GC President Ted N. C. Wilson released the following statement regarding the passing of statesman Nelson Mandela:

“The global Seventh-day Adventist Church joins the people of South Africa and the world in mourning the loss of Nelson Mandela. His life of forgiveness and reconciliation served as a light in a world that too often lives in the shadow of reprisal, anger and malice.

“May all reflect on his important efforts to bring people together in peace. What a joy that we can also be part of that process as we are reconciled to God and each other by the grace of Jesus Christ, the Prince of peace. We offer our sympathy and condolences to the Mandela family and the citizens of South Africa.” - Ted N. C. Wilson, President, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. From ANN News.

Adventists in the News

Broken bikes heal at hospital

Country’s first passive solar church goes up in Valatie

Book of Dreams: Hats, gloves help homeless people ward off winter cold

Small church fills backpacks to help Chattanooga’s homeless

Akers students win local tobacco cessation contests

Operation Walk USA doing 30 free surgeries in Colorado

Announcements

The new, Year-end Meeting approved 2014 Calendar of Special Days is now online. Check it carefully if you are in charge of a particular day in your church ministry. Some of the usual times for a special Sabbath or week-long emphasis have changed.

The Second Annual Children's Leadership Conference will take place at Andrews University, March 28-30. Guest speakers and workshop presenters include Phyllis Washington, Brenda Walsh, and Richard Aguilera. Workshops will be offered toward Children's Ministry Certifications (Basic, Advanced, and Creative Ministries). Two tracks of workshops in Spanish will be offered along with the full Adventurer Basic Staff Training. Early registration is $69 per person through December 31. Register HERE, MORE or call (269) 471-8357. This event is sponsored by

December 11, 2013

Special Days

December Focus: Christian Hospitality

January Focus: Friendship Evangelism

Helpful Special Day Websites and Resources

Offerings

Dec 14, Adventist Community Services

Jan 25, Religious Liberty

Sample Offertory Readings

What's a "Building Block?" Retention of Young Adults

Watch: "Retention of Young Adults"
the North American Division Children's Ministries Department, Lake Union Conference Youth Department, and the Center for Youth Evangelism.

Saved February 15 for Mental Health Sabbath with the theme, "How to Maximize Your Brain Potential." As a part of the initiative, the NAD Health Ministries Committee is recommending that every person in church that week receive a copy of a special issue of Vibrant Life magazine that complements that theme. What a great opportunity to provide members with health information they can use—and share! MORE

Resources

Sharpening the Sword is a free Adventist-operated Bible study website that offers a wealth of Bible translations, Bible commentaries, Bible dictionaries, topical studies, Ellen White writings, Sabbath School lesson resources, and tools to organize your personal Bible study and devotional life. (From Best Practices for Adventist Ministry, 10/13/13)

ViewPoints

Did you know God has a place for you in His community? Fundamental Beliefs video #14 from My Way to Jesus

Just "Click" to share your beliefs: The Fundamental Beliefs videos and other updates are shared on the My Way to Jesus Facebook page and from there onto the NAD Facebook page. Both updates link back to www.MyWaytoJesus.com, NAD's "seeker site." The site offers options such as sending a prayer request, enrolling in the Discover Bible Course, watching a beliefs video, and a connection to Adventist Information Ministry where people can chat with someone about spiritual issues or things that are troubling them. "Like" these pages on Facebook, and then share the updates with your friends.

Share the Beliefs videos on your own website: Just go to www.vimeo.com/channels/didyouknow for the entire video series and click on the "Share" button in the upper right corner of a specific video for the embed code, to share on social media or email to a friend.

REACH North America

REACH: Community Outreach and Evangelism
Every member an active and enthusiastic witness for God

Retain Young Adults to the Church through a revitalized campus ministries program along with Spirit-filled Church activities that engage their interest and energies.

