health Action Center. Later, OU students joined ABC’s weekly chapel service, bringing the Oakwood spirit through music, fellowship, and prayer.

The worship team organized a three-night evangelistic meeting at the Little Rock Shiloh Church under the leadership of Kevin Bruce, pastor. The theme was “Hope & Purpose.” The speaker lineup included Jonathan Acosta, Ryan Washington, and Kee’Laun Crum.

Led by the ingenious minds of the creative team, and because of the cold, this evangelistic meeting turned into a drive-in meeting where attendees could enjoy the service from the comfort of their cars while enjoying a cup of hot chocolate.

The next Office of Spiritual Life mission trip to Pageland/Rockhill, S.C., is scheduled for February 23 to March 2, 2022. ❶

BY MEDGINE BONZIL

Oakwood University Receives Grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc./ Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative

Oakwood University (OU) has received a grant of \$993,759 from Lilly Endowment, Inc., to help the University’s School of Theology

establish “Diversity, Health, and Social Justice in Community-Based Ministry: Oakwood University’s Strategy for Cultivating 21st Century Pastoral Leaders.”

The project is being funded through Lilly Endowment’s Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative. It is a three-phase initiative designed to help theological schools

across the United States and Canada as they prioritize and respond to the most pressing challenges they face as they prepare pastoral leaders for Christian congregations both now and into the future.

Prudence Pollard, Ph.D., vice president for grants administration, received notice of the grant award to Oakwood University on November 19, 2021. Lilly Endowment made the grant through the second phase of its Pathways for Tomorrow Initiative. R. Clifford Jones, D.Min., dean of the School of Theology, and Gilbert Ojwang, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Religion, expressed gratitude when notified of the award during Thanksgiving. The proposal was developed by a team of faculty in the School of Theology, with Finbar Benjamin, D.Min., associate professor for practical theology and program director for the graduate programs, serving as the lead proposal developer and principal investigator.

The narrative of the grant notes, “Reflecting cultural and systemic shifts in 21st Century society, Christianity in North America continues to undergo profound and rapid changes that point towards both a necessity and an opportunity to reimagine how we serve congregations and communities. From reductions in traditional forms of participation by congregants to a growing call to examine biases and inequities in faith institutions, society is signaling a pressing need for the church to adapt. There is also a growing hunger in our society for a deeper connection with genuine community and fellowship, a way to build bridges across lines of separation, and a path towards a deeper, more fulfilling purpose in life.”

In this context, the nation’s only historically Black Seventh-day Adventist School of Theology sees a tremendous opportunity “to harness the passion of today’s youth for creating positive social change towards a transformation of how Christianity functions in today’s society.” Through new wholistic pathways in theological education for both men and women, involving congregational and diverse



Pictured are Finbar Benjamin, D.Min. (left), associate professor for practical theology, lead proposal developer, and principal investigator for the “Diversity, Health, and Social Justice in Community-Based Ministry” grant; R. Clifford Jones, D.Min., Ph.D., dean of the School of Theology; and Gilbert Ojwang, Ph.D., chair, Department of Religion at Oakwood University.

community partners, the School of Theology will seek to follow a Christ-centered method of training pastoral and lay leaders to minister to those who are most vulnerable.

Leslie N. Pollard, Ph.D., D.Min., M.B.A. president of Oakwood University and a faculty member in the School of Theology and the proposal development team for their collaborative efforts to better train pastoral leaders by advancing goals in diversity, health, and social justice. Pollard observed, “COVID-19 has exposed the glaring inequities faced by communities of color. The Pathways to Tomorrow initiative will develop within our graduates the capacities to ‘do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly’ in communities crying out for justice.”


Provost James Mbyirukira, Ph.D., notes that this curriculum building initiative positions the School to further advance its offerings of graduate programs.

Oakwood University is one of 84 schools that are receiving a total of more than \$82 million in grants through the second phase of the Pathways initiative. Together, the schools represent evangelical, mainline Protestant, nondenominational, Pentecostal, Roman Catholic, Black, and historic peace (e.g., Church of the Brethren, Mennonite, Quakers) church traditions. Many schools also serve students

and pastors from Black, Latino, Korean American, Chinese American, and recent immigrant Christian communities.

