Potomac Conference Launches First Multisite Campus

As Christian churches across the globe celebrated Jesus’ resurrection and a new beginning for sinners this past Easter weekend, the two campuses of a Potomac Conference church embarked on an uncharted, but exciting journey.

Pastor Jennifer Deans and her team officially opened the doors of Community Praise Center-Dulles (CPC-Dulles), March 30. Since September Deans and her team have worked to maximize live-streaming services (pictured) and other necessities that will allow this Dulles, Va., plant to function as one church with the Community Praise Center in Alexandria, Va., which has over 1,200 regular attendees as well as a large online audience.

With a dense population in the Dulles area, yet no Seventh-day Adventist churches within 35 miles, Henry Wright, Dean Waterman and Jennifer Deans, all pastors of CPC, brainstormed ways to reach that community.

“We have creative license to create a worship service and environment that meets those specific needs while still being connected to a solid church that is backing us,” Deans says. —Story by Tiffany Doss

In Chesapeake, Churches Pursue Missing
Members

“I’ve come to learn that some awful things have happened here in the past, things that I can’t believe,” says Cesar Gonzalez, pastor of Chesapeake Conference’s Cambridge (Md.) church and Beacon of Light church in Salisbury, Md. “These stories are decades old and people absolutely don’t forget. This Sabbath is an opportunity to do something different.”

With excitement in his voice, Gonzalez explains that he and his members are planning a special Sabbath for those who haven’t been to church in quite some time. To prepare for this Sabbath, the members of both churches have prayed for each former member and written them letters inviting them to attend a special Sabbath program. His church members are not the only ones looking to embrace missing members this Sabbath. Over the next two weeks, some 30 churches across the Chesapeake Conference will participate in a “Reconnect to Worship” Sabbath. Spurred on by estimates that some 50,000 former Seventh-day Adventists live in Chesapeake, conference leaders have been planning and preparing their pastors and current members for this special Sabbath for months. For a list of participating churches, visit http://ccosda.netadvent.org/directory.— Story by Taashi Rowe

READ MORE

Highland View Teacher Wins Einstein Fellowship

Ophelia Barizo, a science teacher at Highland View Academy in Hagerstown, Md., is among 27 distinguished science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) educators selected to serve the next school year at four federal
agencies. As a recipient of the 2013-2014 Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellowship Program, Barizo will serve in Washington, D.C., for 11 months beginning September 1 at the National Science Foundation Directorate for Engineering Emerging Frontiers in Research Innovation Division. Einstein fellows provide practical classroom insight in guiding education programs and policies, especially those related to STEM education. They also aim to increase understanding, communication and cooperation between the legislative and executive branches of the government and the STEM education community.

“I praise the Lord for this wonderful opportunity,” Barizo said, adding that she had her interview the same week that she asked her Columbia Union colleagues to keep her in prayer.

The fellows were selected through a rigorous application and interview process from a competitive, nationwide pool of nearly 200 applicants.—Story by Amanda Guelzow/Triangle Coalition for Science and Technology Education

WAU Students Win Maryland Music Award

Two Washington Adventist University (WAU) music majors recently walked away with the Maryland State Music Teachers Association Chamber Music Festival Award at an annual competition held on the school’s Takoma Park, Md., campus.

Tenor Aaron Tucker (pictured right), and piano performance major Jonathan Kiplinger, performed three works for the competition: “Una furtiva lagrima” from the opera Elixir of Love by Gaetano Donizetti, “Allerseelen” by Richard Strauss and “Widmung” by Robert Schumann.

The two judges for the event, pianist Yoon Huh and violinist Eva Cappelletti Chao, praised the
Potomac Conference Launches First Multisite Campus

duo for their “great teamwork.” One judge described Tucker’s singing as “exquisite” and compared him to a young Placido Domingo. Another judge praised Kiplinger’s “beautiful tone” on the piano.