Dec. 23-26 & Jan. 1, NAD/GC offices closed
Jan. 8-18, Ten Days of Prayer
Jan. 9-12, NAD Prayer Conference
Jan. 12-15, NAD Ministries Convention
Jan. 24 - Feb. 2, NAD Health Summit
Mar. 16-23, Adventist Community Services Convention (cruise)
Mar 28-30, Children's Leadership Conference
June 2-6, Nonprofit Leadership Certification-I Program
June 25-27, PSI Conference on Philanthropy
Aug. 6-9, ASI International Convention
Sept. 8-10, Risk Management Conference
Sept 19-21, Atlantic Union/NAD Adventist Single Adult Ministries Convention
Sept 22-25, Nonprofit Leadership Certification-II Program
Sept 25-28, NAD Women's Convention

http://us2.campaign-archive2.com/?u=84ac041b8b705798057dab6f2&id=5070a60098&c=3075540be8[12/11/2013 4:02:57 PM]
Therapeutic Outreach
On a typical Thursday, you can find Brian and Buddy making their rounds. They proceed from the Pharmacy to Emergency Department, Admitting, Short Stay (where they do heart catheterizations), and the Coumadin Clinic. Buddy is an official hospital volunteer and a certified pet therapy dog. Brian Yensho is pastor of the Indianapolis Southside and Greenwood churches in Indiana, and takes Buddy with him on hospital rounds.

It all started with Brian's son's wish for a dog and a visit to a funeral home where a golden retriever was on the staff as a "grief counselor." In the past two years Brian and Buddy have spent about 275 hours visiting the hospital. Learn more in the December issue of the Lake Union Herald, p. 10. [Photo: Pastor Brian Yensho and Buddy]
Adventist president offers condolences at passing of Mandela

December 07, 2013 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Author: ANN staff

Seventh-day Adventist Church President Ted N. C. Wilson released the following statement regarding the passing of statesman Nelson Mandela:

“The global Seventh-day Adventist Church joins the people of South Africa and the world in mourning the loss of Nelson Mandela. His life of forgiveness and reconciliation served as a light in a world that too often lives in the shadow of reprisal, anger and malice.

“May all reflect on his important efforts to bring people together in peace. What a joy that we can also be part of that process as we are reconciled to God and each other by the grace of Jesus Christ, the Prince of peace. We offer our sympathy and condolences to the Mandela family and the citizens of South Africa.”

Ted N. C. Wilson
President
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Broken bikes heal at hospital

Jeff Fleck, Project ReCycle’s vice chairman, and Cynthia Edwards, chairperson, stand in the roughly 20,000-square-foot, fourth-floor space that Castle Rock Adventist Hospital donated to the organization for use as a bike storage and repair shop.

It was a mostly empty fourth floor, thousands upon thousands of empty square feet in the new Castle Rock Adventist Hospital — because the plan was to have that extra floor for future growth, have it ready when needed.

Change of plans.

Now, all of a sudden, more than half of it is full, full of hundreds of patients — ranging from those that just need a little dusting off to those that need such things as a new seat, cosmetic changes or mechanical work.

Bicycles. There are hundreds of donated bikes there, becoming almost new again, being repaired for future giveaways to kids — and some adults — who otherwise wouldn’t have a bike.

Todd Folkenberg, the hospital’s CEO, told Colorado Community Media recently that the hospital doesn’t need most of the fourth floor yet, so recently it let the Douglas County-based nonprofit Project ReCycle organization set up shop there for the time being.

Folkenberg said the hospital, at 2350 Meadows Blvd., is equally focused on promoting wellness and caring for the ill.

“Given our mission and focus on wellness, I had been searching for a way to put this resource to work when I met some leaders and...
volunteers from Project Recycle,” Folkenberg said. “It’s the perfect partnership in that their work both supports a more active lifestyle for the kids in our community while also providing refurbished bikes to those families that would otherwise struggle to provide bikes to their children.

“We wholeheartedly agree with Project Recycle that every child should have their own bicycle.”

Jeff Fleck, ReCycle’s vice chairman, said he tries to explain to people about what ReCycle does by telling them to close their eyes and try to remember how they felt when they got their first bike.

“When you give that to a child … that’s what you get to feel,” he said. And he talked further about the experience of that, the child’s new sense of freedom, the feeling of ownership, and pride and responsibility.

