

# TIDINGS

Southern



FEBRUARY 2024

## CHAPLAINS

SPIRITUAL SUPPORT

IN DIVERSE SETTINGS

THE HERO'S  
JOURNEY

GIFTING MOBILITY  
BY PROVIDING  
FREE HIP, KNEE  
REPLACEMENTS  
TO PATIENTS IN NEED

THERAPY DOG'S  
JOIN GCA FACULTY  
IN MINISTERING TO  
STUDENTS

DREAMS FULFILLED:  
SPRINGFIELD I AND II  
HISPANIC CHURCHES  
TRANSFORMED  
BY THE WORK OF  
VOLUNTEERS



# Doubly Blessed: Testimony of Ministry as a Couple



**Leon Solomon Verrett III  
and Vanessa Emanuel  
Hanna-Verrett**

*Guest Editorial*

My name is Vanessa Emanuel Hanna-Verrett. Emanuel means, “God with us.” My late husband died tragically; three years later my heart was shattered due to the tragic death of my youngest son, Justin. He was a freshman at Oakwood University and ready to lunge into anticipated summer adventures. This tragedy was unanticipated, and I was unprepared. The intensity of my pain made it difficult to feel “God with me.”

My name is Leon Solomon Verrett III. I’ve experienced many personal deaths, but none more painful than that of my late wife. Solomon means “peace,” but during this time my life was anything but “peaceful.” For both of us, the struggle with grief was real, but God restores.

As the years passed, I thought I would never get married again since I had been widowed for eight years and Leon for two years. Although the desire was there, neither of us knew if we would remarry or remain single. However, we did know two things: 1) We wanted God to make the decision; and 2) We would embrace our singleness with vigor, purpose, and adventure. We were strangers and yet of one mind.

God’s timing is impeccable. One day, seemingly out of the blue, some mutual friends were inspired to introduce us. We spoke on the phone and made plans to meet in person. Although we served and worshiped in the same conference for at least 20 years, neither of us had any recognition of seeing the other before this moment in time. The butterflies were cutting somersaults inside of both our hearts and the message was clear. This is the one!

A year later, we were blissfully married! Instead of the traditional exciting wedding music, the choir sang “God Restores” by Wayne Bucknor. It was the same song that was sung at Justin’s funeral as we exited out of the church after his service. In the first instance, the theme of restoration is one of hope for the future, and, in the latter, of restoration for the present and the future. It is now almost seven years later, and the bliss continues! We are “a living testimony, God restores!” 1 Peter 5:10.

Additionally, the 23rd Psalm states that “He restores my soul.” The soul is the human life. From the very beginning, God breathed into a lifeless body and mankind became a living soul. He has not lost His creative and restorative power. He breathed into the lives of two broken individuals, creating a new relationship and ministry of restoration! And, because we do ministry as a couple, we receive God’s blessings in double! ❶



**Ron Smith, D.Min., Ph.D.**  
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## features

4  
CHAPLAINS: SPIRITUAL SUPPORT  
IN DIVERSE SETTINGS

8  
THE HERO'S JOURNEY

12  
GIFTING MOBILITY  
BY PROVIDING FREE HIP,  
KNEE REPLACEMENTS  
TO PATIENTS IN NEED

14  
THERAPY DOGS JOIN GCA  
FACULTY IN MINISTERING TO  
STUDENTS

16  
DREAMS FULFILLED:  
SPRINGFIELD I AND II HISPANIC  
CHURCHES TRANSFORMED BY  
THE WORK OF VOLUNTEERS

## news

18 ADVENTHEALTH  
20 CAROLINA  
22 FLORIDA  
24 GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND  
26 KENTUCKY-TENNESSEE  
28 SOUTH ATLANTIC  
30 SOUTHEASTERN  
32 ADVENTHEALTH UNIVERSITY  
33 SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

36 CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING  
38 EVENTS CALENDAR/  
SUNSET SCHEDULE



COVER PHOTO: O'LIVIA WOODARD





Left back to front: Jonathan González, Latonya Jackson, Washington Johnson III, José Antonio Pagán, Paula Chavis, William Dykes and Angela Li are North American Division Members who serve as chaplains.



# CHAPLAINS

## SPIRITUAL SUPPORT IN DIVERSE SETTINGS

BY CHRISTINA NORRIS

### Campus

Jelani Jackson, Atlanta Adventist Academy chaplain and Bible teacher, provides spiritual support to approximately 130 high school students, with about two-thirds attending virtually.

Establishing meaningful relationships is crucial to his role, stated Jackson. “There is a lot of mistrust of people in authority [among this age group],” noted Jackson. He uses various techniques to show his students that he is relatable, and students can confide in him.

Jackson’s class is often filled with laughter, having successfully fostered good relationships with students. But, beyond addressing spiritual questions, praying for students, and teaching Bible curriculum, he also explores students’ stressors, with school being a significant concern. Jackson acts as an advocate for students, seeking ways to reduce school-related stress in students’ lives. Additionally, he has navigated student mental health crises, assuming a counseling role to offer encouragement and helpful resources.

Despite the challenges, Jackson finds the work rewarding, emphasizing the joy of daily interaction, and privilege of walking alongside students on their spiritual journey.

As a chaplain, you get the opportunity to walk with people and celebrate people, but also stand with people at the most crucial points of life.

*Juleun Johnson, D.Min.,  
vice president of mission and ministry  
of the AdventHealth Southeast Region*

“At first, I didn’t know if I wanted to be a school chaplain,” said Jackson. “... but now that I’ve done it, I really love it and it’s been a blessing.”

PHOTO BY: O’LIVIA WOODARD





Jelani Jackson in the classroom

## Community

José Antonio Pagán, MAPM, a volunteer police chaplain and Central California Conference Adventist Youth Ministries director, differs from the law enforcement agents he works alongside — he serves without a salary and without carrying a gun.

After 33 years of ministry and community involvement, he became a law enforcement chaplain, drawn by the opportunity to interact with a diverse group of people and meet the community's needs.



José Antonio Pagán and his wife, Martita Pagán

PHOTO BY: CHRISTINA NORRIS

In his capacity, he provides spiritual support to the police department's employees, their families, victims, and victim's families. Among several heart-breaking situations, one of the toughest moments occurred when his life was threatened by a victim's family member. However, it was not the threat that saddened him, but what happened immediately afterwards. Assigned to ensure the team's safety, an officer made the decision that it wasn't safe for Pagán to engage with the victim's family. This meant Pagán, despite his desire to offer comfort, had to step back and could not complete his chaplain duties.

"It's tough when you have your hands tied and you have your heart available, but you can't do anything else," shared Pagán.

Pagán said he values his role as police chaplain, stating it opens doors to a community outside the Church. "It's a big privilege, a wonderful opportunity to be close to people in a completely different aspect of ministry and religious environment," said Pagán.

## Corrections

Lester Bandy, M.Div., chaplain at Lee Correctional Institution, responds to various needs from more than 1,000 men incarcerated there. In addition to praying and leading chapel, Bandy provides encouragement, supplies spiritual materials, and connects incarcerated people with their families.

In prison, people commonly conceal challenging emotions, especially separation and grief, according to Bandy. "Grief ministry in the prison setting is not like in a hospital. There is some taboo when it comes to talking about grief," said Bandy.

This has been challenging for Bandy as he desires to meet not only the incarcerated men's spiritual needs, but also their emotional needs. To help facilitate conversations on emotions, including grief and depression, Bandy has spent two years developing a non-religious program that will focus on the day-to-day emotional needs of those incarcerated.

PHOTO BY: OLIVIA WOODARD

## Healthcare

Makeba Garrison, D.Min., a healthcare chaplain in Memphis, Tennessee, felt a calling to shift her ministry focus after 15 years of teaching. Instead of pursuing a doctorate in education, she pursued a master's in divinity with a focus on hospital chaplaincy.

Today, Garrison works in a children's hospital where she interacts with patients, patients' families, and staff daily. Her approach varies: she engages some children in games or music, and offers a quiet presence for children who are easily overstimulated. Garrison supports patients' families by advocating for them and allowing them to grieve during difficult times.

"A healthcare chaplain shows up with the agenda — to make a family feel safe, seen, and loved in probably the worst time of a family's life," explained Garrison.

Garrison also provides spiritual support to the hospital staff. In addition, Garrison meets with fellows and residents monthly to affirm them in their vital work.

Juleun Johnson, D.Min., vice president of mission and ministry for the AdventHealth Southeast Region, works closely with chaplains and leadership across AdventHealth facilities in Georgia, Kentucky, and North Carolina. Johnson emphasized the essential role of chaplains in healthcare, offering spiritual and psychosocial support to staff, patients, and visitors.

"Chaplains are viewed by many persons in the hospital as essential to the healing process," stated Johnson. "... The chaplain is an important member of the team."

According to Johnson, many AdventHealth employees identify as non-religious. Johnson views the hospital as a mission field — an opportunity to show Christ to others. Chaplains prioritize making relationships with staff, fostering trust that encourages open dialogue.

"As a chaplain, you get the opportunity to walk with people and celebrate people, but also stand with people at the most crucial points of life," reflected Johnson. "It's a blessing to be able to be connected with the staff members, because they are the heart and soul of the hospital."





I want to be where [the soldiers] are because I saw Jesus as the God who pursued. So wherever they are, I want to be out there in the field, or, if they're going to the range or jumping out of planes, I want to do it too."

*William Dykes, M.Div., U.S. Army chaplain*

### **Military**

William Dykes, M.Div., U.S. Army chaplain, enlisted as a chaplain's assistant at 17 to fund his Adventist education, the sole Army role related to ministry available without a college degree. While attending college, Dykes participated in weekend drills and was deployed for a time, often leading religious services for troops in units lacking chaplains.

Upon completing his M.Div., Dykes pursued his goal of becoming an official

Army chaplain, a role requiring not only a master's degree and endorsement, but also two years of full-time ministry experience. To gain this experience, he worked as a chaplain at Florida Hospital for Children, now AdventHealth for Children, where he developed his personal philosophy of ministry.

Transitioning to the Army chaplaincy, Dykes describes himself as a "muddy boots chaplain," because of his active engagement in training and

diverse activities rather than being confined to an office.

"I want to be where [the soldiers] are because I saw Jesus as the God who pursued. So wherever they are, I want to be out there in the field, or, if they're going to the range or jumping out of planes, I want to do it too," said Dykes.

