Christian Hospitality
by Ardis Stenbakken

So what is hospitality? Showing off your treasures as King Hezekiah did (2 Kings 20:12-18)? Or is it to entertain angels unawares (Heb. 13:2)? Or might it be a way to reach out to share Jesus’ love, to make others comfortable, to gain new friends, and yes, to even enjoy yourself.

I know, we get busy and think we don’t have the time to prepare “company” food, or our house is not fancy enough (or even clean enough), but I have found that those things really don’t matter. Sharing peanut butter sandwiches can be a wonderful hospitality. Actually, hospitality doesn’t even require food, but often does, so you can always invite people you want to know, or who need to know Jesus, over for nothing more fancy than hot chocolate and graham crackers! If you can’t entertain at home, go to a restaurant, have a picnic in the park, or get friends or your Sabbath school class together and serve soup and sandwiches in the church fellowship hall. Be creative—that is what good hospitality is all about.

It is important that every church have some plan for seeing that visitors have a Sabbath dinner. The plan can vary according to the church and the resources, but there needs to be a plan! And it is important that new members be invited to homes to learn healthy vegetarian cooking and how to keep the Sabbath. Then beyond that getting together with friends (old friends and those you have just met) is such fun and can be such a strengthening of the bonds of love that Jesus has already shared with us. Bon appétit!

Ardis is the retired GC Women’s Ministries Director happily living in Colorado. She loves family, friends, and the grace of Jesus Christ.
A new radio station, WHER 100.1 "Eternal Hope Radio" has been launched by the 272-member Midpoint Adventist Church in St. Lucie, Fl. Its low-power signal with a 15-mile radius has the potential to reach 200,000 people. It now broadcasts LifeTalk Radio and 3ABN Radio programs to the Port St. Lucie community, thanks to a series of miracles realized by Midport Church members. MORE

A "quick-meet pastor" to air passengers, Jose A. Barrientos Jr. is the youngest and only Hispanic among 18 volunteer chaplains who work at the Washington Dulles International Airport in Virginia. Every Thursday he spends several hours ministering to his "flock," scurrying commuters and employees, in one of the nation's largest international airports. He is the go-to guy in offering assistance to Spanish-, Portuguese-, and Italian-speaking passengers, as well as the maintenance staff, the large majority of whom are Hispanic.

"We favor more pastors extending their ministries into the community," said Gary Councell, director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries. "We only have influence when we mingle with people and spend time with them for their interests instead of our needs." MORE

Nearly 600 baptisms with another 200 people studying, were the part of the results from an effort held in Zambia by the Joshua, Tex. church. Although 30 members went on the mission trip, the church body, which joined efforts to raise the necessary money to sponsor the trip, does not consider it an effort held by only those 30 people. Nearly everyone in the church was involved in the planning and fund-raising of the needed $70,000 by doing yard work, holding bake sales, selling burritos, mailing letters and responding to appeals at church to help fund the travel expenses for the group. MORE

The following are positive stories that appeared this week in the news about Seventh-day Adventists in the North American Division territory.
A short collection of news stories about Adventists

At Chillicothe food bank, demand keeps increasing
*Chillicothe Gazette*
December 4

7th Day Adventist Church members take on mission in Kenya
*Smith Mountain Eagle*
December 1

Vegan Thanksgiving: No Turkeys Harmed
*Southern Pines Pilot*
November 22

All wrapped up: Youth help Operation Christmas Child
*Escanaba Daily Press*
November 19

Thanksgiving comes early in Burlington City
*phillyBurbs.com*
November 17

Building Bethlehem
*The Wenatchee World Online*
December 1

Berean Seventh Day Adventist Delivers Major Thanksgiving Outreach
*Patch.com*
November 22

South Side church feeds the hungry
*Richmond Times Dispatch*
November 21

Student horrified by Bible abuse
*Statesman Journal*
November 18

Adventist Bolingbrook Hospital named a Breast Imaging Center
Bolingbrook
November 16

The focus for the entire month of December, according to the *NAD Calendar of Special Days*, is “Christian Hospitality.” In some parts of the Bible it seems that hospitality is almost as important to God as purity and faith. Yet it is a ministry some of us often overlook until we are “forced” into entertaining because of a special occasion. If you have ever been treated hospitably while in a strange place, or alone, or anytime, you know how restorative and wonderful it can be. If you are looking for ways to emphasize Christian Hospitality to your congregation or group, check the resources under “Christian Hospitality” on the *NAD Calendar of Special Days page* on the *NAD website*. You will find a downloadable and printable brochure, a PowerPoint presentation, a Hospitality Ministry description and more.
“God’s Christmas Cards” is a series of seven Christmas programs presented by Dan Jackson, president of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists. He is joined by five speaker/directors of the Radio and television ministries of the Adventist Media Center. What would God say this year if He were to send a Christmas card to Casey Anthony or U.S. President Obama? What might He say to Bernie Madoff, Tiger Woods, John Edwards or Jaycee Dugard? What would He say to You?

Enjoy this seven part series of “God’s Christmas Cards” airing on the Hope Channel (also DIRECTV ch. 368) or live online each evening at 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m. EST from December 17-23. Also airing multiple times December 24 and 25. See details below or check www.hopetv.org for listings:

1- Dan Jackson, Dec. 17, 7 and 10 p.m. EST; Dec. 24, 4 p.m. EST.
2- John Bradshaw, Dec. 18, 7 and 10 p.m. EST; Dec. 24, 4:30 p.m. EST.
3- Frank Gonzalez, Dec. 19, 7 and 10 p.m. EST; Dec. 24, 8 p.m. EST.
4- Fred Kinsey, Dec. 20, 7 and 10 p.m. EST; Dec. 24, 8:30 p.m. EST.
5- Mike Tucker, Dec. 21, 7 and 10 p.m. EST; Dec. 25, 4 p.m. EST.
6- Carlton Byrd, Dec. 22, 7 and 10 p.m. EST; Dec. 25, 4:30 p.m. EST.
7- Dan Jackson, Dec. 23, 7 and 10 p.m. EST; Dec. 25, 9:30 p.m. EST.

William Gemora has accepted the invitation to be the new Northern California Conference Asian/Pacific Ministries coordinator vacated by Vic Louis Arreola, III, who was voted Pacific Union Conference Asian/Pacific Ministries director in August. In addition to his new responsibilities, Gemora also serves as district pastor for the East Bay Fil-Am and Stockton Fil-Am churches.

