Church Welcomes Youth Pastoral Couple

Pastor Joe Reeves and his bride Ruthie are warmly welcomed by the Village Church. Pastor Joe will direct his focus towards the youth of the church as his primary endeavor.

Most recently Pastor Joe served in the Detroit area, working with three different churches, including a church plant, in conjunction with Pastor Jim Howard. As the middle child with two sisters and two brothers, Pastor Joe was raised in the state of Washington. After a year of college, he studied with the Amazing Facts Center for Evangelism in California, and then served for a year and a half as a Bible worker in Wisconsin. He graduated with his degree in Theology in 2011 from Southern Adventist University (S.A.U.).

Following graduation, Pastor Joe was employed by S.A.U. for a year as the Outreach Coordinator and Instructor for SALT (Soulwinning And Leadership Training). He is in his fourth year serving as the music coordinator for GYC (Generation Youth for Christ). In addition to playing the piano, he enjoys rock climbing, canoeing, and mountain biking.

Pastor Joe and Ruthie were married on May 4, 2014. Ruthie is working on her masters in Speech-Language Pathology at Andrews University, and plans to graduate in 2016. Her roots go back to Kansas where she lived for 16 years.

Village Votes Sanctuary

The church body met in business session on Sunday, January 25, to make decisions regarding the renewal of the older portion of the church.

The pastoral staff provided a pancake breakfast prior to the meeting. Members added toppings and other items to the menu. The breakfast provided a chance to chat over a warm meal in anticipation of the business session.

Pastor Kelly reminded the group that the church really is the people, the body of believers. Their beauty of character is the true attraction, irrespective of the church building. The following five to ten minutes were dedicated to small group question and answer as members of the Building/Steering committee were able to discuss the plans with those at their tables.

It was noted that the Building/Steering Committee has met most weeks for over a year, more than any other church committee. The members have spent hours processing plans and discussing ideas. The church board reviewed the plans over several consecutive months. Four info sessions were available to members to view the proposals.
Heart to Heart

Ruthie and I have been watching from our new apartment window the ice covering Lake Chapin receding each day over the last week. Winter is not over yet, but it is certainly doomed. Before summer comes, the temperature will keep on dipping for a time. The snow accumulation will still climb. I have not yet ridden my muddy mountain bike on the last icy road of the season. But in spite of the current surroundings summer is guaranteed to prevail.

It reminds me of the Christian journey. Life in this world is like a long cold winter. We may have been born into a world of challenges, disappointments, and sorrows, but it only lasts for a season. A better day is coming! And because summer is around the corner, it makes me feel like today is not so hopeless and dreary after all. The promise of summer makes all the difference in the world.

The promises make all the difference. Our prayer meetings this season are centered on praising God for His wonderful, irreversible, life-changing promises as read in His Word and experienced in our lives. I encourage every able person in this church to choose at least one Wednesday evening in the month of February to join with the pastors, leaders, and members of this body for a moment together. The best things in life are worth putting on the calendar now. But beware, you may feel drawn to come back.

February 4 at 6:30 – “Promises for the End Days”
February 11 at 6:30 – “Promises of God’s Love”
February 18 at 6:30 – “Promises from the Gospels”
February 25 at 6:30 – “Promises for Our Families”

You will see my wife every Wednesday night coming straight from practicum rotations with her violin ready for a blessing. Less than an hour in prayer meeting will have you returning home encouraged and enabled to walk in the way of life. Summer will feel a little bit closer!

Pastor Joe

Family S.O.S.

Through wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches. Proverbs 24:3,4

Jan 31 It Doesn't Take an Expert
Feb 7 Old Fogies In the Fast Lane
Feb 14 Men from Mars, Women from Venus, & Aliens at Home
Feb 21 Once Upon a Time . . . Father Knew Something
Feb 28 She Won't Back Up and She Won't Back Down
March 7 “Irrelevant” - A Hallmark Special Feature
March 14 Polluted Sanctuaries
March 21 Moving Molehills and Mountains in Marriage
April 4 Living Pure in a Culture Rated “R”
Village Votes Renewal, continued from page 1:

Significant provisions from God were mentioned at the business session. The opening doors of God’s providence will potentially save thousands of dollars. Our local building inspector and fire chief have been of great assistance helping the committee understand their options and obligations as related to the building code. The balcony has been approved for full seating capacity.

