

THE ATLANTIC UNION

JULY 2018

# GLEANER



## How to Keep People Away from Your Church



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## 4 How to Keep People Away from Your Church

You may be asking, “Why would anyone want to keep people away from their church?” Good question. Yet, sometimes we say and do things that actually make this happen.

## 7 Work and Education Go Hand in Hand

“Stop going to school and go to work!” Those words seem like heresy. For nearly a century, the philosophy has been, “Go to school and make something of yourself.”



## 8 Atlantic Union College Constituency Meeting Report

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## 10 GNYC Delegates Elect Leadership Team for Next Four Years

The Greater New York Conference held its third regular quadrennial and 56th regular constituency session on June 10 at Camp Berkshire in Wingdale, New York.

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# You Are the **Secret Ingredient**

*“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”—Matthew 5:16, NKJV*

**Y**ears ago, a young Christian girl entered the doors of a Seventh-day Adventist Church after two young Adventists whom she knew extended an invitation to her. She was away from her family, her friends, and her church for the very first time while studying at a university in the local area. She had already found, and was attending, a Sunday church, but she loved her God so much that it was not difficult to say “yes” when the invitation was extended to visit an Adventist church.

After her first visit, she continued to attend Sabbath after Sabbath and participated in the worship and other activities of the church. She was excited to be among young people her age. She was also appreciative of the love and kindness shown by several of the families who made it their business to cater to students who were away from home attending schools in the area.

Several years into her experience, some of the members found out that she was not an Adventist. At first, their reaction was one of surprise and they uttered such expressions as, “Well you look like one,” and “You act like one.” However, it seemed as though their tone and treatment toward her changed.

She did not understand what made the difference to cause them to behave the way they did and she pondered whether or not to stay. She also discovered that there were many other members who did not mind that she was of another faith. Fortunately, her relationship with God was strong, and she was not deterred by the behavior of others, so “she shook it off” and kept going.

Thirteen years and many negative and positive experiences later, this now Christian young adult, married, became a mother, and was baptized into the Adventist Church. On the day of her baptism, many of those who witnessed it were once again in shock

because all along they thought “she looked like one” and “acted like one.”

Having gone through those experiences, this young woman decided that she would not treat others who enter the doors of her church the same way she was treated. She wanted to be more like those whose actions reflected the character of Jesus and who extended compassion and love to her. She has made it her mission in life to reflect the character of Christ and to encourage and inspire those whose lives He allows her to touch.

By now, perhaps, you have probably guessed that I am the young woman in the story. Yes, I am still here, and interestingly enough, employed by the Adventist Church (that is a story for another time). Every day people are entering the doors of Adventist churches or coming in contact with Adventists in various places around the world. We have a great opportunity to present to the world a Savior and Friend who is like none other. It doesn't matter how many worship services we attend, or what we say; what really matters is what we do.

When people cross the threshold of the doors of our church, there should only be one thing they see, ever, and that is the light of Jesus in us. Whatever their background, financial standing, appearance, culture, or religion should not matter. It should matter that they experience the love of God, and, when they leave us, they should be able to say “Did not our heart burn within us while [they] talked with us on the road, and while [they] opened the Scriptures to us?”—Luke 24:34, NKJV.

You are the “secret ingredient” in this Adventist experience to give people a reason to want to stay or leave. What can be said of your treatment of others whom the Lord sends into our church? ☺

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*Ednor A. P. Davison is the communication director for the Atlantic Union Conference and editor for the Atlantic Union GLEANER.*



*“When people cross the threshold of the doors of our church, there should only be one thing they see, ever, and that is the light of Jesus in us.”*

# How to Keep People Away from Your Church



You may be asking, “Why would anyone want to keep people away from their church?” Good question. Yet, sometimes we say and do things that actually make this happen. If we want our ministry efforts to be effective, we must be *intentional* with how we treat those who walk through our doors, just as businesses are with their customers. But you may argue, “A church isn’t a business. We aren’t here to just make people happy.” First and foremost, the business of the church is people. We exist to interact with people on behalf of God’s kingdom. I agree that our first motive shouldn’t be to just make people happy, but I have never seen a hospital that went out of its way to make people miserable. Likewise, churches are supposed to be places of healing and recovery—staging areas for the kingdom that instill hope and renewal.



**R**ecently I told my 1,000+ Facebook friends (Adventist and otherwise) that I was writing an article titled, “How to Keep People Away from Your Church,” and I posed this question, “What have you found that works?” I received an unexpected flood of responses. The summaries below reflect some of their sentiments:

- Place greeters in your foyer who make snide remarks about people’s dress or appearance (e.g. “We don’t wear that here”).
- Choose greeters who are not afraid to “call sin by its right name.” I once heard of a greeter who chastised a visitor because he came to church still eating his breakfast from McDonald’s. The greeter made it clear that eating meat was “unhealthy.” The visitor had
- Emphasize uniformity of thought and discourage people from asking too many questions.
- With a wild-eyed expression on your face, sneak conspiracy theories to members and visitors in the form of CDs, DVDs, books, or by word-of-mouth.
- Hold your service in an ostentatious building that’s only open a couple of hours a week, so if someone has a need, they have to wait till Sabbath. Make them uncomfortable by expecting everyone to wear special clothes, then have them sit for over an hour in a pew without talking to anyone while they wait to hear what they’re supposed to do next.
- Neglect opportunities to pray with those who are hurting.

“Adventism is more than just having “right theology,” but about being the “visible goodness” of God within our families, our churches, and the world at large.”

never been to that church before and probably never went back.

- If you want to divide people, get political. Bring your politics to church and openly denigrate those who do not ascribe to your political preferences. If your goal is to have a church where everyone belongs to the same party, skunk out those who are in the “wrong camp.”
- Criticize the other churches in your community who are not as “advanced” in their understanding of truth as yours.
- Emphasize the idea that unless people “belong” to your church, they are not going to heaven.
- Post a sign near your fellowship hall that reads, “No Cheese Dishes Allowed.” Make veganism a requirement.
- Ignore people you don’t know or like. Invite someone to lunch in front of someone not invited. Or better yet, invite them to your house, but ignore them as you talk with your friends.

