

TIDINGS

Southern 

JUNE 2023

SOUTHERN UNION REVOLVING FUND:

MORE THAN A LOAN — A MISSION

THE ROLE OF FAITH
IN FEELING WHOLE

BUILDING A
BEACON OF
FAITHFULNESS

BELIEVE IN THEM

WALKING IN THE
FOOTSTEPS OF
JESUS

How Are You Loving Your Neighbor?



Benjamin Jones Jr.
*President of the
South Central Conference*

Guest Editorial

Community engagement is an important aspect of the Christian faith. The Bible encourages believers to love their neighbors as themselves and to do good to all people, especially those in need. Today, there are many ways churches can engage with their communities and make a positive impact.

Jesus declared that our role as Christians is to be the salt of the Earth and the light of the world. Salt is only effective as it comes into close contact with the food that it is in season. Light does its best work at dark paces to bring warmth and clarity to those who are trying to move forward without stumbling.

This year we have challenged local churches to engage their communities in a marked way. We are good at responding, i.e., Adventist Community Services Disaster Response. However, there is more we can do to engage our community. We can engage our communities through the church and the conference partnering with non-profit, civic, and political organizations to enhance the quality of life in the community — partnering with the issues that exist in their areas, i.e., gun violence in urban areas, homelessness, etc.

In the aftermath of the storms that tore through Alabama and Mississippi in recent weeks, our South Central pastors and congregations in Selma, Alabama, and Amory, Mississippi, joined church and civic leaders to provide food and other needs to people who had lost everything.

We can also engage the community through the local churches, creating Centers of Influence or Purpose Centers in their community and/or cities. Churches can make a difference in their community. In Nashville, Tennessee, members of our churches joined those who marched

to plead with legislators to put in place measures to help make our schools safer after the tragic mass shooting in that city.

The Bible provides numerous examples of community engagement. In the Old Testament, we see how the Israelites were instructed to care for the poor, widows, orphans, and foreigners in their land (Deuteronomy 10:18-19, Isaiah 1:17). In the New Testament, we see how Jesus engaged with the community by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and preaching the Gospel (Matthew 4:23-25, Matthew 9:35-38). We also see how the early Church cared for one another and their neighbors (Acts 2:44-45, Acts 4:32-35).

The biblical mandate provides us with what you need to do. Let's share how you can engage your community.

1. Identify Community Needs

The first step in community engagement is to identify the needs of your community. This can be done through surveys, conversations with community leaders, or observing the challenges faced by the community. Once you have identified the needs, you can develop programs or initiatives that address those needs.

2. Mobilize Volunteers

Once you have identified the needs, the next step is to mobilize volunteers. Encourage members of your church to get involved in community engagement initiatives.

3. Partner with Local Organizations

Partnering with local organizations can help you to have a bigger impact in the community. This can include partnering with schools, food banks, homeless shelters, or other community organizations.

4. Provide Opportunities for Service

Providing opportunities for service is an effective way to motivate individuals to get involved in community engagement. This can include organizing service projects, volunteering at local events, or participating in community clean-up efforts.

5. Pray for Your Community

Prayer is a powerful tool in community engagement. As you engage with your community, pray for the needs of the community, and for the individuals you are serving. Pray for wisdom and guidance as you develop programs and initiatives. Pray for the hearts of individuals to be open to the Gospel message.

Conclusion

Community engagement is an important aspect of the Christian faith. By engaging with our communities, we can make a positive impact and share the love of Christ with those around us. By identifying community needs, mobilizing volunteers, partnering with local organizations, providing opportunities for service, and praying for our communities, we can make a lasting impact in the lives of those we serve. We must earn the right to preach to people by first demonstrating to them that we love them through serving them. As we engage with our communities, let us remember the words of Jesus: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me," Matthew 25:40. ①

june 2023

features

4
SOUTHERN UNION REVOLVING
FUND: MORE THAN A LOAN
— A MISSION

8
PATMOS CHAPEL GRAND
OPENING OPENS DOORS FOR
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

12
THE ROLE OF FAITH IN
FEELING WHOLE

13
BUILDING A BEACON OF
FAITHFULNESS

14
BELIEVE IN THEM

15
MISSION EXPERIENCE
INSPIRES FEATURE FILM BY
SOUTHERN ALUM

16
WALKING IN THE FOOTSTEPS
OF JESUS

news

18 CAROLINA
20 FLORIDA
22 GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND
24 KENTUCKY-TENNESSEE
27 ADVENTHEALTH
28 SOUTH CENTRAL
31 SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY
32 OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY

34 CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING
38 EVENTS CALENDAR/
ANNOUNCEMENTS/
SUNSET SCHEDULE



COVER PHOTO: R. STEVEN NORMAN III

Southern Union Revolving Fund: MORE THAN A LOAN — A MISSION

BY CHRISTINA COSTON

The Southern Union Revolving Fund (SURF) is a financial incorporation that was established to provide low-cost loans to support Adventist projects in the Southern Union territory. SURF was organized in 1999 and has since provided loans to churches, schools, and other entities within the Southern Union, helping them all achieve their goals. As of March 2023, SURF currently has 324 approved loans equaling more than \$154 million.

How SURF Works

Loans: SURF provides loans to eligible borrowers, such as churches and schools. The loans are typically used to finance projects for new buildings, building purchases, or building expansions.

The interest rates on loans are typically below market rates, which makes the loans more affordable for borrowers. The rates are also the same regardless of how big or long the term is.

Investing: Money invested with SURF has a reasonable rate of return to investors. The money invested is used to pay for the loans which fund various projects. Any member of the Southern Union can open a SURF account through their local representative.

Loan Repayment: Borrowers repay their loans to SURF, and the repaid funds are then made available to other borrowers in the future. This creates a revolving fund, where the same pool of funds can be used again to support multiple projects over time.

Partnering With SURF for Renovation and Evangelization

Patmos Chapel was previously located on Swoope Avenue in Winter Park, Florida. The building the church met in needed repair, and the cost of repair was “exorbitant,” according to Marvin D. Mclean Jr., Patmos Chapel executive pastor.

While looking for possible new locations, the congregation discovered a sports complex for sale. The site included a dedicated space for volleyball and gymnastics, and had three full-size basketball courts that were regularly rented out to various vendors.

With a goal of evangelizing south Apopka, the church viewed potential in the building. After much discussion, the congregation decided to move forward with the purchase. Patmos Chapel used SURF to help secure the property.

“SURF had the resources and funds. And, having a partnership with the revolving fund allowed [Patmos Chapel] to be competitive, as well as allowing us to be a favorite to purchase this building,” said Mclean.

After acquiring the building, the congregation started the \$1.6 million renovation project for the 9,200-square-foot space designated for worship. Originally, the renovation was to be a cash project that members would contribute funds toward. However, as costs of materials and labor increased, the church was unable to cover the cost completely, putting the



Carlos Salazar, SURF treasurer, addresses Patmos Chapel grand opening attendees.

PHOTO BY: BRYANT TAYLOR, DMIN



The Well Activity Center and Patmos Chapel is open to the community for sports and religious services.

project on hold for a few weeks. The congregation didn't want to delay the project any longer and turned to SURF for additional funds.

"I think \$293,000 of the \$1.6 million was what we received from SURF, which came to us at a very crucial time," stated Mclean. "... The revolving fund and the [Southern] Union have always been a great partner with us."

The congregation met for the first time in the renovated worship space for a grand opening on Friday, March 17, 2023. Among the Southern Union representatives who attended the opening ceremony was Carlos Salazar, SURF treasurer.

Salazar said he is happy to see projects completed. He also stated he feels blessed to be involved in projects like this, and to know he was a part of making borrowers' dreams come true.

"It's a joy to see them worshipping — it's a feeling of satisfaction," said Salazar.

McLean said worshipping in the space for the first time was amazing, and members were excited to be in a dedicated worship space.

The church continues to rent out its sporting facilities to various vendors. Patmos Chapel pastors and members often appear at events to converse with attendees and develop friendships. Some of the athletes have attended church, and a few have even become involved in helping with

church. There has also been an increase in young adult and young family attendees.

"Had it not been for those funds [from SURF], we would not have the opportunity to do this ... to help us achieve our goal of evangelizing south Apopka," said Mclean.

SURF's Role in Enabling Property Purchase

In 2018, the Breath of Life and First Coast International churches, both located in Jacksonville, Florida, decided to merge and became the New Life International Church. Nathaniel Lyles, former New Life International Church pastor, said a stipulation of the merger was searching for a new worship location.

The church began looking and soon found a nearby property with a bigger sanctuary space, handicap accessibility, and increased safety — a perfect fit for the church's needs. They began working with a realtor to negotiate prices. After

negotiations, and selling some of the church's properties, the church was a little short of the amount needed to purchase the property.

The church looked at several different lenders, but ultimately decided SURF was the best option, taking out a loan of \$650,000.

"After looking at other options, we knew that we weren't going to get a great rate like our Southern Union Revolving Fund," said Lyles.

The church, with a loan from SURF, purchased the new, larger property. The additional space allowed the congregation more space for fellowship and events. Located on Atlantic Boulevard, 30,000 people drive by the clearly visible church every day. According to Lyles, the new space has fostered a sense of pride among the congregation, and many have invited family and friends to attend. All these factors have impacted the church's growth.

"The new building increased our membership attendance," stated Lyles.

Now the pastor of the Maranatha Church in Tallahassee, Florida, Lyles's congregation will be turning to SURF to help with a building renovation project.

Lyles encourages any churches, schools, or other entities within the Southern Union that need a loan to consider SURF.

"Take advantage of [SURF] and then

"Joining SURF
is partnering in
ministry."

Carlos Salazar, SURF treasurer



PHOTO BY: NATHANIEL LYLES

Nathaniel Lyles holds the sold sign for the New Life International Church shortly after purchase.

watch what God does with paying off your mortgage,” said Lyles. “See the growth that takes place.”

SURF Helps Fund New Church Building

The Apopka Church in Apopka, Florida, recently finished phase two of a building project which began more than 15 years ago. With the assistance of SURF, the church was able to get a low-interest loan, which enabled them to finish construction on their new building.

The new building, which is connected to the old building where the congregation was meeting, includes a sanctuary, gym, and rooms for young adults and teenagers. According to Freddy Rodriguez, Apopka associate and youth pastor, the new building has been a blessing, especially the gym.

“Some of the deepest conversations I’ve had with young adults and children have happened while playing sports,” reflected Rodriguez. “I think the gym is a neutral space where people let their guard down.”

Rodriguez said the church’s gym has a basketball court that can also be used for volleyball and pickleball. The church hopes to open the gym to the community for certain activities in the future.

In addition to being excited for the gym, Rodriguez said a highlight of the new building is the permanent baptis-

mal tank instead of the portable tank that was previously used. Rodriguez had four baptisms in the new tank on April 29, 2023.

Working with SURF has been helpful to the church, according to Rodriguez. He stated that SURF not only provided funds, but also guidance which helped the church through the process.

“SURF is like a GPS, because it shows you where you are, it shows you where you want to be, it gives you the way to do it, the resources, and the finances,” said Rodriguez.

The Future of SURF

Recently SURF approved the request for a loan to build the new School of Business at Southern Adventist University. The loan, in the amount of \$20 million, is the largest loan SURF has ever given.

“SURF feels privileged because we can extend our financial assistance to them,” said Salazar.

SURF wants to help as many entities as possible within the Southern Union take advantage of its valuable resources and benefits to borrowers.

“We encourage [entities within the Southern Union territory] to avail of this, because the loan is basically free, no closing costs, no penalty if you’re late up to 120 days,” explained Salazar. “... We believe SURF is an advantage to them.”

SURF offers low-interest rates, flexible repayment terms, no collateral (except a first mortgage to be recorded if the loan amount exceeds \$99,999), and quick access to funds. Most importantly, SURF remains mission and community focused, aiming to support and strengthen the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Southern Union.

“Joining SURF is partnering in ministry I view the investors or depositors in SURF as missionaries,” reflected Salazar.

Beginning in 2023 Salazar said SURF has seen an increase in demand for loans for the first time since COVID-19. Due to policies, SURF is only able to loan a certain percent of its funds. Since there is currently more demand for loans, and fewer investors, SURF must limit loan amounts in compliance with policy. Salazar said SURF hopes there will be more investors so they can loan more money to borrowers.

“We don’t want to turn any church away,” said Salazar.

