Dear Lexie,

Have Mercy!

For some reason I have been thinking a lot about mercy lately and how much this virtue is needed in human relationships nowadays. Mercy is one of those qualities that our society desperately needs - mercy towards the poor, the weak, the uneducated, the sick, the elderly, the lost, and towards those who as a result of mistakes in the past now live in circumstances that are less than conducive.

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Fire at Sligo Church

Mortgage Burning

"There's going to be a fire in church on Sabbath and am not going to miss that," said one young member. The snowfall on Friday, January 25, caused a few to ask whether the much trailed...

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Home Improvement

Finance and Stewardship

I love my home. I have invested quite a bit of money to make it comfortable and welcoming and just the way I want it. When I walk in the front door after a day at work, I am content and
DAT & Youth Dept. Embark in Ministry

DAT and Youth ministries feature

For a long time now, the Disability Action Team (DAT) has been trying to ascertain how we can have an impact on those within our congregation who have physical and/or emotional needs.

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HAVE MERCY!
By pesposto On February 20, 2013 · Add Comment · In eWeekend

For some reason I have been thinking a lot about mercy lately and how much this virtue is needed in human relationships nowadays. Mercy is one of those qualities that our society desperately needs — mercy towards the poor, the weak, the uneducated, the sick, the elderly, the lost, and towards those who as a result of mistakes in the past now live in circumstances that are less than conducive.

Surprisingly, mercy was not highly thought of in the ancient world. The Greeks had a problem with it. Aristotle said that it was a troublesome emotion. The Romans recognized four cardinal virtues — Wisdom, Justice, Temperance and Courage. There was no place for mercy. However, in the Jewish and Christian traditions mercy is one of the great virtues. In fact, mercy lies at the very heart of the Christian faith. One might say that Christianity is all about mercy. It's about God's mercy in sending His Son to die for undeserving sinners. It's about His mercy in forgiving us when we have messed up despite our best intentions.

One of the saddest expressions I hear from time to time goes something like this: “I am not going to spend my time or my money on those people. They had the same opportunities I had but they messed up.” Talk like this brings to mind Jesus’ parable of the unmerciful servant. In Matthew 18 who was forgiven ten thousand talents (a very large sum of money) by the king but who subsequently imprisoned one who owed him just one hundred denarii (a few dollars) and could not pay. The king showed him great mercy but he could not find it within him to show a little mercy.

John Coblenz says, “To be merciful, we need a particular way of seeing. In a needy world, we easily grow calloused to people. We easily train our eyes to look for what we want from others instead of looking for what others may need from us. We need the eyes of Jesus. Merciful eyes see more than surface needs. Rejection, loneliness, despair, discouragement, self-will, self-pity, fear, moral failure—these needs are not as visible, but they are real, and they are all around us. When we walk down the street, when we stroll through a mall, when we visit with neighbors, what do we see? Are our eyes open to the deeper levels of human need? Can we see with the eyes of Jesus?”

During the week of April 14 to 20 Sligo Church will have the opportunity to show mercy toward folks who live in the Takoma Park vicinity and individual members to people who live in their neighbourhood. We are calling this week, “Let’s Make a Difference Week,” which is part of our “Raise the Roof” initiative. We plan to take on projects in the community that will affect residents positively and raise their quality of life. Individual members will be encouraged to make a difference where they live by showing mercy to those who need their assistance. One could help a single parent with baby-sitting, run errands for an elderly neighbour, paint an elderly neighbor's house, etc. The possibilities are limitless.
Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church | Have Mercy!

a beautiful experience but Micah reminds us of how we most meaningfully express our faith: "He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8). "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy."

Don W McFarlane

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Charles Tapp, January 26, 2013
“There’s going to be a fire in church on Sabbath and I am not going to miss that,” said one young member. The snowfall on Friday, January 25, caused a few to ask whether the much trailed Mortgage Burning Ceremony planned for January 26 at Sligo Church would have to be postponed. Postponement was far from the minds of the church leaders and their faith was rewarded when approximately 1200 souls braved the cold and the snow to participate in the ceremony. In both the 8:45 and 11:15 services mortgage papers were set alight and burnt to cinders, signifying the retirement of a loan of $2,292,956 that was borrowed from the Columbia Union Revolving Fund (CURF) to upgrade the sanctuary and the organ. “Now Thank We All Our God” was sung with added meaning as worshippers expressed their gratitude for God’s leading in the life of the church and for moving hearts to give generously to the Mortgage Fund.

Potomac Conference treasurer, Steve Wilson, commended the Church for the mammoth achievement of paying...
SLIGO SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Interest. Those members who gave regularly to the Mortgage Fund were encouraged to direct their gifts in future to capital development projects.

The work of Charlotte Conway, church treasurer, Robert Visser, former chair of the Finance Committee and Dr James Gulley, chair of the Stewardship Committee, was said to be pivotal in paying off the loan early. Each of these three members received a token of thanks and appreciation from the Church for their committed service and strong leadership.

Senior Pastor, Charles Tapp, who incidentally celebrated his birthday on January 26, said that having cleared the loan the church was now in a position to concentrate more fully on ministry and on endeavors that bring people to Christ. In his sermon, “Walking on Water” Pastor Tapp reminded the church that what seems impossible with men is possible with God and that God can empower feeble human beings to accomplish that which is beyond their human limitations. He also emphasized the fact that though human instrumentality was used to pay off the mortgage, God was the one to whom praise was due. Sligo’s Sanctuary Choir, a brass quartet, The Columbia Collegiate Chorale, the New England Youth Ensemble, organist, Patrick Altton and vocalists Denise Barclay and Raisa Labrador, led the Church in a crescendo of praise to God who rewards His faithful children with glimpses of His power.