Of course, we know no church member or leader would purposely do these things. But unfortunately, the unintended messages we sometimes convey are damaging. If this continues over a period of time, the personality of a church may reach the point where outsiders view it as “toxic” or negative.

One of my Facebook friends responded, “There was a time, when it took every ounce of emotional capital I had within me to make it to church. When I heard from the pulpit that, essentially, ‘if I was only there to warm a seat and listen to music, I might as well not be there’ . . . as if to say, ‘If you are here for healing, then why are you here?’ I wanted to scream, but I could hardly breathe . . .”

What should the defining qualities of a Seventh-day Adventist Church be? Without getting into the nuances of Adventist theology and doctrinal belief (which I'll save for another time), let me focus on the “elephant in the room” that we often try to ignore. Pain! Every Adventist church should be in the business of relieving pain.

Years ago, Floyd Bresee, former ministerial secretary of the General Conference, delivered a sermon about the church that made a lasting impression on me. He told about his wife, Ellen, having an accident and needing to go to the emergency room. When they arrived at the entrance, Ellen was greatly relieved because she knew it was the place that would ease her pain. It was as if there was a sign across the door that read, “The Pain Stops Here.” Likewise, Adventist churches should be places of healing! They should be triage centers for spiritual healing and recovery. When people walk through our doors, they should be able to sense that this is the place that alleviates pain. Unfortunately, some churches do just the opposite.

Jesus once spoke about religious people who made God's work more difficult: “The religion scholars and Pharisees are competent teachers in God's Law. You won't go wrong in following their teachings on Moses. But be careful about following them. They talk a good line, but they don't live it. They don't take it into their hearts and live it out in their behavior. It's all spit-and-polish veneer. Instead of giving you God's Law as food and drink by which you can banquet on God, they package it in bundles of rules, loading you down like pack animals. They seem to take pleasure in watching you stagger under these loads, and wouldn't think of lifting a finger to help. Their lives are perpetual fashion shows, embroidered prayer shawls one day and flowery prayers the next. They love to sit at the head table at church dinners, basking in the most prominent positions, preening in the radiance of public flattery, receiving honorary degrees, and getting called ‘Doctor’ and ‘Reverend’ ”—Matthew 23:1-7, *THE MESSAGE*.

These indicting words are still true in some circles. Fortunately, this is not true of all “religious people.” There are many sincere leaders and church members who are committed to reflecting the love and grace of



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Jesus to everyone they meet. And this is what it takes to create a community that's focused on healing.

We have been told, “If we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tender-hearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one”—*TESTIMONIES TO THE CHURCH*, vol. 9, p. 189.

I recently attended a seminar where the speaker said, “A lot of people don't believe in a good God because they haven't seen good people.” That hurts.

Adventism is more than just having “right theology,” but about being the “visible goodness” of God within our families, our churches, and the world at large.

If you long for your church to become a “caring” refuge in a careless, fractured world, reverse the actions of the items listed above and let the healing begin. ①



*Rich DuBose is director of Church Support Services for the Pacific Union Conference.*

*This article was first published on the Church Support Services website [www.churchsupportservices.org](http://www.churchsupportservices.org).*



By Jerrell Gilkeson

## Work and Education Go Hand in Hand

*“And work with your hands”—1 Thessalonians 4:11, NIV.*

“**S**top going to school and go to work!” Those words seem like heresy. For nearly a century, the philosophy has been, “Go to school and make something of yourself.” High schools are rated on their percentage of graduates that are going on to college. Salaries have traditionally been connected to the amount of education that an individual attains. If you have a diploma, you have a job, and job security. This has been the tradition for decades.

### **NOTICE: The world has changed!**

- While education is still important, it is what you do with the education you receive that determines success. Many of the wealthiest and happiest individuals are currently not college graduates.
- While students are very involved in choosing the education that fits their goals and skills, they need guidance. All education is not equal.
- While there are still a majority of people that are employees, there has never been a time when the number of private business owners or entrepreneurs has profited more from their personal labor.
- While students are exploring education options, schools are searching for better ways to prepare them for

the world of work that is changing every day.

### **NOTICE: The world’s need for quality practical education has not changed.**

- “The youth need to be taught that life means earnest work, responsibility, [and] care-taking. They need training that will make them practical—men and women who can cope with emergencies. They should be taught that the discipline of systematic, well-regulated labor is essential, not only as a safeguard against the vicissitudes of life, but as an aid to all-around development”—*EDUCATION*, p. 215.
- “As parents and teachers try to teach these lessons, the work should be made practical. Let the children themselves prepare the soil and sow the seed. As they work, the parent or teacher can explain the garden of the heart, with the good or bad seed sown there, and that as the garden must be prepared for the natural seed, so the heart must be prepared for the seed of truth. As the seed is cast into the ground, they can teach the lesson of Christ’s death; and as the blade springs up, the truth of the resurrection. As the plant grows, the correspondence between the natural and the spiritual sowing may be continued”—*EDUCATION*, p. 111.

- Parents and teachers, “If [God] sees you use your entrusted means as a faithful steward, He will register your name in the books of heaven as a laborer together with Him, a partner in His great firm”—*COUNCILS ON STEWARDSHIP*, p. 299.

### **NOTICE: Check your home and school.**

- Do your children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews get practical experience?
- Does your school have an entrepreneur work program?
- Do you know what agriculture principles your school is teaching?