The festival is a statewide competition of chamber music for duos, trios and quartets in three divisions: pre-high school, high school and collegiate.—Story by Daniel Lau

Allegheny West Young People Remember King, Black History

This year Martin Luther King Jr. Day (MLK Day) did not pass by the young people of the Glenville church without some reflection and action. The teens and young adults of Allegheny West Conference’s Cleveland-based congregation decided to honor the civil rights activist with a service project.

Young Glenville members Taina Casimir and Orlando Grant led the special day. They started by teaming up with City Year, a volunteer organization that works with inner city youth. Volunteers painted Glenville church classrooms as well as the office of John Coaxum, associate pastor, and picked up trash in the community. To give a sense of how far Dr. King’s legacy has reached, organizers streamed live President Barack Obama’s inauguration ceremonies throughout the day.

Later the young people also took to the corner of a nearby major intersection—105th and St. Clair streets—armed with posters and signs asking passersby to honk for MLK Day. Many applauded their efforts.—Story by Allegheny West Conference Staff

Tell us About Your Church!

We want to feature your church on the Columbia Union Visitor Facebook page! Send us a
picture of your church and a sentence or two about why you love it. Send your photos to VisitorFacebook@columbiaunion.net.

Corrections

• In an article titled, “Dundalk Spanish Company Gains Church Status,” which appeared in the March 27 issue of the Visitor News Bulletin, we incorrectly stated that the Dundalk Spanish church met in a community center prior to securing their current home. Church members worshiped in an office. We apologize for the error.

• In the April 1 Visitor News Bulletin issue titled “April Visitor Asks, What is it Like to be a Single Adult in the Church Today?” we encouraged people to comment on our Facebook page, but gave the wrong address. You can find us on Facebook at facebook.com/ColumbiaUnionVisitor.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Click here for a complete listing of upcoming events around the Columbia Union Conference.

MARYLAND

April 6: The Westminster church is hosting their first Adventist Regeneration Ministry Day featuring speaker Katia Reinert, North American Division Health Ministries director. The day starts with a 12-step Sabbath school at 9:15 a.m. and ends with an Adventist Youth Society music program (3-5 p.m.). To learn more, email growandheal@yahoo.com, call (410) 751-5600 or visit adventistrecovery.org. The church is located at 320 Crest Lane.

April 6: The church in Hyattsville, Md., will host an hour of spiritual encouragement for families affected by autism starting at 4:30 p.m. Pastor Brenda Billingy will share words of affirmation and hope with parents and caregivers. Childcare will be provided so attendees may fully benefit from the program. Light refreshments will be served. All are welcome. The church is located at 6307 Riggs Rd, Hyattsville, MD. So that the church may provide adequate childcare, RSVP by calling (240) 620-2371 or emailCherAndAssociates@gmail.com. This event is sponsored by F.A.C.E. (Facing Autism with Children Everywhere - facethemovement.org), Moore Communication Connections and Spectrum Support Group, in conjunction with the Metropolitan church.

April 6-13: Welcome friends back to church at Chesapeake Conference’s “Reconnect to Worship” Sabbaths. In a conference-wide Connect 2 Reconnect initiative, more than 30 Chesapeake churches have planned a special Sabbath (most on April 6 or 13) to welcome missing/inactive members. Take a moment to reconnect with and invite people you know who
have stopped coming to church. Locate participating churches and schedules at http://ccosda.netadvent.org/directory or call Gary Gibbs, evangelism director, at (410) 995-1910.

**April 6-May 5:** A country living training program will be held at the Liberty church in Baltimore. The seminar will include agriculture, food storage, mechanics, and building, among other things. As time will permit, the training will also include some accelerated medical missionary training, like hydrotherapy and first aid. The program begins on Sabbath, April 6, 5-6:30 p.m. with a “Spiritual Orientation.” It will continue for five consecutive Sundays, April 7, 14, 21, 28 and May 5. The seminar costs $120 for singles, $160 for families (husband, wife, children) and $200 for pairs. The church is located at 3301 Milford Mill Road. For more information, contact Beniam and Felicia Astatkie at Trueeducation1@gmail.com.