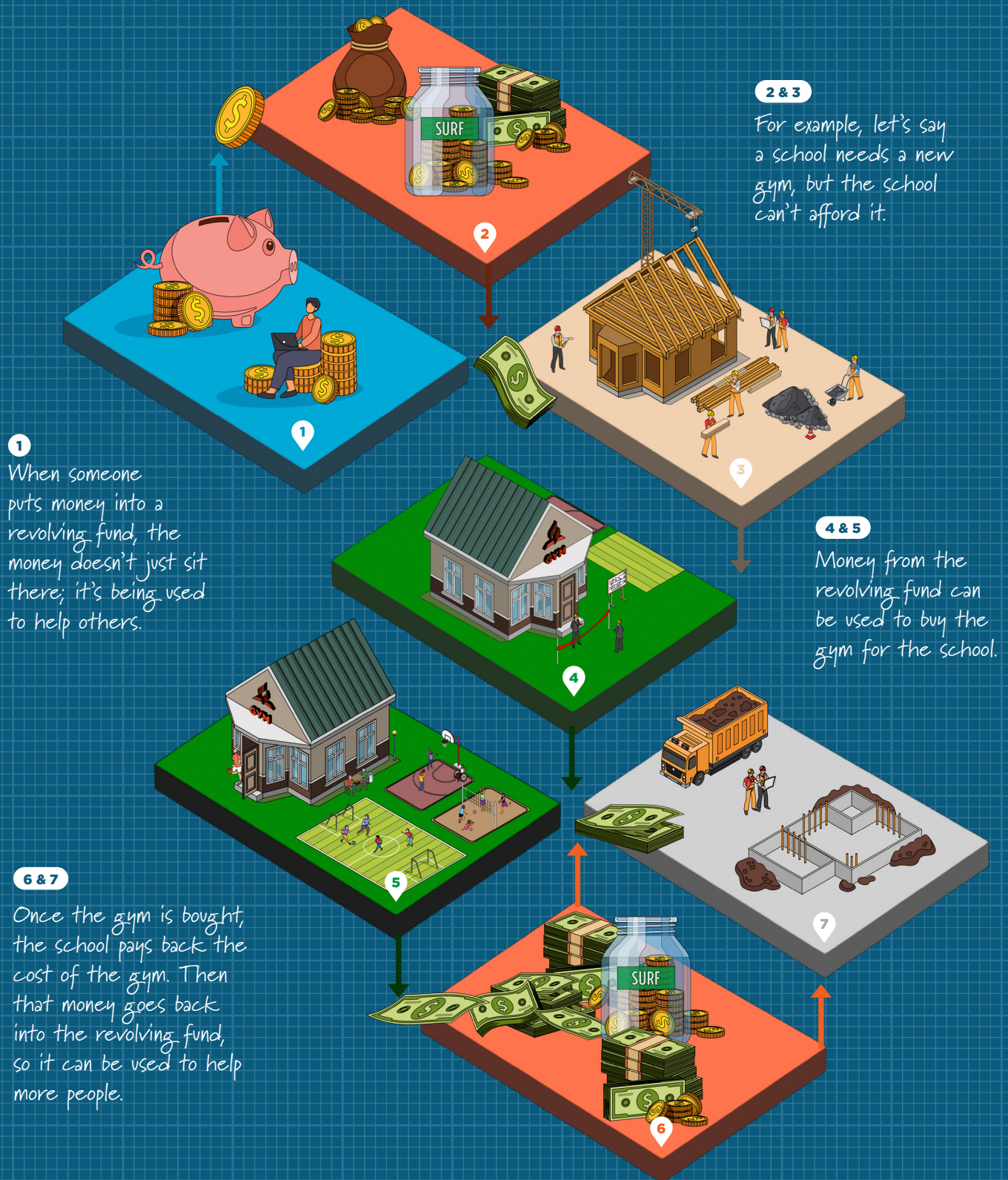
How to Become a SURF Investor

Any member or organization affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Southern Union can invest in SURF. Investing in SURF is a unique opportunity that allows investors to see the blessings of provided funds for properties, equipment, and physical structures that will enhance worship to God, fellowship with others, and educational advantages for children and youth.

A SURF investment can be Adventist individuals living in the Southern Union. Revocable trusts can be invested in SURF, and other Adventist entities such as churches and organizations may also invest. Interest is calculated monthly and paid quarterly. You can open a regular investment account with SURF through your local conference. A minimum of \$1,000 is all that is needed. ①

Christina Coston is Southern Union associate communication director.

REVOLVING FUND EXPLAINED



THE REVOLVING FUND IS LIKE A CYCLE: Money is put in the fund, money from the fund is used to help people, the fund gets the money back, and then the fund is used to help more people. It keeps going around and around, helping as many people as possible!

PATMOS CHAPEL GRAND OPENING OPENS DOORS FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

BY CARLOS MEDLEY

What's the secret of conquering Mount Kilimanjaro, elevation 19,341 feet, or hiking the length of the Appalachian Trail, distance 2,190 miles? It's taking one step at a time.

For the past three years, members of Patmos Chapel Church in Apopka, Florida, have taken steps of faith and sacrifice on a journey to construct a sanctuary — a tabernacle — a “worship hub.” In March 2023, the congregation crossed the finish line and celebrated with a two-day grand opening festival.

The festivities began Friday evening, March 17, with a ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremony. Attending the opening ceremonies were guests from the Southern Union Conference and city, county, and state leaders, including Bryan Nelson, Apopka mayor, who offered greetings and well wishes. Clarence Wright, a former pastor at Patmos Chapel, now serving in Lakeland, Florida, gave a devotional message.

More than 800 people packed the “hub” and an adjacent overflow room on Sabbath morning, March 18; some had to be turned away. The lively praise service featured music from the Dynamic Praise choir from Huntsville, Alabama, and Patmos’ children’s choir and praise team. Among the special guests were Michael Owusu, Southeastern Con-



James R. Doggette Sr., D.Min., Patmos Chapel senior pastor, addresses the church members and visitors at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.



Public officials who attended the ribbon-cutting ceremonies include Bryan Nelson (left), Apopka, Florida, mayor; Geraldine Thompson, Florida State senator; Christine Moore, Orange County commissioner; and Alexander Smith, Apopka commissioner.



Approximately 800 people filled the worship hub and overflow room.

ference president, who congratulated the members and praised them for the sacrificial giving that made the renovation possible. Emmanuel Charles, Conference treasurer, presented James R. Doggette Sr., D.Min., senior pastor at Patmos Chapel, with a financial gift to support the effort. Ron C. Smith, D.Min., Ph.D., president of the Southern Union Conference in Peachtree Corners, Georgia, delivered his affirmations through a video message and praised Doggette for his visionary leadership.

Doggette and Marvin D. Mclean Jr., executive pastor, honored the several building contractors with plaques in appreciation of their work on the renovation.

Jeffrey Williamson, Orange County communication director, presented Doggette with a proclamation from Jerry L. Demings, mayor, declaring March 18, 2023, as Patmos Chapel Day in Orange County.

During his sermon, G. Alexander Bryant, D.Min., president of the North American Division in Columbia, Maryland, commended the congregation for its vision. “Do you know what the emphasis is in the World Church today?” He asked. “It’s to have a place like this — to turn our worship centers into community places that will serve the needs of the

people for whom Jesus Christ died. How do we take our places of worship and turn them from places that gather just two hours a week, to a place that serves the community seven days a week?”

Urgent Priority

The need for the 9,200-square-foot “worship hub” has been a priority since the congregation moved to the property in 2019. Though the structure had lots of space, there was none suitable for worship. During the pandemic, services were held in the parking lot. That necessitated moving sound equipment and musical instruments, and laying cables every week. As the pandemic subsided, the congregation worshiped in a gym, and the deacons had to set up floor mats, chairs, sound equipment, musical instruments, and cables every week. The process was reversed after services. The new hub provides an environment more suited for worship, and eliminates the need to move furniture and equipment.

From Humble Beginnings

The congregation was birthed in a tent in Winter Park in 1937. The church’s first building was dedicated, and the name Patmos Chapel was chosen in 1955, under the leadership of former pastor

“To see Patmos Chapel with a facility that meets the community’s needs **seven days a week** is outstanding. They are ahead of the denomination at large.”

*G. Alexander Bryant, D.Min.,
president of the North American Division*

Calvin B. Rock, Ph.D. Throughout its 86-year history, parishioners experienced several construction projects and relocations, but the latest move was radically different when the assembly acquired the Apopka property in 2019. The property wasn’t designed as a church building; instead, it housed a widely



Patmos' Higher Ground choir provided music during the Friday night service.



G. Alexander Bryant, D.Min., president for the North American Division, gave the Sabbath sermon.

recognized athletics program, which offered unique opportunities for mission.

Church leaders named the building "The Well Activity Center," a reference to the biblical story of the woman at the well in John 4. The 107,000-square-foot activity center has basketball courts, a children's gymnasium, volleyball courts, batting cages, martial arts facilities, space for COVID testing, a restaurant, and an outdoor video screen used to stream services to the parking lot.

The hub, a multi-purpose space, is also useful for wedding receptions, banquets, conferences, training sessions, and other events. "Apopka has very few venues for organizations to hold gatherings," said Doggett. "The hub could make a major contribution to the social and cultural life of the city."

A Different Mission Field

The Well serves hundreds of youth and adults who participate in activities such as gymnastics, martial arts, basketball, baseball training, tutoring, and workplace screening. As a result, there's a mission field right inside the church's doors; the worship hub provides a spiritual complement to the physical activities offered by The Well.

In addition to the activities inside

The Well, Patmos impacts surrounding neighborhoods. In 2019, Patmos Chapel launched a food drive that now serves more than 30,000 persons each year. The biweekly food giveaway has greatly enhanced the health of Apopka residents, and is one of the largest food distribution sites in the county. The church also collaborates with non-profit groups to regularly feed unhoused individuals in Orlando, Florida.

"We're at a time in society when, unless we're out meeting the needs of the

community, our churches are in danger of becoming irrelevant," Bryant warned in his Sabbath message. "To see Patmos Chapel with a facility that meets the community's needs seven days a week is outstanding. They are ahead of the denomination at large."

Geraldine F. Thompson, Florida State senator, who represents Apopka, sees Patmos' community services expanding. "I'm interested in seeing the community thrive, and churches can add to what the



The Dynamic Praise choir from Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama, provided music on Sabbath morning, and gave a concert in the afternoon. The students traveled 11 hours overnight to sing at the grand opening.



Marvin D. Mclean Jr. (left), Patmos executive pastor, and James R. Doggette Sr., D.Min. (right), honored several people who worked on the hub, including Hector Buchhammer (center), lead contractor.



Jeffrey Williamson, Ph.D., who represented the county mayor, presented Patmos Chapel Church with a proclamation declaring March 18, 2023, Patmos Chapel Day in Orange County, Florida.

government does to meet the needs of the people. This church has already proven itself with the recreational and food programs. Services can be expanded into education and many other areas. I'm looking forward to a wonderful partnership."

A few days after the grand opening, the church's community engagement did expand. Demings invited Doggette to co-chair the Orange County Citizen Safety Task Force. The 32-member group — a racially diverse body com-

posed of public officials, educators, community activists, and clergy — will research and recommend action steps to stem the growing threat of gun violence. "My co-chair, James Coffin — a retired Adventist pastor who served 11 years as executive director of the Interfaith Council of central Florida — and I will work side by side with the mayor to study and develop initiatives for prevention, intervention, enforcement, and prosecution," said Doggette. "This will

give the church a major voice in crafting public policy on this vital issue."

What's Next

In looking ahead for Patmos Chapel, Doggette and Mclean are focusing on the growing mission field within the doors of The Well. "Each week hundreds enter The Well, parents bringing their children for a basketball game, gymnastics training, or a martial arts class," said Doggette. "We need to touch those lives by being friendly, answering their questions, and meeting their needs."

He added, "With the facility we have now, our task is to reorient our members to become missionaries, not only by giving Bible studies or preaching sermons, but by simply making friends and showing the love of Christ to those who walk through our doors."

"God has given us this building. He gave it to us for a purpose," said Doggette. "With God's grace we will fulfill that purpose" ... by taking one step at a time. ①



Michael Owusu, D.Min. (center), Southeastern Conference president, commended the congregation for their liberality and praised Doggette for his vision. Owusu and Emmanuel Charles (left), Conference treasurer, presented Doggette with a check to support the building effort.

