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Cover: The cover photo of the Chinguni Hills nature reserve in Malawi, overlooking a landscape of hills far into the distance, is from iStockphoto.
While Jesus was on earth, He "mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’—The Ministry of Healing, p. 143. During His ministry, Jesus chose 12 men to be His disciples; He trained them, and gave them the assignment to go and be His witnesses. The disciples were to be workers together with Him to save men, women, boys, and girls. What an awesome responsibility! But it doesn't stop there.

Jesus has asked us—you and me—to do the same and to continue the work as His modern-day disciples. He said, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”—Matthew 20:19, 20.

Jesus never said that the work He has asked us to do would be easy, but He promised to be with us every step of the way. He did not ask us to sit in the pews of the church and hope and pray that the people will come to us. The work of the Lord is two-dimensional—inreach and outreach. In the case of inreach, Scripture instructs, “Let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near”—Hebrews 10:25, NLT.

Jesus provided us the example of interaction with our community. Consequently, we need to get out of our seats and move about our neighborhoods and wherever else He directs. As we meet people and find out what their needs are, we have opportunities to show them Jesus' love, and to help to finish the work He has called us to do. The world is full of people who need to hear a message of hope and about a soon-coming Savior.

Thankfully, many churches and members in the Atlantic Union are endeavoring to reach out to do their part in finishing the work. They are busy ministering to the needs of those around them. We don't often hear much about them, but they are there. You might be thinking, “That's true. Our church does that,” or “That's me. I do that.” The reality is that very often these people and groups are so involved in their ministry, they forget or don't even think about sharing their stories so that others can be encouraged by their ministry and, perhaps, learn of other ways to become more involved.

As you read through this issue of the Gleaner, you will find a few stories about churches and members who are reaching out and making a difference in the lives of the people in their communities and beyond. I hope the stories inspire you and stir you to become more involved and to get your church more involved in your community. Perhaps, some of you will also be inspired to share your stories.

There is much to be done as we get closer to the coming of Christ. Jesus said, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come”—Matthew 24:14, NIV. What plan of action has your church taken to help this become a reality? Who are you and your church mingling with? ¶

Ednor A. P. Davison is the editor of the Atlantic Union Gleaner and assistant to the president for communication in the Atlantic Union Conference.
Abundant Life
in the Shadow of Death

“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”—John 10:10.

She was dying and she knew it. Her sunken, jaundiced eyes welled with tears as she pondered who would care for her eight-year-old child. Her husband had succumbed to AIDS two years earlier, and unbeknown to her, his secret tryst had left her infected. Within a few weeks, her short life of 28 years would be over.

Her case is not unique in southern Africa and in countries like Malawi. Malawi, a small, landlocked country in southeastern Africa, has become a global hotspot in the HIV/AIDS pandemic. With a small population of only 15 million, there are more than one million persons infected. Think about it: one out of every 15 people is infected. From poor farmers to government officials, the disease knows no class and no boundaries.

The sad legacy of this pandemic is the 700,000 children left orphaned by AIDS. Many of these children will end up in work camps or sold into prostitution. Because some infected adults believe the myth that being with innocent children will rid them of AIDS, they pass the disease on to these most vulnerable victims, and the tragic cycle of premature death continues. Twelve-year-olds are often...
heads of households and must care for their younger siblings while trying to remain healthy themselves.

In 2004, faculty and students at Oakwood University (then college) led by Gregory Allen, then chair of Oakwood College’s Department of Religion and Theology, organized an evangelistic mission team to Blantyre, Malawi. More than 2,000 people were baptized. Yet, obvious to all was the reality that people were dying almost as fast as they were coming into the church.

It was then that we began to see HIV/AIDS as more than just a health crisis, but as part of the Great Controversy. We were reminded of Revelation 12 which says, “And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed”—Revelation 12:17. “But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short”—Revelation 12:12, ESV.

At the time, the Adventist Church had one office in South Africa dedicated to HIV. The faces of the dead and dying lingered and we could not rest. It was as if we heard the call, “Come over to Macedonia.” Something had to be done. Upon returning to the U.S., a small group of faculty and supporters started Adventists Against AIDS in Africa (A4).

Since 2006, A4 has expanded its membership into Texas, New York, Georgia, and Virginia, and brought hope and healing to persons in Africa and America. The organization always works with local entities of the Adventist Church. In Malawi, Wilbert Mwale, president of the North Malawi
Field, and A4 strategized together to meet the needs of widows and orphans impacted by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Linking public health and preventive medicine with the gospel, A4 has been able to reach thousands of individuals, preparing them for the abundant life here and eternal life in the earth made new. Using a “train the trainer” model, A4 has empowered local pastors, elders, and chiefs to work successfully within their own communities to combat the spread of HIV. But more work needs to be done.

Because those infected with HIV are often shunned, they often find themselves unemployable with no prospects for income. To address this need, A4 is partnering with local churches and communities to provide seed, fertilizer, and irrigation so that those infected may grow their own food and sell the surplus at local markets. This year, 2014, A4 will initiate a tailor-training program in northern Malawi, so that HIV victims may produce and market sewn goods.