By: Don W McFarlane

Photos by: Michael McKennis (www.eyesoulphotographyllc.com)

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HOME IMPROVEMENT

By Lawrence On February 15, 2013 · Add Comment · In Church Finance, eSteward

[Jean Arthur, Finance Committee chair, is the primary author of this article.]

I love my home. I have invested quite a bit of money to make it comfortable and welcoming and just the way I want it. When I walk in the front door after a day at work, I am content and happy to be in my space.

But then standing in one of the bathrooms I look up at the ceiling and I notice that the stucco has a crack. That was not there before. And I had those ceilings re-done not too long ago. Oh wait, that was nearly eight years ago. It will be showing a bit of age about now.

Then on closer inspection, I notice that my kitchen counter has many small burns and nicks. That is showing a bit of age too. And so it goes. I look around the structure that I call home and I always see something that needs to be fixed or changed. Some of it I just want a change; but others are necessary to maintain the integrity of the place or to make it safe.

The same goes for our church. We enter the building and at first glance it seems to be fine, but close inspection reveals carpeting that desperately needs replacing—for aesthetic and safety reasons; restrooms that saw better days a decade ago; a heating and cooling system that does not always do the job. There is always something—just like at home.

For the past ten years, we have had the specter of the Organ and Sanctuary Restoration (OSR) debt and its huge monthly payments hanging over the church. But praise be to God who has blessed us with many church members, friends and benefactors of Sligo Church through whose generous support we’ve been able to pay off that debt early. Hallelujah!

Now we must focus on other aspects of the building and its infrastructure. More than a mere building, it is a place of worship—a gathering place for prayer, fellowship and outreach.

We need your continued generosity to make safety improvements and keep our building in good condition. Someone once told me that he always directs any salary increase he gets into a savings account because he had been living without that money any way.

For the past ten years we have been in the habit of giving towards retiring the OSR debt. Now that the debt is gone, please consider re-directing your OSR gift towards the Church Building Improvement Projects fund. Your gifts to this fund are dedicated to addressing the church’s numerous capital improvement needs and will be the sole source of funding for all current and future capital improvement projects. No projects will be undertaken unless we have the funds needed in hand. And no fundraising efforts or loans will be made.
Research undertaken by the Facility Committee has identified several critical areas in need of attention. Some of the needs will require comparatively large outlays of funds: air conditioning for the sanctuary, repair/replacement of the youth building skylight, and a new roof for the youth building. Other projects, while they may individually require smaller outlays, are no less important for safety, efficiency or other reasons: repair of the women's bathroom, security camera system, sanctuary platform sound upgrade, steam system inspection and evaluation, etc.

The new tithe envelope, on paper and online, includes a line for the Church Building Improvement Projects fund. We urge you to consider donating the same amount of money you had been giving to the Organ and Sanctuary Restoration debt reduction.

Each one of us should give what we can. All gifts, large and small, put together will enable us to make necessary improvements to our church home.
DAT AND YOUTH DEPARTMENT EMBARK ON NEW MINISTRY

By Johnson On February 14, 2013 - Add Comment - In Giving Stories, Youth Blog and Events

For a long time now, the Disability Action Team (DAT) has been trying to ascertain how we can have an impact on those within our congregation who have physical and/or emotional needs. Then during our first meeting this fall Ken Flemmer—who Co-chairs the DAT—asked a different question—what if we get the youth of our church excited about working with folks with disabilities? That single question has injected new life and purpose into the DAT!!

At our last meeting we were joined by Ross Patterson the Assistant Director of the Youth Department and Nitsasha Isaac who attends WAU just to talk to us about some of our ideas and see if they'd even be interested in working with us! Their enthusiastic response was both overwhelming—and humbling at the same time!! Not only did they think such a project would work, they added ideas to make this a vibrant ministry. A ministry which I feel will be mutually beneficial to both those with disabilities as well our youth.

Our next step will be to do some sensitivity training in order to educate our youth about those with disabilities. As those of us who have disabilities can attest, many times folks within our congregation aren't able to see beyond our differences into the people that we really are. So this sensitivity training will help our young people understand disabilities better in order to meet their needs. After this training occurs, the young people will break into small teams of 2 or 3 people who will be willing to assist people with disabilities within our congregation.

This program is still a work in progress!! But we envision these teams of young people going out into our community to help meet specific needs. For example, perhaps you're an elderly person who has some difficulty walking in your yard. While you refuse to look at yourself as "disabled" you just can't do yard work any longer. But what if you wouldn't have to have a couple of kids volunteer to come over one Sunday to clean your yard and plant some flowers! Or maybe you're the parent of a child with a disability and you would love just to attend church and hear the sermon for once knowing that your child is being cared for. Or maybe you're just lonely and would really enjoy some company. If you fit into any of these categories—this program is for you!

But what will our youth gain from this project? Simply put—they will learn to see those of us who have different abilities as people first—with hopes and dreams like everyone else. And when you consider that many of our young people will go on to become doctors and nurses, psychologists and social workers this new ministry project may become one of our most important endeavors.

As the Co-chair of the DAT I ask you all to please pray for this project. Then stay tuned because good things are going to happen!!!