A new Facebook page for Adventist songwriters, poets and artists to network and be affirmed has been launched by Pacific Union Conference Church Support Services. If you are an Adventist songwriter, poet or artist living in the North American Division, “Inspire” wants to connect with you. Whether your creative efforts are considered professional or amateur, you have unique gifts that can uplift your faith community and the world. We want to learn more about your gifts and affirm your efforts to glorify God through the creative gifts he has given you. Please join at: http://www.facebook.com/visit.inspire.

December Offerings and Special Days

December Focus:
Christian Hospitality

Special Days:
• December 3, Bible Sabbath

Helpful website(s):
• NAD Website List of Bible Studies
• BibleInfo.com

Related Resources Quick Links:
• AdventSource Related Resources
• Journey of Joy DVD Bible Studies
• Lifting Up Jesus Bible Studies
• *Hospitality* in Women’s Ministries Certification, Level 3

Offerings:
• December 10, Adventist Community Services
Two students from the University of Louisville attended the nightly presentations on Bible prophecy held in Louisville, Ky., by Amazing Facts evangelist Emanuel Baek. At the conclusion of the meetings the students were both baptized. Now they are so on fire for Lord that they are giving Bible studies to their classmates at a McDonald’s restaurant on the University of Louisville campus.

Like the 70s chorus “Pass It On” says, “It only takes a spark to get a fire going, and soon all those around can warm up in its glowing. That’s how it is with God’s love, once you’ve experienced it. You spread His love to everyone. You want to pass it on.”

Help “keep the fire going” by living out your commitment of sharing Jesus with those around you.

Scan this Family Ministries QR code with your iPhone. It will take you directly to the Family Ministries group on Facebook. Members of the group receive updates with resources, links, articles, ideas, information on dating, cohabitation, marriage, family, singles, men’s issues, and parenting.

Ministerial spouses now have a new resource available specifically for them, developed by the NAD Ministerial Spouses Association. All of the segments of the newly-launched “Keeping It Real” 2-hour TV show are available for viewing in HD or downloading. Spouses of ministers can also join the ongoing conversation on facebook.com/MinisterialSpousesAssociation live during the show.

“Learn to appreciate what you HAVE, before time makes you appreciate what you HAD.” - Claudio Consuegra, director NAD Family Ministries, at Georgia-Cumberland Conference Couples Retreat, November 11-13, 2011

Union Magazines and Websites

- Atlantic Union GLEANER
- Canadian Adventist MESSENGER
- Columbia Union VISITOR
- Lake Union HERALD
- Mid-America OUTLOOK
- North Pacific Union GLEANER
- Pacific Union RECORDER
- Southern Union TIDINGS
- Southwestern Union RECORD

Adventist Mission DVD and Quarterly

4th Quarter, 2011

North American Division

Watch DVD
Read Mission Quarterly

Visit our website
“Rockne’s Rule, ‘You’re only as good as your last time up,’ does not form the basis of REACH. Our concept is based on a spiritual aspect. We are to empower, encourage, and assist each other. How God looks at us is the Gold Standard. Not Rockne’s Rule. Not how we look at ourselves…God does not give up on you or me.” - Pastor Dan Jackson, president of the North American Division, at NAD staff worship, December 7, 2011
Midport Church Launches WEHR-FM Radio Station

posted on December 05, 2011, under Church, Top by communication

by Anesta Thomas

Dale Bass, center, WEHR's President of the Board, gave Three Angels Broadcasting Network representatives John and Angela Lomacang a tour of the radio station during the inauguration event. (Photo: Haroldo Arismendi)

A new radio ministry at Midport Church in Port St. Lucie, Fla., launched into reality in two short weeks; however, before broadcasts over WEHR could begin airing, a series of steps had to be completed.

First, the Board had to ascertain a relationship with LifeTalk Radio. Next, a connection had to be established with Three Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN) Radio. Then, the Board had to locate and hire an engineer to work on the physical installation of the fully automated local station. The only three such engineers in St. Lucie County were unavailable for four to six weeks.

Dale Bass, President of the Board, said they prayed for a miracle because they could not wait that long. Two hours later, one engineer called and said a client was not ready, so he could do the installation at Midport Church. The Lord had performed the first in a series of miracles. Two and a half days later, this engineer did the installation and aligned the satellite with 3ABN radio to enable receiving its signals at 100.1 on the FM dial.

A second miracle ensued when the station was ready to broadcast in a two-week window before their Federal Communications Commission (FCC) license would have been jeopardized.

WEHR presently has a signal which covers a 15-mile radius and reaches a population of 200,000. “This is the first step to a bigger mission—the radio station’s web site,” said Bass. Listeners will be introduced to the web site where there are five direct links: 3ABN Television, 3ABN Radio, Online Bible study course, church programs, daily programs, schedules, and events.
Danny Shelton, left, Three Angels Broadcasting Network (3ABN) founder, sings with Ladye Love and Reggie Smith at Midport Church in Port St. Lucie, Fla. The concert was sponsored by the church's new radio station, WEHR-FM, as a musical gift to the community. (Photo: Haroldo Arismendi)

John Lomacang and his wife, Angela, of 3ABN were present to help facilitate the station’s sendoff. Their participation drew hundreds of members from other churches who, armed with a knowledge of the radio station, were asked to share the news with those they know. These guests watched a special, videotaped message from 3ABN President Jim Gilley and received WEHR 100.1 bumper stickers to distribute in the community.

The church hopes their radio station will plant seeds which will sprout and grow as listeners learn truths of the Bible and, ultimately, give their lives to Christ. Pastor Dennis McOmber says, “My desire is that our radio station will reach the community with the Three Angels’ Message by its distinctive content and programs.”

The WEHR Radio Station Board’s vision is to make high profile music artists available to the community, drawing those who want to hear good, Christian music. By scheduling quarterly community Sabbaths, followed by evening concerts, they hope to introduce people to Midport’s Adventist fellowship.

The first concert of the series was presented by Jennifer LaMountain, the second by Reggie and Ladye Love Smith, and a third will be conducted by The King’s Herald Quartet on February 18, 2012. On the same date, Lonnie Melashenko will be the morning speaker. Information on future concerts is available on the Events link of the WEHR website: http://www.eternalhoperadio.com/
12-7-11 A young pastor's "quick-meet" ministry to airplane passengers

"They have chaplains at the airport?"; the hottest book in the chapel

6 Dec 2011, Chantilly, Virginia, United States

Every Thursday morning, Jose A. Barrientos Jr. leaves his home shortly after 5 a.m. and drives to Washington Dulles International Airport to minister to his flock for several hours.

