

Southern

TIDINGS

MAY 2022

Devoted to Duty:
PRIVILEGED AND
HONORED TO SERVE

DISASTER RELIEF TEAM RESPONDS
AFTER KENTUCKY TORNADO

BETTY KOSSICK — ADVENTIST AUTHOR,
POET LAYS DOWN HER PEN

Persistent Pursuit



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

Matthew 7:7 says, “Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

The New Testament repeatedly makes the point that God hears the requests made of Him. It takes the “might” out of prayer. But, what does that mean in practice? Not every prayer has a recognizable answer. While there is truth in the maxim that God has three answers — yes, no, and wait — it hardly explains the New Testament thrust toward certainty.

Only certainty can keep prayer alive. If doubt weakens or lessens certainty, prayer will die. The certainty of God’s involvement with the requests of His people operates as a spiritual law. So much depends on it that faith cannot survive without it, just as physical life depends on the operation of physical laws.

Jesus assures us that our Father delights to give. He is good and loving. Just as a father will give to a son who asks, so the heavenly Father gives to His children.

The command to seek and knock helps us understand further. When the Bible talks of seeking, it often has God as the one sought. Our seeking has God in view. Our asking is in keeping with the nature of God. True prayer asks that which is pleasing to God. It seeks and asks according to the will of God.

When the son comes to his earthly father, he asks for “good” gifts (Matthew 7:11). When we go to the Father, He responds with good gifts. In another place, Jesus said that the right and good gift to ask for is the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13).

This means that we dare not come in doubt to God. Remember always that He is the living one, the Almighty, with Whom nothing is impossible. In Him, the request made in faith has the certainty of being heard. In that certainty, our faith remains secure, for we know that our Father hears and acts with benevolence and love.

The prayer of certain faith has a sure reaction. Because we know that to ask is to receive, to search is to find, and to knock is to have it opened to us, the answer comes with the praying. In such prayer, hope turns continually to joy.

“He is as willing to listen to the prayer of faith as when He walked visibly among men. The natural cooperates with the supernatural,” *The Great Controversy*, p. 525.

The fact that God is willing and ready to hear and respond to our heartfelt prayers under all circumstances is profoundly reassuring. As we, the constituents of the Southern Union, have positioned ourselves to pursue displaced men, women, and children who are currently out of the fold of the Church, we can take courage that God will grant our desire to reconnect with these precious human beings.

It is important to note that more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. Under God, let’s multiply our membership through reconnecting. Join me in the prayerful and persistent pursuit of God’s help and for lost people. —RCS 

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Devoted to Duty: PRIVILEGED AND HONORED TO SERVE

BY WASHINGTON JOHNSON II, D.MIN.

The Southern Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists is the home of many vibrant chaplaincy ministries. More than 200 Seventh-day Adventist chaplains serve in multiple chaplaincy areas, accounting for nearly 30 percent of all chaplains currently serving in the North American Division. The non-traditional settings in which chaplains serve (i.e., hospitals, military installations, college and university campuses, prisons, municipalities) provide an array of ministry opportunities. Rarely is any day the same, yet every day can be both rewarding and fulfilling. Chaplain duties include providing counseling on spiritual and moral issues, conducting worship services, performing weddings and funerals, overseeing religious education, visiting injured personnel, and advising military leaders, just to name a few of their many responsibilities.

Three principles that notably contribute to chaplaincy ministry success are deck-plate ministry, inclusion, and readiness.

Deck-plate Ministry

Over my 22-year career in the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps, I have perpetually employed deck-plate ministry — an approach that allows me to walk around each level (deck) of the ship and interact with sailors and Marines on various points of interests. In a sense, the chap-

lain is able to meet those whom he or she serves right where they are. Some of my most cherished relationships have come as a result of deck-plate ministry. This has also been effective in helping to meet the needs of service persons during some of their lowest points. Chaplains take the initiative in performing deck-plate ministry, finding opportunities to convey compassion, empathy, and moral support. Conceptually, deck-plate ministry transcends all chaplaincy areas. The settings in which chaplains serve also vary as much as the patient, inmate, or service member's tragedy, trauma,

or misfortune, and can occur wherever there is a mutually shared space.

Inclusion

Chaplains are called to minister to persons of many diverse backgrounds and religious affiliations without bias or prejudice. This can only be accomplished effectively by following the model of Jesus, who lived by the New Testament message of inclusion. He was not selective about those to whom He ministered and embodied His own words in His ministry practice.

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself," Matthew 22:39.

"And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me,'" Matthew 25:40.

Jesus ministered to the physically challenged, less fortunate, and sick. John the Baptist, while imprisoned, was not confident of his future and sent his disciples to confirm if Jesus was the Messiah. "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind see, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me,'" Matthew 11:4-6. Through His miracles, Jesus showed love, compassion, and



HOLY
BIBLE

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NIV

empathy for those who were disadvantaged. Jesus was also inclusive of women and placed a high value on them. He conversed with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well (John 4), and He elevated women by referring to them as "daughters of Abraham," Luke 13:16. Jesus instantly healed the woman who touched the hem of His garment (Mark 5:25-34); He had compassion on the mothers who brought their children to Him to be blessed (Matthew 19:14). In the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus illustrated the nature of true religion that is inclusive of all people, regardless of race, color, religion, or creed (Luke 10:35-37).

Similarly, chaplaincy ministry transcends world views, ethnicity, socio-economic status, gender, individual and cultural differences. But like Jesus, chaplains must be willing to meet people where they are and seek to gain a knowledge of differences that will contribute to an environment of mutual respect, trust, and inclusion where all are valued.

Readiness

For chaplains, readiness takes on different connotations. For example, spiritual readiness is essential for chaplains to develop and maintain personally, and to promote among those they serve. Spiritual readiness gives meaning and purpose to a person's life and better equips one to face inevitable life challenges.

Then there is a literal physical readiness that keeps chaplains constantly vigilant and on alert for the next act of service, which could come at any time in the form of a visit to the hospital, mortuary, prison, university campus, military barracks and other sites where they are needed to turn those in crisis toward Christ.

Over the years, my work as a military chaplain has helped me to learn well the meaning of the Latin phrase, "Semper Paratus," always ready. Two days after Christmas 2021, I received military orders to assist during the Red Hill fuel leak at Joint Base Pearl Harbor. In this

capacity, I served as the Emergency Family Assistance Center chaplain, providing spiritual and moral support to affected service members and their families, and visiting military housing communities and water distribution centers. My commitment to serve both God and country inspired a high level of readiness that required long distance travel and a period of separation from family and friends. My expedient response was also in part due to the strong support and prayers of my wife, son, and other family members.

Present Day Examples

Chaplain Joseph Khabbaz, vice president of spiritual life at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee, fully embodies the essence of deck-plate ministry, inclusion, and readiness. He recently shared that, "As chaplains at Southern, we remain steadfast in our commitment to provide our students with a biblically-grounded and vibrant





spiritual environment for learning academically and growing in their relationship with Christ. There is no shortage of ways to get involved in the spiritual life of the campus. Whether it's praying with classmates and faculty by the flag pole, joining one of our 90-plus small groups for Bible study, joining a praise team and leading out in campus-wide worship, or spending a semester as a student missionary, you're likely to connect in a faith community at Southern — and that's intentional."

Carol Campbell-Norris, Ed.D., a chaplain in the oncology unit at AdventHealth Celebration Hospital in Orlando, Florida, is well equipped for her non-traditional and specialized ministry role. Acknowledging her special gift as a counselor, she pursued master's degrees in marriage and family therapy and pastoral ministries, as well as a doctorate in pastoral community counseling, specializing in grief, death, and dying. For years, Campbell-Norris has provided grief therapy for individuals and families as

a hospice bereavement counselor. She currently extends her service by providing bereavement groups, mentorship, and community-based education. She also shares online video-based resources offering testimonials, tips, and strategies for living a fulfilling life. Messages of hope further resound in her two books, *The Invisible Me* and *The Last Breath*, where she explores God's intimate care during the most difficult times of life.

Interestingly, Campbell-Norris, shared that, "Becoming a chaplain was never my intention; God chose me, and it is now my calling." What she enjoys most about chaplaincy is the privilege of entering the hospital every day, and leaving, knowing that God has used her to touch people's lives for eternity. If you happen to visit AdventHealth Celebration, you will experience the joy and inspiration that Campbell-Norris exhibits to staff, patients, and their families every day. When asked how she does it, she responded, "The joy of the Lord is my strength," Nehemiah 8:10.

Conclusion

In these challenging times, with the COVID-19 pandemic, wars, natural disasters, and social and political unrest, chaplains continue to minister at every level, like "the sons of Issachar who had understanding of the times," 1 Chronicles 12:32. These faithful men and women are devoted to duty and count it a privilege and honor to serve the God of the universe by serving others. Their hard work is greatly appreciated!

Persons interested in a career in chaplaincy should contact the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists for additional information and assistance. The website address is <https://nadadventistchaplains.org/>.

**WASHINGTON JOHNSON II,
D.MIN.,** is director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries for the North American Division, and captain (CHC), United States Navy Reserve Chaplain Corps.

DISASTER RELIEF TEAM RESPONDS AFTER KENTUCKY TORNADO

BY STEVEN LEGER

Steven Leger shares his testimony after the Kentucky tornado disaster on December 10, 2021.

Saturday morning, the news reached Wings4Humanity (W4H) headquarters: Tornadoes touched down in Kentucky with more than 240 miles of reported damage and countless lives affected. Since 1995, Wings4Humanity has responded to disasters around the world, providing air support, transportation, and medical evacuations.

Sunday morning, Douglas (Doug) Paglioli and I received the call to respond. Grabbing our go-bags, we met at the Johnston Regional Airport in North Carolina (KJNX), where our humanitarian organization is based. Pulling the Mooney M20C out of our hanger, we did our pre-flight checks and took off. We landed at Nashville International Airport (KBNA) in Tennessee, refueled, and were joined by a crane operator with Gideon Rescue Company (GRC). They provide search and rescue teams, rescue dogs, and equipment for disaster relief.

Douglas, the crane operator, and I took off toward Kentucky. Forty-five minutes into our flight, we came across the tornado's path. Circling the most devastated areas, we used Google Maps to pin the locations most affected. Landing at Mayfield Graves County Airport (KM25) and seeing the destruction up close filled me with a sense of urgency. As the sun set, we met with the rest of the



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

teams. The thought of someone trapped kept Doug up all night. He wasn't alone.

Early the next morning we laid out plans. W4H coordinated with GRC's president, Brock Mayer, and Heritage Academy's response team on a plan of action. I was placed in charge of a box truck to deliver essential supplies from the distribution centers to the communities in need, while Douglas picked up more rescuers from Nashville, Tennessee, and flew them to Mayfield, Kentucky.

I headed towards the airport where supplies were being stored, and discovered that the fairgrounds and airport, the two major distribution centers for food, water, and other essentials, were full to the brim. Not enough people from the communities were getting to the distribution centers to pick up the supplies they needed. I stopped by the fairgrounds to meet with Brock and the academy students. They were praying with people leaving the fairground, and handing out pamphlets about hope and how to deal with devastating circumstan-

ces. Many individuals broke down crying and were so grateful for our prayers and encouragement.

Meanwhile, Doug had landed at the airport with Doane Tarin from Texas. I gave an update on what was happening, and Doug replied, "Well, if the distribution centers aren't getting enough supplies out, we will do it ourselves!" With that, we went to the supply hanger; loaded our box truck with food, clothes, and other essential supplies; and drove towards a community we had identified. We had no idea if we would find a place to drop our supplies, but with a little faith and a lot of determination we set off. It was getting dark and our hopes of finding a community in need of our supplies was setting with the sun. Finally, we arrived somewhere called the Moors in Kentucky.

