Las Cruces, N.M. reversed an ordinance that Adventist legal counsel said violated religious expression and the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The 1997 ordinance defined a business as "any profession, trade or occupation and all and every kind of calling," including the work of pastors, priests, rabbis, bishops, imams and other religious leaders. It required a registration fee and passing a discretionary review process before a pastor-led church could gain approval to conduct worship services or provide pastoral care. MORE

A $1 million initiative that will partner with ministries to create new resources for evangelism and church growth has been approved by the Pacific Press® Board of Directors. Through the "A Million Streams of Light" initiative, Pacific Press® will offer seed money to help church departmental ministries, supportive ministries, and local church ministries create and develop new evangelistic products and programs. MORE

Black vegetarian Seventh-day Adventists are at lower risk for heart disease compared with their meat-eating counterparts, according to results of a new Loma Linda University Health study. The study, available online in the journal Public Health Nutrition, compared the cardiovascular risk factors between black vegetarians and non-vegetarians who are part of the ongoing Adventist Health Study-2. MORE

Memorial services held for Dr. Teleka Patrick – Dr. Patrick was missing under mysterious circumstances for four months. Her body was finally found in a northern Indiana lake. Cause of death was ruled asphyxiation by drowning.

New York memorial service: 7 p.m., Apr 24, will be live streamed on Praizevision.com and LindenSDAChurch.org.

Loma Linda University (LLU), where she was a 2013 School of Medicine alumnus, will hold a memorial service on Apr. 28, at 6:30 p.m. in the Loma Linda University Church. MORE

Oakwood University held a memorial service for her on Apr. 17, during their worship service, and issued this statement.

Many were praying for her well being while she was missing. Please continue to remember her family and loved ones in your prayers.

How do Big Bear’s gardens grow?

Single moms invited for oil change in Aldergrove
Mobility returns as Langley repair project wraps up

70-Mile Bike Ride Celebrates 70th Birthday Of Southern Adventist University President

12 PUC students prepare tax returns at Up Valley Family Center

Adventist Christian Fellowship Institute (ACF), May 16-25, is a short term mission training to prepare students, young adults and church leaders in establishing Adventist campus ministries for Christ on public college and university campuses. This year it will take place at Union College in Lincoln, Neb. Registration closes April 30. MORE/REGISTER

Join the Columbia Union's (CUC) team of experts including the NAD Health Ministries Director Katia Reinert, and CUC’s Health Ministries Director A. Leah Scott, when they discuss symptoms of mental illness and practical ways to help those suffering. Follow #VisitorChat on Twitter, Apr. 29 at noon (EDT). Facebook: MORE

Atlantic Union College is seeking candidates for the position of president. The detailed posting is available on the college Web site www.auc.edu. Send nominations and resumes to the e-mail address of the administrative secretary for Dr. Donald King, chairman of the Search Committee, at pwillmott@atlanticunion.org.

Watch and give a "thumbs up" to Hope Channel's “Hopey to the Rescue” video. It is an entry in the Telly People’s Choice Award. Vote here by May 9.

ACS "A Haven for the Homeless" – May 3 will be Community Services Sabbath.

Here is a video you can show to illustrate one aspect of the Adventist Community Services work taking place in Coatesville, Pa. There, an Adventist community center is providing a safe haven and a chance at a...
new life for those who have nowhere else to go. Over 30 years ago, the Coatesville First SDA Church (of the Allegheny East Conference) opened their doors to the homeless in their community, turning the Sabbath school rooms into a shelter every week from Sunday to Friday morning. MORE

Download a bulletin insert to share with your local church, reminding members to join the NAD Prayer Ministry team for the May 1-2 all-night Prayer Call. Join at any time between 10 p.m. Thursday, May 1, and 5 a.m. ET, Friday. Call 712-432-0031; access code is 435650#. There will be a different leader for each half hour. MORE

CALLED — A Visit to Philadelphia

Joshua and Sara Withers read about how Tara VinCross was able to plant a new church in Philadelphia while continuing to pastor the traditional Chestnut Hill Seventh-day Adventist church a few miles away. Travel with them as they check out the Philadelphia community, interview Tara, and observe Tara’s relationship with both of her churches. Josh is particularly fascinated with how the new church plant focuses much of their weekly Sabbath activities on community outreach. Sara is intrigued by some of the unique challenges of female leadership.