Arresting the spread of the disease and its ravages requires a multi-disciplinary approach of education, public health, infrastructure development, economic empowerment, gender equality, public policy, and gospel ministry. Thousands of dollars of medical supplies have been donated to rural clinics. In villages like Gomo, where children and persons with compromised immune systems are vulnerable to water-born diseases, A4 is constructing wells. Textbooks and computers go to Adventist schools. And because only half of the children who start elementary school will complete it, in 2014 A4 will sponsor a Read-Up Literacy Camp. Also, sessions on marriage and gender equality have helped both sexes to value and respect God’s ideal for healthy intimacy.

The words of our Lord seem ever so relevant when speaking of the HIV/AIDS pandemic: “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly”—John 10:10.

To learn more, visit the Adventists Against AIDS in Africa Web site at www.adventistagainstaids.com or write to: A4, 101 West 123rd St., New York, NY 10027.

Dedrick Blue, senior pastor of the Ephesus church in New York, is president of Adventist Against AIDS in Africa, and Elfreda Blue, associate professor of Special Education at Hofstra University, is director of education for Adventist Against AIDS in Africa.

Photos taken by Dedrick and Elfreda Blue.
Olivia Follows Her Heart

Olivia Pereira was born in São Miguel in the Portuguese-speaking Islands known as the Azores, which are about 550 miles off the coast of Portugal. At age 14 her mother died and she, along with four sisters and a brother, went to live with their grandmother, who soon found this overwhelming.

At 16, Olivia and her siblings moved to Bermuda to live with their father, a devout Catholic. Olivia remembers passing the Hamilton Seventh-day Adventist Church many times as a teen, and she promised herself that one day she would find out why so many people were dressed up on Saturdays but the church was empty on Sundays.

Eventually, Olivia married and had children, but her marriage ended in divorce; afterward, she no longer felt accepted in the Catholic Church. She still had faith in God and she visited many churches, looking for one that felt like home.

Olivia married Eduardo Pereira, and through him she met many Portuguese-speaking people from his native country of Brazil. One friend, Mayume, called for help in completing passport documents and a few weeks later she called to ask if Olivia would translate for her at church.

When Mayume said she wanted to go to church on Saturday, Olivia’s first reaction was, “Saturday! I clean my house that day. But I will go with you.” “There is no hurry,” Mayume said. “We will do it whenever you can.” Olivia got her housework done on Friday and on Saturday morning she called Mayume and asked, “Which church do you want to go to?”

Mayume attended Midland Heights church, but Olivia asked if they could go to Hamilton instead. At church Mayume insisted on sitting in front where she could see better. When the guests were welcomed, Olivia introduced Mayume and explained her role as translator.

As she translated and read Bible texts, Olivia was overwhelmed because she recognized that the words were true. After church she and Mayume talked again about all that was said in the service. A few weeks later she called Mayume and asked if they could go to church again. Olivia found the Bible texts so powerful that after church she told Mayume, “I want to know the God that you know!”

They studied together for two months, then Olivia asked for the studies to be held at her house. Eduardo listened, though he pretended not to. Eventually, they became a study group. Later Olivia began formal studies with Kenneth Manders, pastor of Hamilton church, and soon told Eduardo she was ready for baptism. He told her, “Follow your heart.” She was baptized on September 22, 2012. After studying with James Landy, an elder, Eduardo was baptized on September 21, 2013.

When asked how her children feel about her baptism, Olivia said, “They think it is fine as long as I am happy. I hope they will join me some day.”

—Celia Musson-Nazabalinda, editor, Hamilton church Communication department

What’s Happening in Your Church?

We are looking for news and other inspiring stories from your church that can be shared with our readers. E-mail your stories with the photos attached as separate files to the Bermuda Conference communication director. Be sure and include a caption with each photo and the name of the photographer.

For information on submitting articles, visit: www.atlantic-union.org/writing-guidelines.

Sheila Holder
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at www.atlantic-union.org

Atlantic Union Gleaner, June 2014
When the General Conference launched its NY13 evangelism push in 2013, the Maranatha church in Brooklyn, New York, saw an opportunity to put a twist on the traditional evangelism series. “We wanted to see Maranatha impact the community, especially the families” said Shane Vidal, the church’s pastor.

The church did a demographic survey of their neighborhood and discovered an interesting trend—many of the families were headed by young parents. Vidal seized the chance to do something innovative for the church’s contribution to NY13 efforts: a family enrichment series.

Vidal called on Alanzo Smith, family counselor for the Greater New York Conference, to lead out in the family emphasis evangelistic series. For more than three weeks, Smith drew from his psychological and theological training to discuss topics relevant to the challenges families are facing, including depression, rejection, pornography, and unfaithfulness, as well as repentance, confession, and salvation.