There we found a resort and restaurant that was feeding all the community members for free; anyone who needed a hot cooked meal could come and eat. We connected with some of the resort staff and, seeing our box truck full of supplies, they were elated!

We unloaded winter clothes, food, blankets, baby food, diapers, etc. They were so happy to see us. The communities in the area were coming here to eat, and now they could also come to have much needed supplies. We had found a community in need, and we would be back to continue serving them.

The next day, Doug and I, along with Brock and a few other teammates, head-



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

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ed to Gilbertsville, Kentucky. When we got to the peninsula along the lake, the destruction was everywhere. As far as the eye could see, the tornado had ripped apart everything. A sea of boards, nails, broken furniture, kids' toys, and houses was laid to waste. The rescue dogs searched the debris for signs of survivors. Signs commemorating the lives that the tornado had taken were placed where the houses once stood. Names and "Rest In Peace" were spray painted on plywood.

Doug, a former Marine who deployed overseas on different occasions, told me this damage and destruction was worse than any war zone he had ever witnessed. As we pulled up to where our team was working, I heard cries of excitement as a small red camera was found. Pictures and videos of the last precious moments of a family member who had passed away from the tornado were on the camera. The lady gripped the device tightly to her chest, crying in disbelief that a group like us would take the time to search through the rubble, on a seemingly impossible task of finding a small red camera in an ocean of debris.

I found picture albums, a torn Bible, toys, and memorabilia scattered across hundreds of feet. Doug found a box of toys and some Christmas presents still intact. He was able to connect with the owner of these presents and send them to the resort with the name of the two girls it belonged to. They got to have their Christmas. These two girls hid in a bathtub along with their dad when the tornado came and ripped them from their home and threw

them across the street. One suffered a collapsed lung, the other lost a few fingers.

As I stood watching the chaos around me, an older couple stopped besides us in their car, and asked if the supplies in the box truck were for the community? We immediately started giving them whatever they needed. The gentleman broke down crying, and then his wife. Doug and I hugged them, praying with them.

We followed a woman from the community, Melanie, up to a little community club house where we could unload the rest of the supplied. All the windows had been blown out; leaves and glass littered the floor. We swept the building and moved all the supplies inside. Brock showed up, started talking to Melanie, and asked her if she would like a shower. She began to weep. So much was happening, and she hadn't even realized that all she wanted was to take a shower. Brock coordinated an RV to come up, and she was able to shower.

Everywhere we went, we prayed and sometimes even sang songs in a group. I remember finding an American flag on the ground and running to lift it up, but I was beaten to it by two young girls from Heritage Academy, I watched as they struggled to fold it, determined to get it right, and Doug taught them how. I took the flag to the owner of the house, and he took it with tears in his eyes.

When we had reached the end of the road, there was a house with smoke coming from the chimney. Some of the group had gone to see if everyone inside was alright. They found an army veteran, Reid, who was drinking and wanting to take

his life. He was devastated by all he had lost and the destruction around him. As a team we cleared his driveway so he could get to his truck. Doug sat and talked with him for a long while as we worked. Eventually, he was talked him down from his suicidal thoughts. We all gathered around him, W4H, GRC, and Heritage, singing songs and praying with him. Encouraging him, we thanked him for his service. The next day he messaged Doug, saying, "Thank you all for saving my life."

On our flight home, Doug and I meditated on the experience, exhausted from work but proud of the good we had done. The need is still not filled, though. We intend to return soon to follow up and help those we reached out to.

This is a small part of what we did, and words cannot describe what we witnessed, but I know that I'll never forget it. I once heard that we are not defined by what we say, but by what we do. Our actions speak louder than words. As I look at the faces of the people we helped, their faces etched in my mind forever, I am filled with a longing to do more. Every disaster, every car stuck on the side of the road, the person at the grocery store who can't pay for their food, the souls who cry out from the dark pits of depression and PTSD: We are here for you. ●

STEVEN LEGER is an apprentice in AWA's Maintenance Department, a student pilot, and disaster relief specialist. He is a missionary in training with AWA to serve the needs of humanity.

BETTY KOSSICK

Adventist Author, Poet Lays Down Her Pen

BY GLADYS M. NEIGEL



Betty Kossick

PHOTO BY: A. LEE BENNETT JR.

for something more to do for the Lord, and then her church asked her to prepare press releases for the newspaper. All of these were accepted and printed, leading her to become a stringer for the paper. Her writing became a mix of volunteering and professional writing as she continued to serve her Lord as press secretary in nine churches throughout five states.

Writing that flowed from her pen was enhanced by her forte for interviewing people from all walks of life, including celebrities. But, none were more meaningful to her than those individuals she met every day. She became a sought-after and award-winning journalist with articles in newspapers, books, and magazines. She authored several books and composed more than 1,000 poems.

Kossick received many accolades for her professional writing within the Adventist Church for such genres as *Adventist Review*, *Columbia Union Visitor*, *Lake Union Herald*, *Southern Tidings*, and *Florida Focus*. She was a contributor to the General Conference women's devotional book each year. Even without her own degrees, she taught writing to people with doctorate degrees in her summer workshops at Andrews University.

Betty Kossick, author, poet, teacher, mentor, and friend passed away February 2, 2022, in Altamonte Springs, Florida. She was born May 26, 1931, in Akron, Ohio, and was 90 years old.

In second grade, Kossick wrote her first poem, but it would be 40 years before she would pick up a pen to write professionally. She was a creative child guided to study commercial art in high school, and she proceeded to win many awards. Instead of a career, she chose to marry John Kossick on April 23, 1950, at the Adventist church in Akron, Ohio.

Even with two children and church activities, Kossick prayed three years

The Writer
Am I writing my own epitaph?
Perhaps—yet
to be known as the writer
that so well.
The writer of words be best—
my goal.
Word crafting is a gift
of expression to open.
How dare I not articulate?
Thus I dip the pen.
—Betty Kossick

an article for the *Lake Union Herald* magazine before laying down her pen one last time.

She is survived by one son, Kevin (Gwen) Kossick of Georgia; one daughter, Stephanie (Wayne) Moore of Indiana; one sister, Joanne Green; five grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandchild. She was predeceased by her husband of 71 years, John, who passed away June 23, 2021.

A celebration of life service will be held at Florida Living Church in Apopka, Florida, on Mother's Day weekend, May 7, 2022. ☀

GLADYS M. NEIGEL is the contributing editor for Florida Conference content.



New Degree Launches for High Demand Healthcare Workers

As demand continues to increase for medical laboratory scientists around the U.S., AdventHealth University (AHU) is launching a bachelor's degree program in medical laboratory science.

Once fully accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and the National Accreditation Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences, courses are expected to begin in fall 2022.

"AdventHealth University is excited to expand its health care education offerings to include the rewarding field of medical lab sciences," said Sandra Dunbar-Smalley, provost, AdventHealth University. "These aspiring health care workers will be a vital part of our commitment to develop highly skilled individuals who live the healing values of Christ."

The COVID-19 pandemic and its testing challenges underscored the importance of specially trained lab workers, bringing to light the essential role that clinical laboratory tests play in medical diagnoses, according to a 2017 study published in the *Journal of Applied Laboratory Medicine*. The boom in genomics is also increasing the need for medical scientists. In addition, AdventHealth continues to expand its services to meet the needs of the region's population growth, with multiple facilities housing fully functioning laboratories needing medical lab scientists.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of medical scientists is projected to grow 17 percent between 2020 and 2030. Through this new degree program, AdventHealth University is working closely with AdventHealth to stem the shortfall of medical lab scientists throughout the hospital and health system. Students in the lab science program will have access to leading-edge equipment and



AdventHealth University Science Lab



hands-on clinical training in world-class, whole-person care at AdventHealth's hospitals. Median annual pay for medical lab scientists, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, is \$91,510.

"This field is for those who really love science," said Julie Hess, vice president of Laboratory Services for AdventHealth's Central Florida Division. "I love solving medical problems. Our medical lab scientists play such an integral role in diagnosis and healing for our patients and their families."

Twenty students will be accepted in the first year of the program, with the goal to have a total of 60 students in the program at its full capacity.

A medical lab science degree is geared toward high school students with an interest in science, medicine, or math as well as a mid-career health care worker

or lab tech looking to grow professionally. Someone with a biology, chemistry, or molecular background may have potential interest, for example.

In addition to core prerequisite classes, courses in this four-year program include clinical microbiology, immunodiagnostics, and interpretive and practical hematology. As part of graduation, students will have the opportunity to earn certification through the American Society for Clinical Pathology as well as licensure to work in Florida.

The program will create new jobs for five AdventHealth University faculty members, including a newly hired program director.

Application deadlines for the bachelor of science in medical lab science program are May 15, October 15, and January 15 each year.

About AdventHealth University

AdventHealth University is a leader in health care education, transforming the science and practice of whole-person care and developing professionals with uncommon compassion. The University, marking 30 years of academic excellence, seeks to develop skilled professionals who *live* the healing values of Christ, and works in collaboration with AdventHealth to effectively extend His healing ministry.

AHU offers undergraduate, graduate, and online programs, including biomedical sciences, diagnostic medical sonography, health sciences, healthcare administration, medical lab science, nurse anesthesia, nuclear medicine, nursing (BSN), occupational therapy, physical therapy, physician assistant, radiologic technology, and spiritual care. ☀

BY JENNIFER AUDETTE

Evangelism Impact Moves From Plan A to Plan J

The seventh annual Evangelism Impact took place February 3-5, 2022, in Charlotte, N.C.

After going virtual in 2021 because of COVID, hopes were high for meeting this year in Myrtle Beach, S.C. (Plan A). Nearly 800 people had registered, but the pandemic had other ideas. The gathering was limited to just the pastoral staff (Plan B). The invitation list was limited further to just presenters and support staff (C), but eventually it was decided to host the event virtually (D) from the University City Church in Charlotte.

As the date drew near, word was received that one (E), then another (F), then yet another speaker (G) was unable to come. It became obvious that, with these challenges and more (H-I), something important was about to happen.

Thankfully, God's hand (Plan J) is not shortened, nor is He surprised by obstacles. With mere hours before the keynote message on Thursday night, the other speakers and some local church pastors stepped up to fill the vacancies: Julio Flores; Ricardo Palacios; and the pastor of the host church, Jackie James.

The location for the Spanish track was shifted to the Conference Office, bandwidth logistics were modified, and equipment hurdles were jumped. The "perfect



Roger Hernandez



Richie Halversen

PHOTO BY: COURTNEY HEROD

storm" was raging — changes of audience, changes of location, and changes of speakers. Glen Altermatt, Conference evangelism director, had every reason to throw in the towel. But, the University City Church willingly opened their doors, and by God's grace, those who heard the messages were inspired and challenged.

From the opening meeting with Roger Hernandez, Southern Union ministerial director, to the final challenge by Richie Halversen, Southern Union church revitalization and growth director, God's intervention was evident. Hernandez shared the Union-wide plan for reaching members who no longer attend. Entitled "RAMP," the purpose is to train

members to provide an easy access ramp back onto the Gospel highway. Churches were invited to study his latest book by the same name, *RAMP*. It contains information and recommendations for loving non-participating members into a full-life discipleship of Christ.

Halversen, with the same evangelistic fire that burned in the belly of his Uncle Ron, delivered a message about why none should let challenges defeat them. "God is still saving souls." Preaching on the storm of Acts 27, he said, "In spite of all that is happening, I have faith that it will happen as God told me Though Paul is the prisoner, [he] is not a victim of his circumstances. He does not let his



Raleigh Church praise team



PHOTO BY: REBECCA CARPENTER

problems define him. He does not let his storm invade his spirit." And for many, inflation, difficulty, and uncertainty must not deter them from holding fast to faith in God's Word, and fulfilling His commission, proclaiming the everlasting

Gospel to the world — because "God is still saving souls."