There are 55 schools around the Atlantic Union where these principles are being taught. Adventist education has held the secret of this balance between education and work since the early 1900s. The Atlantic Union Conference elementary and academy schools implement these secrets everyday. ☺



*Jerrell Gilkeson is the Atlantic Union Conference Education and Children’s Ministries director. He would love to talk with you about practical education. [jgilkeson@atlanticunion.org](mailto:jgilkeson@atlanticunion.org)*





## Atlantic Union College Constituency Meeting Report

Delegates to a specially called constituency meeting for Atlantic Union College expressed continued support and a strong desire to see Seventh-day Adventist higher education remain a viable option in the Atlantic Union Conference.

At the meeting held on May 20 at the college's Machlan Auditorium in Lancaster, Massachusetts, delegates heard updates on the state of the college. The meeting was called following a February vote of the Atlantic Union Conference Executive Committee and the Atlantic Union College Board of Trustees to suspend the baccalaureate program at the end of the current academic year and phase out the certificate programs, due to financial exigencies. That decision was based on the results of a feasibility study that revealed there was an absence of support for continuing the institution in its current configuration.

The constituency meeting, attended by administrators and delegates from the Atlantic Union and its six local conferences, the General Conference, North American Division (NAD), as well as



On the front row, from left, Jerrell Gilkeson, Atlantic Union Conference education director; and from the North American Division, Larry Blackmer, education vice president; and Daniel Jackson, president; are among the delegates at the Atlantic Union College Constituency Meeting.

college personnel and alumni representatives, opened with a devotional by NAD president Daniel Jackson.

Leaders presented a number of reports, including the feasibility study that led them to make the difficult decision to suspend the academic program and lay off employees after the current semester. The college president and vice president of finance also shared reports in their respective areas. The union trea-

asurer shared updates on the status of the teach-out process for the academic degree program (completed May 2018), the certificate program (anticipated end date, August 16), employee layoffs (ongoing); and gave an overview of the projected finances. It was noted that five of the six conferences have either reduced their financial subsidy to the college or completely eliminated it.

The treasurer also shared updates on several initiatives under consideration: collaboration with other Adventist colleges and universities, discussions with Andrews University about becoming a branch campus, proposals from parties interested in using or purchasing the property and its facilities, and other potential partnerships.

After discussing possible uses for the property, delegates voted to avoid selling core campus buildings, as

much as possible, and to continue to find ways to bring back Adventist higher education on the campus. They also voted to authorize the administration and appropriate committees to continue negotiations with financially viable parties and to implement the programs and processes proposed in the reports presented.

While the Atlantic Union Conference administrators and executive committee and the Atlantic Union College Board of Trustees must face the reality about the college's immediate future, they remain committed to finding a financially viable and sustainable model that works in cooperation with other Adventist institutions to provide for the higher education needs of members of the Atlantic Union Conference.

—Ednor A.P. Davison, *GLEANER* editor, Atlantic Union Conference





## Children's Ministries Sponsors JAM in the Park

The Bermuda Conference Children's Ministries Department held its third annual JAM (Jesus and Me) at Victoria Park in Hamilton, Bermuda, on May 26. There were 275 people in attendance this year.

Attendees were treated to a variety of talents by children from around the conference. Once the children finished performing, they were divided into age groups and rotated through three stations—crafts, science, and games. Each station provided a fun way to reinforce a biblical principle. There was also one station purely for fun—free snowballs—which is provided each year by the Midland Heights church Men's Ministries department.

This year, when the children started their rotations, the adults were treated to three selections by international gospel Reggae recording artist Septimus. The organizers of the event thanked Brotha Richie of Trinity Sound, a supporter of JAM from inception, for



Children participate in JAM (Jesus and Me) sponsored by the Bermuda Conference Children's Ministries Department.

providing uplifting music once the live performances were over.

JAM ended with a preview of the upcoming Vacation Bible School songs, and the children were dismissed by age groups to collect a goody bag that contained Children's Ministries infor-

mation for upcoming events, a bottle of water, a bag of homemade cookies, and a bag of popcorn.

The master of ceremonies for the evening, Anthony Peets, kept the children occupied throughout the entire afternoon. Music for the concert was provided by children and youth from the various churches across the island. The youngest was four years old. Concert attendees experienced vocal, as well as instrumental talent.

The Children's Ministries leaders and volunteers from the Somerset, Southampton, Restoration, Warwick, Hamilton, Devonshire, Pembroke, and Midland Heights churches are to be commended for their organization of this event. JAM 2019 is scheduled for the last Saturday in May at Victoria Park.

—Tammy Hendrickson, Children's Ministries director, Bermuda Conference

### OFFICIAL NOTICE

Bermuda Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the second Quadrennial Session of the Bermuda Conference of Seventh-day Adventists will be held at the Hamilton Seventh-day Adventist Church Complex, Hamilton, Bermuda, on Sunday, September 30, 2018, at 8:30 a.m. The Organizing Committee will meet on Monday, August 6, at 6:00 p.m. and the Nominating Committee will be meeting on Tuesday, August 14, at 6:00 p.m. The purpose of this meeting is to elect officers, executive, trustees and constitution and by-laws committees, and departmental directors for the ensuing term; to receive reports; and to transact such other business as may properly come before the session.

Each church is entitled to one delegate for the organization and one additional delegate for each 25 members or major fraction thereof. Additional delegates are members of the executive committee, the constitution and by-laws committee, the board of trustees of the Bermuda Conference; members of the executive committee of the Atlantic Union Conference; all employees holding credentials and licenses issued by the Bermuda Conference; departmental directors, associate or assistant departmental directors, and members of the General Conference/NAD executive committee who may be present. The number of General Conference/NAD delegates shall not exceed 10% of the total number of regular delegates.

Kenneth Manders, President  
W. DeJaun Tull, Secretary

### OFFICIAL NOTICE

The Trustees of The Seventh-day Adventist Church of Bermuda

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that a meeting of the trustees of the Seventh-day Adventist Church of Bermuda, a legal corporation, will be held in connection with the Conference Session of Seventh-day Adventists at the Hamilton Seventh-day Adventist Church Complex, Hamilton, Bermuda, Sunday, September 30, 2018. The first meeting of the legal corporation will be held at 11:00 a.m.