The church has nearly $100,000 in the Sanctuary Renewal Fund, and will shortly receive another $100,000 in fulfillment from a pledge. Even with the plan to remain debt-free, enough money is available to begin the first phase of construction.

Busch Construction was employed recently for the renovation of the egress. The “Gang of Four,” so named by members of the Building/Steering Committee, oversaw the egress project. The Gang consisted of Bill Collard, Kevin Randolph, Harold Riess, and the late Jack Iverson. (Jack Straszewski has filled Jack Iverson’s spot on the committee.)

The fine work and amiable relationship with Corey Busch gave the Committee confidence in Busch Construction to complete the remodel. Mr. Busch is willing to allow some of our local tradesmen to assist with parts of the church renovation, thereby saving the church money.

The Gang of Four would work closely with the project.

The first motion was the recommendation from the Building/Steering Committee and Church Board that the church proceed with the project as a whole. It was voted Yes - 98, No - 2.

The second motion was to take the front of the sanctuary as the first stage of construction. The remodel would start as soon as contractor and permits allow. The motion was voted unanimously.

The final motion was to engage Busch Construction on a “Time and Materials” basis for the renovation of the sanctuary. It was voted: Yes - 73; No - 4.
A Sure Guide for 2015

Are you at the beginning of life’s journey, wondering what you should do with your life, with whom you should spend it, where you should go to school, who God meant you to be? Are you considering if Seventh-day Adventism is really for you? Does Jesus truly love you, like the song says?

Are you midstream in life, wondering how to raise your children, stay committed to your mate, succeed in your vocation? Do you wonder if God listens to your prayers? Do you feel guilty that you hardly know how to pray? Does the Bible have relevance to life?

Are you looking back, wondering where the years have gone? Has life not turned out like you had hoped and dreamed? Do you wonder if it’s too late, if God still cares, and would He accept you back?

You hear that Jesus is coming soon, but you know in your heart that you are scared, not excited. You know you need to be memorizing Scripture, studying God’s Word, connecting in prayer, but you’re not sure where to start.

You may be growing in your walk with Jesus, and feel the need to go deeper in His Word, fortify your mind with Scripture, and be more effective in your service for Jesus.

For all of these needs, a Bible study source has been paid for by a family in our church. The FAST Scripture Memory System is now available at no charge. Members have free access to all the study guides, church training resources, promotional tools, and more. The FAST program has multiple discipleship studies, evangelism tools, and memory materials.

Here’s how to access the materials:
1. Go to www.fast.st and login. Create an account if you don’t already have one.
2. Click on the box that says, “Training Centers.”
3. On the list of churches, find “Berrien Springs Village,” and click it.

Following approval, you will receive an email alert saying your request has been approved. Next time you login, you will have access to all the materials.

To use the materials, make sure you are logged in as a member.
1. Click on Study Resources.
2. Check box next to topic.
3. If you want the printed version, click “print” at the top of the screen.

Church Finances

The numbers are in: Our church finances in 2014 went up from 1.6 million to 1.8 million. There was an increase in every major item of the budget, including Michigan Advance and the World Budget.

The most systematic way to support our local church and its mission is through the Combined Budget, which funds all the different ministries of our church. We came within 1.5% of completing our annual budget. Although we were able to meet all our obligations, it leaves us with a very small working capital fund. As we faithfully give month by month, we will strengthen our ability to meet the challenges of operation, as well as reach out to our world.
India Mission

I had the pleasure of visiting India for two weeks. It was a joy to reunite with family and meet some new ones after 40 years! We were also able to visit some famous landmarks and see some beautiful sights such as the Taj Mahal.

Equally important, the India mission project was initiated. As you may recall, the mission was divided into two projects. 1) $2000 to donate to students for tuition at Kottarakara SDA High school. 2) $500 for the distribution of Steps to Christ. Funding of $2000 was met before I left for India.

God was working in advance. Upon arrival in Kottarakara, the first place we stopped was at the principal’s residence. Unknown to me, my cousin who accompanied us there is related to the principal through marriage. It paved the way. By the grace of God and through donors, I was able to present a check of $2000 to the principal of Kottarakara SDA High School.

Secondly, funding of the $500 was not complete before I left. I decided to sell my china for $200. When I returned from India, Village church donations equaled exactly $307. This made a grand total of $507. Seven dollars more than my goal! I’m so amazed at how faithful God is and how He uses willing people like you for His purpose!