**April 7:** Takoma Academy is hosting a talent competition for vocalists, instrumentalists and liturgical dancers aged 12-21 on Sunday at 4:30 at Takoma Academy in Takoma Park, Md. All youth solos and groups are invited to participate in this event. To register, send an email Lulu Mupfumbu at Lmwangi@ta.edu.

**April 12:** The Frederick Adventist School (FAS) is hosting a Pre-K Experience Day from 8:30 to 11 a.m. Parents and prospective Pre-K students will get to observe firsthand what FAS has to offer. To reserve a spot, contact the school at (301) 663-0363 or send an email to FrederickAdventistSchool@gmail.com.

**April 14:** Washington Adventist University’s annual Fun Festival starts at noon and ends at 5 p.m. The festival will consist of health and wellness presentations, a farmer’s market, healthy food demonstrations, fun activities for kids of all ages and a showcase of musical artists and performances. Free workshops will cover English as a Second Language, Hope for Today Bible studies, parenting and family seminars, children’s programs and finance seminars. They will also provide food from area restaurants. WAU’s Acro-Airs will also perform. Learn more at wau.edu/festival.

**April 19-21:** The Middletown Valley church invites you to attend a seminar titled “Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage.” The April 19 session runs 7:30-9:30 p.m. The Sabbath, April 20 service will include a potluck at 1 p.m., followed by a seminar at 3 p.m. The Sunday 9 a.m. seminar will be followed by a brunch at Dutch’s Daughter at 12:30 p.m. Register by April 12 by contacting Lynne Williams at (301) 371-6887. The cost to attend this program is $10 per couple, which includes materials and light refreshments on Friday evening (brunch is not included). The church is located at 1811 Arnold Road in Jefferson, Md.

**PENNSYLVANIA**

**April 12-14:** Allegheny East Conference’s youth retreat is open to young people between the ages of 14 and 18. Some of the topics will include “I’m a Seventh-day Adventist ... So What?”; “Tattoos, Jewelry, Hip Hop ... What’s the Big Deal?” and “Can Seventh-day Adventists Have Swag?” Youth are encouraged to bring their friends to an interactive, fun-filled, spiritual weekend! The cost is $50 per person (includes housing, meals and attendee
Potomac Conference Launches First Multisite Campus

WASHINGTON, D.C.
February 28-April 11: Capitol Hill church members will host a free tax clinic that will be open to all individuals with an annual income of $57,000 or less. The clinic will be held every Thursday from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Lincoln Park United Methodist church in Washington, D.C. For more information, contact Rick Halberstein at (202) 546-1111, or Mike Ambrose at (202) 544-5605. This service is by appointment only.

WEST VIRGINIA
April 16: The Berkeley Springs church will host its monthly supper club with a free vegetarian/vegan meal for members and community visitors. The menu will include Southwestern type foods and gluten-free dishes. For more information, contact Lisa Shingleton, Health Ministries director, in the evenings at (304) 672-1534 or (304) 258-2739. The church is located at 3606 Valley Road (Highway 522 South) in West Virginia.

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Potomac Conference Officially Launches First Multisite Campus

Story by Tiffany Doss Published 4/2/13

The praise team at Community Praise Center–Dulles lift God up in song.

As Christian churches across the globe celebrated Jesus’ resurrection and a new beginning for sinners this past Easter weekend, the two campuses of a Potomac Conference church embarked on an uncharted, but exciting journey.

Pastor Jennifer Deans and her team officially opened the campus doors of Community Praise Center–Dulles (CPC–Dulles), March 30. Since September Deans and her team have worked to maximize live-streaming services and other necessities that will allow this Dulles, Va., plant to function as one church with the Community Praise Center in Alexandria, Va., which has over 1,200 regular attendees as well as a large online audience.

With a dense population in the Dulles area, yet no Seventh-day Adventist churches within 35 miles, Henry Wright, Dean Waterman and Jennifer Deans, all pastors of CPC, brainstormed ways to reach that community.