The purpose of this meeting is to elect a board of trustees and to transact such other business as may properly come before the meeting.

Delegates to the Conference Session of the Bermuda Conference of Seventh-day Adventists are the delegates to the Conference Session of the Bermuda Conference Legal Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists.

Kenneth Manders, President  
W. Aaron M. Spencer, Secretary



## GNYC Delegates Elect Leadership Team for Next Four Years

**A**t the Greater New York Conference's third regular quadrennial and 56<sup>th</sup> regular constituency session delegates elected Henry Beras, president; Alanzo Smith, executive secretary; and Ysaías Javier, treasurer. The day-long meeting was held on June 10 at Camp Berkshire in Wingdale, New York.

Delegates voted to add seven new churches into the conference's sisterhood of churches: East Hampton Spanish, Elmhurst Spanish, New York Filipino, Pelham Parkway Spanish, Port Chester Spanish, Sychar French, and Tres Angeles Spanish.

The delegates heard reports from the president, executive secretary, treasurer, and auditors, all highlighting the work and state of the conference for the past four years. In addition, suggested changes to the constitution and bylaws of the Greater New York Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, the bylaws of the Greater New York Corporation of Seventh-day Adventists, the bylaws of Adventist Home, Inc., and the Greater New York Academy constitution were voted.

The departmental director positions voted at the time of the session include Adventist Community Services/Health Ministries: Luis Biazotto; Adventist Youth Ministries: Ariel Manzueta; Communication/Stewardship: Donnieval Walker; Family Ministries: Samuel Peguero; Ministerial: Reginald Barthelemy; Personal Ministries/Sabbath School: Manuel Rosario; Publishing: Bianel Lara; and Superintendent of Schools: Marlene Romeo. Five ethnic ministries coordinators were also voted and include English Ministries: Rohann D. Wellington;



Pictured, from left, are: Pierre Omeler, Atlantic Union Conference executive secretary, and his wife, June; Henry Beras, GNYC president and his wife, Angela; G. Earl Knight, Atlantic Union Conference president, and his wife, Yvonne; Ysaías Javier, GNYC treasurer, and his wife, Noemi; and Elias Zabala, Sr., Atlantic Union Conference treasurer.

Haitian Ministries: Robert J. Charles; Hispanic Ministries: Yeury Ferreira; Korean Ministries: SangKi Ahn; and Multi-Ethnic Ministries: Bledi Leno. The Children's Ministries, Men's Ministries, Religious Liberty, and Women's Ministries departments were referred to the executive committee.

New members were voted by the delegates to serve on the executive committee and the constitution and bylaws committee. For the next four years, these individuals will represent the members at the regularly-scheduled meeting of the conference.

Representatives from the Atlantic Union Conference present at the session and participating in various aspects of the meeting included G. Earl Knight, president; Pierre Omeler, executive secretary; and Elias Zabala, Sr., treasurer; along with other union personnel. Representatives from the higher organizations attending the session included Tom Evans, North American Division treasurer, and

Todd McFarland, General Conference Office of General Counsel associate general counsel, who served as the parliamentarian.

Over the next four years, the elected administrators, departmental directors, ethnic ministries coordinators, and various committees will provide guidance and leadership to the more than 30,750 members who worship in 160 churches and 25 companies, eight elementary schools, one academy, a number of community services centers, and other ministries in the conference's territory. The three administrators promised the delegates they would continue to work toward unifying the conference, because everyone is important. ☺

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*Ednor A. P. Davison is the editor of the Atlantic Union GLEANER and communication director for the Atlantic Union Conference.*







**Henry Beras**  
President



**Alanzo Smith**  
Executive Secretary



**Ysaías Javier**  
Treasurer



**Luis Biazotto**  
Community Services/Health Ministries



**Ariel Manzueta**  
Adventist Youth



**Donnieval Walker**  
Communication/Stewardship



**Samuel Peguero**  
Family Ministries



**Reginald Barthelemy**  
Ministerial



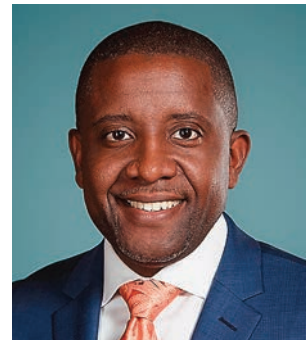
**Manuel Rosario**  
Personal Ministries/Sabbath School



**Bianel Lara**  
Publishing



**Marlene Romeo**  
Superintendent of Schools



**Rohann D. Wellington**  
English Ministries



**Robert J. Charles**  
Haitian Ministries



**Yeury Ferreira**  
Hispanic Ministries



**SangKi Ahn**  
Korean Ministries



**Bledi Leno**  
Multi-Ethnic Ministries

## Westvale Health Ministries Team Active in the Community

### Health Fair Held in Conjunction with Blood Drive

The Westvale church's Health Ministries team sponsored a health fair at Parkview Junior Academy in Syracuse, New York. Many organizations participated in the fair, including the Poison Control Center, the Solvay Police and Fire departments, respiratory therapists from St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center in Syracuse, and nursing students from Onondaga Community College in Syracuse.

The health fair was held in conjunction with the April 20 blood drive by the Red Cross. The Red Cross was encouraged by the number of people who volunteered, and 13 units of blood were donated. Robert Cotter, in charge of donor recruitment for the Red Cross, expressed his appreciation to the two volunteers from the Westvale church who helped with the blood drive. The Health Ministries team is



Kathy Wholers and Maria Lopez, Westvale church members, assist with the Red Cross blood drive.

looking forward to helping the Red Cross with another blood drive in July.

### Health Ministries Director Attends Symposium

Joan Payne, Westvale church's faith community nurse, attended the Westberg Symposium for Faith Community Nurses in Memphis, Tennessee, in early April. She met with about 250 faith community nurses from all over the world and from many denominations.