Funding being met means the distribution of Steps to Christ will soon be underway. A few logistics have yet to be worked out. I believe if we step out in faith, tasks that seem insurmountable will be simplified and made easy.

So, please continue to pray for this mission. God will provide the means to be able to share the good news of the gospel to the millions of people in India who are spiritually hungry. May God touch our hearts to the needs of others, and may He use us to further His work. Many heart-felt thanks to all of you for your prayers and for your contributions! May God bless you and keep you under His care.

-- Shirley & George Alonso

Bikes for Cuba

Come along for a Ride! Do you want to participate in a Study Tour to Cuba? This tour, sponsored by the Master of Divinity program will take place in the Spring break and is collecting funds towards the purchase of 100 bicyclers and 50 tablets for Cuban Bible Workers. Each bicycle costs $150 and will aid a Bible worker to move from place to place quicker. How about giving the “tool of a lifetime” to a Cuban Bible worker? Mark your tithe envelopes: “Bikes for Cuba” and make checks payable to Andrews University. For more information contact Fernando Ortiz: ortizl@andrews.edu or 269.471.3416. Thanks!
Andrews Academy

The International Assembly presented by Andrews Academy Modern Language Department was held on Friday, January 23. This presentation was part of the International Appreciation Week held at Andrews Academy January 19-23. It was a week to celebrate the diversity that the Andrews Academy family enjoys.

International Appreciation Week is an opportunity for each student and faculty to learn more about the many cultures here at Andrews Academy. Each day we had a guest speaker present insights from their culture. Guest speakers were students of Andrews University. Each morning also included song service, with some songs sung from that culture, as well as a short video presenting a feature of the culture.

Friday morning we rearranged class periods so we could combine the chapel and assembly time for the International Assembly, and so that it would end near the lunch hour so we could enjoy the international food fair together.

Steven Atkins

Village Adventist Elementary School

VAES Hosts Movie Night

On Saturday evening, January 10, VAES hosted a Movie Night event. Students and their families enjoyed the evening of fun and fellowship. Admission and popcorn were free, and there were refreshments for sale to benefit the worthy student fund. The event raised $135 dollars, which was matched by a donor, to bring the total to $270. Praise God! A big thanks goes out to the following parents who volunteered their time to plan this event: Todd and Denise Freeman, Katie Freeman, and Tonya Snyder.

Foster Friends Prayer Outreach:

Over the past year the Village School has reached out to give support to the foster care system in southwest Michigan. Our students have been blessed by giving to local children in need. Last school year the school hosted a successful pillow drive, providing a fresh, clean pillow to kids as they entered a new foster home.

This year, students enjoyed putting together stockings at Christmas time, which were delivered to kids in need by DHS.

This winter and spring, we are embarking on a new outreach program that focuses on prayer. Nick Snell, former Village School student and current Seminary student, will be talking with our students on Feb. 3 during chapel about the power of prayer. Dawn Wales, VAES Bible Labs Coordinator, will then share with our students the Foster Friends Prayer program. Students will be given a card that has the age and sex of an actual child in the foster care system, and encouraged to commit to praying for that child. The card can be placed in their Bible, on their desk, or in their locker to remind them to pray daily. Many thanks to Mr. Snell and Mrs. Wales for facilitating this project. We invite our church and school family to join us in prayer for these children, that we know are precious in God's sight.

Village School Upcoming Events:

Jan. 31 Winterfest, 6:30-9:00 p.m. at VAES

February
6 Fruit orders due
7 Choir and Praise Team at Village Church
9-13 Spirit Week
12 8th vs. staff basketball, 6:30 at VAES
16 No School, President’s Day
19 No School PT Conferences
22 Fruit pick up, 10:00-2:00 at VAES gym
23 School board/finance meetings
WHEN IT DOESN’T MAKE SENSE, IT MAKES GOD SENSE

2014: I made the decision to move to Berrien Springs, Michigan from Las Vegas, Nevada and it just did not make sense to me at all. I had witnessed the Holy Spirit working in my life through Search for Certainty Bible Studies, while volunteering for It Is Written Revelation for Today Bible Seminars. I had never given Bible Studies. Following the prompting of the Holy Spirit, I signed up and went to the Bible Workers training by Amazing Facts.

