Basil Plants Brighten Berrien

Village Youth Day 2015

Youth Sabbath on March 28 brought some big moments in the lives of participating youth. Students from Earliteen Sabbath School preached messages from Revelation, with David Vine preaching on the 7 seals, and Philip Robertson on the 7 trumpets of Revelation. Pastor Joe Reeves showed in both services how the message of Revelation promises that even when it feels like Jesus has gone absent, He is still on the throne and has never forsaken us.

In 2nd service, Maria Chiarenza preached God’s love as shown through the 7 last plagues, followed by Nathan Church describing the climax of Revelation in chapters 19 and 20.

Pathfinders were busy throughout the day, including a special presentation in uniform in first service and serving church lunch after 2nd service.

All youth received a chance to be the center of activity that afternoon. The outreach project after lunch involved 65 people walking through the streets of Berrien Springs passing out free basil plants as a small token of spring.

Each recipient received a GLOW tract with a paper stating, “Celebrating God’s gift of spring ... a gift from the youth of the Village Seventh-day Adventist Church.” It was hard to tell who was happier – the grateful recipients or the youth giving them.

Our combined forces passed out 300 basil plants, 600 GLOW tracts, and prayed with 47 people. Village youth were joining churches across the country that day for GYC global outreach. People who joined us for evening vespers were able to see pictures and hear testimonies from the afternoon outreach. Sixty youth stayed for food, games, and bonding in the youth room that evening.

Youth day was a small sample of the incredible potential that our youth have in serving our church and community on multiple levels. Village Church continues to embrace the contributions of our youth.

Pastor Joe Reeves
Heart to Heart

Many of us have recently watched, “What Might Have Been” a mild re-enactment of Ellen White’s vision recorded in Testimonies for the Church, vol. 8, p. 104-106. If you have not yet watched the video, I encourage you to watch it at www.100daysofprayer.org/resources along with reading the original testimony in volume 8.

It strikes me that there were very crucial items on the agenda of the 1901 General Conference. Important decisions were being decided then.

Yet the most important issue at stake was rather the struggles of the inner heart. The biggest need was not better policy, though that was needed too, but to set aside jealousy, backbiting, and pride of opinion.

Our biggest threat is our own divided heart. If we do not gain better self-awareness now, then when? Now is the time to make new routines for praying with spouse, child, and friend. Unless we humble our hearts before God and seek Him, we will sink.

Village Church is not inviting members to pray because local members are going to prison or dying. We are not praying because of a fire or a lawsuit. We are simply praying because we realize that we need God as much as any church in the world.

Even in times of prosperity and blessing we are depending on God. There is nothing like bowing to the ground to show God that you count His work more important than your own.

Check the schedule of our “100 Days of Prayer” to find at least one time per week you can drive to Village church just to pray during these crucial days.

May our local church sanctuary renewal project signal a renewal of our hearts! A newly renovated sanctuary will make Village Church more beautiful than ever, but not nearly as beautiful as renewed hearts will make us!

I encourage every member of the church, young and old to make this spring week of prayer a priority, April 18-24. Bring the whole family for a program that the children will enjoy, and a place for youth to be engaged. Now is the time for a renewed sanctuary, renewed hearts, and a revived church.

Pastor Joe

See the back page for times & places to pray.

Our Village Youth Outreach project was featured in the Michigan GLOW email report. Their local participation was a part of the GYC Global Outreach Day on March 28.
Mara Clay-Humphrey, grade 5 student at VAES, is the proud winner of the Berrien County Health Department Substance Abuse Prevention Services, "Be Smart, Don't Start" poster contest. Mara is pictured with the poster she created for the contest, and is accompanied by presenters S. Larry-Burton and Kerri Teachout, Supervisor for the BC Health Department. This award came with a $50.00 prize. Congratulations, Mara!

Pastor Joe just finished Week of Prayer for the students at VAES. He met separately with Kindergarten - 4th grade, and grades 5 - 8.

Merna Witzel and John Burland watch as Edith Habenicht carefully removes the top of the wedding cake she baked and decorated for John and Hannah's shower.

One of our ladies in the kitchen kept remarking that we needed a bigger microwave to heat the larger dishes. Her husband received a clean bill of health recently, and bought this new microwave as a thank offering!
The excitement mounted as Tuesday, March 10 was getting closer. We would be leaving the land of ice and snow to embark on a journey to the other side of the globe to see our daughter, Danae, in Kenya. Her journey had started in July of 2014. After finishing her Master’s in International Social Work at Southern University, she headed for the Omalaika Home in Kenya. The Omalaika Home, which means “angel” in KiMaasai was started in 2013 by Kim DeWitt as a safe haven for Maasai girls who were at risk of being child brides. You may read about the home and girls at the website: www.globalvillageministries.org.

Anyway, back to Danae’s journey. She ended up staying at the Omalaika Home for 4 months, then headed to Maxwell Academy near Nairobi. I will let her tell her story as written from her blog www.kenyadance.wordpress.com: “They say that you don’t know what you have until it is gone. Living at the Omalaika Home has proven that in my life. I had so many struggles that I faced and maybe didn’t fully comprehend until I was gone. I used a pit toilet for the first full week, took bucket showers for the first two weeks and camping showers after that, had no internet for the first month, used a ‘chamber pot’ for the full four months, wore a lot of the same clothes for multiple days in a row, filtered my water daily, ate the exact same three meals each day for three months, and had to deal with mosquitoes, skinks, mice, flying termites, and cockroaches in my bedroom.