Payne is secretary of the North American Division's Adventist Association of Faith Community Nurses. While at the conference, Payne met Kathleen Coleman, membership coordinator of the Adventist Association of Faith Community Nurses and director of the Faith Community Health Program at Adventist Healthcare.

The goals of the Adventist Association of Faith Community Nurses are to (1) encourage the spiritual and professional growth

and development of its members by: promoting understanding of faith community nursing as a specialty practice for Seventh-day Adventist registered nurses and congregations in North America; foster the cooperation between the pastor, local leadership, and faith community nurses to develop health as a ministry at the local congregational level; assist each congregation to become a center of healing and wholeness in the community, and encourage each member to experience the abundant life promised in John 10:10 for spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional well-being, and (2) to follow after Christ's healing ministry to make [people] whole, and further the spiritual, physical and emotional health objectives of the Seventh-day Adventist Church Health Ministries Department.

—Health Ministries department, Westvale church



Joan Payne, Westvale church's faith community nurse and secretary of the North American Division's Adventist Association of Faith Community Nurses, and Kathleen Coleman, membership coordinator of the Adventist Association of Faith Community Nurses and director of the Faith Community Health Program at Adventist Healthcare, meet at the Westberg Symposium for Faith Community Nurses.



The children complete exercises made available by Kelsey Hayes, a physical therapist and member of Westvale church's Health Ministries team.



# Pathfinders Build Relationships

Pathfinders from around the New York Conference gathered at Union Springs Academy in Union Springs, New York, May 17-20, for their annual Pathfinder Camporee. On Friday, the Pathfinders participated in a variety of activities throughout the day.

Among the activities they engaged in were community service projects such as preparing the grounds for camp meeting, picking up trash along the road; learning skills such as fire building, lashing, and orienteering; and enjoying fun events, including frisbee golf and kickball.

The Pathfinders took on leadership roles for the worship services

throughout the camporee by providing music, drama, and presenting the sermons. Conference president Miguel Crespo gave the worship talk on Friday night. On Sabbath, the Pathfinders spent time at the nearby Montezuma Wildlife Refuge, where they saw osprey, eagles, and other wildlife, and toured the Montezuma Nature Center.

Pathfinders continues to be a strong ministry for the young people in the New York Conference, empowering them to worship God, learn leadership skills, and build relationships with others in the church.

—Jeremy Garlock, communication director, New York Conference



Hannah Runnals, Sarah Runnals, Joseph Jarez, and Ben Barrera, Pathfinders from the Frontenac Islanders Club, raise the flag at this year's annual camporee.

**Come Join us**  
**For the 5th Annual**  
**Renovation Weeks**  
 at Union Springs Academy

// Operation USA 2018

# Missions in Action

// July 15 - 29 2018

To Register Visit:  
[www.Maranatha.org](http://www.Maranatha.org)







## USA Skills Camp!

### July 11-14, 2018

**Come to Union Springs Academy for skill building, growing in God, and loads of fun!**  
**For students going into Grades 9-12 for the 2018-2019 school year**

**CLASS OFFERINGS:**

~Drones	~Soccer	~Gardening
~Drama	~Canoeing	~Pottery
~Volleyball	~Basketball	~Graphic Design
~Woodworking		

**Registration Fee is waived if registered by July 1.**  
**Registration Fee starting July 2 is \$50.**  
**Small fee for materials for some classes!**

**For registration forms and information, visit:**  
[www.unionspringsacademy.org](http://www.unionspringsacademy.org).

## Congratulations, Northeastern Academy Oratorical Contest Winners!

Excitement was all around! Enthusiasm was running high among the well-wishers and the oratorical contestants who assembled on May 12 at the Mount Vernon church in Mount Vernon, New York, for the fifth annual Northeastern Academy (NEA) Oratorical Contest, sponsored by The Edward D. Herndon Legacy Foundation, Inc.

Colet Coke, '05, contest coordinator and NEA alumna, coordinated the logistics for this event—from recruiting contestants, judges, and coaches to preparing the award certificates. Mentors/coaches provided support to each of the contestants by serving as another eye, ear, and voice to the young orators prior to the public presentations. This year's coaches included George Coke, Josie Frampton, Shane Francis, Cory Marshall, Raymond Alcock, Malcolm Vassell, and Brenetha Chung-Lamey.

Surprisingly, the majority of the 2018 contestants were freshmen—Langston Parris, Ajeya Watson, Jade Reuben, Niquelle Johnson, followed by senior Behaca Surpris, and junior Israel Lamey. The topics selected were provocative and had tones of similarity across the concepts and presentations.

Surpris spoke passionately about colorism and the practice of discrimination by treating others with lighter skin more favorably than those with darker skin. She admonished those of African descent to value themselves and to refrain from assessing themselves by the color of their skin, but, rather, to celebrate one's skin color and each other in God's light.

Lamey discussed stereotyping. He presented examples of gender stereotypes, that is, women are expected to be thin and graceful, while men are expected to be tall and muscular. He noted that being a victim of stereotyping can cause some people to feel lonely and depressed. His plea: "Stop



Oratorical contest participants, starting second from left, Ajeya Watson, Niquelle Johnson, Israel Lamey, Behaca Surpris, Langston Parris, and Jade Reuben, are joined by mentor/coaches George Coke, far left, and Malcolm Vassell, far right.

judging people before you even get to know them."

Parris argued that stereotyping is bad for America. He began his presentation by asking, "Have you heard: Jews are greedy; Black people are lazy and always late; Irish are drunks; Muslims are terrorists; Lawyers are liars; and Politicians are crooked?" He concluded that people must be viewed as individuals created in the image of God and designed for good and not evil.

Reuben began her oration by asking, "Does equality exist?" The continuing practice of racism was the key message she wanted to convey. She transported the audience from the early years of racism to current practices where racism and discrimination are evident in education, healthcare, housing, employment, and the justice system. She said she longs to be in a world where everyone can understand and respect each other as equals.