CARLOS MEDLEY is retired online editor of the *Adventist Review*, and serves as the community services liaison for the Patmos Chapel Church in Apopka, Florida.

THE ROLE OF FAITH IN FEELING WHOLE

BY ELIZABETH CAMPS

With a mission of Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ, AdventHealth's team members know that this involves more than caring for a person's physical health. To *feel whole*, healing must be extended to the whole person — body, mind, and spirit.

That's why AdventHealth has made mission and ministry a major focus in the way it operates its facilities, its approach to care, and its strategy for leadership. In fact, for each facility or institution within the organization, the most senior executive leader assumes the role of chief spiritual officer in addition to their official duties.

An Intentionality for Mission

To support them, AdventHealth's chief mission integration officer provides direction through effective initiatives.

"As the world and people and the business world changes, we have to adapt. But, the beautiful thing about the organization is we have kept intact the strong connection to our core mission: Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ," said Tim Cook, senior vice president and chief mission integration officer at AdventHealth.

Cook, who for 25 years has been a CEO and held other roles, has seen the consistent focus on mission and how team members who interact directly with patients are living out the mission and truly caring for the whole person.

"Each team member, no matter where they are in the country, wears their commitment to our mission with the heart badge," said Cook. "By wearing this heart badge, we are saying 'I'm going to

take care of you the way I would want my loved one taken care of.'"

A First-Hand Experience with the Expression of Mission

Some time ago, Cook was a patient at an AdventHealth facility. One morning, he found a team member singing a hymn while cleaning his room. "It was one of those moments I'll never forget," he said. "It wasn't a piece of expensive equipment or a critical pharmaceutical drug; it was a team member giving me the gift of their heart and emotion. It was such a beautiful expression of healing ministry."

This kind of experience is not uncommon at AdventHealth. The care that patients and team members often experience are the expressions of the integration of mission in the clinical setting. It's why Cook views AdventHealth as a form of ministry — the ministry of health care.

"Health care is very tangible — there's no question on illness or ailment," said

Cook. "AdventHealth acknowledges that when that physical wound hurts, it's also connected to a spiritual and mental or emotional wound. It gives us a unique opportunity to minister to the whole person.

A Spiritual Health Check

Spiritual wholeness screenings are incorporated into clinical assessments of patients, which include the following questions:

1. Do you have religious beliefs that may affect your medical decisions?
2. Do you have someone who loves and cares for you?
3. Do you have a source of joy in your life?
4. Do you have a sense of peace today?

Through this assessment, physicians can connect with patients more meaningfully and develop a care plan that caters to their spiritual needs as well. This also allows patients to connect with a spiritual care provider to discuss those spiritual needs.

Looking to the Future

With an increased focus on wholeness and whole-person care, AdventHealth sees team member spiritual health as a priority.

"We want to reach out to our leaders and our team members and ensure their wounds are healing and that they can find wholeness," said Cook. "We need to ensure that our team can refill their cups and feel whole. We want to focus on ministering to our own people so that they are equipped to minister to their communities." 📌



Tim Cook, senior vice president and chief mission integration officer at AdventHealth.

Elizabeth Camps is the senior communications specialist at AdventHealth.

BUILDING A BEACON OF FAITHFULNESS

BY HENRY JOHNSON

For more than a century, Greenville Church members have been known in the upstate South Carolina community for their faith. But, as they look to their future in this rapidly growing city, they realized they needed more than just a new building. They needed a new vision for applying the power of their faith in the details of their daily lives. How could they better love others, serve others, and bring hope and light to their community?

The heart of this vision is the heart of faithfulness — to bring true joy, peace, and restoration to their neighbors through authenticity, openness, and opportunity.

Their vision is less about building another “church” and more about building something God’s Church can use to show the Gospel in action. Monday to Friday, most church buildings stand empty, with locked doors and darkened windows. However, the needs of the people who pass those buildings aren’t limited to the weekend. Greenville is building something new — a place of open opportunities that is accessible and accepting, a building that speaks to both the physical and spiritual needs of the community.

With aging infrastructure and limited physical facilities, members seek to transform their presence from a building of faith into a beacon of faithfulness. Partnering with a leading worship-and-community architect, they have envisioned space planning that speaks to their community. The new facility will include:

- An expansive lobby with open access to outdoor green space, public restrooms, and a kitchen designed to host a wide range of community events, from concerts to farmer’s markets to job fairs.



- A main Worship Center that is also equipped with theater loading access behind the stage to facilitate other community uses outside of worship services.

- Retail space as a community commons with reservable meeting areas.

- A modern, connected board room for non-governmental organizations to use freely in pursuit of their mission.

- Logistics and storage area for the church’s community clothing drives and homeless outreach efforts.

- A two-car, in-ground oil change facility for single parents and people without resources.

- Secure, extended-stay, temporary housing spaces for those with nowhere else to turn.

- Greenville County Police annex that serves their neighboring school facility and increases security and monitoring for the facility and surrounding community.

- Soccer field that supplements the community parks in the surrounding neighborhoods and provides space for underprivileged kids to engage in athletics summer camps.

Their vision for Gospel impact begins on their street, in their own neighborhood. It begins with a renewed commitment to serving others as Jesus served. He didn’t just heal the blind, lame, and leper — He healed their hearts too. He was present and engaged among the outcasts and invisible. He was a friend for sinners and screw-ups. And, He preached a life of repentance and forgiveness of sins, only found in Him.

That’s the Jesus they hope to show their community, not by just talking about Him, but through how they develop their facilities, leverage their capabilities, and increase their reach. Together, they will build a beacon of faithfulness that shines bright across their city with Good News.

If you’re interested in learning more about the future of Greenville Church, or to support their mission, you can visit them at www.buildingabeacon.com. 📍

Henry Johnson is the pastor of Greenville Church in Greenville, South Carolina.

BELIEVE IN THEM

BY ISRAEL MORA AND NATHAN ZINNER

In just two years, the Duluth Warriors Pathfinder Club went from placing near the bottom of all Conference teams at the Pathfinder Bible Experience (PBE), to receiving first place at the national level testing. Part of their success can be attributed to a more intentional relationship with the Pathfinders and their pastor.

This relationship can be credited to a book published more than 20 years ago. The book, *Why our Teenagers Leave the Church*, by Roger L. Dudley, made a significant impact on Israel Mora, pastor at the Duluth, Georgia, Church. In the book, it says, “Most aren’t leaving because of a dispute with doctrine. Rather, they are confused by the tension between the truth of Adventism and the way they see it being lived out by the older members of their congregation. They place a high amount of credibility on relationships ...” (emphasis added).

“I believe that even though this was written more than two decades ago, it’s still relevant today,” says Mora. “Young people, kids, and adults, all put a high value on relationships, and not to overemphasize the role of pastors and young people, but there is a massive importance in that relationship.”

For more than 20 years, Mora has asked himself how he can be part of the solution, which has led him to placing a high value in remembering people’s names, especially kids’ names. Young people see pastors as spiritual leaders and as having authority. So when a pastor remembers a young person’s name, when a pastor takes the time to stop and ask them how they are doing, they are telling them they are important, that the pastor cares for them, that they are relevant, explains Mora.



Israel Mora (left), pastor and coach; PBE team members Arianna Mora, Kiara Minaya-Diaz, Camila Minaya-Diaz, Elia Young, Brayden Nyaberi, and Ethan Young; and Shawna Young, assistant coach, display their first place certificate at the North American Division event in Tampa, Florida. The team excelled from being in third place at the Conference level last year, to first place nationally this year, thanks in part to their pastor taking a personal interest in each team member.

When he saw the PBE teams from his church struggling, Mora decided to volunteer as a pastor/coach. This meant meeting with the team on a weekly basis for nearly eight months. These meetings didn’t just include memorizing Bible texts. It was time building relationships. During each meeting, Mora would ask them how their week went. While Mora had gotten involved to help the team, the team had an impact on him. These weekly catch-ups became one of the highlights of his week, when he would hear their animated stories.

This year, the youngest team made it to second place at the Conference level testing, while the oldest team received first place at the North American Division testing, held April 22, 2023, in Tampa, Florida. But, PBE is more than placing first.

For Mora, PBE has provided an opportunity to build relationships with the

young people; ... to know who they are and what they value ... “to show them as a pastor that I love them, to show them that I care about them,” Mora said. “To Arianna, Ethan, Kiara, Brayden, Elia, and Camila: You have made my journey to the promised land a happier one. I look forward to spending all eternity with you, to hear all your amazing and funny stories.”

Note: Israel Mora is transitioning from his role as pastor of the Duluth, Georgia, Church and chaplain at Duluth Adventist Academy, to be the new youth director for the Oklahoma Conference. ①

Israel Mora was the pastor of the Duluth Church at the time this article was written.

Nathan Zinner is the communication director for the Georgia-Cumberland Conference.

MISSION EXPERIENCE INSPIRES FEATURE FILM BY SOUTHERN ALUM

BY AMANDA BLAKE

When Sydney Tooley began writing a short film based on her experience teaching English in Taiwan, she never dreamed it would become a 90-minute feature now streaming on Pure Flix.

“I aspired to test creative boundaries as a film production student, and even planned to direct a feature film before I turned 30,” said Tooley. But, that path to success seemed to skew when, on a whim, she quit film shortly after graduating from Southern Adventist University in 2017, flew to Taiwan, and began instructing at a Seventh-day Adventist school.

Four years later, the faith-based branch of Sony Pictures Entertainment picked up Tooley’s screenplay.

“When my producer pitched the film to Sony Affirm, I honestly didn’t expect anything,” said Tooley. “Then he told me we were making a movie with Sony! I went from being a little filmmaker who’d never created anything longer than eight minutes to a feature director with a \$1.2 million budget and a studio.”

Tooley’s motion picture, titled “Sun Moon,” explores the reality of mission work: the hardships, required vulnerability, and journey of falling in love with a place and people. Partly autobiographical, it follows a young woman left at the altar who runs away to start a new life as a teacher in Taiwan. While Tooley was not a jilted bride, the protagonist’s interactions with her students in the film mirror Tooley’s experience. The struggles



Southern alum Sydney Tooley (right) directs the main character in her faith-based feature film, “Sun Moon.”



Sydney Tooley (right) filmed much of her film on location in Taiwan, where she had served as a missionary.

portrayed were inspired by real events, and most scenes were filmed at the Taiwanese school where Tooley worked.

“The idea for ‘Sun Moon’ began as a scene in a classroom; I wanted to give people the sense of what it feels like to drown as a teacher,” said Tooley. “For many students, the only place where they can receive parental affection is school, so as a teacher, I ended up with 60 of my own children. Still, despite that sense of being overwhelmed, everything about Taiwan became home for me; the kids impacted me so much. I wanted to show everyone why I love the country, so making a film just made sense.”

Last December, Tooley requested that the movie’s premier screening be on Southern’s campus. While the University was not involved in production of the feature, the film was met with enthusiastic applause from both students and employees.

Tooley credits Southern’s School of Visual Art and Design with teaching her

the language of film and providing her with a support system of friends that remains today.

“My capstone project as a senior gave me a taste of the emotional and spiritual journey I would eventually go on with my feature film,” said Tooley. “I realized that no matter what happened, no matter how my relationship with God ebbed and flowed, whether I succeeded or not, I had to trust Him. I had to let Jesus take the wheel.”

Tooley currently is writing her next project while working as an adjunct professor at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee, where she received a master’s degree in screenwriting and directing. She enjoys mentoring a new generation of artists with ambitious dreams. 🎬

Amanda Blake is a senior journalism major at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee.

WALKING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS

BY JOEL SUTHERLAND

I followed the person in front of me as we descended flight after flight of stairs, slowly penetrating the darkness below in a single-file line. We were somewhere underneath the City of David, the old part of the city of Jerusalem. The goal was to walk through Hezekiah's Tunnel, a channel carved from solid rock which brought water from the Gihon Spring into the city at the Pool of Siloam. I was not prepared for what we came to first, however. Turning a corner, we saw what appeared to be a pile of large boulders, stretching up beyond where we had come from. I looked around at the signs and watched the short video playing on the screen in front of me. We were outside the city and the pile of boulders was actually the water shaft that Joab had climbed up in order to allow David and his army to take the city of Jebus, which became David's capital city, now known as Jerusalem.