Every Tuesday night was dedicated to the concerns of the youth. On these nights, Smith utilized candor and humor to discuss music, self-efficacy, and sexuality. Each night of the series, he implored the participants to improve their relationships with their spouses, children, family members, and, most of all, God.

Josie March 22 marked one year since the first annual South Bronx Area Adventist Youth Society Youth Rally. On that day scores of youth from south Bronx churches met at 1275 Grand Concourse to participate in a march against violence and bullying in the South Bronx community.

Youth United With One Dream, One Purpose, One Mission

The event was planned by a group of pastors and AY team members.

Pathfinders and the drum corps led the way as supporters and members of various churches marched behind carrying banners with messages that read, “No to Drugs, Yes to Life,” “Violence Can be Silenced,” and “Stop Bullying, Start Helping.”

Lincoln Smith, pastor of the New Life church and a leader of the annual youth rally planning committee, has a vision of a united youth force, not only in individual churches or among a group of churches, but among willing Christians of all backgrounds.

Smith, along with pastors Desmond Haye and Neylon Samuels, collaborated in this effort months in advance. AY leaders Othniel Stephens and Ayerkieh Tetteh assembled their assistants and met with the pastors for the planning. These meet-
ings resulted in a well-orchestrated march followed by a mini-concert that ended with two short sermons.

The march started at 3:30 p.m. in front of the Grand Concourse church on the corner of 169th Street, where they were met by the news crew from Channel 12. Following the gathering, the group walked to Mt. Eden and back. After the march, the supporters entered the church for the second part of the youth rally—the concert.

As the pews filled, the praise team welcomed everyone by singing familiar choruses, inviting them to join in the worship and adoration of Jesus Christ. Shortly after praise and worship, and recitation of the Adventist Youth aim, motto, and pledge, an unassuming Patricia Thiessen, who is an elder from Grand Concourse church, was acknowledged with a plaque for her numerous and critical contributions to the youth department and her dedicated involvement in planning the annual youth rally.

Just before the events of the evening came to a close, a short sermon was presented by Edsel Cadet, associate pastor of Kingsboro Temple church, who focused on the importance of creating and maintaining a healthy relationship with Christ in order to build long-lasting relationships with others. Pedrito Maynard-Reid, professor, assistant to the president for Diversity, and Ombudsman at Walla Walla University, then gave the final charge.

Lincoln Smith’s overall goal is to spark togetherness among the people of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. His hope is that these annual youth rallies will be the start of more outreach, and more involvement from the church that will impact the lives of the people they will serve in the community.

—Ira Freeland, Jr., assistant AY leader, Grand Concourse church

Adventist youth from the South Bronx church participate in a march against violence and bullying in the South Bronx community.

Former Poughkeepsie Armory Becomes a House of Worship

U nder God’s guidance, the Poughkeepsie Spanish church purchased a legendary Armory building from the State of New York in August 2012. Since that time, much has taken place. Because of the legal diligence of the Greater New York Corporation, the zoning of the building has been changed. In addition, a number of fundraising efforts have taken place, local church members have donated many hours of labor, and church members have persistently engaged in fasting and prayer.

The three-level facility can accommodate more than 800 people comfortably. The building has a chapel that can hold 180 people, and contains many rooms that can accommodate multiple events. The church also has a lifetime contract with the municipal parking office for 213 parking spaces, as waiver parking, in back of the building.

The church congregation is grateful to God for what He has done. After many years of moving from one place to another, this vibrant congregation now has its own house of worship. They are ready to undertake their mission for this multi-ethnic community. They still have a lot to do to accommodate and furnish the whole site, but they know that God’s promises are faithful.

The first worship meeting was a Communion celebration during which the president of the Greater New York Conference, G. Earl Knight, led out.

On Sabbath, March 1, Gerson P. Santos and his wife, Leila, presented a challenging message and charged the members “to be the church of the mission.” In the afternoon, seven people were baptized in the brand new baptistery.

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ”—Philippians 1:6.

Carlos Aragones, pastor, Poughkeepsie Spanish church

After many years of moving from one place to another, the Poughkeepsie Spanish church congregation now has its own house of worship.
Mission 2000 and New York Conference Pastors Build for the Lord in the Dominican Republic

In a three-week project from February 12 to March 5, a team of 16 volunteers, headed by co-directors Henry Livergood and Winston de Castro, successfully built both a church and relationships in Los Frailes, in the southeast section of Santa Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic. They worked in conjunction with pastors from the New York Conference who were on their second leg of an evangelistic series that began in April 2013. In fact, several of the pastors rolled up their sleeves on two occasions to help carry mud, cut rebar, and set blocks at the church building site.

The building work was a joint effort of the Mission 2000 team and a local crew of Dominicans and Haitians. Thanks to the translation efforts of Ricardo Sanchez, most Spanish-English hurdles were overcome; some could communicate in French, and “sign language” took care of the rest. Many of the Dominicans know a little bit of English.