“Looking back, I had my moments of wondering what in the world I was doing as loneliness swept over me. I journaled, I cried, I got angry, and I had no clue what anyone said. But I had a purpose. It was within the lives of 28 girls that I found reason for my every day. I was able to reinstitute the menu to include more variety, helped them bead, became the nurse, learned to carry maize on my head to help with the daily chores, expanded their vocabulary, taught them to do puzzles and how to sew, took them out to play soccer, got them to let loose and do cartwheels, helped them cook and clean, drew a huge map on the wall, and began relaying the stone path. Each moment was complete magic.”

As a result of a situation in the community, Danae had to leave the Omalaika Home. She continues in her blog: “The remaining 7 months are being spent at Maxwell Adventist Academy in Nairobi, Kenya. This was definitely not in my original plans for the year, but was a necessary move. Most of the challenges faced at the [Omalaika] home have been traded in for the ease of Western living within our compound. It has been harder adjusting back into this culture than it ever was getting used to camping showers, eating the same food every day, and having limited outside communication.” Despite the changes, God has shown Himself faithful in Danae’s life.
So, to continue on our journey. Rodrick, Nathan, and I decided to join Danae in Kenya on the March mission trip. We landed in Nairobi a day earlier than the others and were greeted by a smiling, excited Danae at about 12:30 a.m., which gave us time for a little sleep and to connect with Danae for a day.

Our first adventure was to travel about 7 hours east of Nairobi to the Tsavo plains and stay at the Sarova Salt Lick Game Park for 3 nights. It was an amazing setting with where each room is situated on a large pillar so that the elephants and other animals are literally underneath you and can be heard throughout the night.

As our group would arrive in a village, some of the ladies would start dancing and the men would beat their drums, while the children would swarm with beaming smiles on their faces to welcome us. Rod was kept busy with registering people, I helped with the pharmacy and the physicians, while Danae and Nathan made friends with the children. By mid-afternoon, it was time to leave and move on to a different village for the next day. We left the Tsavo area and headed back to Nairobi.

The following day found us descending into the Great Rift Valley and into the land of the Maasai. We also were able to stop at the Omalaika Home where the girls rushed out when they found out that Danae was there. Even though their culture does not show much emotion, they were all excited and full of smiles to see Danae. She was equally eager to see and hug them.

We ended our mission trip with a day safari in the Maasai Mara Game Park….a day of elephants, cheetahs, giraffes, hippos, various antelopes, wildebeests, lions, zebras, ostriches, jackals, and birds. That evening we ate dinner with Village members, Miroslav and Brenda Kis, who were going on safari just prior to teaching a class at the Adventist University in Kenya. It is amazing how the Adventist Church members connect all over the globe.

A few quick highlights….seeing the adorable baby elephant orphans, being kissed by a giraffe, wondering if we would survive Nairobi rush hour traffic on our way to the airport (think of Chicago without any traffic lights), watching Nathan barter for a bargain, rough roads on a monster safari truck, watching Danae blow soap bubbles for the children to chase, nearly jumping out of my skin when an elephant trumpeted underneath me while I was walking at night at the Sarova Salt Lick Hotel, going on a night safari, watching the matatu drivers (minibus taxes) weave in and out of traffic while missing you by ¼ inch, wide open spaces with herds of animals that I have only previously seen in a zoo.

We all came home a bit tired and travel weary but with many memories of people, places, new friends, and animals to treasure in our hearts.

Nancy Church
Spring Week of Prayer: Know Him & Show Him

Spring Week of Prayer is an opportunity to bring the whole family for a week of drawing close together and growing in Jesus. Lake Union Conference Education Director, Elder Garry Sudds, will be our speaker.

Join us for supper beginning at 5:30 Monday through Friday evenings. There is a special program planned for the children, and the youth will join Pastor Joe for breakout sessions.

Sabbath morning: Keeping Our Eyes Fixed on Jesus
Sabbath 6:15 pm: Seven Ways to Hear the Voice of God
Sunday 6:15 pm: Praying for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit
Monday 6:15 pm: Praying with Desperation, Urgency, & Expectancy
Tuesday 6:15 pm: Revive Me, O Lord . . . as You Wake Up Your Sleeping Church
Wednesday 6:15 Who You Are & What You’re Here to Accomplish
Thursday 6:15 pm: Called to be Co-Workers with Christ
Friday 6:15 pm: We Will Go & We Will Take Our Children with Us

Our Spring Week of Prayer will conclude Sabbath morning with a communion service.

84 days until General Conference!

The Montana Mission trip is from July 30 - August 10. The trip will feature outreach to the residents of the Fort Peck Indian Reservation with health ministry, painting and renovations in Poplar, and jail and juvenile center outreach. If you are interested in reaching out to the original Americans, contact Bill Keith.

The 2nd annual VAES Run for the Fund begins tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

Come to the Garden

Village Church Women's Ministry invites all women to a time of Friendship & Fellowship.

Sabbath, May 9, 2015 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Light Refreshments Provided

Location:
Still Waters Retreat
16495 W. Clear Lake Road
Buchanan, MI 49107
Directions can be emailed, mailed, picked up at the church office, or Welcome Center.

RSVP Required
Call the Church Office at 269-471-7795 or pick up a registration form and place in the Women's Ministry box at the Welcome Center. If you have any questions, call Nancy Church at 269-471-7830.

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