“We tend to make grown men cry,” said Cynthia Edwards, ReCycle’s board chairperson, and she smiled.

She and Fleck rattle off some past crying sessions — like when they gave a bike to a 16-year-old boy who had never had a bike, or even ridden one.

Or the time after Christmas when five brothers were told they could pick out bikes. Their dad came on the scene and when he found out all five were going to get free bikes, the dad related he had wanted to buy all of his sons bikes for Christmas but hadn’t been able to afford it. That time it was the staff and a dad crying.

ReCycle also has what they call Dream Bike projects, where an entire elementary school is targeted and every child who doesn’t have a bike gets one — after participating in an incentive program involving such things as better school attendance, showing respect to adults and so on. At one Denver school, they gave away 230 bikes that one day.

They have mechanics volunteering from small bike shops, and businesses like REI that donate their mechanics’ time, and other volunteers participating year-round as donations keep rolling in and bikes need repairing or cleaning. The organization has one paid employee, the shop manager, and about 500 unpaid volunteers, Edwards said.

People who come into the hospital’s front lobby don’t share it with new bike arrivals, and most of the rest of the hospital isn’t impacted. Project ReCycle’s volunteers bring bikes in through the back and into a freight elevator. But she said some hospital staff members on break tend to wander up to the fourth floor to help.

Project ReCycle, which has joined forces with another organization, Bikes for Tykes, has also given bikes to new immigrants, refugees, people newly released from prison and has even sent some to Africa.

In mid-December they’re giving out 300 bikes at an undisclosed location because of privacy and security reasons for kids who are involved in complicated situations, or with social agencies.

ReCycle is always looking for more bikes — and age and condition don’t matter. Bikes donated range from stores such as Walmart donating brand-new returned bikes that have a minor defect to really damaged bikes that can still be used for parts. They want it all.

“We improve youth pride, responsibility, freedom, respect, and appreciation, through the simple vehicle of a bicycle, while assisting in the battle against obesity and improving our environment,” according to ReCycle’s website. “We do this by not only ‘giving’ a bicycle, but by providing education on how to maintain it and how to use it safely. We seek to provide group rides/events, classes on maintenance, safety and more.”

To find out how to volunteer or where there are bike donations sites in the area, go to http://www.projectrecycle.org/donation-locations/
Country’s first passive solar church goes up in Kinderhook

By Joe Gentile Columbia-Greene Media

KINDERHOOK — Congregants from Kinderhook’s Seventh-day Adventist Church framed the future of energy efficiency Sunday at their construction site as the nation’s first house of worship to fully-implement passive house standards.

Encouraged by Rep. Chris Gibson, R-19, and project architect Dennis Wedlick, church leaders highlighted how the building’s nearly 6,000-square-foot floor plan pledges to help the congregation cut their carbon emissions by about 50,000 more pounds, per year, than what the state’s Energy Conservation Construction Code requires at 80,417 pounds.

“We are joyful this designer has come, that they are making this place a beacon of light, of truth and health for the community we live in,” Pastor Anton Kapusi said.

Passive home design is based on a German concept that promotes the use of sunlight, internal heat sources and heat recovery to eliminate the necessity of traditional, hot water heating systems. Pipes, radiators and central boilers that burn through fossil fuels can be reduced to a single post heating coil with windows, a highly-insulated roof and foundation, and heavily-insulated exterior walls that regulate a building’s overall warmth. Structures also have heat-trapping ventilation systems that recycle heat from their exhaust air into fresh air.

Congregants are hopeful they might worship in the new space by the end of next year.

Jodi Smits Anderson, director of Sustainability Programs for the New York State Dormitory Authority, stated how a recent Philadelphia conference of the United States Green Building Council had called for more outreach to faith-based groups. Green and sustainable buildings, she added, “affect everybody, and everybody needs to be involved in building them.”

Because of their designs, “the Department of Taxation saves $3.5 billion a year,” Smits Anderson said.

Congressman Gibson’s comments focused attention on the nation’s military-industrial complex shaping its recent history.

“You see at the nexus of this is energy we needed from overseas, and we need to do better,” Gibson said.