Instead of church members in pews, his congregants are scurrying commuters and employees in one of the nation's largest international airports.

Barrientos is a Seventh-day Adventist minister and one of 18 assistant chaplains at the busy hub. Not only is he the youngest, he's also the only Hispanic chaplain there, which makes him go-to guy in offering assistance to Spanish-, Portuguese-, and Italian-speaking passengers, as well as the maintenance staff, the large majority of whom are Hispanic.

He and other chaplains offer support by roaming the terminals looking for people to assist with directions, calming down passengers at baggage claim who haven't received their luggage, or reading faces to find those who might need solace. Barrientos also takes a turn once a month leading the Wednesday evening Protestant service held at the inter-faith chapel in the international terminal.

His full-time job is the children's ministry youth pastor at Community Praise Center Adventist Church in nearby Alexandria, but he volunteers several hours each week outside the church at Dulles. Denominational leaders hope that more Adventist ministers serving as community chaplains at airports is an idea that will take flight.

“We favor more pastors extending their ministries into the community,” said Gary Councell, director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, the denomination's ecclesiastical endorsing agency. "We only have influence when we mingle with people and spend time with them for their interests instead of our needs.”

Adventist pastors who become endorsed by ACM serve in places such as corporations, fire and police departments, sporting events and cruise lines. At airports, many people will talk to a chaplain just to share their good mood for a few minutes, while others are desperate for spiritual support, such as a woman who was sobbing during a chapel service after discovering her significant other was unfaithful. Still, some are seeking other things.

"Need help finding your gate?" Barrientos asked a man wandering toward a dead-end corridor loaded down with a large backpack, computer bag and neck pillow.

Barrientos is clergy, but also serves as a guide, restaurant critic, and a first-rate public relations representative. He brags up the architecture of newer terminals and boasts of upcoming renovations. Dulles airport is currently involved in the largest public transportation construction project in the nation.

"You'll love it. When it's done, you'll say, 'I want to travel more,'” he tells passengers.

Opened in 1962, Dulles is 26 miles from downtown Washington, D.C. and employs almost 30,000 people. Last year it served nearly 24 million passengers, according to its website.

"It's a huge, huge place," Barrientos said one recent morning while walking through the pre-dawn chill to the terminal. "Are you ready to do a lot of walking?"

His supervisor, Ralph Benson, wears a pedometer and estimates he walks five to nine miles each day on the job. An American Baptist, he frequently sees Barrientos on the job and requests his assistance in working with Spanish-only speakers.

"He's wonderful, everyone loves him," said Benson, who serves as director of ministry for the Metro Washington Airports Interfaith Chapels Inc. The non-profit organization provides ministry for The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority, which owns both Dulles and Reagan National airports.

Barrientos has dark, spiky hair and wears a charcoal gray suit with a green tie. It's up to each chaplain how he or she wants to dress, he says, but he chooses formal apparel – he needs all the cred he can get. He's 28 years old and has a cheery, young face and a slight build. Most Hispanics, he said, don't expect a minister to be young.
Barrientos helps a traveler find his gate on a recent early Thursday morning. Some days he meets with people in the airport chapel, while other days he walks several miles assisting passengers with directions.

Barrientos often goes out of his way to greet Hispanic employees at Dulles. Here he chats briefly with a security guard in the international terminal.

"But you're not old," a quizzical passenger on the underground train between terminals said to him in Spanish.

Passengers are often surprised that his job exists.

"I didn't even know airports had chaplains," said Betsy Buckner, who with her husband had flown all night after visiting friends in Argentina. They were looking for the Air France executive lounge during their five-hour stopover before a flight home to San Diego, California.

"Passengers are usually one of two extremes: people are either really, really happy or really sad," Barrientos said. Many passengers he meets are going to visit loved ones, while others have just lost loved ones.

Airport ministry is fast -- a chaplain must get to know someone quickly, and just as fast, let them go.

"It's easy for me. I like to make friends," he said after chatting up a security guard. "[My girlfriend] will tell you I talk too much."

When not talking with employees or leading passengers, Barrientos lets people know about the chapel and its services. Of the literature rack, he says the Adventist book he has to restock most often is El Camino a Cristo, the Spanish version of Steps to Christ, written by Adventist Church co-founder Ellen White. About 300 people visit the chapel every day.

The first airport chapel was established in 1951 at Boston Logan International Airport. It was a Catholic chapel named "Our Lady of the Airways." Now more than 140 airports worldwide have chapels, according to the International Association of Civil Aviation Chaplains, a non-profit organization.

Many airports began offering several denominational chapels, but the trend in recent decades is to offer one interfaith chapel, such as the one at Dulles, which offers services for Catholics, Muslims and Protestants.

Barrientos leads the 7 p.m. Christian prayer service the third Wednesday of each month.

From ANN World News Bulletin
Texas Adventists Bring Good News to Zambia

Joshua church travels long distance to preach

BY PAT HUMPHREY, writing from Livingstone, Zambia

A Seventh-day Adventist congregation near the "metroplex" of Dallas and Fort Worth, Texas, went far afield to share the gospel, an effort that resulted in nearly 600 baptisms, with another 200 people preparing to join the movement.

For the Seventh-day Adventist church in Joshua, Texas, involvement in mission is simply a way of life.

“Our church doesn’t just think this was a trip for only 30 members. This was their trip, too, even if they didn’t go with us,” says Kerrie Kimbrow, a church member who coordinated travel arrangements. “When we got back from Livingstone, Zambia, about 20 church members met us at the airport with banners welcoming us home. The church was very much involved.”

The idea was born about a year earlier, when Duane McKey, vice president for evangelism for the Southwestern Union Conference, and his wife, Kathy, who coordinates ShareHim meetings, visited the church in Joshua. Ron and Kerrie Kimbrow invited the McKeys to lunch, and, according to Kerrie, “that started the ball rolling.”

The McKeys were already planning a trip to Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, for the fall of 2011, where about 50 ShareHim meetings would be conducted. So they decided that a group from the Joshua church would also hold meetings in nearby Livingstone, Zambia.

Soon afterward a mission group was organized, and the entire church, it seems, got involved in the planning and fund-raising. Families did yard work, held bake sales, sold burritos, sent out letters, and made appeals at church to help fund the travel expenses for the group.

According to church pastor Jeff Coleman, “We spent $70,000 getting our people over there [to Zambia]. Some say it is money not well spent. But when you look at the baptisms, you can calculate that we spent $160 per candidate. When you look at it that way, it’s money well spent.”