I was warned that my life would be changed forever. I was hooked. I was addicted to Jesus. This was the beginning of a wonderful and long relationship with my Bible Study students and with Jesus Christ. There were many trials, tribulations, and situations that did not make sense. Through pleading with others to pray for me, the Holy Spirit reminded me of the words of Pastor Donald McLeod, “Get your eyes off your self, just say ‘Yes,’ you now.” Again, I said, “Yes,” to God. This just does not make sense, I thought. There was no logic or scientific reasoning behind my decision, which led me to believe, in spite of my prayer, that I had had a moment of insanity!

Dr. Kamieniski had a dream to start an outpatient Weimar Newstart program and also to write instructional manuals, training lay men and women to present the health message within the church. Many miracles were witnessed over the months and years through the Newstart Wellness Challenge. Many souls came to the foot of the cross to meet the Jesus who had healed them. The instructional manuals were given to each participant; however, they never reached the mass production stage, a part of his dream yet to come to fruition.

2005: my life took a turn; I left Florida to help my family in Las Vegas. My life without the Newstart Wellness Challenge felt very empty and dark. It just didn’t make sense why God would give me all that educational experience and not give me an opportunity to use it.

2014: I moved to Berrien Springs. Still no opportunities working in the wellness arena. I kept the original Newstart Wellness Challenge manuals, toting them back and forth over the country. I had just decided to put them in storage for the opportunities to start a program were not there for me, so it must not be in God’s plan. Twenty years since the inception of the Newstart program in Zephyrhills had gone by. Who would want outdated information? Instantly a thought passed through my mind. God’s health message is never outdated.

Instantly rushing in, the Holy Spirit pleaded, “Let go and let God. Yes, you can’t, but God can, trust Him, watch Him work, He will provide. He is in the miracle-working business.”

“Yes,” I said, “I will help! I’ll share what I know.”

In one day the lady made a few simple changes in her lifestyle, and in the morning her fasting blood sugar was down from 200 to 72. She experienced other positive changes and she still continues to give God all the praise. Ten days later her physician lowered her insulin. Within one week the program grew from 1 to 14 participants.

Through the benefits of the new church copier, the manuals have been copied. Praise God! Continuing, the Holy Spirit said, “Remember Carol, God will provide; eyes on Him, just say ‘YES!’”

See Proverbs 3:5,6, and Isaiah 41: 10.

Carol M. Brown-Mitchell
On Saturday night, January 17, 2015, eight young people in their twenties went out to supper at the Pizza Hut in Niles, Michigan. After placing their order, Rogel Perez invited the group to pray. As is their custom, they joined hands, bowed their heads, and prayed.

When they requested their tab, the waitress brought them a clipboard which held a personal message on a scrap of paper which read, “Thanks for not being ashamed to pray in public. Keep the faith. God bless.” Underneath they saw their bill, and to their amazement it was paid in full!

Verle Allen

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Keeping Connected

Tablets for Cuba

Our brothers and sisters in Cuba have no access to our Adventist books. Collections like EGW's or the SDA commentary are impossible to obtain. A Bible or a simple devotional is treasured for generations and, at times it’s circulated among families until it is worn out. Bringing books to Cuba would be an answer, but they are heavy, expensive, and difficult to enter.

The solution is to put hundreds of resources into a single tablet. Yes, a tablet can be entered easily into the country and it can be loaded with a host of materials such as all of EGW books, SDA Bible Commentary, Adventist Hymnal, Bible studies, music, sermons and more. Perhaps you upgraded your tablet over the holiday, or you have an old tablet you would like to donate.

Give a "library" to a Cuban family or Bible worker today. Make your tax deductible donation to Andrews University. For more information contact Fernando Ortiz at ortizl@andrews.edu or 269.471.3416, or simply bring the tablet to the church office. On behalf of a Cuban Bible worker or family ¡Gracias!

Some Enchanted Evening

Join our church family for a special evening together on February 21. The variety program and sale of items for Sanctuary Renewal will combine to make it a family-friendly, fun experience. Doors will open at 6:45 p.m., and the variety program will begin at 7:30.

The church cookbook, In Good Taste, will be available for purchase, as well as Dionne Robinson’s third and latest book, The Courage to Keep Going, 300+ Life-Changing Quotes to Give You Can-Do Power.

Share on your social media through www.facebook.com/villageSDA.