Johnson touched a nerve with her oration about cell phones. She shared information about the health risks and possible increased risks of immune system diseases, and studies that show cell phone screens carry more bacteria than a toilet seat. With a bit of humor, she said that the original texting system is

biblically based, and that there is a text for every situation in life. She said that there has not been a single medical or vehicular accident from its use and that it is safe to use anytime, anywhere.

Watson blurted out, "Gangs make cowards!" She explained that many young people join gangs because they may be lonely, afraid, pressured by peers, and rebellious with a desire for protection and acceptance. In summary, she noted that many young people come to realize that joining a gang was not like the fantasy they had dreamed it would be. She advocated for adults to take more interest in the youth, to help them become independent thinkers and courageous children of God.

The five-judge panel was challenged by these insightful presentations. The essays and the orations were scored on content and delivery. Brian McDonald, Esq., NEA alumnus announced Behaca Surpris as the first-place winner of \$500; Langston Parris, second-place winner of \$300, and Jade Reuben, third-place winner of \$200; honor placement: Israel Lamey, Ajeya Watson, and Niquelle Johnson, each received \$100. All contestants received a Certificate of Leadership.

—S.A. Herndon, member, Mount Vernon church



## Solid Rock Church Hosts Community Health Expo

Solid Rock church and Galaad Mission joined together on May 5 for a health expo in Far Rockaway, Queens, New York. They sponsored various booths, which helped to educate visitors about sunlight, air, water, and prayer.

Demonstrations were also given on how to make almond milk and smoothies from scratch. The purpose for the health expo was to help increase awareness of how to be healthier by seeking to engage the visitors in conversations about their common health issues and concerns. This health expo provided an opportunity for church members to become acquainted with residents in the surrounding community.

—Nadya Jones, communication leader,  
Solid Rock church



Solid Rock church elders William Rudder and Desmond Prass, along with Jose L. Joseph, Galaad Mission pastor, pray with a family at the health expo.

Nadya Jones

## Unity Day: A Catalyst for Change

Students, alumni, and supporters of Northeastern Academy in New York, and Pine Forge Academy in Pennsylvania, gathered at Ephesus church in New York City on April 14 for a "Unity Day" event to highlight Christian education through a combination of athletics, arts, and academics. The event, a vision of brothers and Northeastern alumni, Paul, Patrick, and Garry Graham, provided an opportunity for the two schools to worship together, play together, and raise funds for the two academies.

"When we do things like this, we recognize that we have similar likes, wants, and needs," said Jaymie Pottinger, Pine Forge Academy vice principal. "When we come together like this, we recognize that we are the same people. I think that Unity Day can be used as a catalyst of change to bring people together."

The students participated in Sabbath School and the worship service. Patrick Graham, Allegheny East Conference Youth Ministries director, was the guest speaker for the worship service. The two choirs performed in

an afternoon concert. Saturday night activities included a basketball game featuring students and alumni from the two schools.

Andrew Harewood, Ephesus church pastor, wants to establish Unity Day as an annual event, but he'd like to change the name. "Saying 'Unity Day' somehow suggests that there's disunity; and even though there is a little bit of that, I want the day to have a slightly different feel, even though I

think that what we had was absolutely awesome," Harewood said. "It will be an annual day. We want to do it next year and we also want to include some of the other academies from the other conferences, as well. So as long as we're calling it Unity Day, but there's still segregation, by definition, it cannot be Unity Day."

—Information provided by Garry Graham, member,  
Ephesus church



Choirs from Northeastern and Pine Forge academies perform at Ephesus church in New York City during Unity Day.

Nancy Rutledge

## NNEC Evangelism: It's Okay to Fail

Times change, but our mission doesn't. So what does the sisterhood of Adventist churches in the Northern New England Conference (NNEC) do when the techniques we have traditionally used for evangelism become progressively less and less effective? How can we rise to the challenge and craft an evangelism strategy for our time?

In grappling with this problem, conference leadership set a few standards. First, the message is non-negotiable. We will not preach smooth things just because the world clamors for them. Second, as far as possible, we need to deliver this message using Christ's method of mingling with people and caring for them. This means that all the churches in the conference need to be involved, each in their local community. Third, it is necessary to innovate and, in doing so, it is okay to take risks. Strikingly, it is also okay to fail, as long as there is learning from each effort that advances the overall approach.

This enlightened leadership approach has moved NNEC away from a risk-averse footing and created an enthusiasm for innovation. So what has come out of this approach? Well, the process is ongoing, but let me list current initiatives:

- **The Church Planting Project.** This is an aggressive effort. The project recruits young adults as tent-making missionaries, and forms them into teams



Martin Raj will coordinate the new Healing Project throughout the Northern New England Conference.

that engage in their communities and raise up "spiritual discovery" groups. Some of the members of the spiritual discovery groups are convicted of the truth and mature into an Adventist church, which then sets about planting new churches. Church-planting teams consist of four to six young adults, and the project seeks to recruit 20 teams over the next five to seven years. The project itself will go on for more than a decade. This effort is specifically meant to reach out to Northern New England's massive post-Christian population, who have rejected "church" and will not participate in outreach efforts from our established churches.

- **The Healing Project.** The basic idea behind

this project is that church members become trained in six specific hydrotherapy methods, then the church invites members of the community to attend a six-week program and be trained in hydrotherapy for the relief of an array of symptoms. Church members train community members one-on-one. At the end of the six weeks, attendees have made numerous friends, have learned a great deal, and feel a strong association with the church and pastor. By repeating the program a couple of times a year, churches create a strong flow of interested people to other outreach efforts, including cooking classes, evangelism campaigns, etc. The conference provides an expert to train members and to lead out in each program.