The mission team was a diverse one, with its members ranging from ages 8 to 78: “We were blessed to have a lot of young people with us. This was a fantastic opportunity for them to preach,” said Kerrie Kimbrow. “This gives them affirmation for their faith, and the experience helps to form their life’s direction.”

Meetings were held at 17 different sites around the city of Livingstone, and on October 15, the final Sabbath of the series, 588 people were baptized. One of the new converts was 8-year-old Zoey Prater, who traveled with her family as part of the mission team. About 200 other people continue to study and will be baptized in the near future. “We’ll never really know until eternity the far-reaching impact of these meetings,”
SPEAKER FROM TEXAS: Pat Humphrey, Southwestern Union Conference communication director, was one of many speakers during a recent evangelistic outreach in Livingstone, Zambia, said Coleman.

Because Bibles are scarce in Zambia and in response to the many requests for them, Charlene West, executive director of evangelism for the Quiet Hour, and leader of the Zambia mission team, came to the rescue. Hearing of the need, West immediately placed a call to the Quiet Hour in the U.S., requesting funds to purchase the much-needed Bibles. Within days, the Quiet Hour had wired the money to purchase 900 Bibles so that each baptismal candidate could be gifted with a Bible of their very own on the day of baptism. Any Bibles left over would be used for ongoing evangelistic outreach.

On receiving a Bible, one new member summed up the feelings of many: “This is the most precious gift I’ve ever received,” she said.
At Chillicothe food bank, demand keeps increasing

CHILLCOTHE -- Space is cramped at the Seventh-day Adventist Church. There are two adjoining rooms, both about the size of a doctor's office examination room, that hold the church's clothing and food bank.

There's no waiting room. Clients line the perimeter of the clothing room, some standing, some sitting cross-legged on the floor, waiting for their turn to go into the food bank.

When their names were called, the clients would go into the other small room with two volunteers. Together they would pick food off the shelves -- seldom more than an arm's length away, and place it in a box sitting on a table in the middle of the room.

The church has been able to meet the need so far. But a certain reality isn't lost on Pastor Ron Anderson: Demand is growing faster than supply.

Anderson sees two types of poverty using the charity. Some people have relied on social services and charities for generations. Others are seeking help for the first time.

It's the latter category he'd rather help if he had a choice, Anderson said. He said he gets jaded of people in the former category -- where people on social services have no desire to stand on their own two feet.

"Poverty and unemployment are two different things," Anderson said. "Those in poverty are the people who don't want to do anything to improve."

Homelessness has been more out in the open in Chillicothe, Anderson said, with men panhandling off highway exit ramps.

"A lot of them feel like they're better off not getting a job," he said. "In my opinion, (some) people want to be homeless and in poverty -- that's where they're more comfortable."
After series of struggles, mother sober, back on track
Mental illnesses compound poverty issues
More locals, Ohioans finding themselves trapped in destitution
In western Pike County, people do what it takes
Huntington schools an oasis for kids who are poor
Demand increases at Carver Community Center
Some towns have jobs that go begging
Workers train for USEC jobs that may not materialize
Recession boosting local free, reduced-cost school lunch participation
RossGo employee has become known for finding help for those in need
Some make too much to get help, too little to live on
Organization provides workshop about how to get help paying a mortgage
Building understanding between poor, middle class
They lost everything: Harris family goes from house, to shelter, to Michigan
After series of struggles, mother sober, back on track
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In western Pike County, people do what it takes
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Huntington schools an oasis for kids who are poor
Demand increases at Carver Community Center
American Frances Jordan, director of a remote medical clinic in Kenya, holds the premature infant boy who inspired the Smith Mountain Lake Seventh Day Adventist Church's "Incubator Project."

A baby boy was born much too soon in a vestpocket Kenyan clinic without electricity, his body so tiny it could be cupped in the two palms of an adult. Photos captured the baby moments after his birth, a wisp of a child swaddled in a colorful blanket, his young Masaai mother holding him, peering into his tiny face with a look of wonder.

He died less than two days later, but his death inspired one Smith Mountain Lake Church to raise money for an incubator, which could have saved the baby, church members feel. Linda and Kenneth Snedden of Franklin County, two members of Smith Mountain Lake 7th Day Adventist Church serving as part of a Share Him missions team in the east African nation, launched the Incubator Project when they returned from abroad in September after a month in Kenya.

"The little baby was not even two pounds," recalled Linda Snedden.

Electricity has since been installed in the remote clinic, which before relied solely on a solar powered generator to refrigerate medications, lights being doused promptly by 10 p.m. each night. The clinic is located an arduous 80-mile, three-hour journey down a road so pocked by deep potholes that it must be traversed in the manner of a slalom skier, rather than driven.

"The roads were unbelievable," recalled Snedden. "In addition to all the ruts, there were big rocks," certainly not the kind of thoroughfare conducive to rapid transportation.

Open sewers transected even the larger communities the Sneddens visited, including the town of Maua and other settlements, where Kenneth Snedden preached 35 sermons in 19 days and his wife conducted church-related children's programs.

The medical facility they visited was constructed on part of a safari camp on the Masaai Mara, a vast plain teeming with wildlife much like the Serengeti in neighboring Tanzania. The camp founded by American Andrew Aho also is the site of churches and schools. An assistant to Aho, Frances Jordan, another American, runs the clinic.
"They wanted a place where Maasai women could safely deliver their babies," said Snedden.

"The camp sits on an escarpment overlooking Masai Mara," home to a rich variety of wildlife, including lions, hippos, giraffes, a multitude of colorful bird species, and much more, added Snedden, who hails from Maryland and shares a comfortable, memorabilia-filled country home near Windy Gap with her husband of 49 years and the couple's cat. They've lived in the Lake area since 2004. They're semi-retired, with Kenneth Snedden commuting to Roanoke to work for Source 4, a printing company, and Linda Snedden employed at nearby Boone's Country Store for a couple of days a week. The Sneddens have a son, Clifford, a daughter-in-law and two grandsons, age 19 and 22, who live in Rocky Mount. "We were escorted to a tent each night," Snedden noted of the couple's second African mission, "by an armed guard who told us, 'if a lion comes, I shoot'."

To read more of this and other stories, pick up a copy of this week's Smith Mountain Eagle on newsstands or subscribe online or by calling 719-5100. A year's subscription, which is just $26 in Bedford, Franklin and Pittsylvania County, also gives you free access to the Smith Mountain Eagle's e-edition, an online version of the entire newspaper.

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Wands and her daughter check on rolls they are baking.