The responses from those who viewed the live stream of Evangelism Impact 2022, or have viewed later on demand, show the determination of pastors, mem-

bers, and churches to extend the loving call of Christ, and invite others to share eternity with Him. ☀

BY HASKELL WILLIAMS, MINISTERIAL DIRECTOR FOR THE CAROLINA CONFERENCE

Spartanburg Spanish Begin Children's Ministry

When the pandemic began in March 2020, the Spartanburg Spanish Church began worship services online, not only for adults, but also for children.

For children, the primary focus was the online Sabbath School and Adventurer and Pathfinder clubs. An opportunity was identified to provide a joyful, creative, dynamic, child-friendly study of the book *Steps to Christ* once a week. By God's grace, this online study was very fruitful.

After 12 weeks of in-depth study, 32 children graduated and 11 children decided to be baptized. It was never anticipated that so many children would give their lives to Christ. One of the children was the first one in their family to be baptized, and now their adult family members have started Bible studies.

After the baptism, the children's ministries team decided to continue strengthening the faith of these young souls by offering a creative, child-friendly online program based on the Adventist Church's 28 fundamental beliefs. Another child has been baptized this year as the result of these studies.

The Spanish-language online children's study group is now an ongoing ministry for Spartanburg Spanish Church serving the children, not only locally, but internationally, as the online approach allows them to reach children everywhere. Every Friday night, families from North America, the Caribbean, and Central and South America connect their children to



28 Creencias graduacion



PHOTO BY: CONTRIBUTED

PHOTO BY: HENRIQUE GOMES

the online program, and stay connected afterward to participate in the general worship service.

The church family praises the Lord for preparing the hearts of the children and their families to accept Jesus Christ in their lives, and pray for many more to follow in their footsteps.

Other churches and groups are encour-

aged to be intentional in providing children with diverse worship and study opportunities to grow in their relationships with Jesus. For more information about programs or sharing resources, please reach out to Spartanburg Spanish. ☀

BY SHEILA MONTENAT

Kress Memorial Church Celebrates 80 Years

Kress Memorial Church in Winter Park, Fla., held an 80th anniversary celebration February 12, 2022.

The church had its beginnings in 1941 when Orlando Central Church became overcrowded, and 81 of the active missionary-minded members volunteered to begin a church in Winter Park. The church building was completed in 1953, and it was voted to change the church's name to Kress Memorial Church in honor of Daniel and Lauretta Kress, who both were medical doctors greatly loved by the congregation.

Celebration Services

In true teacher style, Sandra Doran, educator and writer, included all of her students in the discussion of the Sabbath School lesson. Adam Szerbak-Rivera, age 8, shared why Kress Church was special to him.

Eric Doran, pastor from 2002-2014,



Sandra Doran, educator and writer, taught the Sabbath School lesson.

PHOTO BY: SHEILA SPRAGGINS



Adam Szerbak-Rivera, 8, shared why Kress Memorial Church was special to him.



Nola Anderson has been a Kress Memorial Church member longer than any other member — 62 years.

PHOTO BY: SHEILA SPRAGGINS

challenged the congregation to awaken, notice what was happening in the world, and forgive the little hurts. Jesus is coming, and all must be ready to meet Him. "We don't live just to preserve our rights," stated Doran. "We live to glorify our God."

Celebration Memories

Dressed in her Pathfinder uniform, Nola Anderson, the longest Kress Memorial Church member of 62 years, related her story.

Shortly after her husband, Pete Anderson, was baptized in 1960, he was asked to be the assistant Pathfinder director. He continued to serve in Pathfinders for 60 years, first as assistant director and then as director. His famous "Pete Burgers" were a hit with Pathfinders and an excellent fundraiser.

A mini-museum under the direction of Curt Gray, Kress Church historian,

featured a photo of Lauretta Kress M.D. and some of the 5,000 babies she delivered. Many membership books and Pathfinder photo albums were also on display. The church was designed by James Gamble Rogers, and the original blueprints were also in the museum.

To close the spiritual feast, Gerry and Evelyn Realin prepared a bountiful feast of delicious and nutritious Filipino food.

Most of the church family assisted with the celebration preparation, including Aurora Realin, planning chair; Sonia Hernandez, assistant chair; and Nancie and Mike Nickless and Arlyn and Carol Robertson, decorations. ☀

BY Verna M. Travis

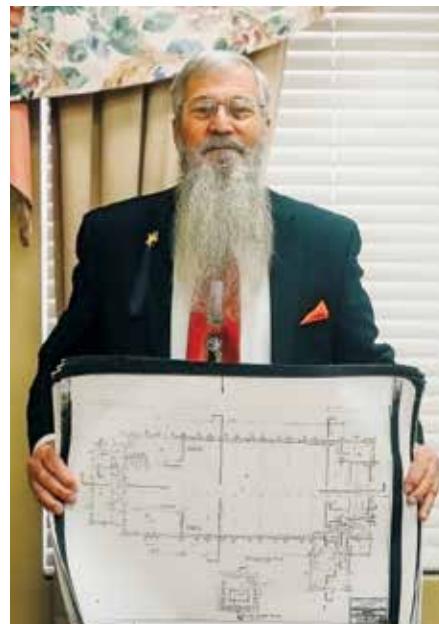


PHOTO BY: SHEILA SPRAGGINS

Curt Gray, Kress Memorial Church historian, is holding original blueprints of the church.

Florida Conference Commissions Chaplain

Tatiana Perez-Oh
February 19, 2022

Tatiana Perez-Oh was born on the beautiful island of Puerto Rico to Eliud Perez and Celeste Inzer. After her father taught her and her younger sister (ages 12 and 7 at the time) how to preach, they were invited to preach at different churches. This gave Perez-Oh her first taste of the unique joy found in ministry. In high school, she felt God's call to ministry during a week of prayer, and was anointed by the visiting pastor who affirmed her calling.

Her theological training and formation progressed while studying theology at Antillean Adventist University and in her local church setting. After



graduation, she followed her dream of being an overseas missionary, and spent 2 1/2 years in South Korea teaching English and Bible.

Perez-Oh was accepted into a clinical pastoral education (CPE) residency in

2006 at Texas Health Huguley Hospital, and was convicted that this was the path in ministry God was calling her to pursue. Following her residency, Perez-Oh returned to South Korea where she and her fiancé, Simon Oh, married.

Seeking advanced training, Perez-Oh obtained a M.Div. degree from Andrews University. She began working at Florida Hospital for Children (now AdventHealth) in Orlando in 2011, and currently serves as chaplain for the mother-baby units as well as an adult medical-telemetry unit.

Tatiana and Simon have been married for 13 years, and have two children, Grace, 8, and Justin, 6. ☀

Regenerate Annual Festival Held

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines regenerate at being “reformed or reborn, especially in a spiritual or moral sense.”

The Holman Bible Dictionary gives this definition: “The radical spiritual change in which God brings an individual from a condition of spiritual defeat and death to a renewed condition of holiness and life.”

Regenerate, a youth and young adult festival held annually in the Georgia-Cumberland Conference, has precisely that goal in mind. The Conference Youth and Young Adult departments seek first to celebrate what God is doing in and through the youth and young adults around the Conference, and second, to inspire each attendee to move from a condition where perhaps their spiritual life has lapsed or is waning to a renewed commitment to walk in the life and light of Jesus.

“We strive to inspire our youth to regenerate the Church by being a part of the Church,” says Jonathan Montes, youth ministries director for Georgia-Cumberland.

This year’s Regenerate, held at The Church in Liberty Square in Cartersville, Ga., on March 5, 2022, featured music, workshops, and reports, all given by young people. Vandeon Griffin, D.Min., associate youth and young adult ministries director at the North American Division, was the keynote speaker.

The day started with students from various schools and groups from across the Conference sharing their experiences on mission trips they went on last year. In addition, attendees heard from campers who participated in DiscipleTrek, a three-week summer camp at Cohutta Springs Youth Camp which encourages teens to go deeper into their discipleship with Jesus.

During the church service, students from Georgia-Cumberland Academy’s Sinfonietta Orchestra, Collegedale Academy’s Opus X choir, and Southern Adventist University’s Engage Ministries



PHOTO BY: CAMERON REEL

Nearly 250 youth and young adults responded to the challenge of Vandeon Griffin, D.Min., for the youth to be Christians that make a difference in the world. Regenerate is a day long festival with the express purpose of celebrating and inspiring youth to regenerate the Church by being a part of the Church.

teamed up for a spectacular praise time. Additionally, Atlanta Adventist Academy’s Adoramus Choir added to the musical extravaganza.

During the morning message, Griffin encouraged youth to be “loud Christians.” One example of this is by bold and unashamedly-Christian actions and interactions. As he finished his message, Griffin issued a powerful call to the youth challenging them to be Christians that make a difference in the world. Approximately 250 young people surged forward in response.

Afternoon opportunities again provided opportunities for attendees to express themselves and learn from others. The early afternoon sessions included a youth-led improvisational session; Q&A with Gary Rustad, Georgia-Cumberland Conference president; and seminars addressing negative emotions, getting involved in social media ministry, and how to live the Gospel.

The day ended with the Expression Session, which provided another opportunity

to not only celebrate the gifts and talents of youth and young adults in the Conference, but also how they are uplifting and supporting the Church. Attendees were blessed by incredible music, powerful testimonies, and other creative artistic expressions such as the Georgia-Cumberland Academy’s Acroflyers gymnastics team’s pantomime illustrating biblical themes and stories.

Griffin closed the day with another powerful message challenging each to continue their walk with God.

As the festival came to a close, one attendee was overheard saying, “I feel I have been Regenerated!” Parents also expressed their gratitude that the Church was providing opportunities for young people to actively participate and attend a high caliber event specifically geared toward them. Plans are already under way for the next Regenerate on March 4, 2023. ☀

BY DON KEELE JR.

Ooltewah Hispanic Builds, Dedicates Church Home During COVID-19

The Ooltewah Hispanic Church held a dedication service for their new church home on February 12, 2022, built in-part by a team of dedicated volunteers. The new building sits on Ooltewah-Ringgold Road just two miles from Southern Adventist University.

The journey for the new church building began when the property was first purchased in 2017. The idea first came from a college-aged young woman, who worked as a tutor for the daughter of the property owners. It was this young woman who thought the property would be a great spot for a church. When COVID-19 hit the United States, there was some concern that the project

wouldn't take off. Nevertheless, construction began in August of 2020 and lasted 14 months.

"Maranatha International was the reason we were able to know how to begin and complete the building project," says Tony Sandoval, Ooltewah Hispanic pastor. "They provided the architectural plans and coordinated 56 volunteers [who] spent two weeks erecting the wooden frame of the structure and put on a roof. Maranatha also coordinated with the general contractor, site developer, and major contractors all while having a loving Christ-like approach. They were a huge blessing!"

Roger Hatch, along with his wife, Eli,

daughter, Pam, and son-in-law, Dave Wilbur, made a personal commitment to see the church project through. Hatch sits on the board of Maranatha and worked as a contractor for more than 50 years. Hatch and Wilbur had the wisdom and muscle to do the project, but there was still a need for a local general contractor to pull the permits. Nick Joy answered the call. They began clearing trees, moving dirt, and laid a concrete cement slab foundation in time for the Maranatha volunteers in October of 2020. Even after the other volunteers left, Hatch, Wilbur and their families remained at the property, living in their RVs for several more months, coordinating the subcontractors.