Everyone worked hard and exhibited a cooperative spirit. Day laborers in the Dominican Republic receive 500 pesos a day, which is equivalent to $12 U.S. Livergood provided all the workers at the site with hearty dinners at midday—which was no small feat, since the size of the group swelled around noon every day. Church members pitched in to help whenever they could, coming out in force on Sundays.

While the three Sabbaths there were all wonderful, the highlight occurred on the second Sabbath afternoon when a large, enclosed amphitheater at our residence filled with all those who attended the evangelistic series along with the pastors for a culminating celebration with songs, speeches, and baptisms. Combined with those who had been baptized the previous week, there were 453 converts to Christ. Adventists are growing by leaps and bounds in the Dominican Republic as in other areas of the southern hemisphere. The Spirit is moving mightily, and it’s exciting to be there and catch the fire.

Scheduled into the itinerary were a few afternoon visits to the beach. The group also visited the botanical gardens and spent one Sabbath afternoon in a smaller park with underground caves. A highlight was the day off—traveling by bus to Samana on the north side of the island for a whale watch and picnic at an island resort. Another highlight was visiting the Colonial Zone, where they toured Christopher Columbus’ home and several other historic buildings.

Before they left to return home, the church members feted them with a Saturday-evening party and gave each person a small gift. Their appreciation and joy in having a beautiful, spacious place to worship made the trip worthwhile. When they left, the roof was installed, the walls were almost all...
plastered, windows were set to go in, and wiring was in progress. Henry Livergood will attend a dedication ceremony for the church in November.


A trip to Belize is being planned for January 5-26, 2015. With this trip Mission 2000 is celebrating its 25th (silver) anniversary. They will build a 38-foot x 100-foot church and will also refurbish an elementary school inside and out.

For more information about Mission 2000 and upcoming trips, contact Henry Livergood at (978) 368-8304 or e-mail him at dhlivergood@juno.com.

Since it is the 25th anniversary of doing mission trips, the group is requesting that anyone who took part in Henry Livergood's previous mission adventures over the past 25 years contact him.

—Sue Trecartin, member, St. Johnsbury church

### SKILLS WEEK

at Union Springs Academy

40 Spring Street, Union Springs, New York 13160  (315)889-7314

This unique week at Union Springs Academy, in beautiful Central New York, allows teens ages 12-17 the opportunity to experience dorm life while engaging in fun hands-on workshops, participating in exciting outdoor activities, meeting potential classmates, and experiencing the spiritual warmth that fills the Union Springs Academy campus.

If you know a 7th-11th grader who is interested in a boarding school experience, contact the school by phone or visit our website for printable registration materials. There is a $100 registration fee for the week.

July 13-20, 2014

www.unionspringsacademy.org
For the past 15 years, the Northeastern Conference New England Region Women’s Ministries has been holding its annual Day of Prayer conference at various locations around New England. This year about 350 people attended the 15th annual and first International Day of Prayer Conference on March 8 at the IBEW Hall in Dorchester, Massachusetts. A number of new faces were in the audience, along with the faces of many longtime participants. In attendance were teens, youth, young adults, adults, and a few more men attended this year’s event than in previous years.

The participants of this one-day conference were asked to consider the theme “What Kind of Footprints Will You Leave?” The conference was well-planned and executed. It was a spiritually-uplifting way to spend the Sabbath in worship.

Four gifted speakers presented messages from God’s Word: Gwendolyn Weeks, pastor of the Bethel Tabernacle Pentecostal Church in Boston, Massachusetts; Deborah Harris, founder of Praying for Our Children (www.prayingforourchildren.org); Katie Arnette, founder and director of Ever Rising, Inc. (www.everrising.org), and Yvonne Collins, treasurer/CFO of the Lake Region Conference in Chicago, Illinois.

Each speaker shared stories and testimonies of how God has been and is using them to encourage, inspire, and empower others. Their messages challenged the participants to trust God, forgive others and themselves, and to be ambassadors for Christ in their sphere of influence.

Two segments of the program were devoted specifically to prayer. The first segment, held at the close of the morning service, included individual prayer, intercessory prayer in groups of two, and a general prayer closing out that segment of the prayer session. The second segment, held at the end of the afternoon program, was dedicated to individual requests. All prayer intercessors attending the conference were invited to the front of the room and were available to pray with anyone who had special requests and desired prayer. It was an event one had to attend to experience the working of the Holy Spirit in a mighty way.

Attending the conference and expressing her appreciation to the New England North Women’s Ministries leaders was Mirielle St. Pierre, Northeastern Conference Women’s Ministries director. It was said that the planning committee members wanted to take this conference “up a notch” from the previous events. And that they did! Bernadine Williams-Dormer, New England Region District leader, and her team are to be commended for the planning and preparation that went into making this spirit-filled, Sabbath worship experience, one that will leave many people thinking about the footprints they will leave as they journey through this life.