REACH: Community Outreach and Evangelism

Simplicity Mission 2014

A box of unexpected bread brought unexpected results at the Simplicity Outreach Center in Allentown, Pa. The team decided to set up a table outside on the sidewalk that evening and offer the bread to people as they walked home. This led to meeting a Muslim woman who was going through some troubled times and had just left an unsuccessful job interview with a very rude manager. MORE
North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists® : 4-22-14
It worked -- U.S. city reverses ordinance after Adventist Church’s complaint

The U.S. city of Las Cruces in the state of New Mexico reversed an ordinance that the Adventist Church claimed violated religious freedom. The ordinance was changed after the Adventist Church’s Texico Conference filed a complaint in court. The Texico Conference headquarters, shown here, is located in Corrales, New Mexico. [ANN file photo by Sue Hinkle]

Texico Conference last year filed suit on religious liberty grounds

April 22, 2014 | Silver Spring, Maryland, United States | Elizabeth Lechleitner and Ansel Oliver/ANN

Seventh-day Adventist Church legal counsel said they’re pleased by a United States city’s reversal of an ordinance they said violated religious expression and unfairly targeted pastor-led faith groups, especially Latino churches.

Las Cruces, New Mexico last month changed an ordinance that required churches to register with the city and pay fees, a move that came six months after the Adventist Church filed suit against the city.

A city spokesman last year said the ordinance aimed to provide information for the city’s obligation to provide citizens
with fire and police protection. Adventist Church officials alleged that it violated the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

The city changed the ordinance on March 17 to no longer require non-profit organizations to pay registration fees, and the Adventist Church subsequently dismissed its lawsuit from the U.S. District Court of New Mexico.

“We’re very happy that the new ordinance addresses both the city’s legitimate fire and safety concerns and our concerns about governmental interference with churches,” said Todd McFarland, associate general counsel for the Adventist Church.

The original Las Cruces Ordinance No. 16-131, passed in 1997, defined a business as “any profession, trade or occupation and all and every kind of calling,” including the work of pastors, priests, rabbis, bishops, imams and other religious leaders.

The ordinance essentially required all pastor-led churches within city limits to register with the city, pay a registration fee and pass a discretionary review process before gaining approval to conduct worship services or provide pastoral care. Faith groups that are lay-led rather than clergy-led were not subject to the requirements, lawyers said.

Early last year, city officials threatened to take legal action against the Las Cruces Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church if it failed to comply with the requirements of the business registration ordinance.

There are more than 100 churches within the Las Cruces city limits, but the ordinance, Adventist lawyers said, had been applied only to a small percentage of these churches and, according to the Adventist Church’s complaint, “disparately applied to single out Hispanic and Latino churches.”

In June, the city first notified the Spanish Seventh-day Adventist Church that it had seven days to comply with the requirements or face “court action,” according to a letter from the city’s Codes Enforcement Department. However, the Las Cruces Central Seventh-day Adventist Church, a majority non-Latino congregation, received no such notice, McFarland said.

The Adventist Church filed the lawsuit in September through its Texico Conference, headquartered in the Albuquerque suburb of Corrales.

“I think it was great that we did what we did in challenging it,” said Lee-Roy Chacon, president of the Texico Conference. “Now that it’s overturned we can continue doing ministry instead of having to act as a business.”

The Texico Conference oversees church operations in West Texas and New Mexico, where it maintains approximately 80 churches and supports a membership of 12,000.

---Adventist News Network
4-22-14 Pacific Press® Board Votes to Approve $1 Million Initiative

Nampa, Idaho (April 17, 2014) — The Pacific Press® Board of Directors met today and voted to approve a $1 million initiative that will focus on partnering with ministries to create new resources for evangelism and church growth. In this initiative, known as A Million Streams of Light, Pacific Press® will offer seed money to help church departmental ministries, supportive ministries, and local church ministries create and develop new evangelistic products and programs.