Pictured are Gonzalo Monroy (left), first elder; Tony Sandoval, pastor; and Kenneth Weiss, Maranatha International executive vice president. Maranatha International played a significant role in building a new church facility for the Ooltewah Hispanic Church in Ooltewah, Tenn.

PHOTO BY: NICK EVENSON/MARANATHA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL

Ooltewah Hispanic Church now has a new building to call home. On Sabbath morning before the dedication, Miguel Tirado, Conference Latin-American ministries director, preached that from way before any of us existed, God knew that land one day would have a church.

Later in the day, Gary Rustad, Conference president, gave a powerful dedication message based on 1 Kings 6:12, where God reminds King Solomon during the construction of the temple to encourage him and remind Solomon that God is his judge and still on the throne. Rustad also shared that a church isn't just a physical building, but rather the church members are the true living temples as a light in the community.

During the dedication service, Kenneth Weiss, executive vice president for Maranatha International, challenged the members to continue growing and building churches in the area. Several volunteers who helped with the building project were also in attendance.

"During seminary at Andrews Uni-



PHOTO BY: NICK EVENSON/MARANATHA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL

Gonzalo Monroy (left), first elder; Gary Rustad, Conference president; and Tony Sandoval, pastor, present during the dedication service. The new Ooltewah Hispanic Church was built during the COVID-19 pandemic, and was dedicated on February 12, 2022.

versity, I was taught many wonderful things," says Sandoval. "Unfortunately, building a church building was not one of them. If I had to do it all over again, I would have a better idea what to expect. I

have to admit I always saw God moving at every step." ●

BY RACHEL BEAVER AND TONY SANDOVAL

"Blessing Box" Installed at Murphy Church

The Murphy, N.C., Church has a new addition. Thanks to Julian Stephens, a "Blessing Box" has been built and is now a permanent fixture on the property.

The box, which took about three weeks to build, offers a little extra help to anyone in need. The hope is that folks will stop by with items to donate — such as nonperishable foods, new socks, and essentials like toothbrushes, winter hats, gloves, and other items — leaving them in the box. If anyone stops by and needs any of the items placed inside, they are free to take them.

Craig Fish, pastor, discourages leaving



PHOTO BY: BILL BELIAN

Julian Stephens and Craig Fish, pastor, at the newly built "Blessing Box."

cash and used clothing. He thanks everyone donating gifts of love to the box.

When asked what made her want to

build the box, Stephens said, "One of the women in church, it was her idea. She told me what size she wanted and the dimensions, and showed me a picture. I kinda just went from there, and my husband helped me."

This is a gesture of love and compassion for those in our community needing extra help in these especially difficult times."

"A Blessing Box is just that — a box that is meant to be a blessing," said Fish. ●

BY ANGEE QUINONES-BELIAN/CHEROKEE SCOUT. REPRINTED BY PERMISSION.



Former Presidents Gordon Bietz, David Smith Honored

Southern Adventist University's Board of Trustees designated former presidents Gordon Bietz, D.Min., and David Smith, Ph.D., as presidents emeriti during its February 27, 2022, meeting in recognition of their dedication and service to the University.

Bietz served as Southern president from 1997-2016. During his 19-year tenure, the University's enrollment nearly doubled, campus facilities expanded to meet that growth, and the Vision 20/20 Strategic Plan that he spearheaded set a strong foundation for the institution's ongoing success. Previously, he served as senior pastor of the Collegedale Church on campus for 13 years.

"As Southern's longest-serving president, Dr. Bietz played a huge part in shaping Southern as we know it today," said Ken Shaw, Ed.D., president, '80. "We are pleased to recognize and honor Gordon for his Christ-centered lead-



Serving the Southern Adventist University community a combined 60 years, David Smith (left), former president; Ken Shaw, current president; and Gordon Bietz, former president, are dedicated to Adventist education.

ership, commitment to Adventist education, and rich legacy of service to the Southern community."

Smith also has a long relationship with the institution, beginning in 1981 and serv-

ing 17 years as English professor and then department chair. After leaving the area to serve as president of Union College in Lincoln, Neb., in 2011 Smith returned as senior pastor of the Collegedale Church — a position he held for five years. During that time, he served on Southern's board, gaining an intimate understanding of the institution's finances, operations, and mission. In 2016, Smith was unanimously elected as Southern's 26th president and served until his retirement in 2021.

"It is our pleasure to honor President Smith, who dedicated nearly 30 years of his career to the Southern community," Shaw said. "In every role, Dave's love for Jesus, as well as the students, employees, and church members he interacted with, made a significant impact and leaves a lasting legacy." ☀

BY STAFF WRITER

Knowledge Exchange Surpasses One Million Downloads

Southern Adventist University's Knowledge Exchange — an online institutional repository that includes scholarly work by students and faculty members — passed the milestone of one million downloads this school year. Provided by McKee Library as a free service since 2013, Knowledge Exchange houses more than 5,000 documents, which have been accessed by people in 226 different countries. For Southern students, it is a useful resource for sharing their academic work with a broad audience.

"Utilizing Knowledge Exchange is

a valuable experience for students who want to be published or get into graduate programs," said Jessica Spears, research services librarian and administrator of the repository. "Through this platform, content created here on campus gets used all over the world, which creates incredible opportunities for students and faculty."

In order to participate, students must have a professor certify that their work is of high caliber and can be published. One of the top downloads on the site is a paper written by a student in 2009, titled "The Impact of Media Exposure on

Self-Esteem and Body Satisfaction in Men and Women," which has garnered nearly 70,000 downloads.

In addition to academic works, the site houses historical documents, images, and digital content for Southern. To view and download documents, visit southern.edu/knowledgeexchange. As Spears said, "No matter what you are studying, or where your interests lie, Knowledge Exchange is a wonderful resource." ☀

BY STEFANIE GREEN

Decatur Crochets Beanies for Local Hospital



Members of the Decatur women's ministries show their handiwork of hand-crocheted beanies for local newborns.

As part of women's ministries for the Decatur, Ala., Church, several members have crocheted baby beanies for newborns. Created in preemie and regular sizes, the hats were delivered to the nearby Decatur Morgan Hospital. Upon delivery of 50 completed beanies on February 21, 2022, the hospital made a Facebook post on their page, featuring the recently gifted hats in a photo with some of their nursing staff. In addition, the hospital tagged the Decatur Church and thanked them for the donation.

Following the donation, the volunteers went back to work and created 50 more hats, intending to make a total of 100 before their next delivery.

The pre-washed beanie is part of a package that includes a note of encouragement and blessings to the new parents. The package also includes a health

tract on the importance of drinking water. The volunteers also intend to add a handmade bookmark with each hat for the next delivery. The bookmark will feature the encouraging verse of Psalm 139:14, "I will praise You for I am fearfully and wonderfully made..."

This group of volunteers varies in responsibilities and skills. Some crochet, others create the notes and bookmarks, and still others assemble the packages and deliver. But, there's something for everyone to contribute. Women's ministries of the Decatur Church are prayerful that other churches take the opportunity to connect with their community positively. □

BY ANNA PEREZ



Two nurses from Decatur Morgan Hospital participate in a thank-you post to the hospital Facebook page.



Panama City Church Hosts Preaching Seminar

In 2022, the Panama City, Fla., Church is making its mission to connect, equip, and grow. Eddy Nuñez, pastor, wants his church to be a place where everyone can engage in all three of those components.

Nuñez presented a preaching seminar hosted at the church on March 12, 2022, and was made available to anyone who wanted to attend. The goal for this seminar was not only to sharpen the skills of local church leaders that are already on the preaching schedule, but to open the door for new presenters to have an opportunity to learn and share.

In a written recap posted to the church's Facebook page, they state, "Preaching is the communication of truth through personality, and there are three main types of messages: topical, expository, and narrative. A topical sermon is governed by the theme; an expository sermon is governed by the text; and a narrative sermon is governed by a story."

Eleven people participated in the seminar in person, and several others joined online via Zoom. Of those in attendance, the majority were people who have not preached before. This seminar helped them all to better define what preaching is, and how to do it more effectively. Among the tips presented, pinpointing the topic you intend to give was revealed to be highly effective in how the sermon is constructed, and how well it would be received. "Good sermons, like any other good speech, must encompass a single concept that we call the big idea. The big idea is a 12- to 15-word sentence that is memorable and clearly portrays the focus of your message," says Nuñez.

At the close of the seminar, Q&A time allowed attendees to engage even more on the topic, and learn how things like the length of the sermon can alter its effectiveness.

Nuñez intends to offer a second component to the seminar in the fall of 2022. ●

BY SHANE HOCHSTETLER



Attendees join in person and online via Zoom to sharpen their preaching skills or to gain a first-time introduction.



Eddy Nuñez, pastor of Panama City Church, wants everyone in his church to have access to connect, equip, and grow.

Joel Sutherland Appointed as New Ministerial Director

Kentucky-Tennessee Conference administration is pleased to announce that, after much prayer and consideration, the Executive Committee extended an invitation to Joel Sutherland to be the new ministerial director. He will start the position on May 15, 2022, following the retirement of Kieth Noll, current ministerial director, on March 29, 2022.

Sutherland was born in Alaska. He felt the call to ministry in his teenage years, and, after receiving guidance from his father and a mentor, he enrolled at Southern Adventist University to pursue a B.A. in theology. While at Southern, he completed the Soul-winning And Leadership Training (SALT) program — an evangelism course conducted in partnership with It Is Written.

During his time as a student, he also worked as First Year Experience mentor, completed a year as a Bible worker coordinator in the Chattanooga First Church, served as the Student Ministerial Association (SMA) president, and interned as



Joel Sutherland poses with his wife, Chelsea. The couple will be joining the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference on May 15, 2022, as he takes on the ministerial director position.

then transferring to the Pulaski and Lawrenceburg churches. He was ordained on July 28, 2020.

In 2021, he completed a master of ministry degree from Southern Adventist University and accepted the call to work as a pastor at the Pennsylvania Conference. Sutherland has a heart for mission. Throughout his life, he has worked on evangelistic mission trips in the Philippines, Sierra Leone, and North Carolina.

"I am excited to start this new position," said Sutherland. "One of my passions is equipping and empowering people. I look forward to working with the Conference staff, and supporting the incredible set of pastors in Kentucky and Tennessee. I am just happy and humbled to be a part of what God is already doing in this Conference."

The Kentucky-Tennessee Conference family looks forward to welcoming back Joel Sutherland, and his wife, Chelsea. ●

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Faith Amidst War: The Amazing Testimony of a Ukrainian Couple

This testimony is from a member of the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference whose family is currently living in Ukraine. His parents, faithful Seventh-day Adventists, continue to share their faith despite the war going on around them. He wanted to remain anonymous.

Vera and Volodymyr live in a small village in the south of Ukraine, just a bit over 50 miles from the Crimea

border — a peninsula that has been occupied by Russia since 2014. The couple was still young when they discovered the Gospel and joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church. From the start, they were a dynamic duo eager to share the joy they had found in Jesus. Vera and Volodymyr were the first missionaries in their village, where they were both born.

For many years, they held church services in their own home. One year they

had the opportunity to purchase their neighbor's property, which they transformed into a house of worship. The church grew to have more than 40 members, and though that number dropped after many people moved to the big cities, their ministry never stopped.

Like many people in the area, Vera and Volodymyr make a living from selling eggs, milk, and a variety of vegetables. A few months before Russia started



their invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the couple used their savings to buy copies of *The Desire of Ages* and *The Great Controversy*.