His duties are multifaceted: from conducting religious services on both Sabbath and Sunday to advising battalion commanders on ethical matters, providing counseling, organizing family events, and even offering assistance with personal matters like taxes and child-care. Dykes puts it simply: "Whatever it takes, I want to be there for them."

### **Critical Ministry**

Regardless of the area of ministry, chaplains within the Southern Union fulfill a vital role. In crucial times, their unique position allows them to engage with individuals who otherwise may not have sought spiritual support. ❶

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**Christina Norris** is the associate communication director for the Southern Union Conference.







# THE HERO'S JOURNEY

BY DANITA LASHELLE JONES

*WE WANT TO HONOR THE CHAMPIONS WHO HAVE CONSISTENTLY AND FAITHFULLY SERVED, EVEN IF THEY ARE OFTEN OVERLOOKED. IN OUR NEW SERIES, "UNSUNG HEROES," WE WILL SHINE A SPOTLIGHT ON INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE QUIETLY SERVED THEIR COMMUNITIES — ORDINARY PEOPLE WHO HAVE MADE EXTRAORDINARY IMPACT.*

In 1949, American writer Joseph Campbell gave fellow writers one of the most brilliant blueprints for storytelling. After discovering that great stories follow the same pattern, he published *The Hero With 1,000 Faces*. In it, he introduced "The Hero's Journey," eventually adapted into a 12-stage explanation of a central character's path. Good narrative writers will tell you, if you want to tell a compelling story, you need to incorporate this literary device.

If I wanted to tell a story about a humble hero, I could weave in doctoral dissertation-like language to describe his skills, credentials, and contributions. Honestly, though, Campbell had the right idea. Thus begins the story of our hero, Cleveland Thaddeus Wilson.

## Ordinary World

*"This is where the hero exists before his present story begins, oblivious of the adventures to come."* Although named Cleveland Thaddeus Wilson on the day of his birth, his father, Seventh-day Adventist minister Thaddeus Russel Wilson, lovingly refers to his firstborn son as "Murphy." As the child of an Adventist pastor, the family moves through Northeastern Conference until his father arrives at Emmanuel Temple in Buffalo,

New York. Here is where Murphy discovers the Emmanuel Temple Chorale.

## Call to Adventure

*"The hero's adventure begins when he receives a call to action."* To know Murphy is to know he would argue about his "call." Yes, it's his life, and he should have first dibs in discussing

when he was "called." But, some may agree that sitting in the alto section of that choir as a little boy is where it actually happened. Yes, he is like any other young boy who enjoys playing with cars, trains, and pick-up sports games in the street. But, music calls him here and begins to unknowingly build the blocks to play a large part in his life.





### Refusal of The Call

*"Although the hero may be eager to accept the quest, at this stage, he will have fears that need overcoming."* At this point in the story, we find our hero in the 1960s on Oakwood College's (now Oakwood University) campus in Huntsville, Alabama. He refuses to join a group or even sing in the earshot of others. Because he's surrounded by, according to him, musicians who can sing circles around him, he keeps quiet. So, he sits through many Adventist Youth Society programs, concerts, chapels, and church services, and thereby sits on his God-given talent.

### Meeting the Mentor

*"At this crucial turning point where the hero desperately needs guidance, he meets a mentor figure who gives him something he needs."* And, Murphy — dragged kicking and screaming by dedicated friends — is forced to audition for Harold Anthony, Oakwood College Aeolians director. Beyond that, our hero acknowledges his mentorship by Fred Willis Sr., attributing his ability to feel and sing his way through music directly to him.

### Crossing the Threshold

*"The hero is now ready to act upon his call to adventure and truly begin his quest."* Our hero joins a more contemporary group, The Capelle Chorale, on campus. He's happy to just sing first tenor. But, when the group's director doesn't return the following semester, and with no one to take on the responsibility, group members encourage him to direct a song since he is "standing on the end." At this moment, he steps forward and takes the reins. Known for his ability, Murphy is often tasked to direct the Oakwood College Choir while director Jon Robertson, D.M.A., is away, an opportunity not usually given to a non-music major.

### Tests, Allies, Enemies

*"Now, finally out of his comfort zone, the hero is confronted with an ever more*

*difficult series of challenges that test him in various ways."* At this point in the story, our hero gains an ally in life when he meets and marries a local preacher's daughter, and together they start a musical legacy that would stand the test of time. The test? It was introducing contemporary gospel music to a "musically conservative" church in the 1970s with a small choir dubbed Murphy's Band of Mercenaries. Here, our hero faces many verbal and physical attacks from church members and ministers alike. But, others encourage the ministry. So, our hero, with his ally by his side, presses forward.

### Approach to The Inmost Cave

*"As the hero approaches the cave, he must make final preparations before taking that final leap into the great unknown."* This is the part where we highlight Murphy and Antoinette's 40-year musical legacy together. For him, it's safe. He trusts her to choose the songs, while he directs. Fourth Sabbaths at First Church in Huntsville become a rite of passage for church musicians everywhere. Inside this space, together, they create memorable arrangements of songs like "The Lord is Blessing Me," "This Little Light of Mine," "God's Still Moving," and the choir arrangement of Elenore Wright's "A Better Day." Albums would be released, singles with famous country

singers would go gold, and God would bless. But, our hero will shy away from words like "legacy," "world-renowned," and "famous."

### Ordeal

*"The ordeal may be a test or a deep inner crisis that the hero must face to survive or for the world in which the hero lives to continue to exist."* Sadly, this is the part of the story where Antoinette dies. And, for a moment, for our hero, the music goes with her. Murphy decides, on this devastating day in 2013, that the music, choir, and legacy should cease. But, God uses this heart-breaking moment to call his name. This



PHOTO BY: BRYANT TAYLOR, D.MIN.



PHOTO BY: BRYANT TAYLOR, D.MIN.



PHOTO BY: BRYANT TAYLOR, DMIN

could take us back to another “Call to Adventure,” but honestly, this is where the story continues to build momentum.

### Reward (Seizing the Sword)

*“After surviving death and overcoming his greatest personal challenge, the hero emerges from battle as a stronger person.”* Now, after his road-to-Damascus moment, Murphy shares a new testimony with everyone. He challenges everyone he meets to discover the day they gave their life to Christ. With this kind of inspiration, this kind of charge, he approaches what he always knew with a different kind of fervor

### The Road Back

*“At this stage, the hero must return home with his reward, but this time with that of acclaim.”* It’s 2014, and songs he thought he could never sing again have a more authentic, more profound meaning. Our hero conducts workshops, mass choirs, Sunday choirs, and even orchestras. Camp Meetings would have their minister of music, chorales would regain their first tenor, and

the Inspirational Choir would continue past its 40-year ministry. Indeed, Murphy has a new song. That little boy called to music ministry in Buffalo, New York, is now in his 70s, singing Christ’s praises!

### Resurrection

*“This is the climax in which the hero must have his dangerous encounter with death.”* Churches all over the world in 2020 find their ministries facing death. In a world where choirs are dying, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to end it all. Here, our story could end, and everyone would understand. Circumstances beyond his control could defeat our hero. Yet, fully robed, and with nine indoor singers, growing to outdoor, masked, and socially distanced rehearsals, just for morale, he keeps fighting. He keeps going in the face of obstacles and even more devastating losses.

### Return With the Elixir

At this stage of the journey, we find our hero changed and looking forward to a new hope and a new future.

Murphy Wilson, my hero, my daddy, is still directing the nearly 50-year-old Inspirational Choir, still mentoring musicians, still uniquely “feeling” music. I could write so much more about this living legacy, spanning volumes of books that would fill multiple shelves.

As a screenwriter, I can sum it up in a simple elevator pitch: Musician and choir director Cleveland T. Wilson uses his 70 years of experience in music and conducting to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others and create a space for people to realize that it’s never too late to “find your day.”

“The Hero’s Journey” is an archetypal blueprint for our lives: <https://innerpeaceouterjoy.com/the-heros-journey-an-archetypal-blueprint-for-our-lives/>.

*To submit an “Unsung Hero” article for publication in the Southern Tidings, email to [unsungheroes@southernunion.com](mailto:unsungheroes@southernunion.com). ~Editors* ①

**Danita LaShelle Jones** is  
Murphy Wilson’s daughter.

**TELL US ABOUT THE UNSUNG HERO IN YOUR CONFERENCE:**  
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# GIFTING MOBILITY BY PROVIDING FREE HIP, KNEE REPLACEMENTS TO PATIENTS IN NEED

BY LAUREN ROZYLA

As part of a nationwide effort to help patients with debilitating joint conditions improve their quality of life, AdventHealth Carrollwood, Florida, Orthopedic Institute and Pioneer Medical Foundation have joined forces for a third year to provide free hip and knee replacements to 25 individuals in the Tampa Bay, Florida, area who may not qualify for government health coverage, lack insurance, or can't afford surgery.

"When we talk about procedures that can really enable and get patients back to functioning, there's nothing better than a hip and knee replacement," said Brian Palumbo, M.D., who has led the effort to bring together the three organizations to participate in the program and fill a critical need.

Palumbo said there is an ever-increasing demand for orthopedic surgeons, leading some patients to struggle to find access to care, especially those without health coverage.

"The incidence of hip and knee arthritis and severe disease which requires a joint replacement is rising almost exponentially," said Palumbo. "There's actually a shortage of joint replacement surgeons that's expected in the next decade or so. It's certainly

a potential issue in the future for the United States."

Patients said the opportunity to have these free surgeries will be life-changing for them.

Lori Roth, 56, is an Orlando, Florida, resident undergoing left hip joint re-

placement due to an auto accident that left her in excruciating pain.

After working in real estate and auto auctions for many years, she said the pain forced her to stop.

"I'm just grateful from the bottom of my heart that all these people take



Chris Robinson and Lori Roth chat about their upcoming joint replacement surgeries at AdventHealth Carrollwood, provided at no cost through Operation Walk USA.

PHOTO BY: ADVENTHEALTH

their time and have so much love in their hearts to help people like us,” she said. “Because before I found them, I thought I was going to have to lay in bed in pain and wait to die. I wasn’t really capable of doing anything to care for myself.”

Chris Robinson, 57, is a Tampa resident who is receiving his first surgery with this program after more than 20 years of debilitating pain. Robinson worked in the restaurant industry, and later as a baseball umpire, until the pain was too much, and he couldn’t work anymore.

