New Creations in Christ

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! II Corinthians 5:17

Jason & Kimberly Spear’s Journey

The journey of life takes us in all different directions. Sometimes the pathway is narrow, sometimes it’s bumpy, but no matter what happens, when we step back and look at life, we realize that LIFE is HARD.... but GOD is GOOD!

Jason and I met in 2007 and joined our lives together forever in 2009. We have two children, Samantha - age 5.5, and Kaden - age 4. After our marriage in 2009, Dr. John Baldwin and his wife, Sylvia, invited us to go through a series of Bible studies to deepen our relationship with Jesus. Jason and I both believed in Him already, but wanted to strengthen that relationship as a couple and as a family.

Dr. Baldwin has such a beautiful way of teaching and encouraging us. One of the jobs that Jason has is working Fire/EMS. He sees the sick, and even death, on a regular basis. You have to have faith and believe in something to see the things he sees.

We know the journey of life isn't going to be easy. Satan is VERY real, but God is STRONGER. Jason and I have fallen in love with each other, but have also fallen in love with Jesus. Every day we pray and commit our lives and our children to Him, and that's why on August 23, we were baptized as God calls us to do. We love the Lord and will continue to grow with Him.

Marie Newbrough’s Decision

Marie studied the Bible with Jon and Stacy Gusky and was baptized at the beginning of the summer. Since then she has dealt with a variety of continuing health challenges and has been unable to worship with us regularly. Let’s pray for her health.

Welcome to our church family!
Andrews Academy Commences Classes

Andrews Academy is pleased to announce the commencement of the 2014/15 school year with our current enrollment standing at 230 students.

Thank you for your generous support of Andrews Academy students.

One of the many blessings of living in a close-knit community is that its members so often rally together when challenges arise. Andrews Academy continues to experience this kind of community camaraderie firsthand. Principal Robert Overstreet realizes that many families would be unable to afford the tuition that a private school requires to cover the costs of its program. Mr. Overstreet presented a challenge to academy students, their parents, board members, and the greater Berrien Springs community, asking them to help sponsor families who are experiencing difficult financial times, but who want their children at Andrews Academy.

In an overwhelming demonstration of generosity and support, community members continue this year to meet this challenge with contributions of thousands of dollars to help families afford tuition costs. Andrews Academy already has a scholarship program in place to help families in need, but the increased number of families grappling with financial hardships has created a greater need for funds than the scholarship program could provide. We are so grateful to God and to the community for the generosity we’ve received.

We continue to solicit the community’s prayers for Andrews Academy staff and students, that they have a successful year and to live with the challenge of this year’s school theme, “Here I am, send me.” This is based in the words of Isaiah 6:8 which reads, “Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’”

We sincerely pray that each community member will be blessed this year. Thank you again for your ongoing kindness and generous support of Andrews Academy.

Steven Atkins

Heart to Heart

Someone once said, “If life hands you a lemon, make lemonade.” We all get handed lemons in life at one time or another, don’t we? Well, I was sitting in a restaurant once with a friend and he ordered a glass of water and a dish of lemon wedges. When they came he proceeded to squeeze the lemons into his glass of water and then he began opening the packages of sugar and pouring them in as well. He told me that the water and lemons came free and it was the cheapest way of having lemon juice for a meal.

What I noticed was that it took a lot of sugar to sweeten the lemon juice so it was drinkable. It is the same with life. When we get handed a lemon in life, it takes a lot of the sweetness of Jesus living in our hearts to not react to that difficult situation out of the humanness of our hearts. When we have Jesus dwelling in us, it will make the lemons that get handed to us more palatable and will even sweeten those around us. Let’s spend time with Jesus every day so that the sweetness of His character will flow through everything that we do and say.

Pastor Hayward
A Journey to the Other Side of the World and Back
From the extremely poor, to the extremely rich, and a simple answer . . .

Part 1:
This past July Beatriz and I were able to use some of our frequent flyer miles to make a few stops around the world. Our first stop was in Kenya, Africa to see the work REACH International is doing with the Turkana and Sumburu people. This region of Kenya is very dry and barren. Many of the people have very little to eat, and sometimes no water to drink, driving them to drinking cows’ urine just to stay alive (yes, you read that correctly).

REACH International has made this area in Kenya a top priority project, and has raised enough money to drill three wells in key locations.

In addition to these wells, REACH is also building two churches and two schools. Beatriz and I had the privilege to visit these churches and schools and really enjoyed visiting the kids and the adults. We are keeping in touch with the pastor there.

Part 2:
The second stop on our journey was to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), in the Middle East. The two cities we visited were Dubai, home of the tallest building in the world, and Abu Dhabi, capital of the UAE. These two cities gained most of their wealth from the export of oil since the 1970’s, but after the economic downturn in 2007 Dubai has relied mostly on tourism.