It only took a few days for the Russian soldiers to reach their village. Life has changed since then. Soldiers patrol the streets. Roadblocks have been put in place. Tanks and guns are a common sight. Stores are empty and food is rationed. Despite these changes, Vera and Volodymyr's faith has stayed the same.

In the mornings, the couple milk their cows and take the filled bottles to give out at the center of their village. They do not ask for any money, but just say, "The Lord paid us in advance; just praise His name."

In the afternoon, Vera and Volodymyr

go around the village offering prayer and Bible studies. They walk with their previously purchased copies of *The Desire of Ages* and *The Great Controversy* in hand, ready to share it with whoever needs it. Like when they first began, the missionary duo is delighted to share their hope in Jesus.

One day, two Russians soldiers carrying guns approached Vera as she was in her home. Instead, of turning away she called out to them, "Okay, boys, I brought you some books about God. Will you like to read them?" Vera and Volodymyr have previously offered these books to Russian soldiers, their courage never wavering. Though most refuse to take the books, these two soldiers each took a copy; one

took *The Desires Ages* and the other took *The Great Controversy*. The story of Vera and Volodymyr, like the ongoing war, is still developing. Their son shares that it is painful for him to hear these stories being so far away and unable to help, but he also says his parents are happy to bring comfort to the people around them and happy to spread the Gospel.

Since the invasion, Vera and Volodymyr have distributed more than 300 books. The couple only has one plea to church members around the world: Do not hesitate to share the Good News. ☩

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Madison Campus Church, Academy Host Blood Drive to Honor Alumna

Members of Madison Campus, Tenn., Church hosted a blood-drive in honor of Madison Academy alumna Brianna Underwood on March 7, 2022. The day-long event made in collaboration with the Red Cross drew in 44 donors.

Last December, Underwood was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (A.L.L.), a type of cancer that affects the white blood cells. She was admitted to Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) on December 28, 2021, to begin treatment to fight A.L.L. and rebuild her health.

During her first five weeks in VUMC, Underwood received multiple life-saving treatments of donated blood products. As a result, she began encouraging her church community and Madison Academy family to become donors, so other in-need patients could receive blood transfusions.

Hearing her story, Jacqueline Downs, a Madison Campus Church member whose sons had been schoolmates with Underwood, was inspired to organize

a blood drive. After contacting the Red Cross, the team decided to do it on Madison Academy's school grounds.

"This way, the students could be in-



PHOTO BY: PHOTO COURTESY OF KRIS FUENTES

Andrew Jones (left), Donnie Underwood, Brianna Underwood, and Abigail Anderson during the March 7, 2022, blood drive at Madison Academy.

volved with registration and hosting the post-blood donation area with snacks," said Downs. "The entire event was just full of laughter and support. This was a great way of serving our community and showing our love for Brianna."

The blood-drive took place from 1 to 7 p.m. and welcomed several volunteers. According to Jason Streger, Red Cross representative, there were 44 blood donors on the day of the drive. From this number, 82% were first-time donors.

"Overall, we collected 39 whole blood

units, which have the potential of saving more than one life," said Streger.

Underwood remembers her time at the hospital in December, where she got multiple units of blood to correct her white blood cell count. She says that as she stared at the screen monitors, she noticed that there was a shortage. Red Cross reports that every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs blood or platelets transfusions.

"I'm very grateful to everyone who gave blood, especially those who were first time donors or even nervous about

donating..." said Underwood. "I think the main thing I want readers to get from this article is to be encouraged to go give blood locally if they are able."

Though no dates have been finalized, Downs says she is in contact with the Red Cross to repeat this event throughout the year. To learn how you can donate blood in your area, visit www.redcross.org. ●

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Students Learn About Jesus Through Lego Robotics

In the back room of the Manchester, Ky., Church, every Tuesday from 3:45 to 5 p.m., students in grades 3-8 gather together to do Lego Robotics. This program is designed for students to learn the basics of robotics and Christian values.

Lego Robotics is a STEM-focused course that teaches students to think out-

side of the box, according to Manchester Church pastor and Lego Robotics mentor Tom Kyser. During the classes, students build legos into robots for which they can later program or create obstacles to interact with.

"My goal is to teach [the students] complex problem-solving skills and to help them boost confidence," said Kyser.

Trey Weideman, fourth-grade student, says that Lego Robotics has taught him the importance of teamwork. He says that, because he hasn't used teamwork very much in the past, this has been a good experience for him.

Lego Robotics is a simple program to use. Kyser first got the idea to incorporate the Lego Robotics program from



Students program their robot to complete challenge course during their Lego Robotics class. Lego Robotics is a STEM-focused curriculum for students to learn the basics of robotics and Christian values.



Students build a Lego robot. Tom Kyser, pastor, says that his goal for this program is to teach students complex problem-solving skills while giving them a boost of confi-

PHOTO BY AMINA KYSER



a booth during the Chosen Camporee. He later talked to Mel Wade, Adventist Robotics League director, to learn more about the program. A few months later, Kyser completed a course online to learn the basics of coding, which is an essential part of the program.

Ministry is also an integral part of Lego Robotics. During the class, students start with prayer, and whoever is in charge that day will give a short de-

votional that tells the students the theme for the day, which often relates to the lesson they learn of the day. For example, if the topic for the day is safety, they study what the Bible says about it, and how the students can apply that to their own lives outside of Lego Robotics.

"Legos helps teach character development," Kyser says. "It teaches you how to solve problems, and [shows you] how to deal with frustration It helps you

grow as a person both mentally and spiritually. If you could be spiritual when you're frustrated, you can be spiritual in just about any kind of situation."

If you are looking to start a similar program at your church or school, visit <https://www.adventistrobotics.net/> for more information. ☀

BY AMBER KYSER

Highland Academy to Open Counseling Center for K-12 Students

After receiving a \$296,000 grant, Highland Academy in Portland, Tenn., will open an on-campus counseling center for its K-12 students. This counseling center will be led by a licensed school psychologist, and will offer Christian counseling services to both the elementary and high school students beginning in the fall of 2022.

Plans for this project began in January after school administration noticed that there was an increase in the number of students seeking local or remote counseling services. Chadd Watkins, Highland Academy principal, estimates that about 15% of students are currently receiving professional mental health help.

"We've been seeing, just like everyone else through the pandemic, that the mental health of our students has taken a toll," Watkins said. "We're talking about kids who are dealing with depression, broken homes, or struggling with relationships. We wanted to provide some sort of professional help here on campus so that all students, despite finances, can have access to quality mental health services."

With the leadership of Eric Johnson, vice principal for development, and full support from the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference, Highland Academy secured the grant to launch this program. The funding will cov-



PHOTO COURTESY OF ERIC JOHNSON

Highland Academy students are shown in a promotional photo. This coming school year, Highland will open an on-campus counseling center, which will offer services led by a licensed school psychologist for its elementary and high school students.

er the costs to renovate Ponce Hall, as well as assist with the operation of the Center.

According to Johnson, the counseling center will offer a variety of services, such as one-on-one counseling, group counseling, addiction therapy, peer tutoring, and ADHD testing. Johnson says that as a Christian school, Highland Academy wants to be proactive in meeting their students' mental health needs. "At Highland, we do a great job with the academic, social, and spiritual aspect of our school," said Johnson. "The counseling center is a continuation of our desire to really reach the whole person, which includes mental health. We're just grateful that God has

blessed us with this opportunity to make an impact for our students and provide a service to them that can address the overall mental health wellness."

During the next several months, the school will be focusing on completing the renovations, and finding the right person to come and lead the Center. Highland Academy is deeply grateful for this grant, and looks forward to seeing how this new addition to the campus will help students in their journey to know Jesus Christ as their best friend. ☀

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Teenagers Elected Church Clerks

In what has been shown to be historic actions in their local churches (and may also be true in their local South Atlantic Conference), two young women, aged 18 and 19, have been elected to serve as the church clerk and assistant church clerk by their respective churches. They are Lashanti McGinty of Newnan First Church in Newnan, Ga., and Abigail Watson of New Jerusalem Praise and Worship Center in Douglasville, Ga.

Everton A. Ennis, D.Min., senior pastor, recommended the teens to the respective nominating committees, and the committee members were quick to

add their blessing to ask them to serve. Both young women were subsequently elected and have since assumed their duties. McGinty is a 2021 graduate of Newnan High School, and Watson is a sophomore in college.

The Newnan First/New Jerusalem district accepts that God calls youth to serve Him, too, and is committed to providing them with opportunities to fulfill their calling. As church board members, church clerks provide an essential ministry of maintaining the record of the board's actions, the church membership roll, and comple-

ing conference reports in a timely manner. Thank God for youth who want to serve God and His Church! ☩

BY EVERTON A. ENNIS, D.MIN.



Lashanti McGinty, 18, is the church clerk at Newnan First Church in Newnan, Ga.



Abigail Watson, 19, is the assistant church clerk at New Jerusalem Church in Douglasville, Ga.



Oakwood Latino Adventist Church Established at Oakwood University

The Oakwood Latino Adventist Church (OLA) was established February 2011, when a group of students and professors at Oakwood University developed an inreach ministry for the growing number of Latino students at Oakwood. The Primero Dios Ministry is an organization devoted to promoting higher Christian education, providing financial support, and preparing the Latino community to serve. According to Isaac Ibarra, special assistant to the president for diversity and inclusion at Oakwood University, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Primero Dios ministry played an essential role in the development of OLA. OLA was voted as an official church in the South Central Conference on December 12, 2021.

In support of the University's outreach to the Latino community, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion has already traveled to Florida, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Mississippi, Kentucky, California, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Mexico, Cuba, Costa Rica, and the Dominican Republic. They plan to visit Mississippi, Florida, and Panama in the next few weeks.

The current goals of this office in relation to enrollment include the following:

- Facilitate an environment of inclu-

sion for alumni, current students, and future students.

- Develop policies that promote no discrimination toward staff, faculty, students, and administrators.
- Provide training as it relates to diversity and its development.

Campus activities include training, support, culture-oriented programs, and worship opportunities in their native languages. When talking about the future and goals of the office, Ibarra says, "It is to become a division to better serve the institution."

Osias Morales Ruiz, a current student at Oakwood University and a member of OLA and Primero Dios says, "Primero Dios is a ministry whose purpose is to work on mission trips, help Hispanic students grow spiritually and personally, as well as help the community and implement mission trips in different parts of the United States and internationally."

Ruiz says, "The ministry of Primero Dios is related to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion," a department of the University which plans and coordinates activities to support and educate students. Every year the group travels to different places where they perform dramas as part of worship services, socialize and build relationships during baseball

games, and conduct community services. The Primero Dios (First God) ministry is led by pastors Enoc Balbuena, Isaac Ibarra, Osias Morales, and Hispanic students from Oakwood University. The role of this department and ministry is to carry the message of Jesus, recruit young people, and work to put God in first place in people's lives. All of this is directed by Hispanics who attend the OLA Church and work together on mission trips.

"In all my life I have not experienced something as beautiful as being in OLA. Knowing that you have someone who cares about you, who gives you food, and helps you grow is something that you cannot find in many churches. OLA is a ministry that cares about their students financially, personally, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally. I believe we are the only Hispanic church in the area at this time that has excellent potential, and are willing to use the potential and talent that God has given us. OLA's ministry is focused on the mission that God has left us to preach and teach the Gospel to others." ☀

BY GABRIELLE CALDWELL, A SENIOR AT OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY



Lower than average temperatures on Sabbath, March 12, 2022, were offset by the warmth inside the Moseley Complex, where Oakwood University students from Rwanda, Congo, and Hispanic countries gathered for a soul-stirring worship experience.



Oakwood students pause for a stretch and photo op during their travels.