“I’m very excited. I’m going to be having my right hip replaced this year. It gives me back my life, or at least half of it, because the left one is going to be replaced next year!” he said. “As far as mobility goes, any mobility is better than

what I have now. It’s difficult getting up and down. I haven’t been able to squat in nearly two years. It’s basically going to give normal activity back to me.”

Nearly 200 staff volunteers from AdventHealth Carrollwood helped to complete the surgeries, which all took place in early January at AdventHealth Carrollwood.

They are also partnering with Operation Walk USA, a humanitarian organization now in its 13th year, that works with participating hospitals around the country. The program takes place each December through early January as a way for orthopedic surgeons to give back to the community and help patients gain the mobility and quality of life they once enjoyed.

To date, free joint replacements — in-

cluding surgery, hospitalization, and pre/post-operative care — have been provided for 866 patients and surgeries valued at more than \$23.3 million. This year, an estimated 50 surgeries will take place across the country at 20 hospitals, including AdventHealth Carrollwood, with an estimated 25 orthopedic surgeons dedicating their time and expertise.

Device manufacturers include DePuy Synthes, DJO, Smith & Nephew, Stryker, Total Joint Orthopedics, and Zimmer Biomet, who are donating hip and knee implants for 2023-2024 Operation Walk USA. 📍

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**Lauren Rozyla** is the senior manager of media communications at AdventHealth in west Florida.



PHOTO BY: ADVENTHEALTH

AdventHealth Carrollwood



# THERAPY DOGS JOIN GCA FACULTY IN MINISTERING TO STUDENTS

BY KALIE KELCH

Ministry comes in a variety of forms, but at the heart of it is the desire to meet the needs of another person. Georgia-Cumberland Academy (GCA) is getting creative in its ongoing commitment to minister to students, and to provide them with a whole person education that not only prepares them academically, but also meets their mental, spiritual, and physical needs. Thus, the school has adopted two Australian Bernedoodle therapy dogs to address the mental health needs of its student body.

“GCA started looking into this option because pets have a calming effect on people during counseling sessions or just with students experiencing anxiety, homesickness, or other stressful situations,” said Serge Gariepy, GCA principal. “The therapy dog program is a resource to help our counselors, chaplains, deans, and faculty meet the emotional and mental health needs of our students.”

Thanks to the generosity of GCA alumna Cathy Becker Prather, class of 1987, the school adopted the puppies and plans to send them through a training regimen that will ultimately result in them receiving the Canine Good Citizen certification offered by the American Kennel Club. GCA staff members



Georgia-Cumberland Academy student Brianne Spellman stops to spend a few moments between classes with Koda, an Australian Bernedoodle therapy dog. Koda is one of two therapy dogs the school adopted as another way to help students thrive in high school and beyond.



Anani Cross (left), Jacob Henry, and Ella Anderson enjoy a few moments with Koda and Georgia. Georgia-Cumberland Academy recently adopted Koda and Georgia, Australian Bernedoodle therapy dogs, to help address mental health needs of the school's student body.

Chris Harris, Ph.D., counselor, guidance and testing, and Susan Jenkins, business manager, will also undergo special certification training as the dogs' handlers.

"Research highlights dogs' ability to uplift mood and well-being, enriching the school experience. As a parent of two autistic children who have greatly benefited from dogs, I'm thrilled to help bring this support to GCA," said Prather, a family nurse practitioner in Calhoun, Ga., and owner of Happy Top Doodles.

Pets have been shown to lower anxiety in their owners, so GCA is excited to welcome the two puppies — named Georgia and Koda — to the school family. GCA wants to help students develop positive coping skills, and thrive in high school and

beyond; thus, the therapy dogs are another facet in GCA's growing student services.

With more and more students struggling with depression, anxiety, stress, and loneliness, the school has already expanded its counseling services, and this is just one more step in ministering to its students. Shelby Miller is a junior at GCA, and just one of the many students who enjoy taking a break during the day to pet the puppies. "I absolutely love both Georgia and Koda! I've gotten to interact with both of them, and I can say they are so helpful when you're stressed or upset. I definitely think they bring needed support to us as students. They are obviously adorable and just what the school needed!"

There are so many benefits to therapy dogs. "They are non-judgmental, they are excellent listeners, they love unconditionally, they never break confidentiality, and so much more," said Harris. "Our program intends to bring these animals into the family of GCA, where they will be a part of daily life on campus, and can be used in crisis situations and in everyday activities. Once fully trained, we expect the dogs to spend most of their days on campus, at events, in classrooms, and [in] counseling sessions." ❶

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**Kalie Kelch** is the marketing director at Georgia-Cumberland Academy.



# DREAMS FULFILLED: SPRINGFIELD I AND II HISPANIC CHURCHES TRANSFORMED BY THE WORK OF VOLUNTEERS

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA

Following months of dedicated effort, all carried out by church members, the Springfield I Hispanic Church and Springfield II Hispanic Company in Tennessee, achieved significant milestones by respectively completing reconstruction and remodeling projects of their temples. The congregations of these churches celebrated the accomplishments on October 28 and November 4, 2023, with special Sabbath services.

## A Dream of Two Churches

Established in the year 2000 through the initiative of five families, Springfield I initially convened in one of the family's homes. As the congregation expanded, the need for a larger space became evident, and the group acquired a small church building. In 2002, Carmelo Rivera, pastor, who was the Hispanic ministries coordinator for the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference at that time, appointed Armando de León, pastor — now the current Kentucky-Tennessee Hispanic ministries coordinator — as a Bible worker for the growing congregation. This decision laid the groundwork for



Hugo Vasquez (left), Otto del Toro, and Saul Vargas pose inside of the Springfield I Hispanic Church. The trio represent the more than 100 members/volunteers who helped in the reconstruction and remodeling projects for the Springfield Hispanic churches.

the formation of both the Hispanic churches of Elkton and Springfield II.

A new congregation emerged amidst the global pandemic on September 26, 2020. Inspired by the growth of Springfield I and the opportunity it presented for sharing the Gospel, de León initiated the organization of a new group by reaching out to Emilio Perche, pastor, who was assigned to the district at that

time. Perche selected families from Springfield I and the Madison Hispanic Church to form this new assembly. It officially became a company on January 15, 2023, and a month later, Otto del Toro, pastor, was appointed to lead the district.

## A Dream of Growth

Facing the challenge of accommodating their growing congregation, Springfield I, which has an average attendance of 120 people each Sabbath, shifted their meetings to their gym due to its larger capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recognizing the need for a more suitable space, the church initiated plans to rebuild and remodel their facilities.

"In a sense, the pandemic was a blessing for us," said Hugo Vasquez, member at Springfield I. "Our membership grew during the pandemic, and our tithes and offerings increased as well. Soon, it became evident that we had outgrown [the gym]."

Meanwhile, Springfield II, which has a current Sabbath attendance of approximately 80 people, had been generously gifted a church building by the

PHOTO BY: XANDER ORDINOLA



PHOTO BY: PASTOR OTTO DE TORO

The Springfield II Hispanic Church was dedicated on October 28, 2023, with a special Sabbath service. The service, which included a baptism, celebrated the remodeling of the temple.



PHOTO BY: PASTOR OTTO DE TORO

Steve Haley, D.Min. (left), Kentucky-Tennessee president, and Otto de Toro, pastor, conduct the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Springfield II Hispanic Church. The construction for the Springfield I Hispanic Church commenced in late March of 2023.

English-speaking Springfield Adventist Church. However, the building required substantial remodeling and repairs to meet the congregation's needs. The pressing need for additional space prompted the leadership to undertake a practical and essential renovation project.

"We said, 'Let's go now by faith,'" said Saul Vargas, Springfield II member. "We practically had no money, but we did have the desire to see the temple look beautiful, just as God deserves."

### Dreams Under Construction

Construction for Springfield I commenced in late March of 2023. The project involved dismantling the existing structure and reconstructing the church essentially from scratch, retaining only the original steel frames. Concurrently, in June 2023, remodeling work began at Springfield II.

The two churches spent just over \$140,000 in materials for the projects. Both the construction and the remodeling efforts were completed entirely through the volunteer efforts of dedicated church members. Week after week, members dedicated their Sundays to work on the roofing, flooring, lighting, plumbing, and more.

"Every member was involved," said del Toro. "Those who did not know anything about construction would clean or sweep. Those who did not clean or

sweep would prepare food to bring to the workers. Some would organize fundraisers, and others would travel all the way to Georgia to pick up the materials."

The construction and remodeling projects were successfully completed by the end of October 2023. On October 28, Springfield II dedicated their remodeled temple, which can now accommodate 120 people, during a special Sabbath service. The service included a baptism. The following weekend, Springfield I also dedicated their newly rebuilt temple, which was also expanded to accommodate 190 people.

"It is an honor to work for the cause of God," said Vargas. "The Lord put this project in our hearts, and He gave us the skills to see it done."



PHOTO BY: PASTOR OTTO DE TORO

Outside of the Springfield II Hispanic Church: The church's new project is to build a gym to meet the needs of their youth ministries.

### The Dream Continues

Both churches continue to plan for the future. Springfield I is focusing on external renovations to enhance its overall appearance. Springfield II has set its sights on constructing a gym to serve the needs for their youth ministries.

"The first thing that I learned as a child is that you give the best to God," said del Toro. "Everything we do in the Church, first of all, is to glorify God and, secondly, it is to reach the community. When visitors come to the church, they must feel welcomed, comfortable, and at peace. [This project] was important to us because this is where God meets His children." 🕊

**Paola Mora Zepeda** is the media ministries director for the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference.



PHOTO BY: PASTOR OTTO DEL TORO

Inside of the reconstructed temple of the Springfield I Hispanic Church: The new building can now accommodate 190 people.



# Practicing Gratitude Can Help Keep Burnout at Bay

Practicing gratitude can be good medicine, according to a recent study conducted by AdventHealth researchers.

Three clinical leaders from AdventHealth DeLand and AdventHealth Fish Memorial in Florida published a timely, first-of-its-kind research study in the 2023 fall issue of *Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*.

“Work stress and burnout are reported barriers to quality patient care and job satisfaction,” states the study. “This study aimed to evaluate the effect of participation in a 21-day gratitude journaling intervention on health care professionals’ reported gratitude levels. A secondary aim was to determine the correlation between increased gratitude and decreased work-related stress and burnout.”

The study revealed how practicing gratitude by journaling can help decrease perceived stress and burnout for health care professionals while also elevating feelings of gratefulness.