By Deborah Salomon

As of Tuesday, November 22, 2011
Take the turkey out of Thanksgiving and what’s left? Thanksgiving.

“Turkey is the wrong focus,” says Kim Wands, vegan cook and vendor at the Sandhills Farmers’ Market. “Thanksgiving isn’t about the centerpiece. It’s about what is around the table.”

Wands, a former paramedic and ER nurse who lives in Carthage, hasn’t eaten turkey for 35 years. Her mother became a Seventh Day Adventist, embracing with the religion the Genesis Diet that some Adventists follow. Wands fishes a Kindle from her bag and pulls up Gen. 1:29 — God’s admonition to Adam and Eve:

And God said behold, I have given you every herb-bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed. To you, it shall be for meat.

“If we can stay with a simple diet as close to fresh as possible, we’ll be healthier,” Wands believes.

Because of her home environment, Kim Wands never learned to prepare meat. As a bride, she told husband Joel Wands, a fellow paramedic, that he was welcome to eat any meat he wanted to cook. That didn’t happen.

“He enjoyed the things I fixed,” she says. “I even make a wal-o-burger out of walnuts, oats and bulgur.”

The Wands family goes several steps further: They grow nutrient-dense greens, mill
wheat and use natural, preservative-free baking ingredients. At 47, Kim — who wears a head covering as a sign of respect to God and her husband — has rosy cheeks, smooth skin and happy eyes.

Her business, Our Daily Bread of the Sandhills, grew from a project mounted by daughter Emily, now 16. Emily wanted a horse; her parents insisted she map out the yearly cost and divide it into weeks.

"I can do this," Emily said, viewing the number.

Kim Wands had taught Emily and younger brother Evan bread-baking as part of early home schooling. Emily proposed baking the bread and having her mother sell it to nurses and doctors at FirstHealth Moore Regional Hospital, where she worked.

The bread became so popular that arrangements were made for a booth at the farmers market. During peak season, the family bakes 160 loaves per week in five rescued ovens installed in their garage. Proceeds support Emily’s equestrian dream — and then some.

"It’s fun having a family business, doing things together," Emily says.

By 5 a.m. Tuesday, Kim and Emily Wands were busy-busy-busy preparing cornbread, pies, sweetbreads, scones, muffins, rolls and ready-to-bake stuffing in her Carthage kitchen. Christmas carols played softly in the background. The near extinct aroma of home-baked breads: divine.

Most will be sold Wednesday at the Southern Pines Farmers Market on Morganton Road. When the market closes at 1 p.m., the family will load their van and drive to Chattanooga, Tenn., where Kim’s parents live and son Evan attends a church school.

This year, guests at Thanksgiving dinner include a family recovering from the death of a father. They gather at 2 p.m. for a vegan feast: cornbread dressing studded with vegetables, creamy mashed potatoes, homemade cranberry sauce, a green salad, whole-wheat dinner rolls, corn from their garden and macaroni with a rich, velvety, better-than-cheese sauce.

The meal ends with pumpkin and pecan pies followed by hot orchard wassail, a combination of cranberry and apple juices with citrus slices and, Kim concedes, a bit of sugar.

Before dinner, each participant expresses personal thanks. This year, Kim is grateful for how the plant-based diet she suggested helped reduce the pain of a friend suffering from a debilitating illness. She’s also grateful, she says, “for the love of God in all things.”

Afterward, in lieu of football, the family takes a long walk. Even without the big bird, they are stuffed.

"You shouldn’t measure Thanksgiving by the turkey," Emily concludes. “This isn’t..."
Turkey Day, it’s Thanksgiving Day.” Kim smiles proudly at her daughter and adds, “The importance of the holiday is being together. Things can change real quick. You never know when you’ll be together like this again.”

Contact Deborah Salomon at debsalomon@nc.rr.com.

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Comments

rightwingpatriot 2 weeks, 5 days ago

really... ill stick to the meat! but more power to ya

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carmenwille 2 weeks, 5 days ago
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vegaia 2 weeks, 5 days ago

There are so many reasons to choose a vegan lifestyle. Here are two short videos to help everyone understand why so many are making this life-altering choice: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fKr4HZ... and http://www.veganvideo.org

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skylinefirepest 2 weeks, 5 days ago

You're welcome to whatever you're little heart desires...but I'll spend Thanksgiving with family and good friends...including turkey, mashed taters, cranberry sauce and a host of other great goodies. May even get too sleepy to watch the game!!

• Sign in to reply
• Suggest removal

Courseaire 2 weeks, 5 days ago

What I like for Thanksgiving is a nice cut of Veal and maybe a little vegan side dish to go with the mash potatoes and cranberry dressing. The Turkey is only good for leftover sandwiches the next couple of days and eventually what's left will end up in a nice soup with chicken stock.
ladylane 2 weeks, 4 days ago

What is near the farmers market where the family sell their goods. I really like yeast rolls.

cantstandya 2 weeks, 4 days ago

This would really put a damper on those leftovers for Turkey sandwiches, and more it would put a big dent in the local economy, lots of Turkey is raised and sold right here in North Carolina, but enjoy what makes you feel good.

Leibniz 2 weeks, 3 days ago

Yeah, enjoy what makes you feel good. Never mind if it means taking the life of another creature.

It's always interesting (and a little depressing) to see the reactions of the morally obtuse.
It's not that I don't understand nature; it's that I understand the difference between what's natural and what's moral.

It is just as natural for stronger and smarter humans to exploit those who are weaker and less intelligent. But that doesn't make it morally okay. To suggest that it is always morally acceptable for humans to mimic what happens in nature is naive.

If your line of thinking were correct, one could just as easily justify the strongest humans enslaving the weakest humans, and even breeding them and raising them for food. Humans are at the top of the chain, but the strongest and smartest humans are even higher on the chain than the weaker and less intelligent ones. By your reasoning, the stronger humans could justify exploiting the weaker ones because, after all, every creature has a role to play and the weaker humans are lower on the chain.

Of course life isn't fair, but that doesn't mean we are free to do what we want or that we shouldn't work to make the world better.

In response to your other points: (1) Why is being a vegetarian killing me? What exactly does meat contain that I can't get in adequate amounts from non-meat...
sources? (2) You seem to be suggesting that because evolution has worked by way of survival of the fittest that we are justified in mistreating and killing animals because we are fitter than them. There are many flaws in this thought. One of them is that it conflates the moral with the natural. Another is that it would justify us killing those humans who are not as fit as us. If that's really an idea you're prepared to endorse, then our discussion isn't likely to make much progress. (3) If domesticated farm animals were simply released into nature, they probably wouldn't fare that well. But that doesn't mean it's okay for us to kill them for food. Consider an analogous argument. If all human children were released into nature today, most of them would be killed by predators, disease, starvation, etc., and the human race would be extinct with a few decades. But that doesn't mean it's okay for us to do what we want with human children. It doesn't mean it's okay to mistreat them or kill them for food.