Members Stay Connected Through COVID-19 Pandemic

Disconnected. It is the word that is usually used to characterize the pandemic experience. It may indeed be the reality for most people.

However, the congregation of Golden Gate All Nations (GGAN) congregation in Naples, Fla., is a noteworthy exception. The experience has been dramatically different, with “connected” being the overwhelming experience. The theme “United through Fellowship, Worship, and Discipleship” came into action when the doors of the church were officially closed,” said Dolphy Cross, pastor, whose leadership extends to three other churches.

When, on that day in March 2020, the confirmation of the pandemic strength of COVID-19 turned a planned post-wor-

ship formal fellowship luncheon into a “Grab ’n Go” boxed lunch, the path was set. “The enemy planned to close this church, but God had other plans,” says Catherine James-Bell, church clerk, as she marshaled the forces. Virtual church on Zoom and YouTube became the standard for two years. She sourced support for the worship services from church elders and members for Sabbath School, worship music, and occasionally the spoken Word as Cross ministered to his other churches. For additional interest, James-Bell reached out to friends and relatives in her native St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, and other countries in the Caribbean, exposing GGAN to different worship experiences, while expanding the reach of the GGAN Church through external bonding.

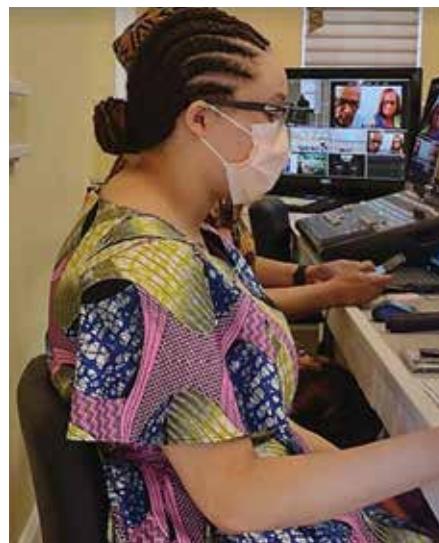
Church activities continued during the week as the conference line was em-

ployed to continue call-in Wednesday night Prayer Meetings. On Friday evenings, with Hidy Matthew, AY leader, as host, members again gathered virtually for Vespers to welcome the Sabbath and to celebrate the survival of another week.

Important features of the Wednesday and Friday evening sessions were the testimonies that members shared to encourage each other through the manifestation of God in their lives. They were accompanied by requests for prayer that covered those members, relatives, and even neighbors afflicted with COVID-19 or other illnesses. Another feature was the spoken Word delivered by a church member, transforming many into lay preachers, a clear example of the power of the concept of the priesthood of believers. When one of the GGAN stalwarts passed away in the pre-vaccine



Laurentia Catherine James-Bell, Golden Gate All Nations church clerk, spearheaded the expansion of the reach of the GGAN Church through many online activities. Church attendance during the two-year pandemic closing grew to include members in her native St. Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, and other Caribbean countries. Additionally, James serves as director of Community Services and Pathfinder counselor.



Hidy Matthew, GGAN youth leader, directed the Friday afternoon virtual Vespers sessions that have continued even after the church’s official reopening on March 5, 2022. Matthew also serves on the GGAN technology team.



Maryland-based clinical psychologist Lavonne Browne, Ph.D., counseled the GGAN congregation on strategies to cope with death, dying, depression, and general mental health issues increased by the pandemic in the series “Tell the Truth.”



height of the pandemic, James-Bell organized a drive-by farewell. There were also drive-by birthday celebrations with drop-off gifts: two for treasured seniors, one for a five-year-old.

The Health Department, headed by an ER physician, Patricia Gardner, M.D., and a team of committed nurses, became central in providing up-to-date information on the pandemic and its wily devastation throughout the country and the world. The church relied on this active department for reliable information with respect to vaccines, masking, self-protection, and home care of families. More importantly, the Health Department established strict protocols for safeguarding the health of members as the church reopened ... first cautiously, then with full reopening on March 5, 2022.

Other departments used the Zoom platform and the teleconferencing facilities to present programs. Through Wednesday evening telephone meetings, the Education Department kept a supportive rein on the activities of



John Bell, GGAN head deacon, facilitated members who were reluctant to give online by providing a friendly, personalized pick-up service. This service has added to the steady increase in tithes and offerings with which the church has been blessed, despite its two-year closing.

the youth, especially those who were away at university. Women's ministries zoomed a "Tell the Truth" series, inviting nationally-acclaimed speakers to provide critical information on issues of particular relevance in this dangerous post-truth era. Speakers included Emory Tolbert, professor and chair of Howard University History Department; Trevor O'Reggio, professor and chair of Church History, Religious Education, and Discipleship at Andrews University; Keith Burton, Ph.D., author of *The Blessing of Africa: The Bible and African Christianity*; Kwame Vanderhorst, minister and co-founder of "Prepare Our Youth," and president of Seed Planter International; and LaVonne Browne, Ph.D., a licensed clinical psychologist who provided timely mental health counseling on "Growing through Grief."

Furthering the agenda of keeping connected, men's ministries continued its "Know Your Neighbor" series of interviews designed to help members get to know more about each other. Men also got together on an early 5:30 a.m. phone call to stay connected and support and pray for each other and for the en-

tire church, which had by then become a close-knit family. During November, the national month of Thanksgiving, the Community Services Department collected turkeys to continue its annual turkey distribution.

Even as the sting of COVID-19 appears to wane, God has continued to pour out His blessings. Members unable to navigate online giving have been facilitated by a personalized pick-up service from John Bell, head deacon. The church has experienced a steady increase in membership, along with tithes and offerings.

In celebration of the opportunity to stay in touch visually and audibly, Cross praises God "for the faithfulness of the members who remained undaunted, steadfast, and true to God. We all fully embrace the unwritten motto, that has now become the written motto: 'United through Fellowship, Worship, and Discipleship.' To God be the Glory!" ☩

BY MERYL JAMES-SEBRO, PH.D.



Catherine James, GGAN church clerk, doubles as host of the birthday party in front of the closed church for musical director and former first lady Yvonne Douglas, whose husband, Walter Douglas, pastor, was the former GGAN pastor and chair emeritus of the Church History and Religion Department at Andrews University. Church members drove by to send virtual hugs and kisses, and to drop off gifts.



BLEDSOE, JAMES D., 93, born Jan. 12, 1929 in Wellington, TX, died Feb. 6, 2022 in Windermere, FL. He was a member of the Forest Lake Church in Apopka, FL, for 48 years.

He served as a teacher at the following schools: Forest Lake Academy, Apopka, FL, for 20 years; Mt. Pisgah Academy, Candler, NC, for four years; Lynwood Adventist Academy, Lynwood, CA, for nine years; San Pasqual Academy, Newberry Park, CA, for three years; and Cheyenne River Academy, Harvey, ND, for one year.

He is survived by one son, David (Debbie) Bledsoe of Winter Garden, FL; two brothers: Tom (Diane) Bledsoe of Fletcher, NC, and Cecil Bledsoe of Gentry, AR; and one grandchild. He was predeceased by his wife of 60 years, Margaret Jo Bledsoe, who passed away in 2012.

The graveside service was conducted by Pastor Steve Sherman at the Highland Memory Gardens in Apopka.

HALLOCK, MILTON WALTER, 87, born Aug. 20, 1934 in Lincoln, VT, peacefully went to sleep in Jesus in his home in Rossville, GA, on Feb. 1, 2022. He married Margaret Wright of Worcester, MA, in 1955. Their ministerial journey began in Portland, ME, and took them to Concord, NH; Johnsvury, VT; Tranquility, NJ; Jackson, MS; Pensacola, FL; Des Moines, IA; and Macon, GA. After 31 years of ministry, they retired in the Collegedale, TN, area.

Milton is survived by his wife of 66 years; daughter, Deborah Clayton of Ooltewah, TN; son, Milton Hallock Jr., of Rossville, GA; daughter, Darlene (Richard) Hickman of Altamonte Springs, FL; six grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his precious granddaughter, Kristin Ann Hallock (16) in 2002.

He will be remembered for his deep love for Jesus and how special he made those around him feel. His laughter was contagious. He will be greatly missed by his family and friends. His favorite topic was the Second Coming of Jesus, and we look forward to that Resurrection Day for a joyous reunion.



IVES, KEVIN P., 66, born Oct. 7, 1955 in Lansing, MI, died Feb. 2, 2022 in Apopka, FL. He was a member of Forest Lake Church in Apopka.

His denominational work included work with AdventHealth at various hospitals and in various fields: maintenance/engineering, patient financial services, and as a licensed practical nurse.

He is survived by his wife of 24 years, Vikki; one son, Jason (Kristina) Busch of Arlington, TX; three daughters: Hope (Jonathan) Cruz of Apopka, Heather (Jim) Skiver of Apopka, and Autumn Ives of Apopka; one brother, Dave Ryder of Lakeland, FL; one sister, Lisa Mullins of Oregon; eight grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. The service was conducted at Forest Lake Church in Apopka by Pastor Barbara McCoy.

GABBERT, EULA M. L., 91 of Duluth, GA, born to missionary parents in India, died March 6, 2022. Eula May obtained an elementary education degree from Union College. She met her husband, Gale, working in the school cafeteria. They taught school in Maryland before Gale took up pastoral work. Eula May taught school, piano, and supported Gale's ministry. They opened up their home for church potlucks and enjoyed visiting people. They retired in Collegedale, TN, wintering in Avon Park, FL. Recently, Eula May lived with her son, Dennis, and his wife, Rhea, where she read her Bible, walked two miles a day, and watched sermons. Survivors include her sister, Evonne Baasch; three children: Teresa Dorn, Dennis Gabbert, and Brenda Theus; six grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband, Gale; parents: Ebba and George Lindquist; and brother, Edo Lindquist.

MENHENETT, ELAINE H., 88, born May 18, 1933 in Horicon, NY, died Feb. 18, 2022 in Cleveland, TN. She was an Adventist for 66 years and was a member of the Wesley Chapel, FL, Church. She is survived by five daughters: Joan (Bob) Zollinger of Woodbury, TN, Dawn (Charlie) Hastings of Georgetown, TN, Sheila (Carl) Rymer of Cleveland, TN, Lisa (Mauro) Robles of Dade City, FL, and Lori Carter of Dade City, FL; one brother, Bernard (Millie) Bolton; one sister, Joan Young of Zephyrhills, FL; 14 grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by one sister, Eleanor Higgins of Brant Lake, NY.