Even “as complex as the world is, you can distill it down to love and discipline,” he added, pointing out the “God-given talent” at the project’s heart.

“This is going to be the country where we’re going to take the lead on this,” Gibson said. “We’re going to beat the Germans and the Chinese in doing this.”

Before Jeff Brooks, a Vermont Timber Frames sales manager, assembled the wooden frame, Wedlick credited BarlisWedlick Architects’ success to the “craftsmen of New York,” so “the Hudson Valley area can have the most energy-efficient buildings in the nation.”

“When you’re doing it so precisely and so carefully, you create an equilibrium, a body at rest,” Wedlick said. “And I think that’s such a perfect, perfect metaphor for this building: peace.”

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To reach reporter Joe Gentile, call 518-828-1616 ext. 2495, or email at jgentile@registerstar.com.
Small church fills backpacks to help Chattanooga's homeless

By Nick Austin, Meteorologist / Reporter - bio | email

CHATTANOOGA, TN (WRCB) -

The Hixson Seventh Day Adventist Church is a small congregation with a big heart. For nearly three months the congregation of fewer than 50 has been collecting and organizing donations as part of it's annual Christmas program benefiting Chattanooga's homeless.

"Thinking of things they're needing out there. Things that they don't have readily available," says church member Sylvia Knoch.

Things such as blankets, sleeping bags, scarves, and gloves to help those stuck on the streets stay a little warmer. Snack foods as well as personal items like soap and shampoo have been dropped off, too.

The items are placed in around 200 backpacks, making for special gift packages to be handed out to those in need at a Christmas dinner later this month. Because having a backpack can mean everything to a person without a home, Knoch says filling one with simple items can mean everything.

"We want to share and bring a little bit of joy into someone's life that looks pretty bleak," says Knoch.

Even if it's just for one day, adds Knoch, it's important.

She's going a step further and has her local software company lending a hand. Employees, including Kris Rose, are donating, wrapping, and organizing. He found out years ago what it's like to need a "hand up" during tough times.

"My apartment complex almost completely burned down. So I had almost nothing. Thanks to the fine people of Chattanooga I got back on my feet," explains Rose.

He received help from local churches and other organizations.

"This is a good way to give back," Rose says of helping with the donation drive.
Everyone involved says it's about trying to lift the spirits of those who benefit as high as possible.

"Even though they're without a home, we want to make them feel important," says Knoch.

If you'd like to make a donation, please contact the Hixson Seventh Day Adventist Church at 423-386-5451. Someone there can tell you what is needed and when you can drop off. The Christmas party where the homeless will receive their gift packages is December 15 at the Olivet Baptist Church in downtown Chattanooga.
Akers students win local tobacco cessation contests

By Tammy Eskew

Dee Fricks and George West from Kings County Office of Education and Adventist Health Hanford community development coordinator, Shawna Steinway present new mountain bicycles to Abbie Lane, left, and Mauricid Salido. The Akers students were winners in an anti-tobacco essay/art contest sponsored by Adventist Health.

As part of Adventist Health “Breath Easy” campaign to stop smoking, several students from Akers Elementary School on board Naval Air Station Lemoore were awarded prizes for their literary and artistic contributions on Monday, Dec. 2.

Students from Chris Holdbrooks, Brandie Allen and Kathy Snow’s class participated in the Adventist Health’s “Letter to a Smoker I Love” essay contest and art contest as part of the tobacco prevention program.

“The students had to write letters to a person they loved explaining why they didn’t want that person to continue smoking and some of the students did some artwork. They had to complete research, state their feeling about it and persuade the person to stop,” said Snow. “It was a wonderful opportunity for the kids to learn.”

Dee Fricks and George West from Kings County Office of Education and Adventist Health Hanford community development coordinator, Shawna Steinway presented appreciation gifts to the teachers for their participation and each student received a certificate of appreciation for their efforts.

“We had three winners for both the essay and art contests and three honorable mentions. First place winners were awarded Wii Fits or gift certificate to purchase electronics; Second place winners were presented with mountain bikes and third place winners with Walmart gift cards. There were 79 participants,” explained Steinway.