“Theological schools have long played a pivotal role in preparing pastoral leaders for churches,” said Christopher L. Coble, Lilly Endowment’s vice president for religion. “Today, these schools find themselves in a period of rapid and profound change. Through the Pathways Initiative, theological schools will take deliberate steps to address the challenges they have identified in ways that make the most sense to them. We believe that their efforts are critical to ensuring that Christian congregations continue to have a steady stream of pastoral leaders who are well-prepared to lead the churches of tomorrow.”

Lilly Endowment launched the Pathways initiative in January 2021 because of its longstanding interest in supporting efforts to enhance and sustain the vitality of Christian congregations by strengthening the leadership capacities of pastors and congregational lay leaders.

For more information on the grant or to enroll in undergraduate or graduate programs in the School of Theology, contact the School by phone at 256-726-7357, or online at oakwood.edu/academic-experience/school-of-theology/. 

BY STAFF WRITER, OU INTEGRATED
MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Couple Awarded “The Christian Service Award”

Michael and Betty Tompkins, members of the Atlanta Berean Church, were awarded “The Christian Service Award” by the senior ministry of the church because they are the epitome of Christian service.

The couple goes about quietly providing much needed services to the members and others in need of help inside and outside of the community. The Tompkins take it upon themselves to seek those who are in need of service. They provide meals, purchase clothing and other goods, clean homes for the

disabled, visit those who are lonely, provide care for those without others to care for them, and many more acts of kindnesses not known.

There are numerous people who are unable to get to a facility where food is distributed. The Tompkins take this to task to make sure food gets to these individuals.

This husband-and-wife team seek to bring joy and happiness into the life of many downtrodden people. They are the ones you think about what Jesus said in Matthew 25:35-46.

The Tompkins unselfishly give of their time, talents, means, and selves in caring for the aged, disabled, homeless, and lonely without seeking any recognition themselves. They are true Christians in service for God. ●

BY ROBERTA HUBERT



Gregory Saunders (left), associate pastor of Berean Church, presents “The Christian Service Award” to Michael Tompkins.

Students Participate in Life-Changing Meetings

During the Thanksgiving break, 30 Southern Adventist University students traveled to Cancun, Mexico, to conduct an evangelism series, leading to more than 50 individuals choosing to be baptized. The trip was part of the Soul-winning And Leadership Training (SALT) program, which is a partnership between Southern Adventist University and It Is Written.

The students each led out in their own churches, preaching for seven days. Earlier in the semester, the SALT students had gained valuable experience while assisting with a local evangelistic series held by John Bradshaw, director of It Is Written.

“The students went out into the com-

munity and gave Bible studies, and then invited those people to the meetings,” said Douglas Na’a, SALT program director. More than 10 individuals from the Chattanooga community were baptized as a result of the meetings. Additionally, three Southern students requested baptism, including Prem King, who comes from a Hindu family and came to Southern specifically for the SALT program.

Participating in evangelism through SALT helped to grow King’s faith as he shared it with others, and he eventually decided to fully put his trust in Christ and become a member of the Church. 📍



KEYLA NAVALLO MARTINEZ

SALT student Keyla Navallo Martinez, a sophomore health services and senior living administration major, is one of 30 Southern students who led out in a seven-day evangelistic series in Mexico.

BY STAFF WRITER

Donated Cameras Enhance Photography Training

Students have the opportunity to develop a strong foundation in photography at Southern, thanks in part to generous community members. The School of Journalism and Communication’s “Intro to Photography” course utilizes 35mm manual film cameras, which can be hard to come by in today’s digital world. Stephen Ruf, associate professor, is grateful for alumni, employees, and community members who donate manual film cameras that he can refurbish and loan to his students.

“These cameras are older than the students, but students are getting a lot of use out of them,” Ruf said. “I think it’s neat that instead of collecting dust on the shelf, the cameras get new lives as tools for the photography classes.”