Dale Galusha, president of Pacific Press®, said “We asked ourselves, 'How can the church's publishing work make a real difference in ministry and outreach for our church?' He continued, “If we want to reach people with the Adventist message there is a need for innovative new products and programs. Ellen White wrote, 'Men are needed who pray to God for wisdom, and who, under guidance of God, can put new life into the old methods of labor and can invent new plans and new methods of awakening the interest of church members and reaching the men and women of the world.' ”

Commenting after the Board meeting, Elder Dan Jackson, president of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists noted, “The greatest need the church has is for an engaged membership. The Million Streams of Light initiative will provide an opportunity for our people to think creatively in terms of how they may use their God-given ingenuity to complete their God-given task in partnership with the publishing ministry.”

Elder Lowell Cooper, general vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists added, “It is heartening to see Pacific Press® reaching out beyond its walls to find new ways to work with the church and its people to create opportunities for ministry and mission to occur.”

The entire Pacific Press® Board enthusiastically endorsed the Million Streams of Light initiative and they anticipate many innovative developments in the upcoming months. Additional information on this initiative will be made available shortly.

Check here for the latest information or visit www.pacificpress.com/streamsoflight
Among more than 26,000 black Seventh-day Adventists, those who are vegetarians are at lower risk for heart disease, compared with their meat-eating counterparts, according to results of a new Loma Linda University Health study.

The study, available online now in the journal Public Health Nutrition, compared the cardiovascular risk factors between black vegetarians and non-vegetarians who are part of the ongoing Loma Linda University Adventist Health Study-2 (AHS-2).

AHS-2, funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), is a long-running study of members throughout North America of the Seventh-day Adventist Church focusing on nutrition, lifestyle, and health outcomes. The Seventh-day Adventists are a unique study subject because they have a wide variety of dietary habits, but in general have a very low percentage of alcohol consumption or cigarette smoking – non-dietary factors that may otherwise impact the study.

The new results show a hierarchy of protection received by black participants in the study based on their eating habits: Vegans (those who completely abstain from meat and meat products) and lacto-ovo vegetarians (those who consume eggs and dairy) were the least at risk for cardiovascular disease; followed by semi-vegetarians (those who infrequently eat meat); pesco-vegetarians (those who eat fish); and lastly, non-vegetarians.

A study conducted by the Medical University of Graz in Austria, recently found that vegetarian diets are tied to generally poorer health, poorer quality of life and a higher need for health care. This study, which examined the health of 1,320 vegetarians over a shorter period of time, contained flaws according to Austrian researchers. The study stands in direct contrast to the findings of the Adventist Health Study 2.

“The Seventh-day Adventist Church has always stressed the importance of a vegetarian diet as part of its health message,” said Katia Reinert, PHDc, director of Health Ministries for the Adventist Church in North America.

“This important, comprehensive study is validating that the closer we get to a natural, plant-based diet, the less risk for illness and the better chance of living a long and healthy life,” added Reinert.

The study results show that compared with their non-vegetarian counterparts, black vegetarian Adventists were at less risk for hypertension, diabetes, high blood pressure, total cholesterol, and high blood-LDL cholesterol. The study was a cross-sectional analysis of the data, and does not conclusively establish cause. In the future, the study involving black subjects also plans to look directly at heart disease experience rather than risk factors for heart disease.
Patti Herring, PhD, MA, RN, associate professor at Loma Linda University School of Public Health and one of the study’s co-investigators, said “some findings for black Adventists are promising and we are anxious to compare black Adventist health with the general population of blacks. In so doing, we suspect that black Adventists’ health will prove better in many regards, than those in the general population, particularly for the vegetarians.”

“There’s a growing body of evidence that vegetarian diets lower the risk for cardiovascular diseases and other diseases,” she said, noting that AHS-2 is one of the few that has such a large number of black participants, which is important since they generally have some of the worst health outcomes among minority populations.