Leibniz 2 weeks, 3 days ago

I enjoy having rational discussions with people who are willing. But you're evidently not interested in a rational discussion, so I'll quit. I do think it's ironic that you think I'm in over my head and accuse me of using circular logic, when in reality I have a Ph.D. in philosophy and have taught logic and philosophy in several major universities. If anyone is in over his head or illogical, it's not me.

deepthought 2 weeks, 3 days ago

ladylane, the Farmer's Market is conducted on Thursday mornings, 9a-1p, next to the Southern Pines Armory on Morganton Road. Will continue throughout the winter as a delivery site for pre-orders. Veggies and goods will be available as long as the weather permits growing in greenhouses. Spring brings a few other various markets to watch for also. Come by for more info! Carnivores, please do not be offended! We still have some freedom of choice left.
JeneccaD 2 weeks, 3 days ago

Dude, there is no "e" in POTATO...Happy Thanksgiving.
OOPS! We are currently upgrading the system to better serve you. We will be back in a few minutes.
Thanksgiving comes early in Burlington City

By Jeannie O'Sullivan Staff writer | Posted: Thursday, November 17, 2011 5:45 am

BURLINGTON CITY — For the second year, two congregations joined forces to provide an early Thanksgiving to dozens of needy people.

Members of the Burlington Seventh-Day Adventist Church cooked and served a traditional turkey meal at the Burlington Quaker Meetinghouse and Conference Center on High Street on Wednesday.

Apron-clad volunteers smiled and dished up the buffet while folks of all walks of life dug into the holiday feast and peeked into gift bags filled with toiletries and other essentials. Medical screenings and chair massages, new features this year, were also part of the package.

Friends Rose Bickle and Jounita McHugh were impressed.

"Everything was delicious," said Bickle, of Burlington Township, adding that she'd gotten her blood sugar tested.

McHugh, of Lumberton, just stuck to the savory cuisine.

"If I'd have gotten a chair massage, I'd have fallen asleep," she said.

The meal was made possible by $3,000 collected from Adventist members and 25 cheesecakes donated by Mother's Kitchen, a bakery on Veterans Drive. The spacious dining room and professional kitchen at the meetinghouse served as the ideal venue.

Adventist Pastor Daniel Duffis worked the room, grinning and taking candid digital photos. Duffis said the community meal carries out the helping-hands vision of the church, which has operated on Conover Street for 120 years.

"We think this is really reaching out. For some people, it's the only Thanksgiving they'll get," he said.

Duffis said that unlike corporate-funded charities, the meal was paid entirely by donations from the church's 75 members.

They also gave freely of manpower. Event coordinator Marilyn Mapp of Burlington Township said 25 volunteers, including teenagers, helped prepare and serve the meal, and that a committee was assigned to take care of shopping for the food and getting the word out.

"My brothers and sisters at church are really, really good. A major difference this year is the youth involvement," said Mapp, a church member for nine years.

Attendance was down from last year's 200 visitors, likely because of the rainy weather, she said.

Still, nothing went to waste as the servers switched from serving hot plates to packing the extras in to-go boxes.

The Meetinghouse and Conference Center, which has lodging space in addition to cooking and dining facilities, frequently hosts traveling groups and other nonprofits of different faiths. Center director Carol Strawson spoke of the excitement that preceded the much-needed brunch.

"People were knocking on the door yesterday, asking about it," Strawson said. "It's really wonderful."
Building Bethlehem

Adventists bring back popular nativity presentation

By Mike Irwin
World staff writer

Wednesday, November 30, 2011

Mike Skeels adjusts lighting as the finishing touches are done on the town of Bethlehem at the annual Living Nativity scene at the Wenatchee Seventh-day Adventist Church. Journey to Bethlehem runs Thursday through Sunday. More than 4,000 people are expected to attend during four nights of free, interactive performances. Below: Edye Coughlin sets up the pottery shop.

Journey to Bethlehem

What: A live, interactive presentation of the first Christmas night and birth of Jesus. It includes 150 actors in period costumes, a stable of live animals and a script that depicts the religious and social issues of the time.

When: 30-minute tours held continuously from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday through Sunday.

Where: Wenatchee Seventh-day Adventist Church, 600 N. Western Ave.

Parking: Either in the church lot or in nearby lots at Wenatchee Valley College. Shuttle buses will carry visitors from WVC lots to the church.
Tickets: The free performances will likely draw large crowds. Advance tickets are available free online at J2BWenatchee.org. Or call 663-4032.

— Mike Irwin, World staff

Edye Coughlin sets up the pottery shop.

WENATCHEE — One heartfelt Christmas present you’ve waited for all year gets unwrapped this week when gates swing open on the area’s most lavish live Nativity presentation.

“It’s a gift to our community, a way to emphasize that this is a special time of year,” said Glenn Fisher, co-director of Journey to Bethlehem, the Nativity extravaganza at Wenatchee Seventh-day Adventist Church.

“We want to emphasize the true meaning of Christmas,” he said. “We want people to have a deeper understanding of why we celebrate the birth of Jesus. We think it’s a way to bring us — our community — all closer together.”

Journey to Bethlehem, presented for a second year by more than 200 Seventh-day Adventists from six Wenatchee Valley congregations, runs Thursday through Sunday. More than 4,000 people are expected to attend during four nights of free, interactive performances.

A blend of song, sermon, scripture and stagecraft, Journey to Bethlehem — or “J2B” — uses historically accurate costumed performers, a 16-shop street bazaar, high-tech lighting and sound and a stable of live animals to tell the Nativity story.

Added authenticity comes from Lilly, a live rented camel from Spokane, who makes her second appearance in the Wenatchee production. Last year, she was only 8 months old. This year, said Fisher, “she’s older, wiser and larger.”

The camel joins donkeys, goats, sheep and chickens to help fill the performance space with the sounds and, yes, smells of a bustling, Middle Eastern bazaar from 2,000 years ago. Additional smells — cooked food at the inn, seafood at the fish monger’s shop, fresh-cut wood at the carpenter’s stand — provide even more olfactory fun.
“Right from the start, we were looking for realism,” said Fisher, a local contractor who volunteered to help coordinate J2B. “As we move through the street scene, we warn visitors to keep valuables close by, not to touch the lepers and, above all, not to sass the Roman guards.”