By using film cameras, students are motivated to quickly learn the devices’ inner workings, because the photographer does not receive immediate feedback after

taking a photo. To get a good shot, students must know how to properly change settings like aperture and shutter speed.

Jim Marlowe, an accomplished photographer who graduated from Southern in 1976, has donated multiple manual film cameras to Ruf’s class and fervently agrees with his method.

“In the film days, you had to know in your soul, ‘I nailed it,’ because you only got one shot,” Marlowe said. “That’s why I think Ruf is doing a favor to his students. Film photography teaches them to slow down and evaluate the scene in order to tell a story.”

Estefania Sanchez-Mayorquin, senior journalism major, works as a lab assistant in the university’s photo darkroom and had no experience with film cameras prior to enrolling in the class her sophomore year.

Taking the class inspired her to minor in photography, and she recently purchased a film camera of her own.



KENNETH SALMON

Kenneth Salmon, sophomore media technology major, practices with a manual film camera during his fall 2021 Intro to Photography class.

“Film photography is a window into the world of digital photography,” Sanchez-Mayorquin said. “It allows us to appreciate the art of what makes a good photo because it’s so much more than just hitting the shutter button.” 📍

BY AMANDA BLAKE



BOGAR, LARRY PAUL, 75, of Greenbrier, born May 20, 1946 to the late Kenneth and Goldie Bogar in Nahma, MI, died Nov. 24, 2021 at Skyline Medical Center in Nashville, TN. He worked for many years as a teacher in Florida and Ohio, and finally in the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference's school system until his retirement at the age of 68. Bogar spent the last 24 years at Madison Campus Elementary where he taught 6th grade. He was an accomplished trumpet player, and his joy of teaching and love for music poured over to him to start a handbell choir. He was an avid reader of his Bible and Christian novels. Bogar loved his church and his students.

He and his wife, Anita, enjoyed traveling through the United States. Their passion for history extended their travels outside of the U.S., sending them to the United Kingdom, Scotland, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, Turkey, and other Western European Countries.

He is survived by his wife of 23 years, Anita L. Bogar; three children: Jimmy Bell, Rodney Bell, and Kristi Gabriel; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild; one sister, Bonnie Hicks; one brother, Donald Bogar; one sister-in-law, Virginia Yancey; and a host of extended family. In addition to his parents, Bogar was preceded in death by his brother-in-law, Steven Mann.

FLACH, CHARLES WILLIAM, born in 1926 in Ludlow, KY, died Dec. 2, 2021 in Mobile, AL. He was the sole survivor of his parents and three sisters.

Charles was married to Barbara Ann Flach for 48 years prior to her death in 2002.

He was a teacher and principal in the Florida and Gulf States conferences for 35 years. Twenty-two of those years were dedicated to Mobile Junior Academy in Mobile. Barbara was also a teacher in the Adventist Educational System, and they worked side by side for their entire careers.

In addition to teaching, Charles was also an elder in the Mobile Church and participated in area evangelistic meetings during those years. He served as a guest speaker in several of the Adventist churches in the Mobile area.

He and Barbara provided special music for many years for those church services.

While teaching at Mobile Junior Academy, he received the Conference Excellence in Teaching Award, and the school section of the church campus was named Flach Hall in honor of his and his wife's dedication to the school and church.

Charles is survived by his daughter, Deborah Ann Flach; his son, Charles Stephen Flach and his wife, Jackie; his grandson, Jared Ross Flach and his wife, Kelsey; and his great-grandson, Liam Aaron Flach.



PHIBBS, HELEN JOYCE BREWER, 83, born July 9, 1936 in Mt. Pinson, AL, died April 15, 2020 in Apison, TN. Before moving to Apison, she was a member of the Lenoir City Church where she served for several years as the church treasurer. Her parents, Jesse P. and Chrystabell Massey Brewer, became Seventh-day Adventists when Helen was still a toddler.

She graduated from Collegedale Academy, Class of 1955. After attending Business College in Chattanooga, TN, Helen was offered a job working for the Adventist-owned Starkey Printing Company in Chattanooga, where she worked for 33 continuous years until her retirement on Feb. 10, 1989.