“Our hope is that so many people in this area will have experienced Jesus and know our name that we can be like a church Paul talked about,” Deans says. “A church that had a reputation that preceded itself, impacting the community so much that they told Paul about the church, not the other way around. We are here to listen to the needs of this community. We have creative license to create a worship service and environment that meets those specific needs while still being connected to a solid church that is backing us. I believe God has great things planned. I’m excited to watch as He opens doors.”

Deans believes so strongly in this mission that she’s confident there will be a need for a third CPC site by the end of 2013. “Some of the biggest churches in the world function with multisite campuses,” says John Cress, Potomac’s vice president for pastoral ministries.
“The idea is to plant the DNA of a healthy church in [one] area and watch another healthy church grow out of that. This can make church planting a smoother process as the new site has the example of the mother church to follow.” Before the launch, CPC-Dulles experienced a slow and steady growth, starting with 30 and having more than 150 people at the launch. Thirty-six guests filled out a communication card geared toward first-time attendees. “This means we have 36 solid member prospects that we have already contacted with an email that shared our excitement in meeting them,” said Deans. “By the end of this week, they will also receive a letter in the mail and a Panera gift card.” To learn more about this new multisite, visit dulles.cpcsda.org.

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**Please limit your comments to 500 words or less. Only one comment per person will be published.**
Columbia Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists

In Chesapeake, Churches Pursue Missing Members
30 Churches Plan Services to Reconnecting Sabbath

Story by Taashi Rowe Published 4/3/13

“I’ve come to learn that some awful things have happened here in the past, things that I can’t believe,” says Cesar Gonzalez, pastor of Chesapeake Conference’s Cambridge (Md.)
church and Beacon of Light church in Salisbury, Md. “These stories are decades old and people absolutely don’t forget. This Sabbath is an opportunity to do something different.”

With excitement in his voice, Gonzalez explains that he and his members are planning a special Sabbath for those who haven’t been to church in quite some time. To prepare for this Sabbath, the members of both churches have prayed for each former member, written them letters inviting them to attend a special Sabbath program. His church members are not the only ones looking to embrace missing members this Sabbath. Over the next two weeks, some 30 churches across the Chesapeake Conference will participate in a “Reconnect to Worship” Sabbath. Spurred on by estimates that some 50,000 former Seventh-day Adventists live in Chesapeake, conference leaders have been planning and preparing their pastors and current members for this special Sabbath. Gonzalez alone notes that if all the missing/inactive members came back to his small churches, membership would double.

“Many inactive members would like to return to church, but they don’t know how to take that first step. That’s why we’ve designed the Reconnect to Worship Sabbath as an easy re-entry point,” explains Gary Gibbs, conference evangelism director. “The services on this day will be inspiring and hope-filled. And the church members are especially sensitive to make this reconnecting Sabbath a positive experience without the awkwardness that returning members often feel. No one will ask them ‘Where have you been?’ or other embarrassing things. Our goal is to help every returning person experience a positive worship experience in a community that their soul longs for.”

This particular project has Gonzalez’s members “excited in a way that they normally aren’t about evangelism.” Among them is Debi Strom who joined Beacon of Light last April. When she heard about Reconnect to Worship Sabbath, she eagerly volunteered to write personal letters to inactive members. “I wanted to make them feel special because that is what Jesus did,” she said. “I think people are paying attention to the signs of the times, and I believe that they are primed and ready to come back if we are aggressive in love. That starts with how we greet them when they walk through the door.”

For Strom those efforts are personal. A victim of domestic violence, she was forced from the church some 30 years ago, while she lived on the West Coast, when she sought a divorce. “I kept praying but I was very angry with the church,” she said. “I even went to other denominations, but I was lonely for my church. No other denomination teaches the whole Bible like we do.”
The members at the Martinsburg (W.Va.) church are hoping that their 200-plus members are yearning to come home too. There are more than 400 members on its books but each Sabbath only half of them show up for church. When asked why this is, Pastor Steve Finny, the youth pastor, says, “Life gets busy and you drift away. It takes a little bit of prompting.”

