BANNER BEARER BLESSINGS
by Lil Yarosh    photos by Seth Shaffer & Sherrie Williams

It seems like every Churchbeat plug for SonRise has included an urge for our participation in ways other than as an attendee. One of our family members took that suggestion to heart and for the first time as a participant guided a group through the Pageant as his assignment.

He picked up his banner and stepped out into the rain-kissed morning air with birdsongs wafting over the pleasant breeze, trees blossoming all about, and green grass afoot. As he faced the beaming sunshine, he recalled the previous night’s forecast of chances for heavy winds, hailstones, and even a possible tornado passing through. He thankfully reflected on how the Lord had watched over our precious make-shift Jerusalem Marketplace, sparing it any damage.

Emotions ran the gamut as his group sobered at the sight of the pleading lepers, brightened at the antics of the playful animals, marveled at the shopkeeper wares, and again became solemn at the Last Supper.

As they arrived at the Garden scene, during a pause in the prep lead-up, a woman approached him and a surprise dialogue ensued:

She: “Do you mind if I ask you some questions?”

This spring, in celebration of all that has happened as a result of the Adopt-A-Student ministry, we would like to deepen our connection by further uniting our families together for a potluck picnic at the Student Park. We invite all of our adopted families to join us on April 18 at 1:00 pm. for food and fellowship. We ask each family to bring 2 dozen finger sandwiches and a large salad of some sort-vegetable, fruit, or pasta. The church will provide drinks, desserts, and plastic wear. I can only imagine the joy God feels when he sees His people lovingly comming together. This Adopt-A-Student Family Picnic is an opportunity for all of us to experience this joy together.

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CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?

by Wolf Jedamski

I want to follow up with our February 2 announcement of a Church Board action approving the raising of up to $300,000 to do a complete upgrade of the PA and Projection Systems in the Sanctuary.

Any one of us who has attended our worship services for a while knows that our Sanctuary has inherent and systemic issues with amplified sound. The very shape of room - a long rectangle box - creates problems. The acoustical treatment of the walls during the organ installation was designed to enhance music.

Hard surfaces that reflect sound cause echo and reverberation, great for music but very difficult for the spoken word. For example, audio engineers tell us that the optimum reverberation for the spoken word should be less than one second. Music likes to have 1.5 to 2 seconds of reverberation. Our room has been tested and its reverb numbers are at 1.8.

Spoken sound waves behave differently. Our speaker system dating back to the 1970s can't overcome those issues. Most modern speakers also have challenges overcoming some of the architectural difficulties. Over the last several years new speaker technology has come on the market that can.

Steerable line arrays, which aim narrow bands of sound directed to each and every specific seat area and then are digitally balanced by computer so that everyone hears clearly and hears the same sound, are now becoming affordable. They are still an expensive top of the line solution but we're confident they are the answer.

As part of this upgrade, we also want to upgrade our projection system. We need to upgrade the projector with a higher, more powerful lumen bright one so that we can overcome the daylight in the Sanctuary during morning worship services. Many have complained that turning down the house lights keeps them from following along in worship with their reading of the Word or songs in the hymnal.

Why do we need to spend this much and why now? Now is because of the new technology that can solve what we need in order to have both good music and good spoken word. More than that, however, we want to do all we can to enhance our worship so that it isn’t distracting and glorifies our Lord and Savior. He is worthy of the highest honor, praise, and our total best.

Mark your offering envelopes “PA or Audio Upgrade”.

Has this campaign been approved by the Church Board and church membership?

This campaign has been approved by the Church Board. Following Board approval a church business meeting was held during which information was provided and all questions posed by those who attended were answered. Suggestions were also solicited from those in attendance. There have been focus groups, presentations to Sabbath School groups and a variety of church entities, articles in Churchbeat, presentations from the pulpit, pledge cards distributed along with a brochure. Information has also been available on the church web site. More presentations from the pulpit, more articles in Churchbeat, and more handouts are planned. Members are welcome to ask questions and make suggestions at any time by contacting a pastor or the church office.
After hearing several very special comments about SonRise this year, I was impressed to share them with my Church family, many of who volunteer each year in a wide range of ways and receive such a blessing themselves.