Michele Johnson, chief nursing officer at AdventHealth Fish Memorial; Michele Lebron, chief nursing officer at AdventHealth DeLand; and Tammy Land, patient experience manager at AdventHealth



PHOTO BY: ADVENTHEALTH

Fish Memorial, worked with three other researchers from May through October of 2019 to evaluate the positive impact of keeping a gratitude journal. As part of the study, more than 400 team members journaled for 21 days, recording three things that went well in their day.

“The idea really came to life as a way to help individuals who are caring for others daily take care of their own mental health,” said Lebron. “Nurses are confronted with helping our community deal with many of life’s greatest challenges, so we leaned into taking a closer look at ways we as nurses can keep doing our job to care for others, while also caring for ourselves.”

The study noted that health care professionals nationwide report stress and burnout as the biggest barriers to job satisfaction. Before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, some of the stressors experienced by health care workers included time constraints, workload, and challenging work circumstances, along with juggling multiple roles.

“We wanted to do something that our patients would benefit from,” explained Land, who is responsible for monitoring patient

feedback. “When our team felt happier or said things in a positive way, it also reflected positively on patients’ care experience.”

AdventHealth continues to innovate to improve the experience of patients and alleviate burnout among clinical teams. Following the pandemic, the organization invested in “virtual nurses,” where a registered nurse working offsite con-



PHOTO BY: ADVENTHEALTH

AdventHealth virtual nursing



PHOTO BY: ADVENTHEALTH

Gratitude journaling

nects with patients, after getting their consent, via a webcam in the patient's room. The virtual nurses are a second set of eyes for bedside nurses, and they help with admissions and discharges, so the onsite care teams can work more closely with high acuity patients. The virtual nurses program helps reduce the work-

load on bedside nurses. This program allowed nurses to spend more time with their patients while providing them with additional caregivers. As a result, the retention rate for nurses working at the bedside improved significantly.

"These results are something I, personally, am grateful for," said Johnson.

"Knowing our nurses are experiencing greater joy in their roles, which in turn gives a better experience to our patients, makes me smile." 📍

BY KELLY PROZIALECK, ADVENTHEALTH COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

# AdventHealth Listed Among America's Top Safest, Highest Quality Hospitals

Highlighting AdventHealth's nationally recognized achievements in patient safety and quality, nine AdventHealth locations were named a Top Hospital by The Leapfrog Group. The Leapfrog Top Hospital Award is widely acknowledged as one of the most competitive awards American hospitals can receive.

The safety of patient care across many areas of hospital performance is considered in establishing the qualifications for the award, including infection rates, practices for safer surgery, maternity care, and the hospital's capacity to prevent medication errors. The rigorous standards are defined in each year's Top Hospital Methodology.

"Protecting patients from preventable harm is the cornerstone of The Leapfrog Group's mission," said Leah Binder, president and CEO of The Leapfrog Group. "AdventHealth has demonstrated that patient safety is their top priority, and we're truly pleased to recognize them as a Top Hospital this year. Congratulations to hospital staff at all levels who made this national recognition possible."

The recent release of Leapfrog's Fall 2023 Hospital Safety Grades also revealed 74% of AdventHealth hospitals assessed by Leapfrog across the coun-



PHOTO BY: ADVENTHEALTH

try earned an "A" grade for meeting the highest safety standards in health care. The organization's consistent excellence in patient safety was recognized last year when Leapfrog granted AdventHealth the Emerald Award for Outstanding Achievement by a Health Care System — the first and only health system to earn the distinction.

"Earning Top Hospital Awards across our system reflects the excellence of our incredible team members who celebrate

and champion safety and quality each day for our patients and each other," said William Scharf, M.D., executive clinical director of quality and safety for AdventHealth. "Keeping people safe throughout their care journey is a key component of our promise to help people feel whole." 📍

BY ERIC FARLOW, ADVENTHEALTH MEDIA RELATIONS MANAGER



# Highlights Shared from “Building with God” 2023 Men’s Retreat

This year’s Men’s Retreat, with the theme “Building with God,” drew a total attendance of 411 men, both Spanish and English speakers. Participants spanned various durations of stay, with some arriving for the entire weekend, which encompassed Friday afternoon through Sunday morning, while others joined solely for Sabbath or arrived early to prepare for the event. Accommodations varied as well, as some chose to camp in the midst of nature while others opted for cabin lodging. Regardless of their preferences, all attendees found themselves enriched by a diverse array of offerings, including music, seminars, nourishing meals, camaraderie, and favorable weather conditions.

The English-speaking segment of the retreat featured Marty Miller as the keynote speaker. Hailing from the Chattanooga, Tenn., area, Miller is the driving force behind Blueprint for Men, a ministry devoted to the pursuit of “building better men.” During his sessions, Miller skillfully guided the men in forging a deeper connection with Jesus through personal devotions. Furthermore, he provided valuable tools for enhancing their lives by following the example set by Jesus, who serves as the ultimate Blueprint for Men. The retreat agenda encompassed periods of collective prayer, relaxation, bonding, learning, growth, praise, sharing, and recreation, ensuring a full and enriching experience for all attendees.



PHOTO BY: COURTNEY HEROD



PHOTO BY: COURTNEY HEROD

Under the steadfast leadership of Tony LaPorte, pastor, these retreats have consistently delivered unique and meaningful experiences. This year, Chana Gentry, LaPorte’s newly appointed secretary, contributed significantly to the event’s success by efficiently managing attendee registrations and ensuring that all necessities were readily available, thus enriching the annual retreat experience.

The musical dimension of the retreat was skillfully orchestrated by the praise team, primarily comprising members from the Charleston, S.C., Church. Their devotion and preparedness shone through as they facilitated a deeper connection with Jesus through music. The theme song for this year, “Builder of Men,” gifted to the event by Tag Garmon, a gentleman from Tennessee, played a central role in setting the spiritual tone. Although Garmon couldn’t attend the retreat in person, his presence

resonated through the heartfelt rendition of the song by the praise team. His inspiring testimony can be accessed through the Blueprint for Men podcast, further enhancing the retreat’s spiritual depth.

Ralph Henderson, pastor from the Kernersville, N.C., Church, contributed a special musical performance with his guitar and captivating voice, showcasing his years of musical expertise. Rick Faber, camp director, as always, went above and beyond to ensure that the retreat was a comfortable and enjoyable experience for all attendees.

Looking ahead, plans are already in motion for next year’s retreat. All are encouraged to mark their calendars for September 2024, and join the event at Nosoca Pines. If anyone has not yet experienced the beauty of Nosoca Pines, now is the perfect opportunity to explore it. Those who have yet to attend a men’s retreat are missing out on a profound and transformative experience. It offers an invaluable opportunity to take a break, rejuvenate, and connect with men from across the Carolina Conference. Equipping themselves with the right resources through this retreat empowers each to become the man that God has called him to be, effectively leading his communities and churches. ❶



PHOTO BY: COURTNEY HEROD

BY LEE GRIFFIN

# José “Joe” Pieretti Answers Call to Ministry

Each pastor’s journey into ministry is a little different, and it is always amazing to hear how the Lord opens doors as He calls His servants. This is certainly true for José “Joe” Pieretti, pastor. Pieretti sensed his calling to pastoral ministry after learning about the Seventh-day Adventist Church and choosing to be baptized.

To prepare for ministry, he attended classes at Southern Adventist University where he also worked at the local Adventist Book Center, served as a local church elder, participated in three evangelistic campaigns, and was an extern pastor for the Chattanooga First Adventist Church.

Upon graduation, Pieretti was called by the Carolina Conference to serve alongside Jeff Crain, pastor for the Raleigh and Henderson churches. He eventually had a change in responsibilities and is currently serving the Wake Forest and Henderson churches.

Pieretti was ordained to the gospel ministry on Sabbath, October 21, 2023. He and Jessica were the honored guests as Carolina Conference administrators and the Ministerial Department conducted the service. Glen Altermatt, speaker for the service, focused on the love that Pieretti has for people, and the wonderful ways God has used him to touch many lives. Altermatt closed by asking Pieretti to share from his heart about the importance of choosing Christ in many lives.

The prayer of ordination was given by Leslie Louis, Carolina Conference president, as each ordained minister present was also invited to come forward to lay hands on Pieretti. He is now authorized by the Seventh-day Adventist World Church to conduct ministry in any portion of God’s vineyard. 🕊

BY DARRYL BENTLEY, MAPM, ASSOCIATE  
DIRECTOR FOR MINISTERIAL



PHOTO BY: STEVEN MCLEOD



PHOTO BY: STEVEN MCLEOD



PHOTO BY: STEVEN MCLEOD



# Arcadia Holds Community Basket Outreach

Arcadia, Fla., Church adopted and orchestrated a Community Basket Outreach Ministry. Members plan to hold this event every November, as the Lord leads. The goal is to connect with Arcadia and DeSoto County community leaders and organizations by presenting them with a gift basket and a note that expresses the church's appreciation for their dedication to the community.

The church got together on a Saturday evening to assemble and decorate the crates. Each one was packed with a variety of plant-based items which included three pounds of pears, three pounds of apples, 10 little bears full of local raw honey, crackers, breadsticks with olives, healthy granola bars, breakfast cookies, and an assortment of nuts. The majority of these items were donated or purchased with funds given by church attendees.

Each crate included a personalized card from the church telling each organization how much they are appreciated, and informing them that all members of their organization, and their families, are being lifted in prayer. Each small group



Each outreach basket has a customized note.

that assembled and decorated a crate also spent time together praying over their crate and the individuals who would be receiving it on November 20.

So far, the response has been very positive. The DeSoto County Fire Department, the Arcadia Police Department, Emergency Room workers at DeSoto



Crew from a DeSoto County Fire Station happily receive their gift crate from Doyle Edwards (left), Arcadia Church elder.



Arcadia member Irene Edwards delivers a gift crate to the Post Office.

Memorial Hospital, and the Arcadia Habitat for Humanity were among the many organizations who were thrilled to receive a gift crate.

Arcadia members encourage others to perform this type of community outreach ministry. It is a creative way to share the love of Jesus and show the community that Seventh-day Adventists care about them and love them, and that they are friendly and approachable. 📍



Youth from Arcadia Church join Luis Gracia, pastor (second from left), and his sister, Rosabel Cameron (right), to deliver a basket to the local emergency room.