- **The Twisted Kingdom.**

Adventists were given a gift to give to the rest of the world, and that gift, which we call "The Great Controversy," is an understanding of the big picture. The Twisted Kingdom is a short outreach series that attempts to give communities this gift using the Bible only. The result is a highly-engaging investigation of scripture that is like nothing people have heard before.

Interestingly, an unexpected result of the series is that churches where the series has been held have become more motivated and engaged.

Not everything the conference is attempting will work. Some projects will fail. Some will evolve into a more effective effort. Some might succeed without modification. What we do know, based on the above efforts, is that the involvement of members in reaching out to their friends and neighbors in an attempt to introduce Christ has become only more crucial to the success of evangelism. Accordingly, the next wave of innovative efforts and projects will be even more focused on facilitating local lay evangelism, which is expressly in the model of Christ's method.

—Scott Christiansen, communication director, Northern New England Conference



## Plainfield Church Members Cater to Their Neighbors

Plainfield church is a small church located in a small, quiet town, just outside of Lebanon, New Hampshire. Though the church may be small, it is making a big difference in the community. After some discussion, the members decided they would focus their outreach on being in touch with their neighbors.

This decision has led to some exciting opportunities. For instance, every Thursday the church partners with Upper Valley Haven to provide a warm meal for less-fortunate families. Upper Valley Haven provides transitional housing and shelter for those in need.

The church was also recently blessed to host a

senior citizens lunch in the church fellowship hall. This meal was prepared and served by the students, and homeschool friends of Estabrook Christian School (ECS), the church's school. Upwards of 60 senior citizens from the town of Plainfield enjoyed a meal, music from the ECS choir and chimes, as well as a tour of the facility. They indicated their appreciation for the hospitality they received and expressed their gratefulness for having the church and school as neighbors.

Just a few days later, the church once again catered to the community, this time by hosting a music recital, followed by a reception in the fellowship hall. Young musi-



Plainfield church hosts a music recital that is open to community residents, utilizing the talents of young musicians from the surrounding communities.

cians from the Upper Valley area poured into the church, along with family members and friends. The musicians were comprised of piano, violin, and cello students studying under different area teachers, including Northern New England Conference's own Glee Charlestream and Robert Wilson. More than 100 guests dropped in for

the recital, and approximately 75 stayed afterward for a meal, and, most importantly, for the fellowship.

The Plainfield church members are excited to be making friends with their community, and in so doing, are getting the opportunity to share Jesus!

—Edward Bryant, pastor, Plainfield church



Estabrook Christian School students, standing near the windows, provide a meal and music for the senior citizens.



The Plainfield church and Upper Valley Haven partner together to provide a meal for less-fortunate families.

### LEGAL NOTICE

Northern New England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Inc.

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the sixth quadrennial session of the Northern New England Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Inc., will be held at Pine Tree Academy, Freeport, Maine, on Sunday, October 28, 2018. The first meeting of the session is called for 10:00 a.m. The purposes of this meeting are to elect officers, an executive committee, and the departmental/service directors for the ensuing quadrennial term; to consider proposed amendments to the Articles and Bylaws; and to receive reports. Each church is entitled to one delegate for the organization and one additional delegate for each fifteen members (Article V, Section 1a) to represent them at the session. The Organizing Committee shall meet on Sunday, July 8, 2018, at 10:00 a.m., at the Freeport church, 67 Pownal Rd., Freeport, Maine. The purpose of this meeting is to elect the Nominating Committee to serve the constituency, to nominate an Articles and Bylaws Committee, and any other committees as may be necessary (Article VI, Section 1c). The Nominating Committee shall meet on Sunday, August 12, 2018, at 10:00 a.m. at the Northern New England Conference office headquarters, 479 Main St., Westbrook, Maine, (Article VI, Section 2a).

Robert Cundiff, President  
Theodore Huskins, Secretary

## Church and School Sponsor Health Fair

The second annual Choose Wellness Health Fair sponsored by the College Church and Atlantic Union College, both in Lancaster, Massachusetts, was held on May 6. It was attended by more than 200 people and provided a variety of opportunities to promote health education and a healthy lifestyle.

A group of volunteers helped to cover the various areas. Individuals were able to get free screenings for blood pressure, weight/BMI, cholesterol/HDL, and blood glucose; along with free eye exams. Clinton Hospital's physical therapy department demonstrated hands-on exercises for muscle stability and strengthening.

Vendors promoted healthy products such as essential oils, juices, and teas. Community organizations were available to provide information on organ donation, rehabilitation services, the amputee coalition, and home health care. Camp Winnekeag in Ashburnham, Massachusetts, raffled off several reduced-rate summer camp weeks.

An active kids section featured a large blow-up obstacle course, a bounce house, face painting, and a variety of games. This was definitely a popular area. Other kids' activities included free tooth varnishes and toothbrushes for children over the age of five, and a Glo Germ station where, after washing their hands, kids held them under a blue light that revealed little orange spots on the areas not completely cleaned. In

addition, a Lancaster ambulance was on site, giving the kids a chance to see what they carry in the ambulance as well as take a peek inside.

Food vendors also participated; the College Church Pathfinders sold haystacks, and the South Lancaster Academy junior class sold smoothies and Mexican food. Also available were samples of 10 varieties of kefir, and Worcester restaurant Vegan Nest provided summer salad samples and conducted food preparation demonstrations.

Plans are already underway for next year's Choose Wellness Health Fair. For more information, including how to become a vendor, visit: [www.choosewellnessma.org](http://www.choosewellnessma.org).

—Kari Radford, planning committee co-chair, Choose Wellness Health Fair



Kari Radford

Guests visit information tables and vendors at the Choose Wellness Health Fair.

## Framingham United Youth Pathfinders Make Strides for Hunger Relief

Framingham United Youth Pathfinders and their supporters laced up their walking shoes on May 6 to participate in Project Bread's 50<sup>th</sup> annual Walk for Hunger. Project Bread's goals are "to promote sustainable and reliable access to healthy food for all, to invest in the strength and resiliency of local communities, and to collaborate with others in building a robust regional food system."