Periodic findings of the ongoing AHS-2 study have been previously reported by major international news agencies. Last year, a journal of the American Medical Association reported AHS-2 findings that vegetarians experienced 12 percent fewer deaths over a six-year period of research.
Our prayers go out to Patrick family concerning the death of Dr. Teleka Patrick, '09. We pray that God will carry them through these tough days ahead and that they will feel His love surrounding them. After talking and praying with Teleka's parents, Elder and Mrs. Patrick told me that they are "walking through a valley of shadows." Many of us can never comprehend the suffering being borne by this good family. The faith of the Patrick family remains strong, though their hearts are broken. Let us continue in prayer and support for the Patrick family.

- Dr. Leslie N. Pollard, president, Oakwood University

Note: A segment of the Oakwood University Chapel Service on Thursday, April 17, at 9:50 a.m., will be dedicated to the memory of Dr. Teleka Patrick.
The Big Bear Valley Community Gardens Project is growing.

Volunteers will build 10 more plots at the Fox Farm Road garden this spring, bringing the total to 46. And now a second garden with 20 plots is being sown at the Seventh Day Adventist Church at 349 E. North Shore Drive in Big Bear City.

“We’re growing to meet the demand,” said the gardens project’s Robbie Bos. “All of the plots at Fox Farm Road are rented, and I’ve got a waiting list with 30 names on it.”

Enter the Adventists. The church had available land, a fledgling food distribution program, and a mission to reach out to the community.

“A number of things came together to make this happen,” said Dan Harris, a church member who rents a plot at Fox Farm and helped with the church garden project.

At Fox Farm, gardeners pay $35 per year for a plot, basically a 6 foot by 12 foot wooden box that is 12 inches deep with the floor raised off the ground. Bos said the boxes are elevated so the soil stays warmer, enabling plants to grow like Jack’s beanstalk during Big Bear’s abbreviated growing season.

The boxes at the new church garden are similarly configured, only slightly smaller. Harris said they’ll rent for $40, and, unlike at the Fox Farm garden, plots can be shared by two renters.

All tools and water are provided, and renters share a combination lock to enter the fenced gardens. A drip irrigation system will be installed at the church garden.

The gardens project even provides a free education. Classes are held each Saturday from May through September at the Fox Farm garden, and cover everything from preparing the soil for planting to canning and collecting seeds.

Harris said the Big Bear Garden Club is helping with the church project and will provide mentoring, and gardening and cooking presentations for community gardeners at the north-side plots.

The rules at the community gardens are simple.

No flowers or shrubs are permitted. Only plants that are eaten can be grown.

And all fruits and vegetables must be grown organically.

“No Miracle-Gro is allowed,” Bos said. “These are 100 percent organic gardens. We have a responsibility to protect the lake.”

Eventually, organizers said, they hope to provide a place to grow food in every town in Big Bear Valley. Donations of cash or land to the group are tax-deductible.

“We’ve still got a long way to go,” said Bos, who co-founded the garden project with Fran Wyman. The
effort began in 2009, and the first Fox Farm Road harvest came in the fall of 2011.

There’s also a charitable component to the nonprofit gardens project.

A larger plot at Fox Farm is sown and grown by volunteers, who give the harvest to food banks. Bos said 220 pounds of vegetables were donated last year, and volunteers hope to double that amount in 2014.

At the 2-acre church garden, Harris said volunteers plan to plant a field of bulk crops like potatoes and corn. The harvest will help feed the hungry at the Adventists’ food distribution program, which serves about 50 families on the fourth Monday of each month. And the recipients will have the chance to pitch in.

“We’re encouraging the people who are coming for food to be involved with the garden and help raise their own food,” Harris said.

Bos said participants at the Fox Farm garden have grown a wide variety of vegetables.

“If you can find it in the produce section at the market, you’ll find it growing in the community garden,” Bos said.

For information about renting a plot at the Fox Farm Road garden, contact Bos at 909-486-8736 or by email at robbie@robbiebos.com.

Direct inquiries about the church garden to Harris at 909-436-8135 or pmadsh@gmail.com.

Everybody has their reasons for growing instead of simply buying vegetables. Harris, who rents a plot at Fox Farm and plants a home garden, has a handful.