—Ednor A. P. Davison, GLEANER editor
Northeastern Conference Ministerial Department Hosts First Music Conference

It was a first for Northeastern Conference. Never before had there been a corporate church discussion on music and worship. As the brainchild of Ainsworth Joseph, Northeastern Conference ministerial director, the concept for the workshop was seen as a needed and open conversation for the present times. More than 200 people registered for the workshops that took place March 14-15 at the New Jerusalem Baptist Church in Queens, New York.

Joseph was encouraged by the response of the Northeastern Conference constituents in supporting an event of this nature. One of the many aspects of the Ministerial department is not only pastoral care but involvement in church growth. Joseph noticed that there was a need for a forum and education on what music and worship mean for the church of today.

Five guest presenters spoke on topics of varying aspects and perspectives of music and its role in worship.

- Cheryl Wilson Bridges, pastor for worship at Sligo church in Takoma Park, Maryland, presented “Music: Majesty or Mayhem?”

- Errol Stoddart, senior pastor at Miracle Temple church in Baltimore, Maryland, presented “The Silent Shout.”

- Eurydice Osterman, professor of music at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama, presented “Worship: From Praise Him to Praise Hymn” and “What's in a Song?”


- Rawlins Joseph, Grammy nominated music producer, presented “In Time With the Spirit” and “The Invisible Musician.”

The two-day music conference consisted of Friday evening vespers with Easton Marks, pastor of Kingsboro Temple church, workshops, keynote presentations, and a summary panel discussion that provided an outlet for the participants to ask questions and share their opinions. The conference concluded with a concert featuring Laos in Harmony, Kingsboro Temple Royal Priesthood, Strings in Harmony, Abigail Charles, and guest artist Duawne Starling.

While each workshop session was focused on the role and character of music in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, the diversity in all of the perspectives was appreciated.

—JeNean Johnson, communication director, Northeastern Conference


Vocal artist Duawne Starling performs at the Northeastern Conference Music Conference.
A Tale of Two Food Banks

In an economic sense, the three states that make up Northern New England—Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine—are “FILO” states. This acronym stands for “first in, last out” and is usually used in accounting applications. For Northern New England, however, it also characterizes how the relatively weak local economy responds to recessions—the states are usually the first to go into recession and the last to come out. This means that when there is economic weakness, such as the region has experienced since 2007, families and communities suffer significantly.

Many churches across the Northern New England Conference have helped their communities through the “Great Recession” and its aftermath. Typical of this effort to help are church-based food banks, including the food banks in Woodstock, Maine, and Auburn, Maine.

Woodstock Food Bank

The Woodstock church was founded in 1864 (it celebrates its 150th anniversary this year) and is pastored by Greg Carlson. Carlson has seen the community use of the church’s food bank more than double in the four years he has been pastor. Most of the reason for the doubling has been because of sheer need, but some has been because the congregation built a new church with a fellowship hall that makes it easier to store food and serve people.

“Food bank day is always a huge opportunity for me to witness to people,” says Carlson. “The people who come here are usually shy and sometimes embarrassed to be here. That means I have the perfect opportunity to talk to them, laugh with them, and make them feel welcome and at ease. After a few months, people who come here start calling me ‘pastor’ and some start thinking of this church as ‘their’ church and of me as ‘their’ pastor. What a privilege it is for me to mingle with these people and talk about their lives.

“I get to see them month after month and get to both plant and water seeds of spiritual growth. What a fantastic opportunity the Lord has provided to not only serve as He would, but to witness as He would.”

Carlson cites The Ministry of Healing, p. 143, as providing a model for how the food-bank witnessing should be done: “Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’ ”

Food bank operations are a study in logistical management. The food bank is open every third Tuesday of the month for staple foods and the first Monday of the month for perishable foods (fruits and vegetables). The Tuesday operation is their big day and on that one day they can serve up to 400 people by distributing eight or more tons of food. That one day usually requires about 35 volunteers committing from 6 to 12 hours each.

However, before distribution day, all food must be loaded on trucks, unloaded, sorted, shelved, and, ultimately, boxed into “family” boxes to be supplemented by whatever baked goods and fruits and vegetables are available on food bank day.

All told, hundreds and hundreds of hours are invested in the operation each month by a team comprised of church members and community volunteers. The food bank has a budget of about $1,000 a month, which is mostly met by donations from church members, with some help from the community and from the town of Woodstock.
The Auburn Church’s beautiful but small stone building is lovely for a church but very challenging for food bank operations.

When asked how she can possibly manage the logistics, the volunteers, the finances, and the constant stream of communication needed, Faye Taylor says that she does not have the skill set necessary to do so and is only able to undertake the operation through the grace of God. “When God calls you He enables you,” she says, and points again at the legion of volunteers that keep coming back every month to help. “I am continuously amazed at how many people will give of their time to help their community,” she says, then pauses. “But, I have to say, the act of helping people is itself a huge reward.”