My eyes suddenly got misty and my voice caught as my wife asked if I wanted a picture in front of it. David has been one of my favorite characters in the Bible since I was a small child, and standing here, where such a pivotal moment in his life occurred, was overwhelming.

This was a feeling that often welled up inside me throughout the 10-day trip to Israel and Jordan, March 9-19, 2023. I was with a group of pastors and conference administration, exploring a few sites in Israel and Jordan, led by Michael Hasel, Ph.D., professor of archaeology at Southern Adventist University in Collegedale, Tennessee.

As a pastor, I thought I knew the Bible well. Yet, with all my training and knowledge, I was unprepared for how this trip would change my life. It was like putting on a pair of 3D glasses after only ever seeing a faded, black and

white pencil sketch. Stories suddenly made sense. I could envision what was going on around the dialogue and brief descriptions we find in Scripture.

One life-changing moment occurred at biblical Caesarea Philippi, a place now called Banyas. This is where there is a cliff and the remains of several temples for pagan gods. Behind the temple of Augustus was a cave called the Grotto of Pan. It was also referred to as the Gate of Hell. This is where Jesus asked His disciples who they thought He was. Peter responded that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus then, with the cliffs towering above Him, made this profound statement: "I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter (pebble), and upon this rock (pointing to Himself) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," Matthew 16:17. I can see Him gesturing back to-



Daniel Yoon, pastor, and his wife, Joy, enjoy the tour of Jerusalem.



Michael Hasel, Ph.D., shares a worship thought with the Kentucky-Tennessee group as they gather on the Mount of Olives.



PHOTO BY: JOEL SUTHERLAND

The Kentucky-Tennessee group poses on the Mount of Olives. From March 9 to March 19, 2023, a group of 30 pastors and administration personnel headed to Israel and Jordan for a once in a lifetime experience — exploring the Bible Land.

ward the temples and the Gate of Hell as He said this. No earthly power could overcome the Church He was founding.

Time and time again the Bible came to life during that trip. We sat on the Mount of Olives, overlooking the city of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, where Jesus stood and wept for His people. We stood on the temple steps where Jesus and the apostles spent so much time teaching and healing. We marveled at the depth of the Pool of Bethesda where a paralyzed man miraculously picked up his bed and walked. We sat in a boat on the Sea of Galilee as the rain reminded us of several dark, stormy nights which pro-

vided a pronounced backdrop for several miracles. We prayed at the Western Wall of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. I experienced a full-circle moment when I walked through the six-chamber gate of Lachish, a spot I had heard so much about during my time at Southern Adventist University, and whose destruction I had seen so accurately depicted on reliefs taken from King Sennacherib's palace walls and displayed in the British Museum in London.

Space prevents me from talking about our visit to Petra, Dan, Hazor, the Valley of Elah, Masada, Herodium, Bethlehem, Jerash, Capernaum,

Qumran, the Dead Sea, and so many other places. I know this trip will not only transform the personal devotional life of those who participated, but it will also transform the preaching and teaching of these Kentucky-Tennessee pastors as they share with fresh insight and passion about a place they have not only read about, but one they have also touched and seen for themselves. ❶

Joel Sutherland is
the Kentucky-Tennessee
Conference ministerial director.



The Kentucky-Tennessee group visits the Western Wall just after closing the Sabbath.



PHOTO BY: JOEL SUTHERLAND

Everyone smiles as they stand in front of Petra, a famous archeological site that is half-built, half-carved into the rock, and is surrounded by mountains riddled with passages and gorges.

Pathfinder Workbee is Weekend of Faith, Fun, and Community Service

More than 750 Pathfinders from North and South Carolina gathered at Nosoca Pines Ranch in Liberty Hill, S.C., for the annual Pathfinder Workbee event, held from March 17 to 19, 2023, to contribute to the upkeep of the campground. Despite the rain, the clubs arrived for registration, set up their tents, and kept their spirits high with laughter and cheering all over the campground.

On Sabbath, the Pathfinders began the day with a spiritual encounter, where Bryan Arvelo, pastor at Rockingham and Monroe Spanish churches, spoke to an attentive crowd. Later, they worked on different honors available to deepen their knowledge and skills on a variety of topics. In the evening, they enjoyed fun activities to relax and bond with one another.

On Sunday, each club took a different job and went to a different place, working as organizedly as a beehive to make Nosoca Pines Ranch campground look its best.



Bryan Arvelo preaches to an attentive crowd.

PHOTO BY: VANESSA ARANA

and Christians.” Events like the Pathfinder Workbee are essential as they give young people a chance to contribute to something larger than themselves; learn the value of hard work, teamwork, and commitment; and form bonds of friendship and memories that last a lifetime.

The remarkable dedication and enthusiasm of more than 750 Pathfinders from North and South Carolina were demonstrated at the Pathfinder Workbee at Nosoca Pines Ranch. Witnessing young people come together to work hard, learn new skills, and form friendships was a testament to the power of what being a Pathfinder really means. Their efforts to make a positive impact were truly inspiring, and serve as a reminder that when Pathfinders come together with a common goal, they can make a real difference in the world. 📌

BY HENRIQUE GOMES

Overflowing Mills River School Breaks Ground to Build New School

Excaavation is moving along quickly. The shell has been ordered, with most of the necessary funds already earned and set aside. The students will learn many practical lessons as they excitedly watch their new school materialize.

Mills River is a five-teacher school with classrooms for four. For years, they have overflowed their current facility by using the church fellowship hall for the fifth classroom.

The new facility will have state-of-the-

art classrooms with adjoining breakout rooms, conference area, and principal’s office, and will allow for maximum use of the library and multipurpose rooms.

Mills River runs a high quality, thriving Adventist program, including strong academics, a music program, tutors inside and out of school hours, an after-school sports program, art, Spanish, fitness, drama, agriculture, and Magabook evangelism. Academics are very strong and structured, with individualized attention that helps

the struggling and challenges the gifted. One of Carolina Conference’s top female vocalists, Heather Darnell, not only teaches grades 5-6 full-time, but also teaches voice and small group choirs for grades 5-8. Additional music classes offered are choir, bells, piano, and violin. Award winning artist Sue Holt teaches grades 7-8 full-time as well as the arts. Several of her students win ribbons at the state fair. Dyslexia expert, Orton-Gillingham trained, and native Spanish speaker, Laura

Figueroa, teaches Spanish as well as grades 3-4. Tammy Mapes, first place for five years in the Southern Union for literature evangelism sales, leads the Magabook program as well as teaching grades 1-2.

Simultaneously as the new facility is going up, Mills River is building a 14'x55' hoop house for agriculture class. Students have been growing and harvesting in raised bed boxes. With the new hoop house, students will have greater opportunity to grow and possibly even sell seedlings and produce commercially.

Students have helped fundraise for the new building by doing "Magabooking," selling Bible and health literature to the community on select Fridays for an hour. Seventh-grader Addison Joseph said, "Magabooking helps raise money for the school, teaches you confidence in speaking, and builds your self-esteem. You're speaking about God, and it builds



PHOTO BY: TAMMY MAPES

your strength in God." Fifth-grader Isla Schnepfer said, "Magabooking is fun, and I had a good experience with it. I feel like it blessed the people that bought from us."

Kristofer Valentine, a one-year graduate of Mills River, on a return visit, voiced, "I miss being in school here. I had a very good experience."

Mills River is summed up by Addison Joseph, whose family drives 45 minutes each way for him to attend: "It is worth the drive because you get a quality education and learn more about God." ❶

BY TAMMY MAPES, GRADE 1-2 TEACHER AT MILLS RIVER SCHOOL

Love, Relationships Renewed During Romance at the Ranch 2023 at Nosoca Pines Ranch

Love was truly in the air at Nosoca Pines Ranch during Valentine's weekend with the English and Spanish Romance at the Ranch events. More than 100 couples gathered, seeking to strengthen their relationships, and grow closer to one another and God.

During the first weekend, 44 couples attended the English event, where Edgar Vyhmeister, M.D., retired physician from California, and his wife, Judy, gave inspiring presentations on the importance of husbands moving relationally toward their wives. Scottie Deal, pastor, provided beautiful music, and the Winter Wonderland theme created a cozy and romantic atmosphere. The banquet on the second night featured tributes and a stand-up



PHOTO BY: REBECCA CARPENTER

comedy act. Plans are already under way for the next Romance at the Ranch English, scheduled for February 9-11, 2024.

The Spanish Romance at the Ranch event took place February 17-19, 2023, bringing together 60 couples. Samuel Peguero, D.Min., Greater New York Con-

ference director of family ministries, served as the keynote speaker, delivering inspiring messages on the theme of "Put a Spark in Your Marriage." The couples were motivated to work on spiritual, emotional, and communication issues to strengthen their relationships. Four pastoral couples helped facilitate various fun and inspiring activities throughout the weekend.

The Romance at the Ranch events provide couples with the opportunity to renew their love for each other and develop their relationship with God, creating a strong foundation that will last for years to come. ❶

BY REBECCA CARPENTER

“Don’t Putter ... Declutter!” Addressed in Workshop

When Benjamin Franklin said more than 200 years ago that, “Nothing is certain except death and taxes,” he missed a key item that belongs in that short list: CLUTTER! That third item was addressed in detail at the Debarry-Orange City Church in Orange City, Fla., at a “Decluttering, Design & Dress” brunch and workshop on Sunday, February 12, 2023.

The 2 1/2-hour program, initiated and

planned by Raluca McRoberts, evangelism leader, and assisted by Ruth Michel, clearly proved the topic was popular by an almost standing-room-only attendance of more than 80 people. The goal: to transform cluttered messes into places of order and ministry. The areas targeted: living space design, wardrobe arrangement and choices, and best methods of cleaning. The watchword: simplify.

Kim Simons, women’s ministries leader, set the tone for the day with three tips on mental decluttering:

- Walk and talk with Jesus daily.
- Practice acceptance and resist worry by God’s grace.
- Pick flowers and look for things to be grateful for.

Four workshop speakers handed out excellent take-home tips for decluttering in the areas of room design, organizing clothing, and effective and efficient methods of cleaning. One handout listed “101 Things to Get Rid Of!”

A “30-day Decluttering Challenge” chart provided daily, 10- to 15-minute specifics to follow in decluttering the kitchen, living room, bathroom, garage, office, and clothing. A woman who participated in the 30-day program commented, “By starting with small projects and completing them, I was motivated to tackle larger areas needing decluttering. It was very rewarding. This workshop was incredibly encouraging!”

Following the four speakers’ presentations, a Q&A panel of women answered questions from the floor that had not been previously addressed. After closing prayer, there was reluctance to leave as the information had been overwhelming and positively received by the attendees. It was agreed that another workshop would be something worth repeating.

Even the Lord indicated that clutter is not something to be accepted in people’s lives, for He inspired Paul to say, “Let all things be done decently and in order,” 1 Corinthians 14:40.

In the end, doesn’t the Bible always have the last good word? 🙏

BY DEBARRY-ORANGE CITY
COMMUNICATION



PHOTO BY: RALUCA MCROBERTS

Ambassador Church Celebrates 30 Years



Participants in the 30th year celebration for Ambassador Church included Valtricts Binns (left), pastor, 2013-present; Elisa Rahming, Florida Conference treasurer/CFO; William Kirlaw, retired pastor; Allan Machado, Florida Conference president; Elsa Machado, Florida Conference Ministerial Spouses Association leader; and Henoc Paulicin, pastor, 2007-2013.

Ambassador Church marked a 30th anniversary with a weekend celebration, January 13-15, 2023. The event started with Vespers, where members welcomed the Sabbath with singing and thanksgiving.

Members reflected on God's goodness and faithfulness throughout the past 30 years. The road was at times dark, winding, and uncertain, but God was present. Faith kept the congregation believing that God, who started a good work in them, would take them to the end.

The celebration continued Sabbath, January 14, with a deep dive into the Word in Sabbath School; an uplifting sermon by Henoc Paulicin, third pastor of Ambassador; and congratulatory remarks from Florida Conference delegates, including Allan Machado, president, and Elisa Rahming, treasurer. The celebration climaxed with a huge ban-

quet where guests enjoyed good food and entertainment.

The church started with a small group of 19 individuals, mainly eight families of the Lighthouse Church, who decided to fellowship together. A small room was rented at Merrell United Methodist Church for Sabbath service. William Kirlaw, pastor of Maranatha Church at that time, was tasked to facilitate helping the group become part of a conference. Members were serious about spreading the Gospel, and the membership grew.