BY ROSABEL CAMERON

## Dunnellon Church Dedicates New Pastor

**D**unnellon Church was blessed to have Javier Diaz, pastor and pastoral ministries field associate for the North Florida District, come to the church to introduce Wayne Gosling, a new pastor for Dunnellon Church.

Gosling is from the Chicago area and attended Andrews University, graduating

with an M.Div. He has pastored churches in various conferences for 43 years. He will now be pastor of the Hernando and Dunnellon Churches in the Florida Conference. He and his wife, Sheila, have two children and five grandchildren.

Sheila Gosling and the attending elders joined Diaz on the platform as he offered

a dedicatory prayer installing Gosling as the new pastor. The church prays for the Goslings as they take on new churches and as they work with the local congregations in sharing Jesus with our community. 📍

BY GLENDA BATES



Those pictured for a dedicatory prayer: Sheila Gosling (left); Wayne Gosling, Hernando-Dunnellon district pastor; Robert Ramoutar, head elder; Javier Diaz, Florida Conference pastoral ministries field associate; Daryl Curry and Freddie Poggi, elders; and Steve Burrowes, head deacon.



# Sinai Community Celebrates Quick Progression in Becoming Church

On December 9, 2023, Sinai Community Church in Jackson, Ga., celebrated receiving its memorable full-fledged church status. Just 16 months prior, Sinai Community had been organized as a church company, and at the same time celebrated the burning of their church mortgage.

In 2008 this church started out as the Antioch Church with seven families, including the Azemar, Caleb, Bellanton, Andre, Philippe, Brea, and Joseph families. Then in 2010 the church embraced a vision for growth and community engagement along with a shift of identity. The church name was changed to Sinai Community. During the history of the church, they encountered multiple challenges. For example, one Sabbath during worship service, the church was given a ten-minute notice to leave the rented building. Despite many transitions and challenges along the way, the church continues to advance.

In 2014 the church joined the Georgia-Cumberland Conference and, be-



**Whitford Shaw (left), Sinai Community Church pastor, recognizes God's leading throughout the church's history. On December 9, 2023, the church was organized with full church status during an organization service led by Chester Clark, Georgia-Cumberland Conference's vice president for administration.**

cause they miraculously secured their own building, they established a reputation for community service and began operating a food pantry program. This program has grown exponentially, and God blesses them with helping around

100 families every two weeks.

An important feature of the church is the involvement of the youth in leadership of and participation in the church's programs. Another impactful program of the church has been the weekly sharing of health information for the membership, followed by the year-round Creation Life initiative for the community. The results, such as diabetes reversal, the lowering of blood pressure, weight loss, and plant-base lifestyle change, have been phenomenal. Also included within the Creation Life Program is the Daniel and Revelation Bible studies held over Zoom. Already several baptisms have been the result of this program.

Today, the Sinai Community Church stands as testament to its journey, embracing technology for communication and community building. The church remains committed to its mission of sharing the Gospel and embodying a dynamic and evolving presence within its community.

PHOTO BY: NATHAN ZINNER

# Collegedale Academy Enhances Campus Safety with Appointment of SRO

In a proactive move aimed at bolstering campus safety, Collegedale Academy welcomed Officer Eatmon as its school resource officer (SRO) on Tuesday, November 28, 2023. The decision comes after a unanimous vote from parents during a recent school safety town hall meeting,

the approval of the school board, and with the full support and partnership of the Collegedale City Commission.

Brent Baldwin, Collegedale Academy head of school, emphasized the school's commitment to the safety of its students, stating, "Safety is our number one prior-

ity, and the addition of Officer Eatmon as our school resource officer is a significant step towards achieving that goal. He promised, if it came down to it, he will do everything he can to keep our kids safe."

Officer Cordario Eatmon, known to students as "Officer C," brings a passion for

fostering positive connections between law enforcement and the student body. In a statement, he expressed his commitment to building trust and understanding within the school community, stating, “My goal

is to develop a positive and approachable presence on campus between students and law enforcement. I pursued this SRO position because I wanted to have a positive impact on the lives of young people.”



Collegedale Academy (CA) early childhood education students love when School Resource Office (SRO) Cordario Eatmon, known as “Officer C,” visits their classroom. The SRO is a collaboration between CA and the City of Collegedale, with the goal of providing a safe educational environment for students.

The decision to hire an SRO was not taken lightly and was the result of a thorough and collaborative process between Collegedale Academy and Collegedale city officials. Officer Eatmon’s position is unique in that his salary will be covered by the school during the 10 months that school is in session, and the remaining two months he will work with the city. “We are able to have somebody here that’s part of Collegedale Police,” noted Baldwin, “without the need for any taxpayer money.”

With Officer Eatmon’s appointment, Collegedale Academy looks forward to furthering its mission of providing an exceptional and secure educational experience for all students while building positive relationships within the campus. ①

BY PAMELA DAVENPORT

## Andrews and Murphy Churches Go to Bethlehem

**O**n a night in Bethlehem of old, perhaps a local bazaar attracted townspeople for shopping and visiting. This routine event surely changed — as indeed the world was changed forever — with the birth of Jesus.

In Cherokee County, N.C., “A Night in Bethlehem” welcomed the Christmas season. On the evening of December 9 at the Mountain Folk Center and Farmer’s Market, more than 1,000 people signed in to visit the 32 booths sponsored by 24 groups, 19 churches, and five businesses. While the weather wasn’t ideal, one visitor noted that, “The birth of Mary’s baby in a stable surely wasn’t ideal either!”

Christmas carols by a local choir set the scene for people in the recreated town of Bethlehem. Many booth sponsors in

costume also offered snacks, apple cider, and books. Children explored the Old Testament “Find It if You Can” activity books provided by the Andrews, N.C.,



Andrews, N.C., Church members share hot drinks and Old Testament activity books during “A Night in Bethlehem,” community event. Murphy, N.C., Church members also participated, giving out New Testament activity books and around 200 stuffed animals.

Church booth. A New Testament “Find It if You Can” activity book was offered by the Murphy, N.C., Church, along with Christ-themed coloring books. The booth also provided some 200 stuffed animals for small children.

Participating in “A Night in Bethlehem” is only one way these churches make a difference in Cherokee County. Just a few weeks prior, the Murphy church gathered 86 coats, 64 pairs of gloves, 106 hats, and 11 sweaters for the Rotary Club’s Winter Coat Drive. The new and gently used adult and youth winter clothing helped ensure that every adult or child in the area lacking a coat or other warm clothing would have what they needed. ①

BY JANICE DEATON



# Volunteers Extend Helping Hands in Aftermath of Middle Tennessee Tornadoes

In the wake of the destructive tornadoes that tore through Middle Tennessee on Saturday, December 9, 2023, dedicated volunteers from the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference stepped up to help the affected communities. These volunteers, many of whom came through the Conference's disaster relief ministry, helped in various aspects of the recovery process.

Some of the key initiatives undertaken by the volunteers involved the cleanup of debris-strewn areas, cutting up fallen trees, helping homeowners tarp their roofs and look for valuable possessions among the destroyed properties. According to Mike Hewitt, Conference vice president for administration and coordinator of the Conference's disaster relief ministries, these opportunities for community assistance are as much a blessing for those affected as they are for those lending a helping hand.

"Every time I do this, it just makes me feel like I'm making a difference in the community," said Hewitt. "Not only am I helping people meet their needs, but I'm also hopefully helping leave them with

something that's going to bring them closer to Jesus."

Over the last year, the Kentucky-Tennessee Conference, in collaboration with the Collegedale-based ministry, 2Serve, has been offering Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training for interested church members. Through these efforts, more than 50 individuals in the Conference are now CERT certified.

"Our goal is to find more churches that are interested in CERT training," said Hewitt. "We want more trained volunteers across the entire Conference because the reality is that disasters, whether they be tornadoes, floods, or any unforeseen events, can occur anywhere."

In addition, thanks to donations from church members, the Conference has successfully purchased a pickup truck and a 20-foot-long trailer fully equipped with generators, water pumps, and essential tools all necessary for the relief efforts. Hewitt says this investment is important as it provides tangible objects used to demonstrate Jesus' love.

Johnny Rodman, from the Oasis Church in Tennessee, has been a constant disaster relief volunteer for the past two years. He helped in the December 2021 Mayfield, Ky., tornado, and the July 2022, Hazard, Ky., flash flood relief efforts. Rodman says helping out during these difficult times has grown his faith and strengthened his sense of purpose.

"This ministry is so important because it's reaching out to the people that are in devastation, that are in the darkness, that have lost absolutely everything," said Rodman. "I feel this overwhelming sensation that the Lord is going to take care of me as long as I'm doing His ministry .... I always pray, 'Lord, let them not see me, but let them see Your work.'"

As the recovery process continues, the Conference remains dedicated to assisting in the rebuilding efforts, emphasizing the importance of long-term support for those affected. 📌

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDEA



PHOTO BY: PAOLA MORA ZEPEDEA

Volunteer cuts down fallen tree following the tornadoes that took place in Middle Tennessee early in December 2023. Other key initiatives taken by volunteers included the cleanup of debris-strewn areas and helping homeowners tarp their roofs.



Volunteers from the Woodbury Church help in the clean-up efforts in Hendersonville, Tenn. Woodbury was one of the churches to receive the CERT training courses provided by the Conference back in June and July of 2023.



PHOTO BY: XANDER ORDINOLA

2Serve volunteer moves debris from a home in Hendersonville, Tenn. 2Serve, a Collegedale-based ministry, has been helping with the CERT training efforts in the Conference, and now more than 50 members are CERT certified.

# Nashville First Sponsors Young Adults to Attend Life-Changing Mission Trip

**C**hristina Lopez, who attends the Nashville First, Tenn., Church, had heard a lot about life-changing mission trips. Her family had just returned from one to the Dominican Republic, and they were raving about how great it was. Lopez, a sophomore at Vanderbilt University, had not been able to join the trip due to school commitments, but, as she heard her family's story, she felt a growing conviction that participating in a mission trip was something she needed to do.

Around the same time, Nelson Mercado, Nashville First Church pastor, was in communication with ShareHim, a donor-supported ministry of the Carolina Conference that organizes mission trips abroad. Eager for the youth in his congregation to have this unique experience, he discussed the opportunity with the church board, and they immediately jumped at the chance to sponsor up to five young adults to go on a mission trip.



Christina Lopez (right) poses with her mission trip translator, Jaquelin Canaza. Lopez had been dreaming of attending a mission trip, and was able to travel to Peru for an evangelistic series thanks to the sponsorship of the Nashville First Church.