On Jan. 4, 1981, Helen and William Wayne Phibbs were married.

She is survived by one stepson, Lynn (Midge) Phibbs of Apison, TN; two grandchildren: Curtis Phibbs Jr. of Powell, TN, and Christina Phibbs Vaughn of Harrison, TN;

three great-grandchildren: Ashley Vaughn, Alex Vaughn, and Will Phibbs; one sister, Hazel (Kenneth) Blazer of Candler, NC; one brother, Eugene (Pat) Brewer of Grayson, GA; two nieces: Vickie (Steve) Klumb of Asheville, NC, and Candis Brewer of Grayson, GA. Helen was predeceased by one niece, Lori Rice, and her husband of 38 years, William Wayne Phibbs. A memorial service was held at the Lenoir City Church on Jan. 16, 2022.

ROGERS, PH.D., ERNEST EUGENE, 103, born June 17, 1916 in Memphis, TN, the third of six children born to Louise Boyd and John Edward Rogers, died Nov. 5, 2021. He graduated from Oakwood Academy (1939) and Oakwood Junior College, Huntsville, AL (1941); Union College, Lincoln, NE (1943), with a B.A. in theology and biblical languages; the Seventh-day Adventist Seminary (1951) with an M.A. in theology and biblical languages; and Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI (1967), with a Ph.D. in communications.

He married his Oakwood Academy sweetheart, Mildred Strachan. To this union came three children, Jeannette Rogers (Garland) Dulan, Ernest Eugene Rogers Jr., and William Sherman (Yvonne) Rogers; four grandchildren; and 12 great-grandchildren.

He began his ministry in 1943 in the North Carolina Conference as pastor of the Berean Church in Charlotte, NC. After receiving a call from F. L. Peterson, president of Oakwood College (now Oakwood University) and C. E. Mosley, Religion Department chair, to come to Oakwood in 1945, he made the choice to join the faculty at Oakwood as the first professor of biblical languages in the original Department of Religion.

Rogers' honors and awards are many and include Professor of the Year at Oakwood College, as well as numerous humanitarian, preacher, and speaker awards. Rogers was a favorite of students who frequented his home as he shared applications of the Word.

He is the last of the faculty who taught in the original Department of Religion at Oakwood College. He retired from his faculty position at Oakwood College in 1979 after 34 years, but not from service. He pastored churches that include Berea in Jackson, Mississippi, where there is a school that bears his name, E. E. Rogers Academy; Magazine Street in Louisville, KY; and Berea in Boston, MA. He also served as visiting professor of biblical languages in Trinidad at the University of Southern Caribbean (formerly West Indies College), and radio pastor in St. Thomas at WGOD. His active service to the Church totals more than 68 years.

After the death of his wife of 63 years, Mildred (2006), he expected the dimension of his life that was fulfilled with companionship had come to an end. However, in December of 2009, Rogers married Annell Wright. They were 93 and 91, respectively. God granted him the capacity for unconditional love and joy, and another special opportunity to give it.

He is survived by his two children: Jeannette Rogers (Garland) Dulan and William Sherman (Yvonne) Rogers; four grandchildren: Stanton (Kelli) Dulan, Stacia Dulan (Herb Marcell) Wright, Sherian Dulan (Wesley) Brown, and Shannon Rogers; 12 great-grandchildren: Stanton II, Zahra, Zoe, and Zeniyah Dulan, Jonathan and Ginneh Wright, Shaylah and Jasmine Brown, Iverson and Ava Rogers, and Jeremiah and Josiah Lewis; and a host of former students, colleagues, and friends. He was preceded in death by his wife, Mildred Strachan Rogers, and his son, Ernest Eugene Rogers Jr.