The first pastor to lead the flock was Lincoln Lewellyn Sr. in January 1993. After his untimely death, Richard James took the helm, then Henoc Paulicin, and now Valtricts Binns. The rapidly growing congregation held crusades, marches for social causes, and feeding programs; even adopted a street (NW 41st Avenue in Lauderdale Lakes, Fla.); and moved

to a small unit in the Headway Plaza in 1994, and later to Redeemer Lutheran Church in 2002.

The goal was to secure a permanent building for worship. Members toiled and labored for years, saving for a building that only faith could see by giving faithfully to the church's building fund, and engaged in numerous fund-raising activities. In July 2007, Ambassador Church purchased a permanent worship center at 3245 W. Oakland Park Blvd. in Lauderdale Lakes.

Today, Ambassador Church stands tall with more than 600 members who are dedicated to spreading the Gospel throughout the world, and connecting Christ to the community. God has been good to His people. ①

BY SHARNETT MORRIS

Battlefield Community Church Holds Women's Spa Day

The women at Battlefield Community Church in Ringgold, Ga., held a spa day for women in their community on March 5, 2023. This is the ninth annual event, known as “God in Shoes,” hosted by the church.

During this event, women from the community were pampered and shown love from the women in the church. The women had the option to get a haircut, neck and shoulder massage, hand massage, manicure, a nice meal, a facial, and gift bag full of goodies. The church provided a health corner where the guests could have their blood pressure taken, and a prayer corner if guests wanted to be prayed over by a volunteer.

When the women arrived at the event, they were greeted and handed a map of the church to help them navigate where each room was. The map also explained that everything was free, just like Jesus’ love and salvation.

The idea to hold a women’s spa day started with Jo Dubbs, Georgia-Cumberland Conference’s previous women’s ministries leader. The Battlefield Community Church was inspired and decided to pursue the event at their home church.

Those who volunteer at the spa day are inspired by Isaiah 52:7, and have worked to evolve the event to fit the needs of the women in their community.

At the end of the spa day, the women were given an anonymous survey to fill out. One woman in her survey said that



Women from the Battlefield Community Church in Ringgold, Ga., host a free spa day for women in the community. This is the ninth year the members have offered this ministry known as “God in Shoes.”

she was grateful for a haircut, as she had not received one in a while. Another woman mentioned that she was thankful for the massage because she had been stressed due to her mother’s recent death.

Yet another woman said that years ago she decided to never go back or step foot into a church; however, the women at Battlefield Community Church were able to show her love and laughter all while inside a church.

“The goal of the women at Battlefield is to show these ladies Jesus’ love and grace,” said Jennifer Dewey, director of the spa day and women’s ministries at Battlefield Community Church. “We want to give hope to all women who walk through the doors on this special day.”

Battlefield Community Church has grown their outreach, and now have events year round that show women the promises Jesus has for them, and to help them grow a deeper connection and friendship in Christ. ❶

PHOTO BY: JENNIFER DEWEY

BY ALEXIS DEWEY

AAA Students are Used as “Puzzle Pieces” in Thailand

Sometimes God uses individuals as puzzle pieces to cover the world with His Word. No matter where the piece is placed, it is still needed to complete the final picture, the journey to Heaven. One piece of this puzzle was where eight Atlanta Adventist Academy

(AAA) students would go on a mission trip during their spring break. When initial plans fell through, an opportunity arose for the students to be part of a mission trip to Sukhothai, Thailand, planned by Denny Grady, pastor.

Kayce and Roby Norton, friends of

Grady, went to live in Thailand after a calling they received from God. The two moved their family to Thailand, with no idea what God wanted them to do. It didn’t take long for the Nortons to notice the need of children who had been abandoned by their parents. Smil-

ing Eyes Group Home for at-risk children is the home the Nortons' run solely on donations from Adventist Church members and volunteer support.

Out of the many things the group home needed, a small house for volunteer staff was at the top of the list. Students, staff, and friends on the mission trip helped build that house. In addition, a hand-painted playground for the children at the group home was built. A Vacation Bible School was also held by students, and a musical performance was given at the nearby school where some of the home's children attend.

The living conditions for most in Thailand are drastic, when compared to those in the USA. Students at AAA

noted how happy Thai children are with the little they have. Through missionary work, God was able to show the students how life is for others, while allowing them to grow spiritually and help others through mission work. His placement is impeccable and will forever be, as long as they allow Him to use them as His puzzle pieces. 🕊



Addison Burdin paints a tire on the new playground at the Smiling Eyes Group home in Sukhothai, Thailand. Eight Atlanta Adventist Academy students spent their spring break building a playground, building a staff house, and conducting a VBS for the children at the group home.

BY JATNIEL MORENO, STUDENT
NEWSPAPER REPORTER AT ATLANTA
ADVENTIST ACADEMY

Hiram ACS Demonstrates Incredible Response to Families in Need

The Hiram Adventist Community Services (ACS) team displayed an immediate response to an opportunity to help three families in need on April 3, 2023. "I have never seen such a tremendous amount of speed as was given to this moment, coupled with robust desires to serve the Lord," said Fredric Preston, community services director at Hiram, Ga., Church. Preston coordinated the event based on knowledge from Cliff McGrady, zoning administrator and project manager for the City of Hiram, and Kim Cayetano, Paulding County School District (PCSD) social worker.

The first family helped was a mother evicted by her proprietor from her home. She was sleeping in her vehicle with her two children. The second family was a mother going through a divorce and working seven days a week to take care of her four children. She made too much money to qualify for SNAP benefits. In addition, her vehicle had broken

down, and she was using Uber to get to work. The third family was a single mom with four children employed as an



Audrey Medley (left), Cleopatra Scott, and Betty Gooch prepare items for families. In April, the Hiram, Ga., Church ACS team assisted three families with household items and toiletries after being made aware of the need by a social worker with the county school district.

Uber driver. During Christmas, her son submitted to the school counselor on the Christmas wish list that his family needed food. The household goods and toiletries provided included literature that shared the everlasting Gospel.

This event is inspirational because it establishes opportunities to serve the Lord in the most unexpected places. Being ready and willing to help others is the whole idea of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Everyone must care, seek, and take notice of these types of occasions. The rewards are marvelous. Efforts such as these advance the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in calling all people to become disciples of Jesus Christ, to proclaim the everlasting Gospel embraced by the three angels' messages (Revelation 14:6-12), and to prepare the world for Christ's soon return. 🕊

BY FREDRIC PRESTON

Maranatha Completes Indian Creek Camp Improvement Projects

More than 80 Maranatha volunteers arrived at Indian Creek Camp (ICC) from March 15 to 29, 2023, to help the staff complete a variety of improvement and maintenance projects, including a remodeled science center, a new art and ceramic room, and a repaired director's deck.

Ben Copley, ICC camp ranger, connected with David Woods, Maranatha's director of North America Projects, at a Southern Union Adventist Camp Ministries (ACM) meeting in December 2022. After assessing the work and finding a leader, Maranatha opened the project to volunteers.

"It was just incredible," Copley said. "We had looked at two dates, one in spring and one in fall, because we weren't sure if we would get the volunteers. But right away, about 80 people signed up."

According to project coordinator Ernie Riles, while there was a lot of construction work to do, the group also completed painting and electrical



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Maranatha volunteers pose by the construction of the new art and ceramic center at Indian Creek Camp.

jobs, and helped in repairing the side roads and some rooflines. In addition to the Maranatha volunteers, 20 Pathfinders from the Georgia-Cumberland Conference also came to help during the first week.

Tim Parkening, one of the volunteers, found out about the project through a friend. He says it was an answered prayer.

"For a long time, I had been looking for a mission to go on," said



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Volunteers at Indian Creek Camp ranged from all ages, and this duo was assigned to work on the roof of the new art and ceramic center.



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Maranatha volunteer smiles as she paints the new zip-line landing dock at Indian Creek Camp.

Parkening, who is not a Seventh-day Adventist. “It just seemed like God was guiding me [to Maranatha and ICC]. I’ve had such a great experience and met so many wonderful people — I guess that’s what happens when you follow God’s will.”

ICC kicks off its summer program on June 3, 2023, with staff training, and on June 11, with the arrival of the junior campers. Throughout the eight weeks of summer camp, ICC staff expect to welcome at least 1,300 camp-

ers, who will enjoy the work completed by Maranatha.

“There is just as much need [for help] here in America as there is overseas,” said Jeanice Riles, project manager. “To me, coming to this camp and investing my time is worth it when I think of this place as a spiritual haven for children to come and find Jesus.” 📌

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Volunteers work on the camp director’s home deck, which had old wooden pillars that were rotting away.

Daniel McFeeters Ordained to Gospel Ministry

During the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference Camp Meeting, on Sabbath, March 25, 2023, family and friends joined the Conference officials to celebrate the ordination of Daniel McFeeters to the Gospel ministry.

McFeeters grew up in a Seventh-day Adventist family, moving frequently to different Adventist academies where his father taught, before settling in Somerset, Ky., at the age of 13. McFeeters studied at Somerset Community College, and later graduated from Western Kentucky University with a bachelor’s degree in computer information technology.

After serving as a student missionary in Namibia, McFeeters felt a call to serve in lay ministry among the people of Appalachia — a passion shared by his childhood friend, Kristina Reeve, whom he had met when their families lived in the state of Washington.

The two were married in March of 2009, and moved to McCreary County, Ky., where she soon opened a vegetarian restaurant. Daniel McFeeters worked as an IT professional and literature evangelist, and served as an elder at their small church in Stearns, Ky.

McFeeters answered God’s call to



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Pastors pray over Daniel McFeeters and his wife, Kristina, during the ordination service at the Eastern-Kentucky Camp Meeting. McFeeters currently serves as the pastor of the London, Stearns, and Williamsburg churches in Kentucky.

pastoral ministry in 2015 when he was asked to serve as a lay pastor in the Stearns Church. In 2018, his calling grew to full-time ministry in the London, Stearns, and Williamsburg District, where he and his wife currently serve. Kristina McFeeters, a talented speaker and pianist, is a vital part of their ministry team, holding active leadership roles in the Stearns congregation.

When they are not busy in pastoral and restaurant ministry, the McFeeters enjoy hiking, canoeing, camping, traveling the

country, and taking photos and videos of their adventures to share with their church family and friends. While they have no children of their own, they have “adopted” countless youth and families over the years, and they love taking their “kids” along on their adventures whenever they can.

Though at times ministry can be challenging, the McFeeters continue to claim the promise of Isaiah 55:10-11. 📌

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Church Members Gather for Camp Meeting, Memphis Festival of Faith

More than 300 people gathered to attend the Eastern-Kentucky Camp Meeting and the Memphis Festival of Faith on March 24 to 25 and March 31 to April 1, respectively. After a three-year hiatus, this year's special program, which was planned by the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference administration office, followed the theme "Growing Together in Christ."

The speaker was Edward Marton, Conference youth director. Throughout both weekends, attendees were blessed with inspiring sermons and uplifting musical numbers. In addition to the spiritual activities, the event included departmental reports which allowed the members to stay up to date on the latest news and activities within the Conference.

"It truly was a blessing to gather together and connect with our church family," said Mike Hewitt, Conference vice president. "It's a beautiful thing when we can all be united in faith as we grow closer to Him, and share in the power of His love."

Those in attendance at the Eastern-Kentucky Camp Meeting and the Memphis Festival of Faith were united in their

commitment to strengthen their relationship with each other as Christian and with God. The events were a success, and many attendees expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to worship together.

"I felt like it was like a 'pre-Heaven reunion,'" said Carol Courtney, member of the Richmond, Ky., Church. "I loved seeing friends that I rarely get to see, and meeting new ones that I'll be blessed to spend eternity with." 🕊

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Steve Haley, Kentucky-Tennessee Conference president, welcomes guests to the Eastern-Kentucky Camp Meeting. The theme for the weekend was "Growing Together in Christ."



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Emmanuel Quartet sing in praise during the afternoon concert at the Eastern-Kentucky Camp Meeting. More than 300 people attended the event, as well as the Memphis Festival of Faith.



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Youth from the Memphis First Church lead song service during the Sabbath School program at the Memphis Festival of Faith. The Memphis Festival of Faith and the Eastern-Kentucky Camp Meeting resumed this year after a three-year hiatus.