Auburn Food Bank

The Auburn church, with some 120 members, is less than half the size of the Woodstock church, but this little church is located on the edge of Maine’s second-largest metropolitan area, the cities of Lewiston-Auburn and serves a much larger population. The Auburn church food bank is led by Pam Strout, and Ben Dugas is the assistant director. According to Dugas, their modest operation feeds about 1,400 people a month, and is growing by five to 10 people a week. “What God is doing here is amazing,” Dugas said. “Here we have a couple dozen volunteers, almost all of whom are either crippled or elderly, and we unload at least four tons of food and bring it into the building through a window, then sort and box it and move it out with great efficiency. We could never do this except that God is working with and through us!”

The food bank is growing in part because of the service mentality of those who operate it. “We noticed that many people who needed our help had either transportation or mobility challenges,” Dugas said. “So through the work of God we obtained two vans and now we deliver food to two central locations. The work is enormous, but so are the benefits!”

The food bank was not designed to be a primary witnessing tool, and what has amazed the staff and volunteers of the food bank is how the Lord is using the food bank to bring people closer to Him.

Alicia Howes, a community volunteer at the food bank who is not an Adventist, said, “I’ve seen so many people coming here from off the street needing food, and when they come, God is not forced or preached, but the amazing thing is that there is something about this place, so that when people come here they approach a staff member and ask for prayer.

“It is absolutely amazing to me to see, week after week, so many of those prayers being answered. Right in front of my eyes I am seeing people brought close to God and slowly being brought into this Adventist Church, and that includes me. God has touched and blessed me while I have volunteered here.”

Dugas, a new member of the church, adds that the blessings have been extended to him, as well. “I have had cerebral palsy for many years and should be in a wheelchair, but God has allowed me to be able to stand to perform the work of His food bank. God has allowed me to serve all these people, who are now my family. We are seeing other miracles weekly of God providing and of God bringing people to us. We are now starting a Bible study after the food bank closes, and many people are participating. It is absolutely amazing how the Lord is working.”

The food bank is facing challenges—food is getting more expensive and harder to come by while the need continues to grow—but Dugas and Howes’ faith is not shaken. “Funds are low and we don’t know how we will go forward,” said Dugas, “but we do know the Lord will lead.”

—Scott Christiansen, communication director, Northern New England Conference

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

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the fifth 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 26, 2014. 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; 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 fifteen members (Article V, Section 1a) to represent them at the session. The Organizing Committee shall meet on Sunday, June 29, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. at the Freeport Seventh-day Adventist Church, 67 Powland 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 17, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. at the Northern New England Conference office headquarters, 479 Main St., Westbrook, Maine, (Article VI, Section 2a).

Robert Cundill, President
Theodore Huskins, Secretary
Members and friends from near and far stopped by to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Village Church in South Lancaster, Massachusetts, on April 25 and 26. Joining the celebration were Atlantic Union College alumni who held their annual homecoming in conjunction with the event.

The speakers for the weekend were Bill Knott, Adventist Review and Adventist World editor and publisher, who spoke on Friday night; John Lomacang, pastor of the Thompsonville church in Illinois, who spoke for Sabbath school and gave a concert on Sabbath afternoon; and Dan Jackson, president of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, who spoke during the Sabbath worship service.

The congregation was reminded on several occasions that the weekend was not just about celebrating a building, but, more importantly, it was about celebrating the people who are the church. “We must never forget the contribution, the commitment, the God-fearing dedication of those who were called by God to establish the work of the three angels on planet Earth,” Jackson said.

The history of the Village Church has a legacy that goes far beyond the impact it makes in the Lancaster community and extends to the broader Adventist world church. The church, organized with eight charter members on April 30, 1864, held its meetings in three places before a permanent home was built where the current church is located on Sawyer Street. Over the years several additions were made to the original structure to accommodate the expanding membership.

In its 150-year history, 28 pastors have served the Village Church. Several of the previous pastors returned to participate in the weekend events. A number of institutions were birthed from the vision of the church leaders and members, including, South Lancaster Academy, Atlantic Union College, the College Church, and several churches in the surrounding towns.

Other items of note from the commemoration include the program booklet that contains photos and some of the history of the church and the heritage room where photos, artifacts, and other items relating to the church’s history can be found.

For more information about the Village Church Sesquicentennial, visit the church’s Web site at www.villagesdachurch.org/150th-anniversary.html. There you will be able to listen to the sermons and view photos.

Editor A.P. Davison, GLEANER editor

Village Church Marks 150 Years

Dan Jackson, North American Division president, delivers the Sabbath morning message.

J.P. O’Connor, right, the current Village Church pastor, and Mike Brown, head elder, address the congregation.

John Lomacang, pastor of the Thompsonville church in Illinois, teaches the Sabbath school lesson.

Members and friends from far and near attended the services for the weekend.

Bill Knott, Adventist Review and Adventist World editor and publisher, presents the Friday night message.

Photos: Krystal Irgrang

Visit the Atlantic Union Web site at www.atlanticunion.org
Group from Athol Church Takes Program to Nursing Home Residents

“We’re not large in number, but the angels are with us.”