Abbie Lane, 6th grader won second place in the art contest and was awarded a Huffy 24” girl’s mountain bike. “Smoking is not very good for people and causes a lot of damage to your body. I’m very excited to win a bike.(583,389),(804,990)

The other lucky winner of the boy’s mountain bike went to Mauricio Salido, 8th grade who won second place in the essay contest for a letter he wrote to his brother reminding him of the feelings they felt seeing their mother smoke and how they would take cigarettes out of her purse and break them. He asked his brother to stop smoking.

“My bike is old and the brakes went out so winning this new bike is something I can really use. I am very grateful,” said Salido.

The first place winner, Tyler Bell transferred from the area and was mailed his prize. His essay to his parents included three reasons he felt they shouldn’t smoke including getting cancer, smelling bad and the fact that he loved them.

The Adventist Health “Breathe Easy” campaign to be smoke and tobacco free began last year during the Great American Smokeout. Adventist Health banned tobacco from its buildings many years ago and effective last year extended that ban to encompass both inside and outside. Tobacco products are not allowed on any of the Adventist Health/Central Valley Network locations in Kings, Fresno, Tulare and Kern counties.
Joe Abeyta, waiting in pre-op for his hip-joint replacement Monday, visits with his wife, Matilda, at Porter Adventist Hospital. Abeyta was the first under the knife in Denver as part of Operation Walk USA's work in Colorado. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

Thirty people who couldn't otherwise afford knee and hip-joint replacements will receive the surgery for free, as a charity organization originally focused on international patients revs up in Denver.

Of the 35 states where the service is offered, Operation Walk USA will treat the largest number of patients in Colorado.

Eight surgeons working without compensation at Porter Adventist Hospital in Denver, Lincoln Medical Center in Parker and St. Mary's Hospital in Grand Junction will complete the work by Saturday.

Lakewood resident Joe Abeyta, 42, was the first under the knife in Denver.

Osteoarthritis in his right hip had deteriorated the cartilage that separates the ball and socket. When the charity approved his operation earlier this year, doctors told Abeyta his hip was rubbing bone-on-bone.

X-rays show Joe Abeyta's new hip. Over the past year, he was almost constantly using pain and anti-inflammatory medication. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

"My right hip, it looks like somebody took a ball-peen hammer and knocked the life out of it," Abeyta said, recalling one of his X-rays before his surgery Monday. "Some days I can walk. Some days it's like someone is sticking a knife in there and turning it."

Abeyta said he has been "carrying over my load," throughout his 17-year career in construction, physically straining himself when supplies are far from an excavation site or when a forklift is not available. Over the past year, he said, he was almost constantly using pain and anti-inflammatory medication.
"I think it was my choice of profession that didn't go well with my hip," Abeyta said.

Abeyta's surgeon, Dr. Charlie Yang, on Monday did four of the 17 joint replacements scheduled at Porter Adventist, using a less-invasive technique known as a direct anterior approach. The technique, popular among American surgeons, allows faster healing.

Abeyta woke up from his 9 a.m. surgery around 2 p.m. and took three steps before dinner.

When Yang traveled to Panama, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic with Operation Walk, he found that none of the local surgeons were familiar with the anterior approach. The technique, which is difficult to learn, initially takes longer to execute than the typical posterior approach, Yang said. It also requires special instruments, which don't come cheap.

The tools are available in American hospitals, and have been used in Operation Walk USA surgeries since the first 85 patients were treated in 18 states in 2011.

Yang said his work for Operation Walk is some of the best he does all year.

"The satisfaction you get after helping these people who could never afford joint replacement — but after the replacement, they're up walking, smiling — it's gratifying," Yang said.

Dr. Douglas Dennis, president-elect of Operation Walk USA and founder of the charity's Denver chapter, said his work on severely deformed hips and knees in Latin America has tested and strengthened his surgical skills.

"It has made me a better surgeon for my Denver patients," said Dennis, a surgeon at Porter Adventist.

One of his female patients in Nicaragua wanted a child but was physically unable to give birth.