IZNAGA, OLGA MARIE ANDERSON, 86 of Ooltewah, TN, born Sept. 14, 1934 in Havana, Cuba, died Jan. 31, 2021, with her family by her side. She was a loving wife, mother, and grandmother. Olga was the youngest of four children born to the late Joseph Anderson and Maria Schweyer. Although she didn't receive a formal advanced education, she was a woman of many talents and gifts. Olga was a superb cook, and all who knew her were blessed by her culinary delights. Like her mother, Olga was a gifted seamstress who crafted an assortment of beautiful clothes. She was a wonderful teacher too, of which she aspired. Olga could recite full chapters of the Bible from memory. She was a devout and active Seventh-day Adventist who truly loved the Church and her Lord. On Sept. 27, 1957, she married the love of her life, Juan P. Iznaga, and out of that union two lovely daughters were born. The young family migrated to the U.S. in 1961, and first resided in New York, and then Florida. When the daughters went away to Southern College (now Southern Adventist University), Juan and Olga moved to Collegedale, TN, and have resided in the area for more than 40 years. They were founding members of the Collegedale Spanish Church. Olga often hosted students from Southern Adventist University and welcomed them to her house. It became a home away from home to many students. She is fondly remembered for her hospitality and care of these students. Olga is survived by her husband of 64 years, Juan; two daughters: Maria Iznaga (Jim) Medley, and Marta Iznaga (Ralph) Lorenzo; her four grandsons: Miguel Monzon, Mitchell Monzon, Eddie (Rayana) Monzon, and Erik

Thomas; her great-granddaughter, Reagan Monzon; many nieces; nephews; and a grand assortment of friends and loved ones. Her siblings: Samuel, Jose, and Mercedes preceded her in death.

OYERLY, GEORGE A., 88, born April 30, 1932 in Saginaw, MI, died April 26, 2021 in Apopka, FL. He was a member of the Florida Living Church in Apopka for four years and a lifelong member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. He was retired from Baker Perkins in 1983 after 33 years as a design engineer. He loved music and could often be found singing his favorite melodies or playing the guitar. George spent his final days surrounded by his devoted wife, children, and grandchildren under the excellent care of the staff at AdventHealth Care Center, Apopka South. He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Dora; one son, John (Sharie); six daughters: Katherine (Robert) Jefferies, Anne Oyerly, Bonnie (Jimmy) Pickens, Amalia Dengler Schmoling, Kathrine Dengler Mello, and Tina (Brian) Parchmont; 14 grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his two brothers: Charles Oyerly and Jerry Oyerly. A celebration of George's life was held Oct. 22, 2021 at his church, Florida Living Church.

POLIVKA, RICHARD (RICH) EDWARD, 77, of Hendersonville, NC, born Oct. 13, 1943 in Chicago, IL, to the late Frank and Mildred Polivka, died Oct. 8, 2021 after a period of declining health. Upon graduating from high school, Rich volunteered to serve in the United States Marine Corps; he was proud to be a Vietnam Veteran. After his time in the Marines, he was employed as an installer

and repairman for Bell Telephone Company. He retired at the age of 54. Rich was a member of the Fletcher, NC, Church, where he enjoyed being a deacon for the past 45 years. He loved his family and enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren. Left to cherish Rich's memory are his beloved wife of 54 years, Shirley Miller Polivka of Hendersonville; three children: Lora (Jeremy) Patton of Hendersonville, Dawn (Kris) Christianson of Jasper, IN, and Richie Polivka of Hendersonville; five grandchildren: Jordyn and Ciara, Stephen, Nick and Cassidy; one brother, Terry (Trish) Polivka of Naperville, IL; numerous nieces; and nephews. Rich was predeceased by his brother, Frank Polivka. He was buried at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Hendersonville.

SOUTHARD, JERRY, 59, born March 23, 1962 in Guymon, OK, died Nov. 7, 2021 in Millersville, TN. Jerry's father, Clarence Southard, was a pastor, so the family experienced many moves, and Jerry attended several schools as a result. He was known as "The Tree Man" through his expertise and business. He is survived by his daughter, Ciara Cheyenne Southard; his sister, Joy Davidson; his brother Bob Southard; one niece; and four nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, Elder Clarence R. Southard and Nellie Katherine Southard.