One of the ten Romanians in my home had just returned from spring break in Orlando and on his way back to Illinois decided to see what SonRise was all about. He and his family had seen The Holy Land Experience a couple of days before. He shared a comparison with me saying that “although the one in Orlando might be more professional, SonRise was much more personal

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He: “Go right ahead.”
She: “How many members attend here?”
He: “Well, we have over three thousand.”
She: “I don’t know much about SDA’s. My co-worker invited us to this pageant and gave us tickets. My husband and I are really enjoying SonRise--it’s so meaningful. This is your Sabbath, right? Tell me what that means to you?”
He: Responded accordingly.
She: “It sounds so special. If we were to visit your services, would we stand out and feel out of place? You know, it can be so uncomfortable going to a new church.”
He: “I can assure you if you slip in, you’ll fit right in and be able to observe and participate as you wish. Tell you what. Ask your co-worker to bring you to church or arrange to meet her and I’ll keep a look-out for you.”
The Garden segment was underway and with a quick "Thank you so much--we don’t want to miss this", she excused herself and the twosome disappeared into the crowd.

About five hundred cast members and the same number of volunteers plus one co-worker and one banner bearer, all blessed from on high, were links in this brief possibly life-changing encounter. Let’s pray that each of us might be a link in many more experiences like this, remembering that we too follow a Heavenly Banner Bearer and “HIS BANNER OVER US IS LOVE.”

—2 Samuel 2:4

and moving.” He added, “It touched my heart.”

One young man said to his friends as they started to exit the gym, “That was just beautiful.”

One little girl, age 4, who was sitting near me in the gym said, “Oh my, that was fantastic!” after the lights came back on.

An old man and I met face-to-face on the sidewalk when no one else was nearby. He said to me, “If that doesn’t choke you up, nothing will!”

So, to all those hundreds of people who each year organize, participate in, and volunteer in so many ways, I want to say a huge “Thank you” from me, my guests, and thousands of others from all over this area and far beyond. It was inspiring and a great blessing! "
COOL CAMP, the Church’s summer day camp for ages 6 to 14, runs from June 1 through July 24. Information may be found at coolcamp.org.

WE DEEPLY APPRECIATE the prayers, cards, emails, flowers, and gifts of food received at the recent death of our loved one, Barbara Butler Ruf. These gracious acts will be of lasting remembrance. You may watch a short video tribute to Barbara at https://youtu.be/m5ZiLPSnBoU. —The Ruf Family

GREATER COLLEGE DALE SCHOOLS are now accepting applications for open enrollment for all grade levels (Pre-K - 12) for the 2015-16 school year. Applications are available online at http://gcss.org/, through each school’s website or may be picked up at the front office of each respective building.

PARENTS of 2 ½ years old – 4 years old (or children turning 5 after August 15) are invited to our most valuable parent event at the Montessori Early Childhood Center located at A.W. Spalding Elementary. Our goal is to answer your most pressing questions about what a child does in a Montessori program— in the best way possible, immersing you in the Montessori environment. Mark your calendar for this adult only event on April 23 at 6:00 pm. Limited space available, call (423) 396-2122 to reserve your space.

JOIN US FOR THE COOLEST WEEK of the Summer! Make your plans now to join us each morning from June 22-26 for an amazing arctic adventure scaling Mount Everest right here at our VBS program. Each day we will experience music and fun in our Base Camp Sing and Play station, rock-solid Bible truths as we visit Bible Expeditions, high energy games in Glacier Games, amazing puppet shows and snacks in our Mountaintop Treats station, and exciting hands-on crafts in our Mount Everest Craft Lodge. We will need hundreds of willing crew leaders, assistant leaders, and general volunteers to help us on our daily trek. Contact Pastor Carole at cverrill@southern.edu or (423) 994-2396 to see how you can get involved in this exciting ministry.