“I like fresh vegetables, I like to cook what I grow, and I’m a vegetarian,” Harris said. “I believe in a healthy lifestyle.”

Contact reporter Casey Jones via email at cjones.grizzly@gmail.com.
Single moms invited for oil change in Aldergrove

Once again the Seventh Day Adventist Church is offering a free car servicing to local single mothers.

Roxanne Hooper / Langley Advance
April 21, 2014 04:36 PM

Langley Advance
Single Mothers Oil Change recipients are treated to refreshments while waiting for their car to be serviced.

Admittedly, many women hate to get their hands too dirty. And the thought of changing oil in their car – even if they know how – is out of the question. Well, two dozen single mothers have a chance to have their oil changed for free – and they won’t have to get their fingers dirty – thanks to the Acts of Kindness (AOK) team from the Aldergrove Seventh Day Adventist church, explained pastor Melissa Cooke. “We do this two times a year, and we continue to make this event available to single moms, especially moms with young kids, because we know that being a mom is a hard but rewarding work,” said Cooke, who herself just returned from maternity leave. “We would love to give single moms a chance to put their feet up and have a break,” she explained, noting that the single moms who register get their oil changed, car washed, and vehicle vacuumed. And on oil change day – Sunday, May 4 – there will also be a few perks, including some light snacks and door prizes. The church’s AOK ministry offers several programs to help people in need in this community, including the Extreme Home Repair, the Mini-vans for Moms, and the Single Mothers Oil Change. To register for this spring’s oil change, single moms must register soon by calling 604-856-5830 with the vehicle make and model and the litre size of the engine. This free oil change concept offered by the AOK
team started by the Aldergrove church more than a decade ago and has proven so popular that other organizations in the community have followed suit.

© Langley Advance
Mobility returns as Langley repair project wraps up

Aldergrove’s Seventh Day Adventist church Acts of Kindness team did a mini-home repair for a Langley senior.

Langley Advance
April 21, 2014 04:26 PM

Carol Oldford

Carol Oldford is waiting for her water main to be repaired. But despite that unexpected hiccup which came Thursday, volunteers are almost finished stabilizing and transforming the exterior of her Langley home.
This year, Aldergrove’s Seventh Day Adventist church members decided to take on two smaller house remodels, instead of one of their grand Extreme Home Repairs.
While Tappers [see story above] will be the larger of the two projects, the Acts of Kindness team also decided to squeeze in some much needed leveling and re-roofing to Oldford’s 232nd Street mobile home.
“IT looks fantastic,” the homeowner shared with the Langley Advance Sunday.
The 71-year-old woman, who has health mobility issues, was outside Saturday. Leaning on the arm of her son, she took a stroll and surveyed their work.
“They’ve done a great job,” Oldford said.
In addition to the water main repair, she believes the only outstanding jobs will be completion of the skirting and venting around the base of her manufactured double-wide home, and the replacement of eavestroughs.
The team leveled her trailer, which had sunk drastically in some sections and caused a domino effect of other problems
inside and out.
They also replaced her roof, tore down her dilapidated carport, replaced her deck, and painted the exterior of the house.
“You’d be surprised what a coat of paint can do,” she said, noting several people in the complex have been stopping by asking questions.
“I’m so very pleased with it,” she said, adding how she’s been talking with her children about how she can now dare to dream about fixing up the inside of her home.
“I wish I knew about them years ago,” Oldford said, only partly joking that it could have saved her mountains of stress, tons of headaches, and a majority of the damage she’s been living with over the past few years.
Oldford’s deteriorating physical abilities in the past two years, compounded with the fact that her home is literally sinking, meant she didn’t have the strength necessary to open her front door.
The arrival of a team of workers on her sloped stoop earlier this month was a blessing that Oldford now believes can actually help restore some of her mobility and consequently her independence.
“I’m so very grateful,” she said, noting she’s been able to sit out on her deck and just breath in fresh air while watching and admiring those working on the transformation.
Oldford said the stress is finally subsiding after two years or more of hell, and she holds out great hopes that she will now be able to grow old in her home.