LEGAL NOTICE

Georgia-Cumberland Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Session

Notice is hereby given that the 33rd regular session of the Georgia-Cumberland Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will convene on Sunday, May 1, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. at the Wally Fox Wellness Center on the campus of Georgia-Cumberland Academy. The purpose of this session is to receive reports for the five-year period ending December 31, 2021, elect officers, departmental directors, and the Conference Executive Committee, revise or amend the constitution and bylaws, and to transact any such other business as may properly come before the delegates. Each church in the Conference is entitled to one (1) delegate for the organization and one (1) delegate for each fifty (50) members or major fraction thereof.

Gary B. Rustad, President

Chester V. Clark III, Vice President for Administration/Secretariat

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cer serving the southeastern United States. The successful applicant will join a professional team of dedicated trust officers and will be enthusiastic about public evangelism and soul winning. For more information or job description visit us at iiw.us/trustofficer. [2]

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR sought at It Is Written. Successful applicant will lead dynamic ministry advancement team. Will direct fundraising to enable soul winning, will understand and support evangelism, and will coordinate ministry representation at events. Qualified individuals are invited to apply at iiw.us/development. [2]

LOOKING FOR CERTIFIED TEACHERS TO JOIN US IN CHRISTIAN ONLINE EDUCATION (Grades 1st - 12th). Work part-time from home tutoring "live" in a Zoom environment. If interested, please call us at 817-645-0895. [2]

DECATUR ADVENTIST ACADEMY EARLY LEARNING CENTER, Stone Mountain, Ga the center board is currently, seeking qualified candidates for the following salaried staff position: Director/Administrator for the ELC. For a full list of qualifications, visit www.daelcsda.com Resumes/CV may be sent to daelc30@gmail.com [6]

MISCELLANEOUS

NEW/USED ADVENTIST BOOKS: TEACH SERVICES helping authors publish their book, including editing, design, marketing, and worldwide distribution. Call 800-367-1844 for a free evaluation. Visit www.infbooks.com for used books and your local ABC or www.TEACHServices.com for new book releases. [2-4]

IMPACT HOPE is seeking an enthusiastic Development Director with expertise in fundraising and major donor relationship-building, who can bring creativity and resourcefulness to the fundraising operations of a mission-driven nonprofit that supports refugee youth in Rwan-

da. Email liz@impact-hope.org. impact-hope.org [2]

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY offers master's degrees in business, computer science, counseling, education, nursing, religion, and social work. Flexibility is provided through some online and many on-campus programs. Financial aid may be available. For more information, call 423-236-2585 or visit www.southern.edu/graduatestudies [2-5]

ENTERPRISE/GREAT PLAINS ACADEMY ALUMNI WEEKEND April 1-2 at Enterprise SDA Church, Enterprise, KS. Honor Classes- Graduating Years ending with 2's & 7's. For more information email: ea.gpa.alumni@hotmail.com or visit ea-gpa-alumni.com [2]

CASKETS FOR ADVENTISTS - High quality 20-gauge steel, includes 2nd coming picture, Ten Commandments, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 3 Angels message displayed on Casket. Priced under \$800.00. Text / call 865-382-1834 on online at <https://1844casketsforadventists.com> [2, 3]

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UCHEE PINES LIFESTYLE INSTITUTE Our Lifestyle Educator course provides six months of intensive instruction in preventive medicine, natural remedies, and gospel evangelism designed to give individuals a better understanding of God's methods of last day Medical Ministry work. Call 334-855-4764 or visit www.ucheeepines.org [C]

ADVENTIST CONSTRUCTION SERVICES "God never forces the will or the conscience; but Satan's constant resort--to gain control of those whom he cannot otherwise seduce--is compulsion by cruelty. Through

fear or force he endeavors to rule the conscience and to secure homage to himself. To accomplish this, he works through both religious and secular authorities, moving them to the enforcement of human laws in defiance of the law of God." The Great Controversy, Page 591 Paragraph 2. Advent Construction Services (ACS) is here to help you carefully consider your construction and real estate options as you follow God's leading in transitioning out of the cities into the country in preparation for the final crisis and His soon return. Contact us at: Phone: (205) 910-2552 Email: @gmail.com Website: <https://adventconstruction2.wixsite.com/website> [2]