NIELSEN, RUTH THOGER, 96, born May 28, 1925 in Copenha-

gen, Denmark, died Feb. 18, 2022 at her home in Candler, NC. She was raised in Copenhagen, the oldest of four girls. She attended the Danish Adventist high school, Vejlefjord, where she worked her way through school and graduated in 1944. While attending a summer camp to learn about literature evangelism, a young man, Louis Christian Nielsen (1924-2016), caught her eye. On May 6, 1946, they were married in Stockholm, Sweden, spending their first year of married life canvassing the countryside. Soon they returned to Denmark where Ruth settled into life as a pastor's wife. In 1952, to fulfill a dream, they immigrated to the United States where she worked in a local hospital and Louis earned a B.A. in theology from Emmanuel Missionary College, Berrien Springs, MI, and a M.Div., degree from the seminary in Takoma Park, MD, where he was ordained. After much prayer, they decided to fulfill another dream, and in 1958 they accepted a call to be missionaries to West Africa. Together, they served in Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. Their ministry included pastoring and education. They returned to Andrews University (AU) in 1965 so that Ruth and their four young children could receive an American education. Ruth earned a B.A. in home economics from AU in 1968, and a master's degree in human environment and design, textiles, and clothing from Michigan State in 1974. Ruth became an instructor in the Home Economics Department at Andrews University in 1968-69 and an assistant professor from 1970-77. She was acting chair of the Department her last year. During her tenure she led several home economics tours to

Europe. In 1977, Ruth and Louis accepted a call to return to Denmark and served at Skodsborg Sanitarium. Ruth was the director for the chef's school and sanitorium hostess, and Louis served as church pastor, sanitorium chaplain, and Bible teacher. In 1981 they returned to Africa where they built and established a mission school in Gambia. Soon they were called to serve at Bugema College, Uganda. In completing their service in Africa, Ruth and Louis operated an orphanage (Les Esperance) on the shores of Lake Victoria, Uganda, for AIDS children. Finally, in 1994, they moved back to the United States and retired in Candler, NC, becoming members of the Mt. Pisgah Academy Church. Ruth, in partnership with Louis, developed a botanical garden and a 5-acre animal farm for their grandkids and the youth of the church. Her interests included: community service, international travel; needlepoint, reading, and Danish home cooking. Her life and career were defined by her love for God, family, and church. She is survived by her three sisters in Scandinavia; and four children: Jan Nielsen of Savannah, GA, Anita Grandy of Candler, NC, Arne Nielsen of Silver Spring, MD, and Frank Nielsen of Seattle, WA; 10 grandchildren; and four great grandchildren.

PETRY, JAMES (JIM) L., SR., 87, born April 16, 1934 in Oelwein, IA, died Feb. 8, 2022 in Blairsville, GA. He was a member of the Fannin County Church. A memorial service was held on Feb. 12, 2022 at his home church. He is survived his wife, Joyce; three children: James L. Jr. (Ann); Shirley (David) Tanner; and Alan (Carrie); two sisters: Leila

(Bruce) Ashton and Joy Dunlap; 10 grandchildren; 9 great-grandchildren; nieces; and nephews.

RUNYAN, MILLIE HALL, 86, July 8, 2021 at Carle Clinic in Champaign, IL. Millie is survived by her four children: Dani Pitt, Rhonda Leauber, Jolie Runyan, and Kevin Runyan; four treasured grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; and one great-great-grandson. Millie is preceded in death by her husband, "Doc" Runyan; her grandson Benjamin Pitt; her parents: Howard and Anna Katherine Hall; her siblings: Lorraine Fox, Howard "Bud" Hall, and her sister, Mabel who died as a small child; and brother, Lawrence who died at birth. Millie will be remembered for her strength, wisdom, kindness, and belief in the innate goodness of others.

SAUDER, DOROTHY L., 95, born Feb. 23, 1926 in Doddridge County, WV, died Feb. 6, 2022 in Calhoun, GA, just a few days shy of her 96th birthday. She was a member of the Calhoun, GA, Church. She is survived by three daughters: Barbara Lawson, Jeralyn (Fred) Beardsley, and Janice (Greg) Miller; one son, Randy; 10 grandchildren; and 14 great-grandchildren. She is preceded in death by her husband Harvey; one daughter, Jeanne and son-in-law, Mark Lawson. She is interred at the Mansfield Cemetery in Mansfield, OH, beside her husband and daughter.

VELTING, ROBERT (Bob) W., 64, born to Wayne and Dixie Velting on Sept. 30, 1957, Battle Creek, MI, died Feb. 20, 2022 at AdventHealth Waterman Hospital, Tavares, FL. He was a member of Markham Woods Church, Longwood, FL. A graduate of Loma Linda University, he was loved by

physical therapy patients at Lake Centre for Rehab for 23 years. Bob was a compassionate person, great athlete, musician, and loved riding the tail of the dragon in Tennessee on his motorcycle. He is survived by two sisters: Cynthia Velting-Kidder, Detroit, MI, and Cheryl Velting, Battle Creek, MI; two nephews; two great-nephews; and one great-niece.

WALTERS JR., ELBERT KESH, 91, born Aug. 19, 1930 in Magee, MS, to Elbert Kersh Walters and Gladys Cornelia Styron, died March 15, 2022 at his home in Goodlettsville, TN. He is survived by his wife of 29 years, Judith Jean Turner Peterson Walters; his younger sister, Mary Kesler; his two biological children; one stepson; and two grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents; and his younger brother, Paul Walters. He will be sorely missed by his many friends, family, and the countless people he touched in his community.

WEIMER, EDWIN QUINBY, 91, born Sept. 18, 1930 in Alliance, OH, to Robert Edwin and Helen Irene (Makinson) Weimer, died Oct. 16, 2021 at his home in Hendersonville, NC, with his children by his side. Ed attended elementary school and high school in Maryland, and graduated in 1946, at the age of 16. Ed attended Mount Union College (now University of Mount Union) in Alliance, OH, where he studied chemistry and became a member of the Phi Kappa Tau fraternity, graduating with a B.S. in chemistry in 1952. He worked part-time for Babcock & Wilcox in Alliance, while attending college and began working full-time there after graduating. Shortly after graduating, Ed was drafted

into the U.S. Army in 1952, and was stationed at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., until he was released from active military duty in 1954. He then served in the U.S. Army Reserve until he was honorably discharged in 1961. Following active duty, he returned to work at Babcock & Wilcox, and then moved back to Maryland in 1957 to attend graduate school at the University of Maryland in College Park, MD. After a recommendation from one of his professors, Ed began working at the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Washington, D.C. in 1958. Ed met Gwendolyn Louise Corbett through a mutual friend, and they were married in 1962. Ed's work took him and Louise to Miami, FL, where their two children, Robert Edwin and Lori Ann, were born. Later his work took him and his family to Athens, Greece, and Frankfurt, Germany. Ed retired from the Central Intelligence Agency in 1990, after a long, successful career of 32 years, and was awarded the Career Intelligence Medal. He then worked as a contractor, teaching classes for another 15 years. In 2000, Ed and Louise decided to downsize and moved to Fletcher Park Inn in Hendersonville, NC. Ed and Louise became members of the Fletcher, NC, Church, where Ed served as a deacon. He volunteered at Park Ridge Hospital (now AdventHealth Hendersonville) for several years. He dearly missed Louise, his "sweetie pie," and looked forward to Heaven, where they would be reunited and made new. He was preceded in death by his wife of 55 years, Louise Weimer. He is survived by his children: Robert Weimer and Lori Weimer; as well as his sister, Mary Adair; niece, Helen Adair; and nephew, Kenneth Zervos.



**Legal notice for
Florida Conference Constituency Meeting
October 9, 2022**

Notice is hereby given that the 72nd Regular Constituency Meeting of the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will be held on Sunday, October 9, 2022, at 10:30 a.m. (registration begins at 9:30 a.m.) in the Forest Lake Academy Gymnasium, 500 Education Loop, Apopka, FL 32713. This Constituency Meeting is called for the purpose of electing Officers and Executive Committee members for the ensuing term and the transaction of such business as may properly come before the meeting.

Delegates chosen to the Organizing Committee shall meet at the Regional Orientation and Organization Meetings. All delegates are to attend their Regional Orientation Meeting as well as the Constituency Meeting. The Regional Orientation and Organization Meetings are an official part of the Constituency Meeting process and will be held as indicated adjacent to this notice.

Allen Machado, President

Tim Goff, Executive Secretary

**Legal notice for
Florida Conference Association Constituency Meeting
October 9, 2022**

The regular meeting of the members of the Florida Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists, a Florida corporation, will be held on Sunday, October 9, 2022, at 10:30 a.m. (registration begins at 9:30 a.m.) in the Forest Lake Academy Gymnasium, 500 Education Loop, Apopka, FL 32713, for the purpose of electing the Association officers and Board of Trustees for the ensuing term and for consideration of such other matters as may properly come before the meeting. Only those members present who are duly elected and accredited delegates of the Florida Conference of Seventh-day Adventists shall be entitled to vote at their Regional Meeting and at the Constituency Meeting.

All delegates are to attend their Regional Orientation Meeting as well as the Constituency Meeting. The Regional Orientation Meetings are an official part of the regular meeting process and will be held as indicated adjacent to this notice.

Allen Machado, President

Phil Bond, Executive Secretary

**Florida Conference Regional Orientation and Organization Meetings
for the 72nd Regular Florida Conference Constituency Session**

North Region—July 31—10 a.m.-12 p.m.
Jacksonville Southpoint Church
3208 Herring Rd., Jacksonville

East Region—July 31—4-6 p.m.
Spring Meadow Church
5703 N Ronald Reagan Blvd., Sanford

Gulf Region—August 1—7-9 p.m.
Tampa First Church
822 W Linsbrough Ave., Tampa

Central Region—August 2—7-9 p.m.
Forest City Spanish Church
7601 Forest City Rd., Orlando

Miami-Keys Region—August 7—10 a.m.-12 p.m.
Miami Temple Church
9175 SW 44th St., Miami

Broward Region—August 7—4-6 p.m.
Ambassador Church
3245 W Oakland Park Blvd., Lauderdale Lakes

Treasure Coast Region—August 8—7-9 p.m.
West Palm Beach First Church
6200 Summit Blvd., West Palm Beach

South West Region—August 9—7-9 p.m.
Port Charlotte Church
2836 Loveland Blvd., Port Charlotte

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR ADVERTISING

(1) Have your pastor or local church elder write "Approved" and his signature on the sheet of paper containing the advertisement, (2) write your name and address on the same sheet, (3) specify how many times the ad is to run, (4) send the approved ad to your conference office 6 weeks in advance of the publication date and (5) don't forget to enclose payment in full for each month the ad is to run. Make checks payable to SOUTHERN UNION.

RATES: Southern Union: \$40 for 20 words or less, including address. \$45 for anything longer than 20 words up to 45 words. \$1.30 per word beyond 45. Accepted as space is available. Ads may run in successive months as space permits.

Southern Tidings makes every reasonable effort to screen all advertising, but in no case can the periodical assume responsibility for advertisements appearing in its columns, or for typographical errors.