"She couldn't have a baby because she couldn't spread her legs apart and didn't have money for a cesarean section," Dennis said.

Dennis replaced both hips of the 37-year-old. "We went back to Nicaragua 18 months later, and I got to hold her baby."

The team, he said, takes every piece of equipment necessary for the surgeries to the host countries — from the first drug to the last Band-Aid. The cargo has weighed as much as 8 tons.

Millions of dollars of in-kind donations typically pay for all but about $125,000 of each of the Denver chapter's semiannual trips, he said, including plane flights for more than 50 staff members.

The high number of patients receiving free joint-replacement surgery in Colorado belies the state's low number of elderly people. According to 2012 Census data, there are about 2 percent fewer people over age 65 in Colorado than the national average, and fewer than most other states where Operation Walk's 70 participating hospitals are serving 230 patients this year.

In Colorado, Porter's support allowed the number of patients who could get free surgery there to increase to 20 from 12, although only 17 qualified, including Abeyta.

Six device manufacturers donated all of the hip and knee implants for Operation Walk USA this year. Each surgery costs the hospital about $30,000 to $35,000 in antibiotics, pain medication, hospital stays, operation-room time and machine use, Dennis said.

"Operation Walk has not asked me for any money at all," Abeyta said.

Alison Noon: 303-954-1223, anoone@denverpost.com
Surrounded by his surgical team, Dr. Charlie Yang, second from left, performs a hip-joint replacement on Joe Abeyta. Yang did four of the 17 joint replacements scheduled at Porter Adventist. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)
2014 CALENDAR OF SPECIAL DAYS
NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

JANUARY

Curriculum Focus for the Month — Friendship Evangelism+
Day of Prayer ...........................................................................................................January 4
Religious Liberty Week ..........................................................................................January 19-25 *

FEBRUARY

Curriculum Focus for the Month — Family Life+
Black History Month .............................................................................................February 1-22
Christian Marriage Sabbath ....................................................................................February 1
Christian Home and Marriage Week ........................................................................February 1-8 *
Christian Parenting Sabbath ....................................................................................February 8
Health Ministries Sabbath .......................................................................................February 15 *
Family Togetherness Week .......................................................................................February 16-22
Family Togetherness Sabbath ....................................................................................February 22

MARCH

Curriculum Focus for the Month — Women in the Church+
Women's Day of Prayer ..........................................................................................March 1 *
Adventist Youth Week of Prayer .................................................................................March 2-8 *
Disabilities Awareness Sabbath ................................................................................March 15

APRIL

Curriculum Focus for the Month — Stewardship+
Missionary Magazines (Signs, Message, El Centinela, Priorities) ................................April 5 *
Stewardship Sabbath ................................................................................................April 12
Literature Evangelism Sabbath ..................................................................................April 19 *
Education Sabbath ...................................................................................................April 26 *

MAY

Curriculum Focus for the Month — Community Services+
Community Services Sabbath ..................................................................................May 3
Youth Sabbath ...........................................................................................................May 10
Single Adults Sabbath ..............................................................................................May 17

JUNE

Curriculum Focus for the Month — Church Growth and Evangelism+
Women's Ministries Emphasis Day .........................................................................June 7 *
Refugees Awareness Sabbath ....................................................................................June 14
JULY

Curriculum Focus for the Month — Adventist Lifestyle+
Griggs University..................................................................................................................July 12

AUGUST

Curriculum Focus for the Month — Spiritual Gifts+
End it Now Emphasis Day.........................................................................................................August 23*

SEPTEMBER

Curriculum Focus for the Month — Health
Men’s Day of Prayer .................................................................................................................. September 6
Nurture Periodicals (Adventist Review, Insight, Guide, Primary Treasure, Little Friend) ................................................................. September 7-13
Hispanic Heritage Week ........................................................................................................... September 21-27
Let’s Move day .......................................................................................................................... September 21
Let’s Move Week/Health Education Week/Vibrant Life ......................................................... September 21-27