Finney and Tom Boggess, the senior pastor, have started prompting inactive members with letters updating them on what is happening at church, postcards inviting them to Reconnect to Worship Sabbath, phone calls and visits. Finney says it’s not just the pastors who are getting involved in reaching out. “I’ve taken some youth visiting with me. We sing songs and pray with our inactive members. We keep the visits quick. We just want them to see us,” he says.

This Sabbath he is hoping that some of those outreach activities will result in seeing some new, old faces in the pews during their Easter cantata held over for this occasion.

At Sussex Central in Georgetown, Del., where Douglas Rennewanz is the pastor, the membership is about 50 but only 25 are attending. “We need to get the [missing members] back,” he says. “This Sabbath gives members an opportunity to go beyond themselves and reach out to people they haven’t seen in years.”

Rennewanz has been a pastor for 38 years and spent the last two at Sussex Central. He says that while he has lost some members to a nearby church that is bigger with more activities for young people and families, he has “high hopes for this Sabbath.”

So does Pastor Andre Hastick. Although there are 70 members on the books, only an average of 35 people show up regularly to the Aberdeen (Md.) church, on Sabbath. “We’ve been preparing for this for quite sometime,” Pastor Hastick says. “We’ve been praying systematically about inactive members, friends and families. Then we’ve followed up with phone calls, text messages and connected with them in their homes. We’ve also challenged each member of the congregation to bring at least one person. This is an opportunity for both in reach and outreach.”

This Sabbath they’ve invited a guest singer, will host a special potluck and then a social event in the evening. “Our singular focus is making disciples. At the end of the day, a lot of discipleship is about finding opportunities to forge relationships for Christ.”

For Chris Holland, senior pastor of the Hagerstown (Md.) church, reconnecting will not just
be a one-time thing. “We are actually planning at least quarterly reconnecting Sabbaths. We have a high Sabbath planned with a very good church service and then a fellowship meal to follow,” he says. “I don't know how many will come. We are actually prepared that none may come, but that will not stop us. This follow-up and pursuit of missing, former and inactive members is now a part of our lifestyle and lifecycle of our church. It will no longer be what we do, but who we are.”

For a list of participating churches, visit http://ccosda.netadvent.org/directory.

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Glenville youth and young adults spend a day remembering black history and how far America has come since Dr. King appealed for change.

This year Martin Luther King Jr. Day (MLK Day) did not pass by the young people of the Glenville church without some reflection and action. The teens and young adults of Allegheny West Conference’s Cleveland-based congregation decided to honor the civil rights activist with a service project.

Young Glenville members Taina Casimir (pictured below) and Orlando Grant led the special day. They started by teaming up volunteer congregants with City Year, a volunteer organization that works with inner city youth. Volunteers painted Glenville church classrooms as well as the office of John Coaxum, associate pastor, and picked up trash in the community. To give a sense of how far Dr. King’s legacy has reached, organizers streamed live President Barack Obama’s inauguration ceremonies throughout day. When Obama started his speech, everyone rested, enjoyed refreshments and reflected on America’s history.

The youth and young adults got an opportunity to give their feedback on black history.
during a “segregation simulation” game. Members designed the game to help the young people understand how black men and women were treated in America’s recent past.

Later the young people also took to the corner of a nearby major intersection—105th and St. Clair streets—armed with posters and signs asking passersby to honk for MLK Day. They set out to get 100 honks and spread awareness to those who may have forgotten about the day. They exceeded their goal, and many applauded their efforts.

At the end of the busy day, all of the volunteers stood in a circle to share what they learned. After enjoying cake, each participant was sent home with a commemorative T-shirt.

“Most volunteers said they normally stay home and do nothing for MLK Day, but after this experience, they hope to do something like this again very soon,” said Coaxum.
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