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Mike Hewitt, Conference vice president for administration, leads the prayer of petition at the Memphis Festival of Faith.

Team Members Reduce Waste, Care for Environment

Band aids. Surgical kits. Gloves. These are a few of the essential health care supplies you will find in patient rooms across AdventHealth. Graycen Holmes, a registered nurse at AdventHealth Orlando, is one of many caregivers who ensures these items are available as they deliver whole-person care.

While restocking a new patient's room, she sometimes finds unopened packs of items that could be reused, except for the risk of possible contamination. If thrown in the trash, Holmes knows they could end up in landfills, so she places them in designated recycling bins. "We used to discard the [unopened] leftovers," said Holmes, who works in the facility's advanced cardiac surgical unit. "Now, we have the bins, and I love to educate others about our supply recycling program."

Holmes said her inspiration comes from a desire to make her community sustainable. Alongside her father, she volunteers with local organizations to nurture gardens where fruits, vegetables, and flowers can be harvested for free and grown by local residents.

"These initiatives excite me," said Holmes. "Whole-person care is also about our environmental impact, which affects the health of our patients."

Cassandra Joseph, an assistant nurse manager at AdventHealth Orlando, said, "I love using the bins. Right from the start, I thought this program was great."

Recycled items are sent to the facility's cleaning chamber where Peter McGarry and Giovanni Gonzalez serve as resource management logistics coordinators. Through a week-long rigorous process, they sort, load, and cleanse the unopened supplies. The process is a sustainable practice that ensures the safety of the environment and of the people who will use the recycled items. During



Cassandra Joseph, assistant nurse manager at AdventHealth Orlando, contributes to the program for the benefit of the communities.

this process, McGarry and Gonzalez also ensure that the high quality of the items is not compromised.

Though they are new to their roles, McGarry and Gonzalez are excited about the opportunity to drive positive social change.

"Being involved in the solution motivates me," said McGarry. "I have tremendous pride and satisfaction knowing that what we do reduces AdventHealth's carbon footprint."

"My role is inspiring," said Gonzalez. "I get to be a part of history in the making, and I'm excited to see where this journey takes me."

The final stop for the recycled items is back at the same AdventHealth units where they were first collected — with the intention of reuse. Some of the items are allocated for training demonstrations and simulation labs led by educators like Lauren Fiorello and Jodi Laney, senior nurse managers of clinical education, and Sara Birney and Julie Long, neonatal and pediatric educators, to deliver learning ex-

periences that align to real-life scenarios for caregivers.

Long believes her role challenges her to be a lifelong learner. "I get to tap into my work and life experiences to create innovative learning for our nurses and help them realize their potential by handing them the tools and resources they need to extend our mission," she said.

Several countries around the world also benefit from receiving a portion of these recycled supplies, thanks to the AdventHealth Global Missions program.

"Being able to donate these items comes naturally as a part of our organization's value of stewardship," said Monty Jacobs, director of AdventHealth Global Missions. "In 2022 alone, the team made 70 shipments to 23 countries, which have helped international organizations to reduce cost and provide care more affordably to those in need."

With more than one million items recycled to date — equivalent to hundreds of thousands of dollars saved — Ben Dale, director of operational excellence at AdventHealth Orlando, said "the ultimate goal is to keep [the items] out of landfills. If anyone can use them, we count that as a win."

It's a cycle that comes full circle for team members at AdventHealth Orlando — and one that Jonathan Looke, executive director of supply chain system support services, is proud to have spearheaded, along with Dale.

"We have a beautiful planet, and I love to explore nature for hiking and skiing," said Looke. "I want those opportunities of connecting with nature to always be there, for my kids and for generations to come." 🌱

BY AMA AKOTO-BOATENG,
COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST
AT ADVENTHEALTH

Maranatha Retires Mortgage

Members, church leaders, families, friends, and the community gathered on November 19, 2022, at Maranatha Church, 360 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive in Jackson, Tenn., to celebrate that the church mortgage has been paid off. Ronnie Forté Sr., current pastor, welcomed families, friends, visitors, and church members to the providential occasion. Forté shared, “I thank God for His many blessings and the great works He has allowed Maranatha Church in Jackson to accomplish. We give God all the glory.”

Benjamin Jones Jr., president for South Central Conference, was the Sabbath morning speaker. He challenged the attendees to stay faithful and continue the work in Jackson, Tenn. Sonja Clayton, South Central chief financial officer, presented Sheldon Bright, Maranatha Church elder and treasurer, with an envelope on behalf of South Central Conference. She has worked with the local church treasury ministry to help shepherd them to this opportunity to retire the mortgage.

Former pastors who served in the present building location were invited to share in the milestone celebration. Pastors Michael Hayes (2001-2007) and Curtis Hall (2012-2021) were in attendance. Pastors Robert Mann (2011-2012) and Thomas Donley (2007-2011) were unable to attend, but sent messages of congratulations and well wishes.

This is the second mortgage Maranatha Church has had to retire since its formation in the early 1900s. The church was located on Lane Ave., and a tornado came through Jackson in 1976 and destroyed that building. The members bought property on South Royal Street and built a new sanctuary there. The new church was renamed Maranatha based on Revelations 22:20, “Even



PHOTO BY: RONNIE FORTÉ SR.

Ronnie Forté Sr. (left), Maranatha Church pastor; Sonja Clayton, South Central chief financial officer; Benjamin Jones Jr., South Central president; and Sheldon Bright, Maranatha Church elder and treasurer

so come, Lord Jesus.” Again in 2002, a tornado came through and destroyed the church building.

After meeting at various locations, the members came together again and decided to rebuild, and held a groundbreaking ceremony on November 1, 2004, at 360 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, under Hayes’ pastorate. The Maranatha congrega-

tion marched to their new location on September 24, 2005.

Maranatha Church is known for its drive-through food pantry distributions, community health fairs, and the community garden sponsored on its property. It currently provides these and other essential community services out of its additional building across the street.

Maranatha Church engages the Jackson, Tenn., community through its Soul Winning Action Team (SWAT) Outreach each week. They go through the neighborhood door to door, praying with residents and distributing truth-filled literature. Also, the SWAT Outreach volunteers at the local soup kitchen.

When asked what it means for the church and community to retire the mortgage, said Forté, “We don’t want to be just a church building on the corner, but a church building engaged to facilitating the Gospel in the community.”



PHOTO BY: RONNIE FORTÉ SR.

Ronnie Forté Sr. (left), Maranatha Church pastor; Sonja Clayton, South Central chief financial officer; and Benjamin Jones Jr., South Central president

BY ROGER R. WADE

Mount Calvary Celebrates 40 Years of Kingdom Building

In honor of Mount Calvary Church's, Huntsville, Ala., 40th Anniversary (1982-2022), the church took the opportunity to celebrate by having all previous Conference presidents and pastors return and share in the three-month celebration beginning October 2022. Benjamin Jones Jr., president for South Central Conference, started the celebrations by speaking on Sabbath, October 8, 2022, and Rupert Bushner, D.Min., former pastor, capped off the celebration and spoke on December 17, 2022, for the Grand Anniversary Sabbath. All the speakers shared a soul-stirring, inspirational message.

The Anniversary Committee, which was chaired by Josette Paschal and co-chaired by Lorna Knight, met monthly since August 2021, to plan and execute the anniversary celebrations.

There were four honorees chosen. Two church individuals, Vera Bartholomew, a current member, and Yvonne Gidden, a former member. They were chosen for their tireless efforts in serving the church's senior citizens and community needs. Two community honorees were Royal Funeral Home and Albert's Flowers. Mount Calvary honored Royal Funer-

al Home, represented by Karen Jones Smith. Royal Funeral Home graciously opened its doors to the church to worship while the current church purchased land and obtained building plans to build the church. The first church pastor, Eric C. Ward, and the funeral home team relationship with James A. and Barbara Hundley Jones were valued, and an integral part of Mount Calvary's historical story.

Well wishes were received from numerous businesses — including the Southern Union Conference with a proc-

lamation sent by Ron C. Smith, D.Min., Ph.D., president; South Central Conference's president, Benjamin Jones Jr.; and Royal Funeral Home — which were displayed in a special historical souvenir booklet. Honorable Devon Keith, councilman of Huntsville City District 2, provided a proclamation on behalf of the City of Huntsville and Tommy Battle Jr., mayor, and the respective councils.

The church was very grateful for the baptized souls, and for the support of the members and community resi-



Karen Jones-Smith (center), Royal Funeral Home representative and a community honoree



Benjamin Jones Jr., South Central Conference president, was the October speaker.



Rupert Bushner, D.Min., grand anniversary speaker and former pastor

dents during the years. Carrie Oats and Estefania Howell, church members, were extremely instrumental in soliciting several ads in support of the event.

The Grand Anniversary Sabbath was a wonderful day for Mount Calvary as it highlighted its history. An elegant evening gala crowned the wonderful experience. The strategic mission of Mount Calvary was celebrated: “Moving from friendship to membership, to fellowship, to discipleship.” The anniversary celebration reminded and recommitted the members of Mount Calvary to its mission. 🕊

BY JOSETTE PASCHAL



PHOTO BY: JOSETTE PASCHAL

Former pastors include Rupert Bushner, D.Min. (left), Antoine Maycock, Khaleel Clarke, Willie L. Taylor, Isadore DeSouza, Auldwin Humphrey, William Gilliard, and DeShon Juzang.

Riverside Chapel Impacts Community

Riverside Chapel Church located on the north side of Nashville, Tenn., strongly believes in community stewardship. Youngs Lane, where the church is located, has become busier with the growth of housing and the increasing number of vehicles and people passing through the community, littering and dumping becoming a significant problem. To mitigate this, the Riverside Chapel Church came together and organized a street cleaning project to clean up trash and debris littered on their street. This project was part of the city’s program to provide resources for neighborhood residents to volunteer to take pride in their environment and participate in keeping the neighborhood clean.

The Riverside Chapel Community Street Cleaning project is an initiative aimed at keeping the community clean and free of waste materials. The project was led by the church’s SOW Ministry. The SOW ministry leads the church’s outreach ministries, providing initiatives for members to sow God’s love in the community of Nashville. The street cleaning initiative has



Street cleaning sign on Youngs Lane

brought members together to clean up the church’s neighborhood.

“One of the responsibilities of Christianity is not only to think of the Kingdom’s realm but its reign. Where we exist, we should make a difference in the community we exist in,” said Gordon S. Jones, D.Min., senior pastor.

This community initiative encouraged members to take pride and responsibility in the community environment of Riverside Chapel’s neighborhood. The street cleaning project has also fostered

a sense of unity and cohesiveness in the community. The volunteers involved in the project have shown a great deal of commitment, dedication, and enthusiasm. The neighbors have seen benefits already. This has set an excellent example for others, promoting a culture of civic engagement.

By organizing the clean-up event, Riverside Chapel Church has made significant strides in reducing waste, making its environment cleaner and safer for everyone. Currently, the project happens twice a year, with supplies furnished by the city of Nashville.

The Riverside Chapel Street Cleaning project is a prime example of the power of community involvement. Such projects are essential, not only to keep the environment clean but also to promote a culture of civic engagement. We can all learn a lot from the Riverside Chapel Community Street cleaning project, and adopt similar initiatives in other communities, making the world a better place.

BY ROGER R. WADE

PHOTO BY: ROGER R. WADE

Southern Hosts Global Conference on Integrating Faith, Business

This spring, the School of Business at Southern Adventist University partnered with nonprofit Hyve International to host “Hyve Creators 2023,” an entrepreneurship event with a Seventh-day Adventist perspective.

More than 800 participants learned about combining mission, innovation, and entrepreneurship from a group of experienced and successful Christian inventors and business professionals affiliated with Hyve International, which provides community and support on the ground floor for Adventist-run missional businesses around the world. Held on Southern’s campus, the weekend included powerful stories, testimonies, workshops, and an innovative startup pitch competition.



Participants enjoyed networking during the Hyve Creators 2023 event on Southern’s campus.

“This kind of event builds a bridge between inspirational and practical, mission and business,” said Michelle Doucoumes, associate professor in Southern’s School of Business and a co-coordinator of the event. “The value of connecting with leaders and experts who

share the same principles and goals is immeasurable for our students and others.”

Under the umbrella of the School of Business, the University’s student-led Enactus chapter spearheaded the event. Lauryn Daniels, senior business major, and Kelsie McCarty, sophomore management major, served as project managers and led their team in organizing everything from logistics to programming.