PHOTO BY: NELSON MERCADO

Jean-Luc Mercado (left), Christina Lopez, Ariana Mercado, and Nelson Mercado smile together while they were on their mission trip to Peru.

"This was an important ministry for the church," said Mercado. "They recognized that anyone who engages [in a mission trip], even if they haven't preached before, experiences incredible spiritual growth. The church was eager for our young adults to experience this."

When Lopez found out about the opportunity, she quickly jumped on board. From October 25 to November 6, 2023, Lopez, alongside Mercado and two other young adults from the Nashville First Church, traveled to Lima, Peru, for an evangelistic series. Despite facing challenges such as technical failures and illness, each individual delivered a total of 11 sermons at their designated church. At the end of the series, eight people were baptized.

As Lopez reflects on her experience, she says the person she was before the mission trip is different from the person who came back.

"You hear so much about mission trips and how they change your life and your

perspective, but if I am honest, I was skeptical. How could a two-week trip change your life?" said Lopez. "But, every single day I was [in Peru], God found a new way to humble me. I felt so small, but yet so seen at the same time. God was showing me something that was bigger than myself."

When she came back from her trip, Lopez wrote a thank-you letter to the church members who had sponsored her. She says their kind gesture inspired her to do the same in the future.

"I just have so much admiration and respect for them," said Lopez. "They spent their time and money for a project they were not going to, and did not know who it was going to affect. They just trusted me and God .... Now I want to do the same. When I am financially stable, all I want to do is sponsor someone else." ●

BY PAOLA MORA ZEPEDA



# South Atlantic Conference Launches New Legacy Ministries Initiative

**H**istory was made when the leadership of the South Atlantic Conference (SAC) officially launched a first-of-its-kind ministry aimed at meeting the needs of three categories of individuals who reside and attend congregations within its Conference territory. The target demographics include retired denominational workers, surviving spouses of deceased denominational workers, and the children of denominational workers. The official launch of SAC Legacy Ministries was declared by Calvin B. Preston, South Atlantic Conference president.

The Sabbath afternoon launch program included a panel discussion to explain the purpose of the new ministry, which is coordinated by Everton A. Ennis, D.Min.,



**The Legacy Ministries was launched at Berean Church in Atlanta, Ga. Pictured are the panelists: Stephen Ruff (left), retired worker; Everton A. Ennis, D.Min., South Atlantic general vice president; Teresa Hairston, daughter of a denominational worker; and Calvin B. Preston, South Atlantic president.**

and tasked with identifying and meeting the unique needs of those who have served the denomination, specifically

within the territory of South Atlantic.

The panel shared how Conference leaders have discovered that some retired workers sometimes felt “forgotten” and “out-of-the-loop” regarding current Conference events, and some surviving (and never-remarried) spouses also felt disconnected and forgotten. It was also noted that some children of active and former denominational workers no longer regularly attend or support the Church. SAC Legacy Ministries is also tasked with finding ways to affirm and inspire detached workers’ children to reconnect with the Church. 📌

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BY **EVERTON A. ENNIS, D.MIN.**

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# Ramah Junior Academy Receives “Best of Georgia” Award

**R**amah Junior Academy, located in Savannah, Ga., received the Best of Georgia Award as one of the best private schools by the *Georgia Business Journal*. This accolade reflects the dedication of the educators and staff, and highlights the school’s profound impact on the local community.

Under the leadership of Paula Morris-Blackwell, principal, Ramah has an unwavering commitment to academic achievement, innovative teaching methods, and a nurturing learning environment.

The school produces students who not only excel in standardized tests, but also exhibit a deep understanding of the subjects they study. This commitment to high academic standards is reflected in the cur-



**Paula Morris-Blackwell, Ramah Junior Academy principal, prays with some of her students.**

riculum designed to challenge and inspire students, and to foster a love for learning that extends beyond the classroom.

From incorporating technology into the classroom to promoting project-based learning, Ramah’s goal is that

its students are well-prepared for the challenges of the modern world.

The impact of Ramah extends far beyond the classroom walls and reaches into the local community. The school actively engages in community outreach programs, instilling a sense of social responsibility in its students. Through initiatives such as volunteering and environmental projects, students are taught to be conscientious citizens who understand the importance of giving back to society.

Ramah Junior Academy was founded in 1914 and is the oldest African American private school in Savannah, Ga. 📌

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BY **LOIS PITTS**

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# Myrtle Grove Church Holds Rededication Service

The Myrtle Grove Church in Wilmington, N.C., celebrated its rededication service as Myrtle Grove Bilingual Church, on Sabbath, November 4, 2023. This is the first officially named bilingual congregation in the South Atlantic Conference. The church's mission remains the same, "Go ye into all the world and preach," which focuses on carrying the Gospel to a multicultural community that surrounds the church.

Believers from the Hispanic and African American Adventist communities came together to create a unique place of worship, outreach, prayer, and praise —

a bilingual worship community.

Calvin B. Preston, South Atlantic Conference president, delivered a stirring message during worship service, highlighting how God will bring His people together to accomplish His will, despite differences in race, culture, or ethnic origin. Preston and Fines Baez-Roman, Myrtle Grove pastor, led the congregation in the rededication service.

Following the church service, lunch was served to all who attended. 📍

BY MARK WADE



The church was filled to capacity as Calvin B. Preston, South Atlantic Conference president, addressed the congregation.

# Smithfield First Church Receives Miracle on 5th Street

For more than two years, Smithfield First Church in Smithfield, N.C., has been working to clear a lot next to the church. The building which had been on the site had fallen into disrepair and been demolished, and the lot had become overgrown with weeds. A section of the land that was used as a temporary trash site had become permanent.

The church was looking into using the lot for much-needed parking space. However, due to a change in the local building codes, those plans became unfeasible. The church board decided to request bids just to clear the lot and plant grass to make it less of an eyesore. The members began to secure bids for the work, one of which was \$6,500.

A site visit was scheduled for an additional bid. When the local elder arrived, he saw that an excavator was already



Pictured are Michael Shelton (left), Smithfield Church pastor, and the benevolent contractor, M. Durwood Stephenson.

working, and a dumpster was partially filled. The contractor was only to look at the job and submit a bid. The local elder approached the foreman to apologize for the misunderstanding. The foreman said, "There is no misunderstanding. The owner

of the construction company said to clear the lot, remove the trash, and send him the bill!" Additionally, the owner approved the job, bringing 60 tons of topsoil. The next Sabbath was one of special rejoicing, acknowledging God's answer to prayer.

A plaque commemorating the generosity of the owner, M. Durwood Stephenson, was presented to him by Michael A. Shelton, Smithfield Church pastor. In addition, copies of *The Great Controversy* and *The Desire of Ages* were given to Stephenson.

They were reminded of the words of Ellen White which she wrote in *The Desire of Ages*, p. 330: "Our Father has a thousand ways to answer our prayers of which we know not anything." 📍

BY MICHAEL SHELTON



# Disability Inclusion Training Helps People with Disabilities Get Involved in Ministry

Inclusion of people with disabilities in church services and community activities is necessary. People with and without disabilities are needed to participate in ministry to carry forth the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Although we may know someone with a disability, learning how to provide access and accommodations to help get people involved in ministry is essential. For this reason, Jennifer Sankey-Battles, Ph.D., director of disabilities ministries for the Southeastern Conference, and Melinda Wilson, an advocate for disabilities ministries, planned a four-hour disability inclusion training to raise awareness on how to remove barriers, and get people with disabilities participating in the worship services, which aligns with Southeastern's mission of sharing hope and restoring wholeness.

The training was a collaboration between leaders at the local church, conference, Southern Union, and the North American Division. Ola Bookhardt, longstanding disability leader of the host church, opened the training with a warm welcome and prayer, followed by a dynamic presentation by Charlotte LV Thoms, Ed.D., coordinator of disabilities ministries for the North American Division. Thoms focused on Jesus' commission to His followers to be fruitful and facilitate access and accommodations for people seeking to know Christ. Her review of the seven major disability groups — cognitive, hearing, hidden, mobility, psychiatric, speech, and visual — were eye-opening, showing the importance of being aware and responsive to the access and accommodation needs for individuals in each disability group.

The Disability Inclusion Training Workshop was informative, interactive, and inspiring, with the goal of participants taking what



**Ola Bookhardt (left), disabilities ministries leader for Mt. Sinai Church in Orlando, Fla., and Jennifer Sankey-Battles, Ph.D., MHA, RN, Southeastern Conference disabilities ministries director**



**Charlotte LV Thoms, Ed.D. (left), North American Division disabilities ministries coordinator, and Jennifer Sankey-Battles, Ph.D., MHA, RN, Southeastern Conference disabilities ministries director**

they learned and implementing inclusion practices in their respective churches and communities. Individuals with and without disabilities and leaders from different churches and the community attended the training workshop held at Mount Sinai Church in Orlando, Fla., shepherded by Derrick Moffett, Th.D., Mount Sinai senior pastor, and Alexis Madrid, associate pastor.

A highlight of the program included individuals with disabilities leading out, which showed the feasibility and importance of giving others like them the opportunity to participate in ministry. Other high points were the heartwarming testimonies, inspirational songs, interactive activities, fitness fun, and an onsite field trip throughout the church building to identify ways to enhance access and accommodation for people with disabilities.

Examples of access and accommodations include an adequate number of designated parking spaces for individuals with a disability, use of closed caption for video presentation, ramps to the pulpit and choir stands, handrails, a push plate door open-

er, lowered paper towel dispensers in the bathroom, and the use of a sign language interpreter when possible. These accommodations help individuals function better and have an unencumbered worship experience.

Teaching individuals the soul-saving value of giving everyone the same opportunity to participate in ministry benefits both the church and the community. Every church should have a disability team that advocates and removes barriers to facilitate the involvement of people with disabilities in ministry. Church services can be enriched when people with disabilities are involved.

Participants of the workshop were encouraged to invite people interested in ministry to use their God-given gifts to help spread the Gospel of Christ's soon return. To learn more about disability inclusion training, contact Sankey-Battles at 352-735-3142, x113. 📞

BY JENNIFER R. SANKEY-BATTLES, PH.D.,  
SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE DIRECTOR  
FOR DISABILITY MINISTRIES

# “Fill Us” Chosen as Southeastern Conference’s 2024 Theme

*Michael K. Owusu, D.Min., Southeastern Conference president, addresses the Southeastern members in a letter.*

Greetings, dear friends:

As we begin another year, my heart is filled with gratitude for each of you who enrich our Southeastern Conference family.