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LAKE - An Adventist community in a rural setting outside Oklahoma city that offers affordable homes or apartments and caring neighbors, with a fellowship you'll enjoy. On-site church, planned activities, and transportation, as needed. Also, Wolfe Living Center offering independent living and nursing home. Website: <http://summitridgevillage.org> or Bill Norman 405-208-1289. [5-4]

DON'T JUST RETIRE.... Live with purpose at Fletcher Park Inn. An Independent Living Retirement Community, located on the campus of Fletcher Academy near Hendersonville, North Carolina. Join our family, take part in the many opportunities for staying active, volunteering, making new friends and living with a purpose. Call to find out more about our apartment and villa homes 828-209-6930 ask for our marketing department or visit www.fletcherparkinn.com [5-7]

ADVENTIST REALTOR - Do you want to sell your home? Do you want to buy a home in North Georgia or South East Tennessee? I can help you achieve your goal. Call me today: Pierre at RemaxREC 423-987-0831 Cell or office 423-664-67644 [5-6]

FLORIDA SDA REALTOR -Would you like to BUY or SELL in Orlando, Florida or surrounding cities? I look forward to helping you! Sandra Da Silva, Realtor: 407-840-8500 (call/text). Service provided in English, Spanish & Portuguese.[5-12]

FLORIDA LIVING RETIREMENT COMMUNITY Independent living on 13.5 acres near Orlando, sunny beaches, golf courses, shopping areas, and

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FOR SALE. Multipurpose commercial steel building in Savannah, TN. 10,800 sq ft. Size of lot: 2.93 acres. Features: 2,500 sq ft. commercial kitchen with pantry; 2,300 sq ft. catering hall (capacity 75 persons) with juice bar; 3 bathrooms, 2 offices and a 5,000 sq ft. warehouse with a loading dock. Price: \$220,000.00 or best offer. For more information call (731) 412-2098. [5-7]

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY is seeking qualified candidates for the following teaching positions: Faculty—School of Education and Psychology, School of Business, Biology/Allied Health Department, Physics and Engineering Department, and Mathematics Department. Adjunct—Adult Degree Completion Program—Business Finance, Economics, and Psychology; and German Instructor—Modern Languages department. For detailed descriptions and qualifications, see southern.edu/jobs.[5]

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY is seeking qualified candidates for the following staff positions: Salaried position—School of Visual Art & Design Technology and Administrative Support Manager, Director of Alumni Relations, Thatcher Hall (Women's Residence) Assistant/Associate Dean. Hourly positions—Patrol Officer (Campus Safety), Deli Supper Cook (Village Market), Master Mechanic (Transportation), Cafeteria Floater (Cafeteria), CK2 Shift Supervisor, Produce Associate (Village Market), Closing Shift Supervisor (Village Market),

Procurement & Merchandising Assistant (Village Market), and Accounting Clerk (Accounting). For a detailed description and qualifications, see southern.edu/jobs.[5]

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY SEEKS FACULTY ACADEMY GENERAL - Instructor-AA The high school English teacher's responsibilities include planning lessons and developing curricula, reading and understanding all prescribed texts, offering academic support to students in regards to literature comprehension, writing skills and grammar understanding; in addition, communication with parents regarding students' progress and ensuring a safe learning environment are necessary for professional success. Candidate should be a Seventh-day Adventist in good and regular standing willing to teach English literature with a distinctly Adventist emphasis.https://www.andrews.edu/admres/jobs/show/faculty#job_1[5]

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY SEEKS FACULTY-Intensive English The Center for Intensive English Programs (CIEP) is seeking an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) professor who has experience teaching various language modules at all levels of English language proficiency, both in-person and online. https://www.andrews.edu/admres/jobs/show/faculty#job_11[5]

IT IS WRITTEN is seeking a Ministry Representative with an emphasis on helping people who have a philanthropic interest for advancing evangelism and will serve the southeastern United States. The successful applicant will join a professional team of dedicated ministry field representatives who are enthusiastic about public evangelism and soul winning. For more information or job description visit us at iiw.us/trustofficer.[5,6]

MARKETING DIRECTOR sought at It Is Written in Collegedale, Tennessee. Successful applicant will be energized by evangelism, enjoy working in a dynamic environment, and will effectively connect the ministry and resources of It Is Written with those seeking to know Jesus and His word. This soul-winning role will grow God's kingdom and reach hearts with the

gospel. Qualified individuals are invited to apply at iiw.us/marketing[5,6].

The VOICE OF PROPHECY at Adventist Media Ministries is seeking a full time Manager/Treasurer. The Manager-Treasurer is responsible for managing all hands-on operational aspects of the ministry, which also includes developing and managing its financial wellbeing. Being a fellow administrator, he assists the Speaker/Director in achieving the goals and objectives set for the organization. For more information you may email Victor Pires at victor@vop.com or apply at <https://www.adventistmediaministries.com/available-positions>[5]

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 [5-6]

UNION COLLEGE, LINCOLN, NEBRASKA is seeking applicants for a boiler plant operator. This is a full-time, non-exempt position with competitive pay and benefits. This individual is responsible for the operation and repair of HV/AC systems, transmission lines, and associated controls. Please view the full job description and instructions for application at ucollege.edu/employment.edu [5]

HIGH SPRINGS SDA CHURCH IN HIGH SPRINGS, FL, is currently seeking a qualified candidate for the part time salaried position: Manager for Grace Works Thrift Store. Do you have a passion for community service? Grace Works is a successful thrift store that has served the community of High Springs for 20 years. For more information contact Pastro Karl Leukert @ Karl.Leukert@Floridaconference.com {5}

STALLANT HEALTH RURAL HEALTH CLINIC is accepting applications for full time NPs, PAs, or Physicians at our Weimar, CA, and Crescent City, CA locations. Competitive pay, benefits, and ministry opportunity. Send CV to

Marva at: marva@stallanthealth.com or call (530) 637-4025 ext. 263.[5]

THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS CO-ORDINATOR at the Samaritan Center works to develop, implement and maintain strategies that sustain positive relationships with community members. These strategies aim to increase community understanding of the ministry's programs and increase support for the ministry. We are looking for someone who is passionate about ministry, can connect and build relationships with various individuals and organizations, can share information through public appearances and speaking engagements, and ability to deliver compelling stories of missional impact. Preferred qualifications are a bachelor's degree in public relations, communication, or related field with two or more years of experience. Send questions or resume to erinbarbtle@thesamaritancenter.net[5]

MISCELLANEOUS

UCHEE PINES LIFESTYLE CENTER in Seale, AL, uses simple, natural methods to assist you in finding healing from lifestyle issues and diseases such as obesity, hypertension, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, autoimmune issues, chronic fatigue, depression and more. Call 334-855-4764 or visit www.ucheepines.org[C]

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RELOCATING? Apex Moving + Storage has a national account with the General Conference for your moving needs. Take advantage of a volume rated discount. Be assured you are moving with the best! Call Marcy Dante' at 800-766-1902; or visit us at: www.apexmoving.com/adventist.[C]

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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/graduateschool [5]

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CAROLINA CONFERENCE SESSION LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the 43rd regular session of the Carolina Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Inc., will be held in the auditorium at Nosoca Pines Ranch in Liberty Hill, South Carolina.

The first meeting is called for 6:00 p.m., Thursday, August 18, 2022. The session will continue through Sunday, August 21, 2022. The session is called for the purpose of electing officers and formulating plans for the next quinquennium, and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the session.

Leslie D. Louis, President
Gary D. Moyer, Vice President for Administration

LEGAL NOTICES

The South Central Conference Session

Notice is hereby given that the Fifth Quinquennial and the 26th regular session of the South Central Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will be held at the Oakwood University Church, in Huntsville, Alabama, Sunday, July 24, 2022, at 9:30 a.m. The Organizing Committee will meet on Saturday night, July 23, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. This constituency session is called for the purpose of electing officers for the ensuing term and for transacting any other business that may properly come before the session. Each church in the Conference is entitled to one (1) delegate for the church and one additional delegate for each 50 members or major fraction thereof. For the Organizing Committee, each church is entitled to one representative for the church and one additional representative for each full 500 members.

Benjamin Jones Jr., President
Larry Bailey, Secretary
Sonja Moxley Crayton, Treasurer

The South Central Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists, Inc.

Notice is hereby given that the 26th regular session of the South Central Conference Association of Seventh-day Adventists, a corporation, is called to meet at the Oakwood University Church, in Huntsville, Alabama, Sunday, July 24, 2022. The delegates to the South Central Conference of Seventh-day Adventists are the constituency of the corporation.

Benjamin Jones Jr., President
Larry Bailey, Secretary
Sonja Moxley Crayton, Treasurer

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Lavelle Homes Humphries

Lavelle Holmes-Humphries never forgot how much Oakwood transformed her life. Gratitude for the evangelistic tent effort held in her hometown of Belzoni, MS, was always affectionately shared. Pastor Howard, evangelist, helped to enroll her at Oakwood in 1953. As a result, her driving passion became providing scholarships for students at Oakwood especially for newly baptized young people. Lavelle was generous as a living donor and left a legacy gift at her passing. As a nurse and lover of music, her legacy will fund the nursing, theology, and music departments. Lavelle was a faithful steward of the resources God entrusted to her.

► For more information, call your Planned Giving office



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Florida Adventist Book Center Express Delivery Schedule – Avoid shipping costs by placing an ABC order to be delivered to a scheduled location. Orders must be made by phone or e-mail before noon on the Thursday prior to a scheduled Sunday delivery. May 1. North Lake in Leesburg, Marion Oaks in Ocala, Ocala, Perry, Tallahassee.

May 8. East Pasco in Zephyrhills, Tampa First, Brandon, Palmetto, Sarasota, Port Charlotte.

May 15. West Palm Beach First, Pompano Beach, Margate, Ambassador in Lauderdale Lakes, Plantation. (Southeastern Conference: Port St. Lucie.)

May 22. Winter Haven, Avon Park, Cape Coral, Fort Myers, Lehigh Acres, Naples.

GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND

33rd Regular Constituency Session – May 1. Wally Fox Wellness Center, Georgia-Cumberland Academy, Calhoun, GA.

ACS Donation Operations Training – May 13-15, Cohutta Springs Retreat Center, Crandall, GA.

Men's Ministries Leadership Expedition – May 20-29, Grand Canyon, AZ.

Collegedale Camp Meeting – June 1-4, Southern Adventist University, Collegedale, TN.

Upper Cumberland Camp Meeting – June 8-11, Meister Memorial Church, Deer Lodge, TN.

Father-Son Appalachian Trail Adventure – June 23-26, Roan

Mountain, GA.

Please check our website for the latest information, www.gccsda.com.

KENTUCKY-TENNESSEE

Camp Meeting – May 27 to June 4. Join us for our 2022 Camp Meeting. The theme this year is “It’s About Time!” During these meetings, Derek Morris, Hans Diehl, John Bradshaw, and others will remind us what we need in order to get ready for Jesus’ soon return. The days on Earth are quickly drawing to a close, and “It’s About Time” for Jesus’ Second Coming!

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

Summer Classes Begin – May 9. Numerous online and in-person courses are available for both undergraduate and graduate curriculums. Prospective students must apply and be accepted

before registering. Start the process at southern.edu/apply.

Academic Summer Camps – June 13-15. Southern is hosting camps for high school students in business entrepreneurship, computing app development, filmmaking, journalism, media production, outdoor leadership, photography, pre-med, public relations, and vegetarian culinary arts. Registration is \$150 for day students or \$200 for overnight campers staying in residence halls (bring your own bedding). For more information or to register, visit southern.edu/camps or call 423-236-2807.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE WOMEN'S CONVENTION – Aug. 8-11, 2023. Orlando, FL. The convention was rescheduled from the Sept. 2022 date to Aug. 2023.

SUNSET

	MAY 6	MAY 13	MAY 20	MAY 27	JUNE 3	JUNE 10
ATLANTA, GA	8:26	8:31	8:36	8:41	8:45	8:49
CHARLESTON, SC	8:06	8:11	8:16	8:21	8:25	8:28
CHARLOTTE, NC	8:14	8:20	8:25	8:30	8:35	8:38
COLLEGEDALE, TN	8:31	8:36	8:42	8:47	8:51	8:55
HUNTSVILLE, AL	7:36	7:42	7:47	7:52	7:56	8:00
JACKSON, MS	7:46	7:51	7:56	8:01	8:05	8:08
LOUISVILLE, KY	8:40	8:46	8:52	8:58	9:03	9:07
MEMPHIS, TN	7:51	7:56	8:02	8:07	8:11	8:15
MIAMI, FL	7:55	7:59	8:03	8:06	8:10	8:13
MONTGOMERY, AL	7:31	7:36	7:41	7:45	7:49	7:53
NASHVILLE, TN	7:40	7:46	7:51	7:56	8:01	8:05
ORLANDO, FL	8:04	8:09	8:13	8:17	8:21	8:24
TAMPA, FL	8:08	8:12	8:16	8:20	8:24	8:27
WILMINGTON, NC	8:01	8:06	8:11	8:16	8:21	8:24

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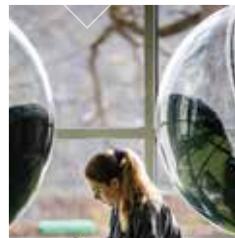
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