Those guards, imposing in armor and helmets, verbally rough-up some of the adult visitors (kids are off limits) with demands of where they’re from and why they’re in Bethlehem. It’s all in fun, all in the script, said Fisher, but it gives a taste of the oppression the Hebrews experienced under Roman rule.

In groups of 20, visitors move through the production in 35-minute guided tours. Their guides, always in character, treat visitors as cousins and explain to Roman officials that they’re in town to pay their taxes.

Along the way, visitors learn a little bit about the politics, religion, social structure and history of Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jerusalem while following the Nativity story as told in the Bible.

Journey to Bethlehem began about 16 years ago at a Seventh-day Adventist church in Longview. Since then, it’s grown to include churches in Yakima, Spokane, Wenatchee and at least three other cities in the state, said Fisher.

Last year, initial start-up costs for the Wenatchee production were about $30,000, with an additional $10,000 this year to re-stage the presentation for four nights. Since no admission is charged, Seventh-day Adventist congregations foot the bill, supplemented by a few outside donations.

But Fisher quickly steered conversation away from finances. “That’s not what this is all about,” he said. “This is about the night Jesus was born — that’s what we’d like people to reflect on.”

Mike Irwin: 665-1179

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Berean Seventh Day Adventist Delivers Major Thanksgiving Outreach

Over a thousand residents of southwest Atlanta were honored guests at Berean Seventh Day Adventist Church on Sunday afternoon.

- By Yolande M. Minor
- November 22, 2011

8 week old Jantavia welcomed to the Thanksgiving Celebration at Berean Seventh Day Adventist Church. Credit YolandeM.Minor

Over a thousand southwest Atlantans were given a warm meal, free clothes, haircuts, and dental/medical treatment Sunday afternoon at Berean Seventh Day Adventist Church, 291 Hamilton E. Holmes Dr.

In addition, free phones and free math tutoring with laptops were offered to qualifying youth at the special Thanksgiving dinner.

The outreach ministry organizer and retired teacher of Booker T. Washington High School Irene Bowden said, "It is a beautiful event for us to give back to our community."

Under the leadership of Rev. Dr. Carlton P. Byrd, Berean prepares for an estimated 1,000 worshippers to come through their doors. The church offers free groceries and free clothing at the church's Outreach Center, at 351 Hamilton E. Holmes Dr., on Wednesdays from 1 to 5 p.m.

Volunteer Director of Food Services, David Riley, said, "I'm doing God's will for the People of God."

For more information, please contact Irene Bowden at 404-799-7280 or visit www.atlantabereansda.org. Volunteer opportunities are available.

Related Topics: Berean Seventh Day Adventist Church, Holiday Guide 2011, and Thanksgiving 2011
The line began to form outside Ephesus Seventh-day Adventist Church on Sunday about 5:30 a.m., even before many of the volunteers arrived.
For some, the visit to the house of worship on Midlothian Turnpike in South Richmond may be their only chance for a Thanksgiving meal.

The church's gym was converted into a food pantry, tables stacked neatly with flour, turkey, cake mix and all the ingredients needed to make a Thanksgiving meal complete.

Before the gathered crowd of nearly 150 people was able to pick food from the tables, Pastor Cecil Williams acknowledged that the need of the community exceeds the resources the church has to help everyone.

But, he told the crowd, it's a blessing to be able to help those they can.

Williams said more people are in need because of the economic downturn and the unemployment that comes with it.

"We see individuals more and more these days that have needs for basic necessities," he said before the food pantry opened. "Our community services department has developed relationships and ties where they can generate large amounts of food."

It was a special day for the church members and volunteers, one in which they were able to give back. Smiles were present on their faces despite the long, hard work to pull off the Thanksgiving feeding program.

"God provides for us," said Norma Foster, director of the church's community service department who oversees the Thanksgiving food pantry. "He's in charge of this whole program, and I'm working under him."

Dr. Sharon Joseph, an internist and pediatrician with Bon Secours in Powhatan County, donated money to help the church buy some of the food items for people to take to feed their families.

She also volunteered her time helping to help distribute the items. For her, she said, it was a way to reach out to the community in a meaningful way.

As Williams looked over the gym, taking stock of the food and people, he said the Thanksgiving food pantry is the church's largest ministry.

It's also one the church wants to continue and grow to make a difference for more people.

"As you can see, it touches a lot of people. That alone makes it very important to us," he said. "This is the only ministry we have that is touching as many lives as it does."
The high school freshman described an upsetting scene at her school last week. While no books were being burned at South Salem High School, she said she saw books being desecrated.

And, what makes it more repugnant, was that the books were Holy Scripture to many people — the Bible.

Lest anyone get the idea I am prejudiced against South High, I will declare right now that I, my wife, two sons and a grandson attended or graduated from that school with many fond memories mixed with the usual teenage angst.

So what happened last week?

It was the semi-annual distribution of Bibles by the Gideons, an international group of laymen dedicated to spreading the gospel message by giving away Bibles. They are well known for the Bibles they place in hotel rooms and such public locations as hospitals.

Standing on the public sidewalks outside of the school entrances, the men offered pocket-sized New Testaments to people who desired a copy.

What happened next shook student Lindsey Borse to her core. She said she saw a number of the students tossing their Bibles around, ripping pages from them, throwing them against walls or making baskets in trash cans and she even saw one student spitting in one while others laughed.

Lindsey is a member of the East Salem Adventist Church and attended Adventist schools until starting at South this school year. She was horrified by the sight of such treatment for any book, but especially for the Bible.

She said of the Gideons, "It was not like they were forcing their religion on them; they didn't have to take it. That is the part that disturbed me."

After talking on the phone to her mother, she was referred to her pastor, the Rev. Steve Lemke. He suggested Lindsey try to rescue as many of the Bibles as she could.

With the help of other students, she retrieved a total of 61 Bibles from trash cans, hallways and other school locations where students had discarded them.
Lemke said they are considering the best use of the retrieved Bibles, perhaps donating them to the Adventist Community Service Center, as prizes to a junior high-age Bible study or in other ways.

He said, "I am really proud of her. She found something that was very valuable to her and wanted to protect it. She also treated the kids in a kind, Christ-like manner."

South Principal David Phelps told of greeting the Gideon Bible distributors on the public sidewalk. He called the treatment of the scripture by some student "not good judgment."