Thank you to all who have chosen to follow our Lord and committed yourselves to the service and mission of His church. Through your faithfulness, we can continue the ministry, trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit to equip us with the tools needed for this great work.

Our unity in service, despite our diverse backgrounds and unique heritages, stands as a beautiful testament to the Spirit of God dwelling within each of us. Remember when Christ said, “By this shall all men know that ye are my

disciples if ye have love one to another,” John 13:35? Our unity and love are precious gifts from our Lord. He alone has sustained us through 2023, and He alone will carry us through the years to come.

On behalf of my fellow administrators, office staff, pastors, and educators, it is our privilege to serve with you, our members, and for this, we give glory to God.


With great joy, I announce the Southeastern Conference theme for 2024, revealed during the closing moments of our Camp Meeting: “Fill Us.” This theme should resonate deeply within each of us and remind us of our aspiration to be vessels overflowing with the divine presence of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the year, our mission will remain unchanged: to embody the teachings of love, compassion, and service in our homes, churches, and communities.

The call to be filled by the Holy Spirit is a call to transformation — a collective pursuit that unites us in our commitment to shine the light of Christ in a world often shrouded in darkness. It is a call to be instruments of peace, healing, and hope wherever we tread.

May our reflection on the “Fill Us” theme serve as a beacon of inspiration, guiding us into 2024 with a renewed sense of purpose and dedication.

Wishing you and your loved ones a blessed New Year as we await the return of our Savior and Lord.

With heartfelt blessings,

Michael K. Owusu, D.Min. 

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BY MICHAEL K. OWUSU, D.MIN.,  
SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

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# Educational Offerings Expand to Include Certificates Program

AdventHealth University is now offering more than 20 certificates in high-demand areas of health care, information technology, and project management.

“At AdventHealth University, we know that achieving one’s ambitions and full potential are a tremendous commitment and continuing journey,” said Deena Slockett, Ed.D., RT(R)

(M), interim provost and senior vice president of operational strategy and learning at AdventHealth University. “We offer robust degree programs at associate, baccalaureate, master, and doctoral levels, and we are thrilled to add an array of industry certifications as further entry points into a meaningful and rewarding career.”

Popular health care certifications include physical therapy aide, medical scribe, and personal trainer and nutrition coach.

Courses are online and self-paced, and students have access to workforce training specialists and advisors. Programs range from 12 to 33 weeks, and require a high school diploma or GED. Courses that require clinical training for completion can be completed through AHU’s affiliation with AdventHealth, one of the largest health care systems in the United States. Course tuition ranges from \$2,000 to \$14,000 and includes certification exams and required e-books.

Certificates are earned through issuing authorities, including the American Medical Certification Association and the National Academy of Sports Medicine.

AHU’s certificate programs are one viable solution to recent labor shortages in central Florida and throughout the U.S.

“AdventHealth University is committed to playing a vital role in the workforce pipeline,” said C. Josef Ghosn, Ed.D., FACHE, AdventHealth University president and CEO. “Our mission is to develop highly skilled professionals who are work-ready from day one.”

To learn more or register, visit <https://workforce.ahu.edu>.

BY JENNIFER AUDETTE



PHOTO BY: ADVENTHEALTH UNIVERSITY

# Southern Nursing Students Provide Needed Services to Low-Income Residents in Kentucky

This past October, Beckie Retzer, assistant professor of nursing at Southern Adventist University, led 17 of her students on the third biannual service trip to the small town of Manchester, Ky., as part of her population and community health nursing course.

For each trip, Retzer works with AdventHealth and the local Healthy Homes Initiative (HHI). The AdventHealth hospital in Manchester serves as the only AdventHealth Global Missions Footprint in the United States and works with HHI, which provides residents with comprehensive home assessments, repairs, and evaluations.

During the trip, students tour a rural hospital and visit the homes of patients they treat. “We think it’s very important for nurses to not just see the patient in the bed, but to understand the home environment from which they’ve come,” explains Retzer. Students observe and aid in each

of HHI’s three steps. They assess for issues such as outdated food, poor lighting, and adequate grab bars. Then, they help fix the issues before evaluating completed homes to confirm their new safety.

Jehlyssa Kennedy, senior nursing major, was one of the students on the trip. Kennedy learned critical skills, explaining, “As a nurse, I think this will definitely help me with patient advocacy and communication.” Many of the homes students visited were not Christian, creating a ministry opportunity. She shared that it was an opportunity for “incorporating God ... without being overwhelming.”

As a new addition to the itinerary, students put on a health fair. “It was a great experience,” said Retzer. “I definitely want to pursue that again.”

Kennedy describes the health fair as “a big learning experience for us.” Students checked patients’ height, weight,

BMI, blood pressure, and more. Then, they worked with each patient to find solutions to the challenges they face. To generate interest, students went door to door to invite community members to the event. Kennedy shares that students were able to connect with people they met at a local rally, including a man who felt discouraged about his health. He came to the health fair and learned about options to create a healthier lifestyle.

“We praise the Lord for the continued safety of the students, as well as the experiences and opportunities they get as a result of the trip,” said Retzer. “It allows the student nurses to have a broader understanding of the communities they serve, so they can give a higher quality of care to future patients.”

BY CHEHALIS ENO, SOPHOMORE  
ENGLISH MAJOR



Students in the population and community health nursing class at Southern Adventist University visit the AdventHealth hospital in Manchester, Ky., on a mission to serve the community.



The service trip allows students to visit patients in their homes, offering real-world experiences for the students, and providing much-needed assistance to the patients.



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## IRA CHARITABLE ROLLOVER

Roy knew he would have to take the required distribution from his IRA when he turned 70 ½. He really didn't need the extra income and was concerned about the impact it would have on his income tax rate and Medicare premium. He called his Conference's Trust Department director who told him he could "roll over" that distribution to the Church to pay his tithe or to support his favorite ministry. Doing so meant that he never actually received the money and therefore did not have to deal with the potential negative consequences. It was a blessing to him and his local church.

Call the Planned Giving and Trust Services office of your Conference or favorite University and ask them about how an IRA roll over works today.

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(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

**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](http://www.fletcherparkinn.com). [C]

**FLORIDA LIVING RETIREMENT COMMUNITY**, an independent living style, is owned by the Florida Conference of SDA. The FLRC church is on property and the largest SDA in the Conference is within walking distance. AdventHealth Medical facilities are close by. We enjoy the beaches and sunshine in large portions. Start your new life with us. 407-862-2646. [C]

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**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]

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or 407-285-2510. Call, text, WhatsApp, or email [ozzyferrer@outlook.com](mailto:ozzyferrer@outlook.com). [C]

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**HOUSE/LAND FOR SALE:** 4.5 acres, 3/2 bedroom, 2 bath. Land next to Standifer Gap Church/School. Susan Gentry 423-320-6844. [2]

## POSITIONS AVAILABLE

**ANDREWS UNIVERSITY** is seeking qualified Seventh-day Adventists who may fill open roles in fulfilling our mission to Seek Knowledge, Affirm Faith, and Change the World. If this is of interest to you, please check out our current openings at: <https://www.andrews.edu/admres/jobs> [C]

**UNION COLLEGE** (soon to be Union Adventist University) Lincoln NE, seeks candidate for full-time, exempt position: Enrollment Counselor to work specifically with Hispanic/Latino prospects and their families to recruit students to Union College. Provide translation support for parents, visit and speak for church services, attend camp meetings and youth rallies, and help organize and participate in college recruitment tours. Bachelor's degree required and must be fluent in Spanish. See full job description and instructions for application at [ucollege.edu/employment](http://ucollege.edu/employment). [2-3]

**UNION COLLEGE** (soon to be Union Adventist University) Lincoln NE, seeks candidate for full-time, exempt position: Financial Aid Advisor/Loan Processor to provide operational and customer support. Process federal aid and loans, provide financial counseling to students and families, assist with development, documentation, and implementation of workflow process in addition to other duties. Bachelor's degree or equivalent experience required. See full job description and instructions for application at [ucollege.edu/employment](http://ucollege.edu/employment). [2-3].

**NORTH TAMPA CHRISTIAN ACADEMY** seeks substitute teachers for grades K-12th. Applicants must model Christ-like behavior, attitudes, and enjoy working with students. A background check will be required. Contact Smyrna Jackson, [smyrna.jackson@northtampaca.com](mailto:smyrna.jackson@northtampaca.com) or 813-991-0801. [2]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** seeks a full-time Associate Vice President for Academic Administration and Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies. Candidate should have a PhD with a minimum of five years of successful full-time graduate teaching experience at the higher education level. Applicant will assume a leadership role in all aspects of graduate education and provide academic, administrative, and strategic direction to Graduate Studies, Online Campus, and the Adult Degree Completion (ADC) Program. For more details, visit [southern.edu/jobs](http://southern.edu/jobs). [2]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** seeks a full-time Engineer teaching faculty member for School of Engineering and Physics 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. 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](http://www.southern.edu/jobs). [2]

**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 academic year before July 1, 2013. For a full job description and desired qualifications please visit [www.southern.edu/jobs](http://www.southern.edu/jobs). [2]

**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](http://www.southern.edu/jobs). [2]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** seeks a full-time teaching faculty member for the Department of Biology/Allied Health, beginning fall 2024. PhD in Biology who will teach upper and lower division courses and labs. Candidate should be committed to involvement

with undergraduate students in the classroom as well as guiding independent student research projects. Additionally, candidate should be a practicing Seventh-day Adventist believing the Biblical record of the creation of life on earth in six literal days. For more details, visit [southern.edu/jobs](http://southern.edu/jobs). [2]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** seeks full-time teaching faculty in the School of Business. Candidates should have a graduate degree (minimum). Doctorate in business-related field preferred. Ideal candidates will have successful, professional experience in for-profit companies/organizations. Candidates will bring relevancy to courses through connecting theories, current events, and real-world experience. Candidates will facilitate learning in alignment with a Christian biblical worldview and Seventh-day Adventist beliefs and values. Ideal candidates will be committed to student learning, engagement, and spiritual well-being. For more information, please visit our job board at [sau.catsone.com/careers](http://sau.catsone.com/careers). [2]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** School of Religion seeks full-time faculty member to begin fall semester of 2024. Must be active member of Seventh-day Adventist Church in regular standing and should have Ph.D. (or be near completion) in New Testament. Positive experience in pastoral ministry and teaching is helpful. Must demonstrate contagious love for Jesus, strong commitment to authority of Scripture, and deep passion for Adventist message and mission. Good people skills and ability to engage students in a positive, faith-building manner in the classroom are essential. To apply, please visit our job board at [sau.catsone.com/careers](http://sau.catsone.com/careers). [2]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** School of Nursing seeks a full-time faculty to join a mission-focused team. Teaching responsibilities will be primarily at the undergraduate level. An earned doctorate is preferred. Requisite qualities include current RN adult health or ICU clinical experience, successful teaching experience, interest in research, flexibility, and commitment to Adventist nursing education. The candidate must be a member in good and regular standing in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. To apply, please visit our job board at [sau.catsone.com/careers](http://sau.catsone.com/careers). [2]

**SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY** seeks qualified candidates for the following staff Salaried positions—Academic Administration DHSI Community Outreach Coordinator (reopened), Customer Service and Print Project Manager. For more information go to [sau.catsone.com/careers](http://sau.catsone.com/careers) [2]

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

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**CREEKSIDE RETREAT:** A place to call home for your ambulatory loved one. Seventh-day Adventist RN and FNP-owned and managed. Compassionate, quality care and assistance in a beautiful country setting. For more information email us at: [creeksideretreatnc@gmail.com](mailto:creeksideretreatnc@gmail.com). [2]

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## SOUTHERN UNION/CONFERENCE JOB OPPORTUNITIES





FLORIDA

**Florida Keys Camp Meeting** - First 2024 Camp Meeting - Feb. 2-4. Camp Sawyer, mile marker 34, on the oceanside. Speaker: Mark Finley. Jennifer LaMountain and the Family and Friends Septet will provide special music. For reservations, housing, or more information, please contact Lynn at 734-796-3733.

**English Women's Retreat** - Feb. 9-11. Camp Kulaqua, High Springs, FL. Theme: Experiencing God in Our Brokenness. Speaker: DeeAnn Bragaw, director for NAD women's ministries. [www.kulaqua.com/2024-florida-conference-womens-retreat/](http://www.kulaqua.com/2024-florida-conference-womens-retreat/)

**Spanish Women's Retreat** - March 15-17. Camp Kulaqua, High Springs, FL. Theme: Experiencias con Dios en el Quebranto. Speaker: Esmeralda Guzman, women's ministries director for Southeastern Conference. [www.kulaqua.com/retiro-de-mujeres-de-la-conferencia-de-florida-2024-sesion-en-espanol/](http://www.kulaqua.com/retiro-de-mujeres-de-la-conferencia-de-florida-2024-sesion-en-espanol/)

**Florida Conference English Camp Meeting** - April 19-21. Camp Kulaqua, High Springs, FL.

**Florida Conference Spanish Camp Meeting** - April 26-28. Camp Kulaqua, High Springs, FL.

GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND

**Oasis High School Retreat** - Feb. 2-4. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.

**"Surrender" Prayer Conference** - Feb. 2-4. Cohutta Springs Conference Center.

**Adventurer Bible Experience, Regional Level** - Feb. 3.

**Children's Ministries Convention** - Feb. 9-11. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.

**Pathfinder Bible Game, Conference Level** - Feb. 17.

**Pathfinder Teen Event** - Feb. 23-25. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.

**Adventurer Bible Game, Conference Level** - March 2.

**Regenerate Youth and Young Adult Festival** - March 2. Church at Liberty Square, Cartersville, GA.

**Hispanic Women's Retreat** - March 8-10. Cohutta Springs Conference Center.

**Adventurer Family Fun Weekend** - March 22-24. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp.

**"Even If" Women's Retreat** - April 12-14. Cohutta Springs Conference Center.

**Pathfinder Camporee** - April 25-28. Cohutta Springs Youth Camp. Please check our website for the latest information, [www.gccsda.com](http://www.gccsda.com).

SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY

**Pops Concert** - Feb. 17. Iles P.E. Center, 8 p.m. Directed by Ken Parsons and Keith Lloyd, "Del-ta Blues" will feature the Wind Symphony, Jazz Ensemble, and Steel Band. This free event is open to the public and will be livestreamed. Visit [southern.edu/musicevents](http://southern.edu/musicevents) or call 423-236-2880 for additional details.

**McKee Southern 6 Trail Race** - Feb. 18. All proceeds will support the university's affinity fund that provides outdoor adventure programming for inner-city youth from Hamilton County schools. For start times, fees, and other race information, visit [southern.edu/mckee-southern6](http://southern.edu/mckee-southern6).

**Archaeology Lecture** - Feb. 19. Lynn Wood Hall Chapel, 7 p.m. The Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum welcomes Mark Janzen, Ph.D., author, podcast co-host, expert in Egyptian epigraphy and archaeology, and associate professor at Lipscomb University. His lecture "From Miracles to Mt. Sinai: Recent Research on the Route of the Exodus" is free and open to the public. Visit [southern.edu/southernevents](http://southern.edu/southernevents) for livestream options and additional information.

**Origins Expert** - Feb. 22. Collegedale Church, 11 a.m. Paul Nelson, Ph.D., a senior fellow of Seattle's Discovery Institute and biology philosopher and author involved in the intelligent design debate

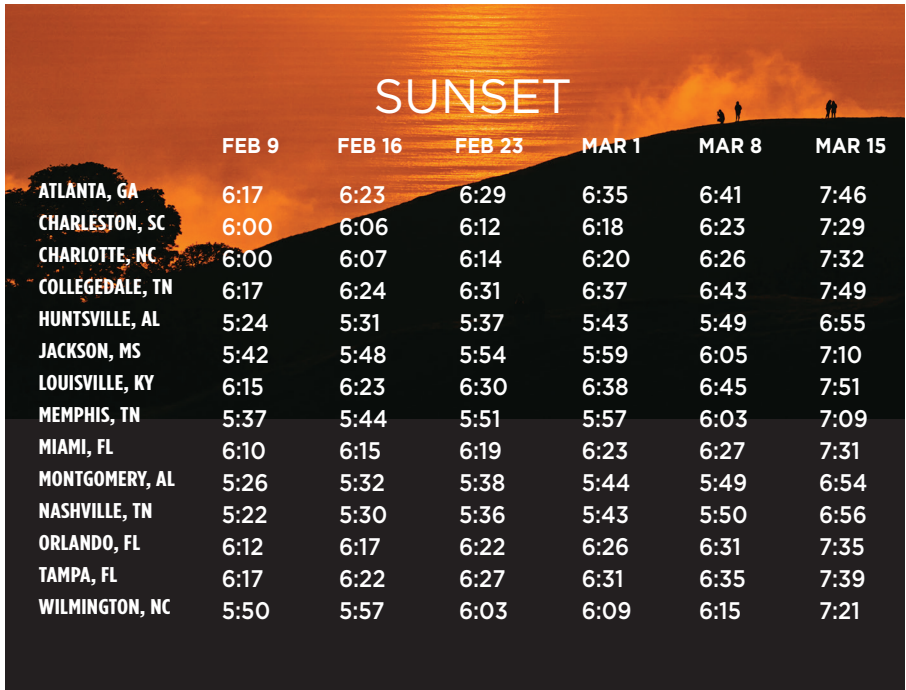
internationally for three decades. Visit [southern.edu/southernevents](http://southern.edu/southernevents) for livestream options and additional information about this adjunct faculty member in the graduate program of Science and Religion at Biola University in California.

**Neuropsychology Expert** - Feb. 29. Iles P.E. Center, 11 a.m. Kim Gorgens, Ph.D., will present "Caring for Injured Brains," an overview of mild traumatic brain injury and the science of concussion identification, management, and long-term risk reduction. Visit [south-ern.edu/southernevents](http://southern.edu/southernevents) for livestream options and additional information.

**Graphic Design Show** - Feb. 29. John C. Williams Art Gallery, 6 p.m. The exhibit featuring works by graduating graphic design majors will remain on display through March 29. Admission is free and open to the public. For more information, visit [southern.edu/artgallery](http://southern.edu/artgallery) or call 423-236-2732.

**Hyve Creators 2024** - March 1-2. Learn about combining mission, innovation, and entrepreneurship during this free conference that will include workshops, keynotes, testimonies, booths, a pitch competition, and networking. To learn more and to register, visit [southern.edu/hyve](http://southern.edu/hyve).

**Symphony Orchestra Concert** - March 3. Collegedale Church, 7:30 p.m. Visit [south-ern.edu/musicevents](http://south-ern.edu/musicevents) or call 423-236-2880 for livestream options and additional information.



	FEB 9	FEB 16	FEB 23	MAR 1	MAR 8	MAR 15
ATLANTA, GA	6:17	6:23	6:29	6:35	6:41	7:46
CHARLESTON, SC	6:00	6:06	6:12	6:18	6:23	7:29
CHARLOTTE, NC	6:00	6:07	6:14	6:20	6:26	7:32
COLLEGEDALE, TN	6:17	6:24	6:31	6:37	6:43	7:49
HUNTSVILLE, AL	5:24	5:31	5:37	5:43	5:49	6:55
JACKSON, MS	5:42	5:48	5:54	5:59	6:05	7:10
LOUISVILLE, KY	6:15	6:23	6:30	6:38	6:45	7:51
MEMPHIS, TN	5:37	5:44	5:51	5:57	6:03	7:09
MIAMI, FL	6:10	6:15	6:19	6:23	6:27	7:31
MONTGOMERY, AL	5:26	5:32	5:38	5:44	5:49	6:54
NASHVILLE, TN	5:22	5:30	5:36	5:43	5:50	6:56
ORLANDO, FL	6:12	6:17	6:22	6:26	6:31	7:35
TAMPA, FL	6:17	6:22	6:27	6:31	6:35	7:39
WILMINGTON, NC	5:50	5:57	6:03	6:09	6:15	7:21

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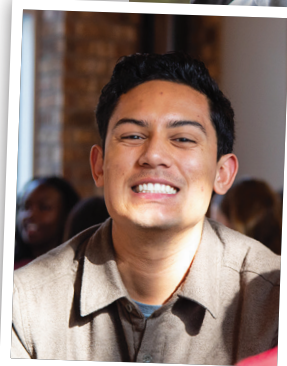
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**March 21-22, 2024**

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*\*Includes free meals and lodging for students interested in attending Southern. Student families are encouraged to visit, too.*



Collegedale, TN

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