The Pathfinders built an incredible team of walkers by inviting their friends and family members to participate, and each member was enthusiastic about walking for an important cause. The



Lanre Olowoyin

Framingham United Youth Pathfinders and other supporters pause to take a photo before beginning the walk for hunger.

club raised about \$2,000 for hunger relief. The 20-mile walk started at the Boston Common and made its way through various towns before winding back to the Common. Participants were

encouraged to walk as many miles as they could, and at various stops along the way, they could take the shuttle back to the starting point.

One Pathfinder with some knee discomfort at mile 16

said, "I know you don't think I've come this far not to finish this walk." Four of the club members and two upcoming members, ages 9 to 14, crossed the 20-mile finish line. "I was very impressed with our awesome young people," said Lanre Olowoyin, co-director of the club. "They showed us that they believed in this important cause, and they wanted to step over that finish line." The Pathfinders not only gained an honor badge, but, more importantly, they understood that they can make an impact on those in need.

—Sandra Hinds, member, Framingham Centre church



## More than \$3,000 Raised at Benefit Concert

The Wachusett Hills Christian School (WHCS) in Westminster, Massachusetts, hosted its twelfth annual benefit concert on May 5. Having established a kindergarten this year that necessitated the hiring of a second teacher, the need for the concert was greater than ever. It seemed as if the Holy Spirit touched the hearts of this year's attendees as they rose to the occasion beyond expectations. A grand total of just over \$3,000 was raised, almost doubling the amount from the previous year, and putting the grand total from all 12 years over \$24,000.

In addition to the concert, a few moments were taken to commemorate the twenty-fifth year of service of the principal and lower-grade teacher, Edie Conrad. A plaque and gifts donated by Gardner church members, amounting to \$650, were presented on her behalf, a testament to how much she is loved and revered by the church members, students, and school board alike. As a credit to her service, dedication, and commitment, Conrad has



The Clinton Spanish church men's quartet performs at the Wachusett Hills Christian School Benefit Concert.

established the astounding record of never having called in sick, even for one day over the course of that entire 25-year duration!

This annual event was blessed by the many talented individuals who volunteered their time to perform in the concerts, and by those who donated financially, recognizing the value of an Adventist education, and in particular, the contribution that WHCS makes to that end.

WHCS still has a few openings left for the 2018-19 school year for anyone

who might be interested in attending. Feel free to call, stop by, and/or access the school's website for

more information at [www.whchristianschool.org](http://www.whchristianschool.org).

—Dale Spencer, school board chairman, Wachusett Hills Christian School



Wachusett Hills Christian School educator Edie Conrad, left, is honored for 25 years of service; standing on her right is Dale Spencer, the school board chairman.



# Opening the Door to the Adversary

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**T**he adversary of souls is not permitted to read the thoughts of men; but he is a keen observer, and he marks the words; he takes account of actions, and skillfully adapts his temptations to meet the cases of those who place themselves in his power. If we would labor to repress sinful thoughts and feelings, giving them no expression in words or actions, Satan would be defeated; for he could not prepare his specious temptations to meet the case.

But how often do professed Christians, by their lack of self-control, open the door to the adversary of souls! Divisions, and even bitter dissensions which would disgrace any worldly community, are common in the churches, because there is so little effort to control wrong feelings, and to repress every word that Satan can take advantage of. As soon as an alienation of feeling arises, the matter is spread before Satan for his inspection, and the opportunity given for him to use his serpentlike wisdom and skill in dividing and destroying the church. There is great loss in every dissension. Personal friends of both parties take sides with their respective favorites, and thus the breach is widened. A house divided against itself cannot stand. Criminations and recriminations are engendered and multiplied. Satan and his angels are actively at work to secure a harvest from seed thus sown.

Worldlings look on, and jeeringly exclaim, "Behold how these Christians hate one another! If this is religion, we do not want it." And they look upon themselves and their irreligious characters with great satisfaction. Thus they are confirmed in their impenitence, and Satan exults at his success.

The great deceiver has prepared his wiles for every soul that is not braced for trial and guarded by constant prayer and living faith. As ministers, as Christians, we must work to take the stumbling blocks out of the way. We must remove every obstacle. Let us confess and forsake every sin, that the way of the Lord may be prepared, that He may come into our assemblies and impart His rich grace. The world, the flesh, and the devil must be overcome.

We cannot prepare the way by gaining the friendship of the world, which is enmity with God; but by His help we can break its seductive influence upon ourselves and upon others. We cannot individually or as a body secure ourselves from the constant temptations of a relentless and determined foe; but in the strength of Jesus we can resist them.

From every member of the church a steady light may shine forth before the world, so that they shall not be led to inquire, What do these people more than others? There can be and must be a withdrawal from conformity to the world, a shunning of all appearance of evil, so that no occasion shall be given for gainsayers. We cannot escape reproach; it will come; but we should be very careful that we are not reproached for our own sins or follies, but for Christ's sake.

There is nothing that Satan fears so much as that the people of God shall clear the way by removing every hindrance, so that the Lord can pour out His Spirit upon a languishing church and an impenitent congregation. If Satan had his way, there would never be another awakening, great or small, to the end of time. But we are not ignorant of his devices. It is possible to resist his power. When the way is prepared for the Spirit of God, the blessing will come. Satan can no more hinder a shower of blessing from descending upon God's people than he can close the windows of heaven that rain cannot come upon the earth. Wicked men and devils cannot hinder the work of God, or shut out His presence from the assemblies of His people, if they will, with subdued, contrite hearts, confess and put away their sins, and in faith claim His promises. Every temptation, every opposing influence, whether open or secret, may be successfully resisted, "not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). ☉

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*Excerpt by Ellen White, author and co-founder of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, SELECTED MESSAGES, Book 1, p. 122; reprinted with permission.*





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