"We have a clear expectation that they will be respectful of all material, if they (find later) they don't want the Bible, we expect them to drop them off to a teacher or the office."

Of course, it was only a small minority of the South students who were involved in mistreating the Bible.

Evan Dillon, a local member of Gideons International, said he helped give out 564 copies of the New Testament at South last week.

Dillon said, "Our hope is that they take them and read them. We can't dictate to them, naturally. It makes me feel bad that people don't have respect for God's word. It could be peer pressure, lack of training at home, or some other reason."

The Salem area has two "camps" of Gideons with about 75 members. He said the Gideons will continue to make the trips to the area high schools to offer scripture.

The organization has a website at www.gideons.org. Local donations may be addressed to Les Martin, 208 Menlo Drive N, Keizer, OR 97303-5537.

**St. Mark Lutheran becomes 'Reconciling' congregation**

Salem has the first Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregation to vote in the "Reconciling in Christ" designation.

St. Mark Lutheran Church, 790 Marion St. NE, will celebrate the milestone at the 8:30 and 11 a.m. services Sunday.

Church member Janice Colvin said, "The Reconciling in Christ program, administered by Lutherans Concerned/North America, recognizes Lutheran congregations that welcome
lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender believers."

The congregation went beyond the basics of sexual orientation to add "we embrace all of God's people, regardless of age, ethnicity, physical and mental abilities, marital status … or economic circumstance."

The Rev. Charles Mantey, St. Mark's pastor, said, "The Reconciling in Christ process is a step forward for Saint Mark in our desire to live out God's welcome to all people."

The church may be contacted at (503) 588-0141 or via e-mail at office@saintmarksalem.org.

**Hoodview Sunday school teacher explores Thanksgiving's origins**

Thursday is Thanksgiving, one of the few holidays observed by most religious organizations.

The aspect of giving thanks is a central tenet in many faith systems and it is deeply engrained in our national psyche.

Gary Johnson, a Sunday school teacher at the Hoodview Church of God in Woodburn, described the history of the holiday by tracing it back to celebration of the Pilgrims in October 1621.

By 1630, New England had set aside a day of thanksgiving. The Continental Congress declared Oct. 29, 1781, as a day of prayer and thanksgiving after the soldiers of George Washington defeated those of British Gen. Charles Cornwallis.

Johnson wrote in the church newsletter, "It was on Oct. 3, 1789, that George Washington as our first president proclaimed the first national day of thanksgiving. New York declared a state holiday of Thanksgiving in 1830, then Virginia did the same in 1855, and in 1863 Abraham Lincoln established the last Thursday in November as our national Thanksgiving holiday."

At the annual gathering for feasting and football, take time to recall what your faith teaches about thankfulness.

*Hank Arends is a retired religion/community events writer for the Statesman Journal who writes a weekly column on religion. He may be reached at hankarends@msn.com or (503) 930-9653.*
November 16, 2011

Adventist Bolingbrook Hospital named a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence

Bolingbrook – Adventist Bolingbrook Hospital has recently been designated a Breast Imaging Center of Excellence by the American College of Radiology (ACR).

The prestigious status means the hospital’s breast imaging center has earned accreditation in mammography, stereotactic breast biopsy, and breast ultrasound including ultrasound-guided breast biopsy.

“Our hospital and staff have gone through a comprehensive review and this designation is well deserved,” said Mike Koerting, director of imaging at Adventist Bolingbrook Hospital. “When patients see this gold seal of accreditation, they can be rest assured that our hospital meets the highest level of patient safety standards and image quality.”

More specifically, the ACR designation of excellence means Adventist Bolingbrook Hospital has undergone a rigorous review process and meets nationally accepted standards of care. It also means the hospital’s equipment is assessed by a medical imaging expert.

In addition, peer-review evaluations - conducted by board-certified physicians and medical physicists who are experts in the field - determined the hospital has achieved high practice standards in image quality, personnel qualifications, facility equipment, quality control procedures and quality assurance programs.

The ACR is a national professional organization serving more than 34,000 diagnostic and interventional radiologists, radiation oncologists, nuclear medicine physicians, and medical physicists with programs focusing on the practice of medical imaging and radiation oncology and the delivery of comprehensive health care services.

The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2011 about 230,500 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women and about 39,500 women will die from breast cancer. Same day mammogram appointments are available at Adventist Bolingbrook Hospital. To schedule an appointment call (630) 856-7070

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Adventist Midwest Health includes Adventist Bolingbrook Hospital, Adventist GlenOaks Hospital, Adventist Hinsdale Hospital and Adventist La Grange Memorial Hospital. To find a physician, visit www.keepingyouwell.com.

Media contact: Sheila Galloro, public relations specialist, Adventist Midwest Health,
sheila.galloro@ahss.org; 630-856-2359.
William Gemora Elected NCC Asian/Pacific Ministries Coordinator

On November 30, 2011, the Northern California Conference Executive Committee voted to invite William Gemora to be the new NCC Asian/Pacific Ministries coordinator. Gemora has accepted the position vacated by VicLouis Arreola, III, who was voted Pacific Union Conference Asian/Pacific Ministries director in August. In addition to his new responsibilities, Gemora also serves as district pastor for the East Bay Fil-Am and Stockton Fil-Am churches.

Gemora said that hearing of his new appointment was both a glad and humbling experience for him and his family—“gladness because it reaffirms God’s call for us in the ministry, and yet humbling because, despite my limitations, God has accorded me the task of leading my fellow ministers.”

Born and raised in the Philippines, Gemora became an Adventist after finishing college. After he was baptized, he conducted evangelistic meetings, which he enjoyed so much he decided to attend Philippine Union College and take theology.

After graduating in 1976, Gemora served as a pastor in the Philippines before moving to the United States, where he worked for several years as a literature evangelist in the Central California Conference in the early 1980s. In 1986, he was asked to lead a Bible study group in Northern California. He has shepherded the group ever since—through its status as a branch Sabbath School, a company and finally a church, now known as the East Bay Fil-Am church—where he still serves as pastor. He became a part-time NCC pastor in 1993. He has pastored full-time since 1997, the year he also became pastor of the Stockton Fil-Am church.

Gemora is married to Betsy, a nurse. They have two children: Kristine, who currently works in Taiwan, and Christian, who attends college in Boston.

A welcome addition to NCC leadership, Gemora begins his new duties immediately. “Elder Gemora has been an active part of the ministry team of the Northern California Conference for many years, and he is well respected across our conference,” said NCC President Jim Pedersen. “I’m confident that he will be a blessing as the new leader of our Asian/Pacific ministries.”