This was the general opinion of a small group of women from the Athol church in Massachusetts. It was Sabbath afternoon March 15 and the choir of 10 women were at the Baldwinville Nursing Home presenting a sacred program for the residents. I had the privilege of leading the group as they sang in sweet two-part harmony, with Violet Bidwell providing the piano accompaniment. Mark Gagnon, the pastor of the Athol church, did a wonderful job of tying the songs together with stories and scriptures.

The residents and staff alike seemed to receive a rich blessing from the choir's program, and the staff particularly mentioned how they appreciated the choir members taking time after the program to visit with the residents (most of whom were in wheelchairs) before they were returned to their rooms. Each resident was presented with a small gift.

“We only had two-part harmony, but the angels filled in the gaps,” was the sentiment expressed following the program by the singers and attending church members.

It is our sincere hope that God’s love will continue to reach out and touch many people as a result of the ministry of this small group.

—Gordon Lethbridge, choir director, Athol church

Longtime Willimantic Church Member Turns 100

Alice Williams, longtime and faithful member of the Willimantic church in Willimantic, Connecticut, celebrated her 100th birthday on January 18, 2014. Her son, granddaughter, great-grandchildren, and many longtime friends joined with the church family to celebrate this special occasion. She was honored during the worship service and a buffet lunch was served after the service.

The church members thank the Lord for Alice Williams and pray that she will be blessed with many more healthy years.

—Gemma Merrill, clerk, Willimantic church

Grief Share is a special weekly support group for people grieving the loss of a loved one.

When: May 6 to July 29, 2014 (meeting each Tuesday)
Time: 7:00 p.m.
Where: Village Seventh-day Adventist Church
75 Sawyer Street, South Lancaster, MA 01561
Contact: Suzanne Young - griefshare@villagesdachurch.org
Young Adults: Why Do They Leave?

Imagine you are a lifeguard at a populated beach, encircled by a beautiful boardwalk that ventures deep into the water with a great spot for people to congregate and look at the ocean. Suddenly, you notice that someone in the water is in trouble. You dive in with your rescue equipment and bring him to safety.

Then, just as you are getting him to shore, you notice there are three more in the water. You go out and get them, and, as you are getting them to safety, you notice there are 10 more people drowning. By now you are overwhelmed. You call for help and, as you continue swimming frantically from one rescue to another, you see more people needing to be rescued. Then you look up at the nearby boardwalk and realize that at the very same area where people gather to enjoy the ocean, the boardwalk is collapsing. You scream out, “We need help at the boardwalk! It’s broken!” As you see the people falling into the water you realize that no matter how much you swim around trying to rescue them, and no matter how much help you get in the water, many may still fall in the water and drown as long as the boardwalk is broken and no one does anything about it.

Does this bring anything to mind? Could something like this be happening in your church? Is your church broken, causing people to fall away, while a few are running around trying to save them? Perhaps no one is trying anymore. Perhaps everyone has become used to young people leaving the church. Perhaps it has become the new normal. I know these are tough questions that should get your attention.

So why do they fall away? Why do our youth, young adults, and even adults leave? The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) told by Jesus provides answers that will help us to fix the “boardwalk” and prevent our younger generations from leaving the church.

One of the first questions I asked myself when I read this parable is: “Why did the younger son leave the house?”

I don’t think it was because of the father. The story describes him as a great father who loved his sons. The mother is not even mentioned, so it was not because of her. Many have blamed the young man for being rebellious and selfish; yet, I would like to give the younger son the benefit of the doubt. Moreover, after he had found the job at the pig farm, he was totally starving, and would gladly have eaten the pigs’ food. He felt very uncomfortable and out of place—his best and only company being the unclean swine.

When he realized the stark contrast between the best food available to him and that which the servants ate back at his father’s house, he came to his senses. When he said “I have sinned,” it suggested that the religious instruction which he had received at his father’s home was not entirely forgotten. The prodigal son was a good young adult, who had made bad choices.

As I meet prodigal sons and daughters who have left our churches, I realize they are great kids who have made some bad choices. I thank God for His grace and mercy.

If the prodigal son was a good kid, and had a great father who loved him and provided for him, then why did he leave? Something must have happened to him.

José Cortés, Jr., is the director of Adventist Youth Ministries in the Atlantic Union.

To be continued...
Washington New Hampshire Church
Annual Meeting

August 16, 2014

Guest Speaker
Gary Councell
Director
Adventist Chaplain Ministries

Sabbath School starts at 10:00 a.m. with worship and afternoon services to follow.

153 King Street
Washington, New Hampshire

The Bordoville 150th
Homecoming Anniversary

6491 Chester A. Arthur Road
West Enosburg, Vermont

October 18, 2014

Speaker
Ted N.C. Wilson
President
Seventh-day Adventist Church

Sabbath School begins at 9:50 a.m.
An afternoon program is planned.

Bring a dish and enjoy the fellowship dinner.