“I strongly believe that everyone who attended both virtually and physically was meant to be there,” said Daniels. “I’m beyond grateful to God for the opportunity to lead, connect, and serve!”

BY TINA SMITH

Professor Calls for Help in Spotting Invasive Spider in Southeast Regions

The proliferate Jorō spider, an East Asian species that is currently spreading rapidly in southeast regions of the United States, is the elusive subject of a research team that includes David Nelsen, Ph.D., biology professor at Southern Adventist University. These researchers are appealing to communities in Tennessee, Georgia, and South Carolina to be on the lookout to report any sightings.

“More eyes in the field will contribute immensely to our research efforts and results,” said Nelsen. “Anybody can be a scientist in this case, and photographs can give us strong data for tracking and measuring this ongoing invasion.”

In 2021, there were four sightings of the yellow, red, and silver-blue arachnid in the Chattanooga area, including one on

Southern’s campus. Last year, sightings increased to approximately 20, along with the presence of males, which suggests a stable breeding population.

Nelsen has involved Southern’s ecology students in the research by incorporating the project into labs and educational outreach. For example, students taught several



The Jorō spider is at the center of Southern biology professor David Nelsen’s, Ph.D., research.

young outdoor adventure groups about spiders and included the local impact of the Jorō on the community.

“Research brings what the students are studying to life,” said Nelsen. “This work helps them answer the questions: ‘How do I take what I’m doing as a biologist and give back to the community? How do I get people excited about the wonders of God’s creation?’”

The project will continue for several more years in order to determine whether or not the arachnid newcomer is harming native species. Nelsen invites those who spot what appears to be a Jorō spider to be part of the research by emailing a photo to him at dnelsen@southern.edu.

PHOTO BY: DAVID NELSEN, PH.D.

BY AMANDA BLAKE

SACSCOC Reaffirms Oakwood University's Accreditation

Oakwood University, Huntsville, Ala., recently underwent its accreditation site visit by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), February 20-23, 2023. Leslie Pollard, Ph.D., D.Min., M.B.A., Oakwood University president, presented the results of the site visit to the faculty and staff. The University was fully accredited for another 10 years with only one minor recommendation, which was resolved immediately. The magnitude of the success experienced by the institution during this reaccreditation is reflected in the words of the SACSCOC On-site Visit Committee chair, who acknowledged that she had never been part of a visit that ended with almost 100% compliance during her several years of collaboration with SACSCOC.

Accreditation is crucial to universities, as it determines their eligibility to receive federal and state funds; their ability to transfer credits with other schools; and their ability to earn recognition from students, other universities, businesses, nonprofit, and government communities. Regional accreditation is the way that the federal government ensures compliance with federal laws and mandates for higher education as well.



Leslie Pollard, Ph.D., D.Min., M.B.A.,
Oakwood University president

The SACSCOC is a federal mandated higher education quality control structure that accredits colleges and universities in the southern region of the United States. It is an institutional accreditor that employs an accountable and transparent peer review process that assures educational quality and integrity, fosters continuous self-improvement, and promotes student

success. The six core values of the SACSCOC are integrity, peer review/self-regulation, student learning, continuous quality improvement, accountability, and transparency.

Institutional regional accreditation remains the one main activity on every university campus that requires concerted effort, engagement, and involvement of all stakeholders — faculty, staff, students, administrators, and the Board of Trustees. The effort is overseen by the Office of the Provost and senior vice president through its Unit of Institutional Effectiveness, led by the director of institutional effectiveness.

Institutional accreditation or reaccreditation, as was the case for Oakwood recently, is a reassurance that an institution of higher education meets a series of quality standards. Accreditation standards require institutions to demonstrate that they adhere to good practices in higher education. Furthermore, accrediting agencies should be recognized by organizations such as the Council for Higher Education Accreditation or the U.S. Department of Education.

While the accreditation initiative was overseen by one office, its overall success depended on the contributions of all Oakwood constituents, from the Office of the President to the office managers and custodial workers who provided outstanding service during the visit. The University gives thanks to God for the unity, outstanding teamwork, and shared vision demonstrated by all constituents during the SACSCOC visit. 🙏



BY ZACHARY MNGO, PH.D., OU DIRECTOR
OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Oakwood University Student Jezer Castillo Awarded Weniger Student Scholarship

Congratulations to Oakwood University student Jezer Castillo on winning the Weniger Fellows Student Award for Oakwood University. As in previous years, each awardee is recommended by the School of Theology for consideration. Castillo was selected because at Oakwood University he represents the values of Charles E. Weniger: spirituality, academics, civic service, and leadership.

Organizers of the event consider these awards as the “Oscars” of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The Charles E. Weniger Society awards scholarships to one student from each of 13 higher education institutions in the North American Division. The \$750 scholarship from the Weniger Society is matched by the recipient’s institution. The award ceremony was held at the Loma Linda University Church on February 18, 2023.

In addition to student awards, each year the Weniger Society honors individuals who have experienced distinguished careers. The 2023 awardees:

- John Brunt – former vice president for academic administration, Walla Walla University; pastor.

- Charles Sandefur – former president, ADRA and Mid-America Union; rural health care administrator; leader of the largest Zoom Sabbath School class in the Church.

- Serena Hasso Tonstad – prominent physician focused on public health and preventive medicine, formerly at Loma Linda University and currently in Norway.

- Wedgwood Trio – Jerry Hoyle, Bob Summerour, and Don Vomer – significant contributions in their own fields but



Jezer Castillo

also honored for impact on Adventism through their music

The Charles E. Weniger Society was established in 1974 by the late Congressman Jerry Pettis; Clinton Emmerson, D.D.S.; and church leader John Osborn, to preserve and project the qualities of inspiration, motivation, and excellence that were paramount in the life and service of Charles Elliott Weniger, Ph.D., beloved Seventh-day Adventist educator.

Over his career, Weniger served Seventh-day Adventist higher education at Pacific Union College, Columbia Union College, the SDA Theological Seminary, and Andrews University. 📖

BY INTEGRATED MARKETING & PUBLIC
RELATIONS STAFF WRITER

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.

PROPERTY AVAILABLE

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. [C]

YOUR REALTOR IN FLORIDA & EASTERN TENNESSEE Are you ready to BUY or SELL your home? Maybe you want to trade hectic urban life for peaceful country living? Want to build a homestead? I can help you make it all happen. Contact Osvaldo "Ozzy" Ferrer 423-457-9057 or 407-285-2510. Call, text, WhatsApp, or email ozzyferrer@outlook.com. [C]

REFINANCE YOUR MORTGAGE TODAY! Looking to lower your interest rate, consolidate debt, get cash out for home improvements, or get pre-approved to purchase your home? We have the nation's top lenders. FHA/VA/USDA/Conventional/First Time Home Buyers welcome. Licensed in AL, NC, TN, FL, and other states. Call 411-MORTGAG-ES...Ozzy 407-285-2510 / 423-457-9057. [C]

CONFERENCE OWNED INDEPENDENT LIVING Community near Orlando, Florida. SDA Church on the property. AdventHealth medical care, shopping, beaches very close. The sunshine is free and plentiful. Start your new life with us!! 407-452-4243 Nancy (Admin), Katty (PR). [C]

SUMMIT RIDGE RETIREMENT VILLAGE 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 [C]

KY LAND FOR SALE: Surveyed into 5 different lots. Each lot is 3± acres. Griffin community. Low gentle slope. Mtn. views. Close to Little South Fork River and Daniel Boone National Forest. City water, electric & garbage pick up available. If you like peace and quiet and having a garden, this land is perfect for you. [6-8]

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. [6-7]

FOR RENT - Furnished 2 bed, 1 bath house in Seale, AL. Quiet, peaceful surroundings in the country area. Five minutes from Uchee Pines Missionary Medical Center, school and Adventist Church. About 10 minutes from public middle and high schools, about 10 minutes from Fort Benning Military Base, and 30 minutes from the two nearest towns. Call 441-234-0146 or email kevac9@gmail.com for more information. [6]

COLLEGEDALE, TN- Bluff view lots with views of SAU, (3+ acres for \$135,000 and 4+ acres \$280,000) on Timberview Trl. Also for sale 3.53 acres of R-3 Zoned Townhomes on Spalding Dr. \$550,000 (sewer available). Call Wendy Dixon Team Keller Williams at 423-702-2000, DixonTeam.com [6]

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

FLETCHER ACADEMY IS HIRING! Serve with Purpose in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains. Join "a growing community of believers operating Adventist schools, ministries, and businesses in harmony to educate youth to have a transforming influence on the world as disciples of Christ." View current openings at www.fletcheracademy.org/career. [C]

WE ARE LOOKING FOR Certified Teachers to join us at an online school, Sycamore Academy (Grades K - 12th). Work part-time from home teaching/tutoring "live" in a Zoom environment. If interested, please call us at 817-645-0895. [6-7]

IN SEARCH OF Adventist operated group home for mentally challenged adult female. Call 229-588-0974 and leave a message. [6-7]

UNION COLLEGE is accepting applications for International Rescue and Relief Expedi-

tion Coordinator/Faculty. This individual will work on campus during the fall semester and plan the semester abroad as well as help out in various classes or initiatives. Coordinator will lead out in the spring semester abroad accompanying students and coordinating class instructions, planning, and logistics. See job description and instructions for application at ucollege.edu/employment. [6-7]

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY seeks a full-time program director to launch a new Doctor of Physical Therapy degree program. The ideal candidate will be proficient in managing the CAPTE accreditation process, new program development, and teaching graduate physical therapy courses as well as clinical practice. In addition, the successful candidate will be committed to mentoring advisees, nurturing student learning both in and out of the classroom, and disciplining students in Jesus Christ. For a full job description and desired qualifications please visit www.southern.edu/jobs [6]

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY seeks a full-time teaching faculty member for the University's McKee Library. The Periodicals and Reference Librarian is responsible for all activities of the periodicals department for the university library, supports the strategic direction for the technical services team, and serves as a reference librarian as part of the research coaching team. Master's degree in Library/Information Science from an ALA-accredited program (or international equivalent). For a full job description and desired qualifications please visit www.southern.edu/jobs [6]

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY seeks a full-time Engineer teaching faculty member for Physics and Engineering Department in the areas of mechanical, electrical, and computer engineering. The ideal candidate will be proficient in developing and teaching undergraduate engineering courses, including both lecture and laboratory components. In addition, the successful candidate will be committed to mentoring advisees, nurturing student learning both in and out of the classroom, and disciplining students in Jesus Christ. Master's degree in mechanical, electrical, or computer engineering or related area required. Doctorate preferred. Prior higher education teaching experience and/or relevant industry experience preferred. For a full job description and desired qualifications please visit www.southern.edu/jobs [6]

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY seeks a full-time faculty in the area of Counseling for School of Education/Psychology. A doctoral degree in counselor education from a CACREP-accredited program is required. Doctoral degrees in clinical or counseling psychology from APA-accredited program could be considered if applicant has been employed as full-time faculty member in a counselor education program for a minimum of one full ac-

ademic year before July 1, 2013. For a full job description and desired qualifications please visit www.southern.edu/jobs [6]

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY seeks a full-time teaching faculty member for the School of Business in the area of finance and economics for face-to-face classroom instruction. Qualified candidates will have an earned doctorate degree in Economics or Finance. For a full job description and desired qualifications please visit www.southern.edu/jobs [6]

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY seeks a full-time teaching faculty member with pediatric expertise to join a cohesive, mission-focused team for the School of Nursing. Teaching responsibilities include undergraduate pre-licensure child health and simulation. Requisite qualities include pediatric RN experience, flexibility, and commitment to Adventist nursing education. Teaching experience and an earned doctorate are preferred. For a full job description and desired qualifications please visit www.southern.edu/jobs [6]

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY seeks a full-time teaching faculty member for the School of Religion. The position would involve assisting in the Institute of Archaeology, including with its publications. Applicants should have a PhD (or have made significant progress in a PhD program) in the areas of archaeology and biblical studies and should be prepared to teach courses in archaeology, biblical studies, and biblical Hebrew. For a full job description please visit www.southern.edu/jobs [6]