Our last Sabbath in the UAE we spent with a small group of Adventist believers meeting in a conference room at a downtown hotel. Everyone in attendance there were foreigners, mostly from Africa, some from Asia. They expressed their longing for Christian education, Christian bookstores, and being able to build their own church; all things prohibited by law, and all things we take for granted.

The good news is, Christianity is being tolerated in Dubai more then ever before. This is a gigantic mission field, and it was good to see a small group of believers on fire for Christ, willing to share Him with others even at such a high cost.

Part 3:
Our third and final stop of significance was our follow-up visit to the REACH school in India where we just completed a Village Church Mission Project last December.

There were some new faces we had not seen before, but many familiar faces as well. We handed out baptismal certificates to the eight young people who were baptized during our mission trip but had not received the official paper declaration.

After many hugs from all the children, one of the first things they wanted to do was to sing, “Deep and Wide,” a song we sang many times during the December mission project. In a way it was a mini revival, and a renewed commitment to them.

On our last day at the REACH school in India we stopped by an ice cream factory and bought several gallons to hand out to the children after their lunch. We had enough ice cream for everyone to have firsts, seconds, and even thirds, all with only spending $20.00. God is good and He does care for even the little things such as a ice cream on a very hot day. (Temperatures this particular day were well over 100 degrees.)

Conclusion:
These people are just like you and me. Almost all our conversations, after the initial small talk, were stories about people working hard, trying to make a better life for themselves and for their families.

Why do we work so hard and spend so much time away from our families? Here in mid-west America we seldom have to worry about not having enough to eat or drink, but if we are honest, we probably think of having a better life more often than we realize.

I think God has put in our DNA a longing, a knowing, that there is something out there that is better for us than what we have right now. Because of sin we get confused; we want to try to make something better for ourselves. What we are really longing for is Jesus (John 4).

Whether we live in Berrien Springs, or halfway around the world, there is one solution to our problems: JESUS (Jeremiah 10:6).

Those who believe must move boldly forward proclaiming, “JESUS is the way, the truth, and the life . . .” (John 14:6). When JESUS comes again we will truly have a better life.

Rob Ritzenthaler
School Picnic News

The Village Adventist Elementary School had its Annual Back-to-School Picnic on Sunday, Sept. 7 from 11:30-2:30 at Fuller’s Resort and Campground in Buchanan.

The Lord blessed us with a beautiful day for outdoor activity. Attendance was good, and our school families had fun eating and playing together. Students enjoyed the playground, swimming in Clear Lake, and playing various sports.

The food was great, and everyone enjoyed the ice cream sundaes provided by Home and School.

Many families reported that they really liked the new location this year, and we are hoping to return to Fuller next year for the picnic.

This event is a wonderful way to socialize and meet new families. Many thanks for supporting this event, and to our Home and School team for all their hard work in planning.

Upcoming VAES Events:

- Sept. 16: Assembly: Make-a-Wish Michigan
- Sept. 20: Choir at Village Church/Praise Team
- Sept. 25: 8th vs. Staff Football Game 6:20
- Sept. 26: K-6 Kids Walk for Kids Walk-a-Thon, 12:30-2:00
- Oct. 6-17: Iowa Testing
- Oct. 13-17: Week of Prayer with Conrad Vine

VAES Theme for 2014-2015

The school theme this year is S.O.I.L. It stands for Serve Others in Love. The theme was submitted by 8th grade student Brittney Gaban. The students voted the second week of school on several themes, and S.O.I.L was the winner. Great job, Brittney!

We are looking forward to a school year that focuses on serving God in love.

The third grade class quickly got on board with the new theme and created a mural to show the new theme. It is on display in the connecting corridor of the Family Center. Great job, Mrs. Reichert and the 3rd grade class.

Wellspring Brings Hope

We came to the seminar struggling, unhappy, facing many issues that have been trying to destroy our marriage and home for the last one and a half years. We even questioned attending the seminar, wondering if it would do any good. With encouragement from our friends we decided to go ahead anyway.

Today we are very fortunate to still be together; we have a better future we are working toward. We are happy being together because we learned how to communicate from our heart and dealt with issues from our childhood years and other obstacles. We have forgiven one another and committed to each other to have a better life together from here on.
Guide dog to his master, Mike Harrell, Chief’s carmel-tinted fur gleams in the warm morning sunlight. He confidently leads his master across a busy intersection, skillfully steering him to the opposite sidewalk in Gallatin Tennessee, where Mike works as a respiratory therapist. Left blind, after congenital glaucoma in one eye, and a bike accident damaging his good eye beyond restoration, Mike functions normally with the help of his furry guide and friend, Chief.