For more information, call Ginny and Erwin Eckson
(802) 433-5881, or e-mail: ege3334@gmail.com

NOTE for travel:
Do not try to come up Bordoville Road. It’s very rough and washed out in some places.
SAVE THE DATE
September 19-21, 2014

ADVENTIST SINGLE ADULT MINISTRIES (ASAM)
CONVENTION

Speaker: Dr. Carlton Byrd
Breath of Life Ministries

Stamford Marriott Hotel
243 Tresser Blvd,
Stamford, CT 06901

All Single Adults Are Invited!
For More Information Contact Atlantic Union Conference Family Ministries
Department at 978-368-8333 ext 3016 or Your Local Conference

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ATLANTIC UNION
Adventist Community Services Curriculum Planning Committee Conference, September 19-21, Hilton Stamford Hotel, 1 First Samford Place, Stamford, CT. For more information and to register, contact the Atlantic Union Conference Adventist Community Services Department, (978) 368-8333 ext. 2913, e-mail commserv@atlanticunion.org, or visit: atlanticunion.org/acs. To reserve your hotel room, contact the Hilton Stamford Hotel at (800) 445-8667, mention “AUC”. The event special reservation rate cut-off date is September 5. The event is sponsored by the Adventist Community Services of the Atlantic Union Conference and the North American Division.

ATLANTIC UNION COLLEGE
Job posting for President. Atlantic Union College is seeking candidates for the position of President. The detailed posting is available on the college Web site www.aucc.edu. Send nominations and résumés to the e-mail address of the administrative secretary for Dr. Donald King, chairman of the Search Committee, at pwillmott@atlanticunion.org.

SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND
Community Gospel Concert, featuring Michael Harris on June 10 at 7:00 p.m., at the Johnston church, 2693 Hartford Ave., Johnston, RI 02919. For more information, call (508) 243-1289.

SAVE THE DATE!
We’re celebrating our 100th anniversary. Come back and enjoy a special weekend!

October 3-5, 2014

Bring your yearbooks, bring your stories, share your memories, and join us in celebrating 100 years of Christian education at Greater Boston Academy.

More information at greaterbostonacademy.org/alumniweekend.html

OBITUARY SUBMISSION
Obituaries are posted free of charge for members of the Atlantic Union. To submit an obituary, visit www.atlantic-union.org/obituaries and complete the obituary form online or e-mail the complete obituary to gleaner@atlanticunion.org.

SAVE THE DATE!
Inviting all current and former Staff Members to the Camp Cherokee 50 Year Staff Reunion!

Labor Day Weekend 2014
August 29-September 1

For more information and registration instructions, go to: www.nyconf.org and click on Camp Cherokee

Join the Facebook Group:
“Camp Cherokee 50 Year Staff Reunion”

Come celebrate 50 years of amazing ministry and memories together!
CLASSIFIEDS

All advertisements should be sent, together with payment, to your local conference office for approval by the communication director. For advertisements originating within the Atlantic Union the rate is $25 for each insertion of 40 words or less, and 50 cents for each additional word. For all other advertisements the rate is $40 for each insertion of 40 words or less and 50 cents for each word over the 40. There is an 80-word maximum. Check or money order should be made payable to Atlantic Union Gleaner or Atlantic Union Conference.

The Atlantic Union Gleaner reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. The rejection of any advertisement should not be construed as disapproval of the product or service involved. Classified and display ads appearing in the Atlantic Union Gleaner are printed without endorsement or recommendation of the Atlantic Union Conference. The Atlantic Union Gleaner makes every reasonable effort to screen all advertisements, but in no case can the periodical assume responsibility for advertisements appearing in its columns or for typographical or categorical errors.

EMPLOYMENT

HOLBROOK INDIAN SCHOOL is seeking to hire a licensed clinical counselor to provide treatment plans, drug and alcohol counseling in individual and group sessions, and guidance for students who have, or continue to experience abuse and/or neglect. HIS is an accredited 1-12th grade boarding school—near the Navajo Reservation—operated directly by the Pacific Union Conference. For more information, please contact Pedro L. Ojeda at (928) 241-3356, principal@hisda.org, www.hisda.org

ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES seeks Assistant Professor of Mathematics. Requirements include ability to work in both a face-to-face and online teaching environments, knowledge of computer based academic delivery systems, and ability to work with an ethnically and religiously diverse student body. For more information, visit www.floridahospitalcareers.com; see job posting #1784403.

MAJOR GIFTS OFFICER needed in Los Angeles. Requires proven track record of securing $20,000+ gifts, Adventist in good standing. Includes cold calling and cultivation of donors. Travel evenings and weekends as needed. Send résumé to Better Life Broadcasting. ContactBetterLife@yahoo.com

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WANTED: The White Estate is looking for original photographs, personal items, or other artifacts relating to Ellen White for display in its new visitor center scheduled to open in 2015. To discuss your item(s), please contact James Nix at (301) 680-6557 or JimNix@WhiteEstate.org. All messages about your items will be answered.


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