© Langley Advance
70-Mile Bike Ride Celebrates 70th Birthday Of Southern Adventist University President

Thursday, April 17, 2014

Southern Adventist University President Gordon Bietz turns 70 on May 1 and to celebrate this milestone friends and co-workers are embarking on a 70-mile bike ride.

The ride will start at Southern at 8:30 a.m. and travel to Graysville, Tennessee the original site of Southern’s campus. After a picnic lunch, riders return to Southern around 3 p.m. for a birthday celebration in front of Wright Hall.

The ride is already full, but those wishing to be invited can visit Southern.edu/birthday and learn about other ways to honor Mr. Bietz.
Beginning in mid-February, students in Pacific Union College’s Individual Taxation class participated in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program at the Up Valley Family Center in St. Helena.

The students prepared tax returns for free for people that earned less than $58,000 per year, applying what they had learned in the classroom as part of a service-learning project that allowed them to grow their skills while providing a valuable service to members of the community.

As of March 19, the 12 PUC students and four community volunteers had prepared and submitted 144 tax returns for Napa Valley residents.

In early February, the students received IRS certification, and soon after began seeing clients under the supervision of Norma Ferriz, site and operations manager for Up Valley Family Centers.

“There are many people who don’t know that by filing they are eligible for certain credits, like the Earned Income tax credit. The program is to educate people about these credits and to facilitate them submit their taxes,” said Ferriz. “Doing taxes is part of being a good citizen.”

Professor Rodney Hardcastle incorporated the service-learning opportunity to the class so students could apply what they learned in the classroom in the real world. The goal was to “to advance the students’ knowledge of the tax area and at the same time provide something to the community,” Hardcastle said.

Ferriz agreed. “It is a great opportunity for students to be exposed to how to do a tax return and also to be exposed to the realities of the different populations who live here,” she said. “People have the idea that there are only wealthy people here, but it’s good exposure that there are people with very different incomes that live and work in the Napa Valley.”

Steven Felty, one of the PUC student volunteers, experienced the diversity Ferriz describes. “Many of the people we did returns for had multiple jobs and children and were barely making ends meet,” he said.

Ferriz estimates that nearly 90 percent of the people who take advantage of the program receive a refund. “This is all money that is reinvested in the community so that is great,” she said.

The free tax preparation program continues through April 15. Those who qualify for the program can call 963-1919 to make an appointment.
Prayer Call

Thursday, May 1
Starting at 10 pm ET
Ending at 5 am ET
Phone # 712-432-0031
Access Code 435650#
First there was a box of unexpected bread — well, about four boxes, actually. Then the question, What are we going to do with all this bread? We decided that we’d set up a table outside on the sidewalk that evening and offer the bread to people as they walked home. That evening around 4:30, a woman named Grisel was going to an interview at a restaurant down the street from the Simplicity Outreach Center. By 5 o’clock, she was out the door after the manager wound up refusing her interview. Discouraged and stressed, she was walking toward her home when she came upon our table full of bread. Miriam, one of our Simplicity missionary workers, greeted her and asked if she would like some. Noticing that she looked distressed, Miriam asked if everything was okay.

Grisel said of her experience, “After sharing my story of the rude manager with Miriam, she immediately asked if she could pray with me and then invited me into the center to warm up and talk.”

She said it made a huge impact on her. She and her son had just moved back to Allentown from Florida, and having no coats were not prepared for winter. Miriam was able to give coats and other warm clothes to her. Over the next few weeks Miriam and Grisel struck up a friendship and visited regularly. Grisel said she is a Muslim, but since she really appreciated praying with Miriam, they pray together often and talk about God and faith. Grisel is also in recovery. She has a story that would be horribly sad if not for her generally upbeat disposition and positive attitude toward life. But having just moved to the area she didn’t have much of a support group around her. Now, whenever she feels like things are getting too much for her, she comes down to Simplicity and she feels at peace when she is there. She knows the whole team now and is comfortable with them and trusts them. She finds herself coming by the center several times a week to help out and just be around friends.

First there were some boxes of bread, then there was a friendship.