CLEARWATER, FL, CHURCH 100TH ANNIVERSARY - The Clearwater church will celebrate its 100th anniversary on February 26. Worship service begins at 10:30 am Clearwater SDA Church, 1445 Lakeview Rd., Clearwater, FL. 33756. [2]

FLORIDA & EAST TN - REALTOR & MORTGAGE LOAN OFFICER - Are you ready to leave that bustle and hustle for a more peaceful home? I can help you sell, buy, and get financed! Osvaldo Ferrer (423) 457-9057 Or (407) 28502510 Call, text or WhatsApp. Email: ozzyferrer@outlook.com [C]

CORNER MARKET/VEGGIE FOODS Located at Georgia-Cumberland Academy on 140 Industry Ln., Calhoun, GA. We have the largest selection of veggie foods within 50 miles--Worthington, Loma Linda, Gardein, Morning Star, Braggs, Roma, Violife, Vegemaise, Silk, Pero, Cafix, Inka, and more! Mon-Thur 9-6; (706)-504-9192. [2]

YOUR NEWS

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Anytime.



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Do bank interest rates make you feel like these people look? Do you like Win-Wins?

If you have a desire to support the Lord's work while receiving a fantastic percentage return on your cash gift, then search no further! Ask your Planned Giving/Trust Services Department about how Charitable Gift Annuities can be an excellent part of an estate plan. You may be able to lower your tax bill as well. There are so many great opportunities to be a "Partner in Mission". We're here to guide you through the process and look forward to serving you.

▶ For more information, call your Planned Giving office

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Silke Hubbard (615) 859-1391

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12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904 USA

The Gospel just changed the face of a country and made history as 50 years of fighting ended in Mindoro, Philippines. After listening to Adventist World Radio's broadcasts and taking the Gospel to heart, rebel fighters and assassins laid down their guns and made decisions for baptism. In November, they received amnesty and embraced members of the military they'd previously hunted.

Read (and watch!) this incredible story and share it with your church on **Sabbath, March 12**, during the Adventist World Radio offering.

Learn more: awr.org/offering



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Men's Leadership Summit

Cohutta Springs Conference Center, GA

April 22-24, 2022



A Man-Building Weekend...

for men's ministry leaders in a post-Christian world

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Registration

- Early Registration \$200 by March 24
- Regular Registration \$250 by April 7, 2022
- Financial Assistance Available!

Included

- Inspirational Messages
- Leadership Certification
- Men's Ministry Leader Kit
- Deluxe accomodations
- Five Hearty Meals



CAROLINA

- Romance at the Ranch (English)** - Feb. 11-13. Nosoca Pines Ranch.
- Romance at the Ranch (Spanish)** - Feb. 18-20. Nosoca Pines Ranch.
- Awaken: Young Adult Rally** - Feb. 18-20. Charlotte, NC.
- Music Festival** - March 3, 4. Mount Pisgah Academy.
- Pathfinder Work-Bee Campout** - March 18-20. Nosoca Pines Ranch.
- Carolina Pathfinder Camporee** - March 23-27. Camp Barnhardt.
- MPA Alumni Weekend** - April 8, 9. Mount Pisgah Academy.
- Adventurer Fun Day #1** - April 9, 10. Nosoca Pines Ranch.
- Adventurer Fun Day #2** - April 23, 24. Nosoca Pines Ranch.
- MPA Academy Days** - April 29, 30. Mount Pisgah Academy.

FLORIDA

Men's Ministries Convention (English) - March 11-13. Camp Kulaqua, 23400 NW 212 Ave., High Springs, FL. Theme: Undefeated. Keynote speakers: Henry Wright, Mike Tucker, Newton King, and Newton Hoilette. Details/registration: men.floridaconference.com, floridaconferencemen.org/convention-2022, campkulaqua.com, or kulaqua.com.

GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND

- Oasis High School Retreat** - Feb. 4-6. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, Crandall, GA.
- Master Guides Winter Camp** - Feb. 4-6. Roan Mountain Park, Roan Mountain, GA.
- Children's Ministries Convention** - Feb. 11-13. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, Crandall, GA.
- District 4&5 Pre-session** - Feb. 12. 4 p.m. Collegedale Community Church, Ooltewah, GA.
- Pathfinder Teen Event/Teen Challenge** - Feb. 18-20. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, Crandall, GA.
- District 6 Pre-session** - Feb. 19. 4 p.m. Knoxville First Church, Knoxville, GA.
- ACF Connect Retreat** - Feb. 25-27. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, Cran-

- dall, GA.
 - Pathfinder Bible Experience Conference Level** - Feb. 26.
 - Regenerate Youth & Young Adult Festival** - March 5.
 - Pathfinder Junior Event** - March 11-13.
 - Hispanic Women's Retreat** - Mach. 18-20. Cohutta Springs, Crandall, GA.
 - Adventurer Family Fun Weekend** - March 25-27. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp, Crandall, GA.
- Event details may change in response to COVID. Please get the latest details and see more events at www.gccsda.com.

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

- School of Music Pops Concert** - Feb. 19. Southern's Wind Symphony, Jazz Ensemble, and Steel Drum Ensemble will perform in concert at 8 p.m. in Iles P.E. Center. Admission is free. For more information, including streaming details, visit southern.edu/musicevents or contact 423-236-2880.
- Southern 6 Trail Race** - Feb. 20. Come participate in the annual 6K run through wooded trails on Southern's campus, open to anyone age 10 and older. For registration, visit the Adventure Programs page at southern.edu/outdoor.
- PreviewSouthern** - Feb. 21 and

March 24-25. Interested students are invited to take a campus tour, discuss majors with professors, sit in on financial aid workshops, and enjoy a fun activity in Chattanooga. Details: Call 1-800-SOUTHERN or email visit@southern.edu.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FLORIDA KEYS CAMP MEETING - Feb. 18-20. You are invited to a special weekend Camp Meeting with Sean Boonstra in the beautiful Florida Keys. Come join us for a weekend of spiritual revival and time of renewal. Enjoy waterfront nature and beautiful weather as we open God's Word together all weekend long. Bring your favorite vegetarian dish for Sabbath fellowship dinner and a comfortable chair. You can stay in the available rental housing or pitch a tent on the campground (reservations required). Camp Meeting starts Friday, Feb. 18 at 6:30 p.m., and continues until Sunday, Feb. 20. Camp Sawyer is located on Overseas Highway, Mile Marker 34, Oceanside. For information, please contact Laura Saladino at 423-972-7694. See you at Camp Meeting!

SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE WOMEN'S CONVENTION - Aug. 24-27, 2023. Orlando, FL.

SUNSET						
	FEB 4	FEB 11	FEB 18	FEB 25	MAR 4	MAR 11
ATLANTA, GA	6:12	6:19	6:25	6:31	6:37	6:43
CHARLESTON, SC	6:56	6:02	6:09	6:14	6:20	6:25
CHARLOTTE, NC	5:56	6:03	6:10	6:16	6:22	6:28
COLLEGEDALE, TN	6:13	6:20	6:26	6:33	6:39	6:45
HUNTSVILLE, AL	5:19	5:26	5:33	5:39	5:46	5:51
JACKSON, MS	5:38	5:44	5:50	5:56	6:01	6:07
LOUISVILLE, KY	6:10	6:18	6:25	6:33	6:40	6:47
MEMPHIS, TN	5:33	5:40	5:46	5:53	5:59	6:05
MIAMI, FL	6:07	6:12	6:17	6:21	6:25	6:28
MONTGOMERY, AL	5:22	5:28	5:34	5:40	5:46	5:51
NASHVILLE, TN	5:18	5:25	5:32	5:39	5:45	5:52
ORLANDO, FL	6:08	6:14	6:19	6:24	6:28	6:32
TAMPA, FL	6:13	6:19	6:24	6:28	6:33	6:37
WILMINGTON, NC	5:46	5:52	5:59	6:05	6:11	6:17

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February 21, 2022

March 24-25, 2022



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