OCTOBER

Curriculum Focus for the Month — Adventist Heritage+
Children’s Sabbath .................................................................................................................. October 4
Spirit of Prophecy Sabbath ..................................................................................................... October 18 *
Pathfinder Sabbath ................................................................................................................. October 25 *

NOVEMBER

Curriculum Focus for the Month — Prayer
Native Heritage Month ............................................................................................................. November 1-29
Stewardship Sabbath ................................................................................................................ November 1
Week of Prayer ........................................................................................................................ November 2-8
Human Relations Sabbath ........................................................................................................ November 15
Welcome Home Sabbath .......................................................................................................... November 22 *

DECEMBER

Curriculum Focus for the Month — Christian Hospitality+
Bible Sabbath ............................................................................................................................ December 6 *

+Curriculum resource materials are available at www.nadadventist.org and www.AdventSource.org

* Special Materials Provided

Changed August 14, 2013
Did you know God has a place for you in His community?

The church is one body with many members, called from every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. In Christ we are a new creation; distinctions of race, culture, learning, and nationality, and differences between high and low, rich and poor, male and female, must not be divisive among us. We are all equal in Christ, who by one Spirit has bonded us into one fellowship with Him and with one another; we are to serve and be served without partiality or reservation. Through the revelation of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures we share the same faith and hope, and reach out in one witness to all. This unity has its source in the oneness of the triune God, who has adopted us as His children.

Romans 12:4, 5  
For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14  
Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

Matthew 28:19, 20  
Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Psalm 133:1  
How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

2 Corinthians 5:16, 17  
So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

Acts 17:26, 27  
From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.

Galatians 3:27, 29  
for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Colossians 3:10-15  
and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Ephesians 4:14-16  
Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4:1-6  
As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.
John 17:20-23

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— 23 I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”
is that Buddy?” a patient asks as he reaches toward the dog. Buddy moves forward and lifts his head, allowing the patient to run fingers through his soft fur. He stands for a moment before sitting or lying on the floor.

A certified pet therapy dog, Buddy is on the job. He has his own hospital tag and neckerchief that designates him as an official hospital “volunteer.” Each week, Buddy spends several hours with his master making rounds at Community Hospital South in southern Indianapolis. He moves from office to office, from patient to patient, offering his special gift of furry comfort and consolation while his master, Brian Yensho, pastor of the Indianapolis Southside and Greenwood churches, chats jovially with staff and patients.

Although Brian cannot initiate spiritual topics, often the conversation will drift around to, “What do you do for a living?” When he tells them he is a pastor, they often ask, “Which church?” Often, even before people know Brian is a clergy, they will request prayer.

“Many times, when I come in with the dog, people will ask me to pray for their loved one who is being treated,” he says. Staff also will share personal concerns on occasion, and ask Brian to pray for them. He has developed some very good relationships with hospital staff as well as blessing patients.

One lady told Brian, “A year ago, my husband was in this hospital when you and Buddy came to visit. I can’t tell you what a difference that made. It was so special that you took time to come in. I know you are volunteering. I want you to know how much your visit meant to us.”

Another patient declared, “Over a year-and-a-half ago, my husband and I were in this hospital when you and Buddy came in. Your visit really brightened up our day. It made our whole hospital experience so much more bearable.”

During the past two years, this pet therapy team has spent about 275 hours visiting in the hospital. It all started with Brian’s son’s wish for a dog and a visit to a funeral home where a golden retriever was kept on staff as a “grief counselor.”

After researching the topic, Brian asked his wife, “Do you think our son would mind if we got a dog and used it for pet therapy?”

“He doesn’t care what you do with the dog. He just wants a dog!” she replied. So Brian got Buddy, and took him through the stringent certification process.

On a typical Thursday, you can find Brian and Buddy making their rounds. They proceed from the Pharmacy to Emergency Department, Admitting, Short Stay (where they do heart catheterizations), and the Coumadin Clinic. Then they move to two patient floors where magnetic paw prints on the door sills indicate a desire to see the pet therapy team. Their last stop is the surgery waiting area. By this time, Buddy usually is getting tired — he’s spent several hours walking and being petted! He’s ready to go home, but it’s been a great day!