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY seeks a full-time undergraduate faculty to join a cohesive, mission-focused team for the School of Nursing. Teaching responsibilities may include assessment, adult health clinical and simulation, and work with students experiencing academic challenges. Requisite qualities include current RN experience, flexibility, and commitment to Adventist nursing education. Master's degree in nursing required; teaching experience preferred. For a full job description and desired qualifications please visit www.southern.edu/jobs [6]

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY is seeking qualified candidates for the following staff positions: Salaried positions— Marketing & University Relations Director, Online Campus Teaching Technology Specialist, Food Service Director. Hourly positions— Cafeteria Floater (Cafeteria), Cafeteria Worker (Cafeteria), Cook Coordinator (Cafeteria), Deli Floater (Village Market), Procurement & Merchandising Assistant (Village Market), The Garden Assistant Manager (Food Services), Housing Technician (Plant Services), HVAC Master Technician (Plant Services), Painting Technician (Plant Services), Custodial Supervisor (Hulsey Wellness Center), S.A.L.T. Outreach Coordinator (School of

Religion), Academic Advisor (Graduate and Professional Studies/Adult Degree Completion Program), Institute of Archeology/Graduate Program Office Manager (School of Religion), Office Manager (School of Education and Psychology), Vision Trips Coordinator (Office of Ministry and Missions) Temporary positions— Bus Driver (Transportation Department), Vehicle Driver (Transportation Department), Housekeeper (Housing Office). For a detailed description and qualifications, see southern.edu/jobs [6]

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY seeks a full-time teaching faculty member with pediatric expertise to join a cohesive, mission-focused team. Teaching responsibilities include undergraduate pre-licensure child health and simulation. Requisite qualities include pediatric RN experience, flexibility, and commitment to Adventist nursing education. Teaching experience and an earned doctorate are preferred. For a full job description and desired qualifications please visit www.southern.edu/jobs [6]

UNION COLLEGE, Lincoln, NE is accepting applications for Computer Science and Mathematics Professor. The individual in this role will teach upper division programming classes and lower division math classes. A PhD in Computer Science or Mathematics is preferred, Master's required. Please direct inquiries to Bruce Forbes at Bruce.Forbes@ucollege.edu or apply online at ucollege.edu/employment. [6]

OUACHITA HILLS ACADEMY a supporting ministry of the SDA church, has openings for the 2023-2024 school year for a Food Service Director, Farm Manager, Math-Science teacher, Assistant Boys Dean/Chaplain, Assistant Girls' Dean/Administrative Assistant, Maintenance staff. Please contact us at Info@OHAcademy.org. or apply on line at OHAcademy.org. [6]

MISCELLANEOUS

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 visits us at: www.apexmoving.com/adventist. [C]

TEACH SERVICES HELPING AUTHORS: Publish your book, including editing, design, marketing, and worldwide distribution. Visit www.TEACHServices.com to submit your manuscript for a free evaluation or call 800-367-1844. Shop for NEW/USED ADVENTIST BOOKS at www.TEACHServices.com or at your local ABC. [C]

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 is available. For more information, call 423-236-2585 or visit www.southern.edu/gradtestudies. [C]

#1NC & SC Allstate Insurance Agency. SDA owned and operated. Call today for a free quote for auto, home, renters, boat, motorcycle or life insurance. Agent is UCSDA church Treasurer & Elder. Exclusive Agent, Brian King 704-844-2572 or jbrianking@allstate.com or visit us at www.allstate.com/jbrianking. [C]

WILDWOOD LIFESTYLE CENTER Residential Program. Suffering with a physical or mental health issue? Come away and receive healing from the Great Physician, regaining your health through natural remedies. Join our residential programs, and learn principles of healthful living by calling 706-820-1493 or visit wildwoodhealth.com [6-12]

COME TO MACEDONIA! Praying for missionary minded families interested in church planting and reviving work in beautiful Northern Adirondacks and Saint Lawrence Valley in upstate NY. Great country living and affordable property. For more information, please contact Steve (518) 651-0674 or Pastor Raymond (315) 406-6701. [6-9]

LOOKING FOR A DEPENDABLE Honda/Toyota/Mazda sedan or small SUV, 8k-13k value. Please text 828-577-5723 pictures, VIN, your name, church, and the contact info of your pastor/head elder for reference. [6-7]

FREE APP. Discover stellar faith-building, Bible-based and Christ-centered radio programs for all ages. LifeTalk Radio streams all music at LifeTalkMusic.net and awesome kids programs at LifeTalkKids.net or listen to talk radio at: LifeTalk.net. Download our handy FREE APP from: LifeTalk.net [6]

CD DUPLICATORS available. Limited quantity. Must be able to pick up at Southern Union Conference Office. Call 770-408-1800, ext. 128 for more info. [6]

UNION/CONFERENCE JOB OPPORTUNITIES.



DO YOU WANT TO BREAK INTO A HIGH-PAYING TECHNOLOGY FIELD BUT DON'T HAVE A TECH DEGREE?

In as little as two semesters, you'll be ready to pursue a new career.



Why Study Data Analytics?

As the world relies more and more heavily on data, understanding how to extract insights from data will open new opportunities and career paths.

Certificate or Master's Degree

This fully online program is open to anyone with a bachelor's degree and one prerequisite class in programming.

Certificates are available in:

- Cybersecurity
- Data Analytics
- Web Development

Master's Degree in Applied Computer Science

Combine two certificates, one additional class, and one project for a degree.

Call or go online today to learn more!



ELEVATE YOUR HEALTHCARE CAREER!

Enroll in our lifestyle medicine + CNA program now and make a positive impact.

Scan the QR code for info.

wildwoodhealth.org/lcit/




Are Your Investments Secure?

If you are concerned about economic security in the future, consider a Legacy IRA. You can now rollover a traditional IRA into a Charitable Gift Annuity. Completely avoid immediate taxation on an IRA withdrawal and make a gift that pays you income for life. Any remaining funds may be designated to the charity of your choice. Visit southern.edu/LegacyIRA or call your local university or conference office and ask about funding a Charitable Gift Annuity with your required minimum distribution.

► If you are interested in a living trust to support the work God has placed on your heart, please contact our planned giving office.



Carolina
Rick Hutchinson (704) 596-3200

Florida
Phil Bond (407) 644-5000

Georgia-Cumberland
Ray Hartwell (706) 629-7951

Gulf States
David Sigamani (334) 272-7493

Kentucky-Tennessee
Silke Hubbard (615) 859-1391

Oakwood University
Miriam W. Battles (256) 726-7508

South Atlantic
Merita Mosely (404) 792-0535

South Central
Sonja Crayton (615) 226-6500

Southeastern
Juan Gonzalez (352) 735-3142

Southern Adventist University
Kimberly Bobenhausen (423)-236-2832



SUSDAGift.org

FLORIDA

Summer Camps - June 5-11; June 11-18; and June 18-25, Camp Kulaqua, High Springs.

Family Camp - Sept. 1-4, Camp Kulaqua, High Springs.

Young at Heart (50+ retreat) - Nov. 6-9, Camp Kulaqua, High Springs.

GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND

Olde Time Camp Meeting - June 8-10. Meister Memorial Church.

Junior 1 Summer Camp - June 11-18. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.

Junior 2 Summer Camp - June 18-25. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.

RAD Summer Camp Weekend - June 30 -July 2. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.

Adventure Summer Camp - June 25-30. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.

Tween Summer Camp - July 2-9. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.

Teen Summer Camp - July 9-16. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.

Family Camp - July 18-23. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp. Please check our website for the latest information, www.gccsda.com.

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

WELLkids - June 12-16 and 26-30, July 10-14. Keep your kids moving and exploring the great outdoors this summer with "WELLkids in the Wild," a day-camp program at Southern Ad-

WILDWOOD CLINIC

"Where care begins with compassion"

- ✓ Christ-centered appointments
- ✓ Natural and Conventional Treatments
- ✓ Specialized in chronic diseases like diabetes
- ✓ In-house lab
- ✓ Telemedicine*

*for specific states

wildwoodcares.com



ventist University. Each week-long session offers outdoor adventures facilitated by the University's Adventure Programming staff. Activities include rock climbing, hiking, canoeing, ropes course, caving, rafting, and more. Available for ages 10-16. Spots are limited, so don't wait! For more information or to register, visit southern.edu/wellkids.

Academic Summer Camps - June 12-14. Southern is hosting camps for high school students in automotive repair, computing, filmmaking, journalism, media production, outdoor leadership, photography, pre-med, and vegetarian culinary arts. Registration is \$150 for day students or \$200 for overnight campers staying in residence halls. For more information or to register, visit southern.edu/camps or call 423-236-2807.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SINGLE' MISSION TRIP - Aug. 7-11, to Dominican Republic. Sponsored by Florida Chil-dren's, Family, and Singles' Ministries to hold a VBS for 400 children with a special singles' weekend to climax the trip.

SOUTHERN UNION CONFERENCE WOMEN'S CONVENTION - Aug. 24-27. Orlando, FL. SAVE THE DATE!!!

FREE SAVVY RETIREMENT SERIES VIA ZOOM. Sponsored by Florida Conference Planned Giving and Trust Services: Aug. 29 - Full and Detailed Medicare Workshop, Part I; Sept. 5 - Full and Detailed Medicare Workshop, Part II; Oct. 24 - Managing and Lowering your Tax Bills at Retirement. Registration: planned.giving@floridaconference.com or 407-644-5000, x2246 or x2241.

NATIONAL CAMPS FOR BLIND CHILDREN - Sept. 17-22. A ministry of Christian Rec-ord Services, it is proud to partner with Camp Kulaqua in High Springs, Florida. The camp will provide confidence-building opportunities for individuals ages 18-65 who are blind and visually impaired as they participate in a variety of summer camp experiences. For more information about our summer camp programs visit www.blindcamps.org.

CAMP KULAQUA'S 70th ANNIVERSARY - Oct. 13-15. TELL YOUR CAMP STORY: Invited are all previous camp staff, volunteers, and those connected to camp to come and join the celebration! Visit website: www.campkulaqua.com.

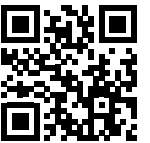
SUNSET

	JUN 9	JUN 16	JUN 23	JUN 30	JUL 7	JUL 14
ATLANTA, GA	8:48	8:51	8:53	8:53	8:53	8:51
CHARLESTON, SC	8:28	8:31	8:32	8:33	8:32	8:30
CHARLOTTE, NC	8:36	8:39	8:41	8:42	8:41	8:38
COLLEGE DALE, TN	8:54	8:57	8:59	8:59	8:58	8:56
HUNTSVILLE, AL	7:59	8:02	8:04	8:05	8:04	8:02
JACKSON, MS	8:08	8:10	8:12	8:13	8:12	8:10
LOUISVILLE, KY	9:06	9:09	9:11	9:12	9:10	9:08
MEMPHIS, TN	8:14	8:17	8:19	8:19	8:18	8:16
MIAMI, FL	8:12	8:15	8:16	8:17	8:17	8:16
MONTGOMERY, AL	7:52	7:55	7:57	7:57	7:57	7:55
NASHVILLE, TN	8:04	8:07	8:09	8:09	8:08	8:06
ORLANDO, FL	8:23	8:26	8:27	8:28	8:28	8:26
TAMPA, FL	8:26	8:29	8:30	8:31	8:31	8:29
WILMINGTON, NC	8:24	8:26	8:28	8:29	8:28	8:26

BE INSPIRED.

Download the brand-new AWR360° app!

Inspiration and a full media library at your fingertips!



visit: awr.org/apps



AWR360°
CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Adventist World Radio 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD 20904

Let's Connect!

f [awr360](https://www.facebook.com/awr360)

t [awr360](https://twitter.com/awr360)

@ [awr.360](https://www.instagram.com/awr.360)

y [awr.org/videos](https://www.youtube.com/awr.org/videos)

↗ awr.org/apps



Southern Union Conference
P.O. Box 923868
Peachtree Corners, GA 30010

NONPROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
COLLEGE PRESS



Reimagine your future.

Crush your 2023 goals!

When you join the AdventHealth team, you'll have access to debt-free educational assistance and student loan support. Grow in the classroom and in your career through our new partnership with Guild, a best-in-class education administrator. With access to more than 400 programs at high-quality institutions, you can move forward in your chosen career path. From day one of employment, you can apply to enroll in one of the many programs available or take steps toward tackling student loans.

Pursue your passions with peace of mind.



Learn more at
[JoinAdventHealth.com](https://www.joinadventhealth.com).