Though Chief makes life navigable, things were not always so. Seven years ago, after his first guide dog had passed away, Mike prepared to receive a new dog. Going through an extensive process to be paired again with a good match, trainers finally decided on Chief to be his new guide.

Traveling to his home in Tennessee, guide dog instructor Heidi Ilgin, spent two long weeks training Chief and Mike to work as a team. Seeing the two matched so successfully, Heidi returned to her job. As soon as she left, Chief simply quit cooperating with Mike.

After leaving Mike stranded in a busy intersection, Mike, and Sharon, his wife, decided it was time to call in to the Southestern Guide Dogs to report that Mike needed a new fit. Before a new dog could be found, the Harrells traveled to the Grand Ole Opry Hotel. There they met up with an old friend Frank Cohan, a motivational speaker for youth.

After hearing of their predicament with their newly acquired dog, he knelt down on Chief’s level and looked soberly into his soft brown eyes. Cupping Chief’s face in his hands, he slowly began to talk to the dog. “You had better start behaving buddy, because my friend Mike needs your help.” Frank quietly and earnestly prayed for Chief and left Mike and Sharon with his blessing.

Soon after this experience, Mike, Sharon, and Chief made a trip to Walmart. To their surprise, Chief followed Sharon like he had been trained to do all along. Could it really be true? Had the prayer actually made a difference in Chief? Once home, Mike and Chief went for a walk around the neighborhood, to see if their hopes were correct. Chief guided him flawlessly! Mike and Chief now travel for Mike’s job. They fly alone, and Chief can find the elevator or hotel room on command after visiting it only once.

You’re wondering how I know this? Because I met them in Yellowstone National Park during a Sabbath morning worship service conducted in the recreation hall. The whole story was related to me, and I even got to pet Chief, (but only with Mike’s permission). When asked what made the remarkable difference in Chief, Mike replies with a smile, “You heard the story, you tell me.”

“You heard the story, you tell me.”

JULIE KELLY
Welcome to the Family!

**Yvonna Applewhite** grew up in New Jersey, moving later to Hazel Crest, Illinois, a south suburb of Chicago. Although Yvonna was already a Christian, a friend introduced her to the Sabbath, and she became a Seventh-day Adventist 15 years ago.

Yvonna serves as the administrative assistant to the doctorate of ministry program at Andrews University. She is also attending the university, working on her masters in education, with an emphasis in Leadership. Yvonna’s interests include walking and reading.

Her five children help to complete the family. Lydia is 18 and a freshman at Andrews University, majoring in speech pathology. Claudia is 14, and a freshman at Andrews Academy. Julia, 13, is an 8th grader at Ruth Murdoch. John is a fourth grader at VAES, and is 9 years old. Stephen, 6, also attends VAES, and is in the first grade.

**Denise Shaver** recently graduated with her doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction. She works at Griggs University in two capacities: off campus programs director and instructional course designer.

Originally from Brooklyn, New York, Denise graduated from Oakwood, moved to Columbus, Ohio, and most recently transitioned to Berrien Springs in 2010. She enjoys walking and reading religious literature.

All three of Denise’s children attend VAES. Lenise, at 12, is a 7th grader. Lenaye, 11, is a sixth grader, and Lenwood, 9, is in grade four.

**Eliana Faith Atencio** was dedicated to Jesus on Sabbath, August 30, by Pastor Kelly.

**WIN! Wellness** begins Thursday, September 25 at 7:00 p.m. Our health ministries team is conducting this weekly 1-½ hour session. Interact with new friends as you learn together, becoming healthier and happier.

**Village Church 100th Celebration:** Friday night, October 31 & Sabbath, November 1. Invite your friends, family, and former members to join us as we celebrate not only our history, but are challenged to our destiny. If you have church “artifacts” that could be displayed, please leave labeled items at the church office.

Chef Mark Anthony will be with us November 15 for worship, and November 16 for cooking.

**Pathfinder Registration Is Open!**

Want to have an exciting encounter with God and other people in a variety of activities and campouts? Join Pathfinders! Whether you are just entering fifth grade or fifty years of life, there’s a place for you in our Pathfinder club. To register, you can contact John Rorabeck at 734-904-3052, or you can just show up at our next meeting at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 17, in the Youth Room downstairs.

Registration will be open until October 1, but if you miss the first half of the year, you can join us the first week of January. We have a great year planned with fun and spiritually-uplifting activities, so we hope to see you there!

**VAES Home & School Italian Dinner**

Village Church Family Center

October 21, 4:00-6:30 p.m.