Weekly News From Around the Columbia Union Conference

January 29, 2014

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For many healthcare enrollees, it was also the first time they visited a Seventh-day Adventist Church. Attendees asked questions about the new Affordable Care Act, submitted their applications for Medicaid or navigated the healthcare websites themselves, a real convenience for those who may not have access to the Internet.
The enrollment event was one of three community events at the church that weekend. They distributed food Sunday and hosted a Martin Luther King Jr. birthday celebration Monday. “These events are a fulfillment of one of our frequent prayers—for our church to be a beacon on the corner and our light to shine brightly,” explains Jerome Hurst, the church’s pastor. Pictured are some of the Southeast members who helped sign up community members.—Story by Deborah Donbraye; Photo by Cheyanne Burton

Adventist HealthCare to Divest its New Jersey Hospital to a Local System

Adventist HealthCare (AHC), which is based in Gaithersburg, Md., today announced plans to transfer their 111-bed, New Jersey-based Hackettstown Regional Medical Center to Atlantic Health System. AHC officials noted that the transaction is subject to state regulatory review and could take several months.

“This decision was not an easy one for our organization because Hackettstown has been a valued member of Adventist HealthCare,” said William G. “Bill” Robertson, AHC’s president and CEO. “However, because of the changing healthcare market in New Jersey, discussions began a few years ago about the best step to continue to ensure a strong future for the hospital and the community it serves. It was decided that by partnering with a health system in its region, Hackettstown would be in a better position to serve its community and receive help with future growth opportunities.”—Story by Adventist HealthCare Staff

Tiny Potomac Church Celebrates 50 Years of Ministry
Fifty years ago, members of Potomac Conference’s Highland County (Va.) church celebrated their first Sabbath together. The church, constructed for $30,000 in 1964, was to stand as a “memorial for the cause of God in another ‘dark county’” (Columbia Union Visitor, 1964). Neal Wilson, then Columbia Union Conference president, and C.H. Lauda, Potomac’s president at the time, participated in the dedication service.

While Highland County’s first year in service brought 30 baptized members and an average attendance of 45, the church later struggled to maintain its membership and eventually shuttered its doors in 1983. However, the tenacity of the remaining Seventh-day Adventists stayed strong, and 10 years later, they reopened the church’s doors.

“We are in a very rural area of Virginia, with a little over 2,000 souls in the entire county. This averages out to be about four people per square mile,” said Joe Pappalardo, elder.—Story by Tiffany Doss

READ MORE ON POTOMAC’S WEBSITE

Dupont Park Celebrates Top Scholars
Last Friday top scholars, family and other well-wishers came out in record numbers to enjoy Dupont Park Adventist School’s second quarter honors program, where those who made the principal’s list and the honor roll were recognized.

Robin McNair, middle school language arts educator for the Washington, D.C., school, hosted the program, which featured not just academically talented students, but also those talented in the performing arts.

Yasmeen Cartwright and Asia VonStitt, sisters, played hymns on the piano; the third grade Recorders serenaded the audience with their rendition of “Hot Cross Buns”; Brielle Simmons, a pageant finalist and honor student, encouraged her peers with an original speech; and Daejah Wilson (pictured), an eighth-grade poet, challenged all to do their best in an original poem.

**Chesapeake Kids Eagerly Help With Church Building Project**

Members of Chesapeake Conference’s Waldorf (Md.) church have decided to ask their kids to help them with a major building project. No, the tiny tots will not be picking up hammers or hauling bricks.
During recent worship services, Pastor Volodymyr Grinchenko made an appeal for kids to help raise funds for their new building. Dozens of children (some pictured) ran toward the front of the church and enthusiastically took the special envelopes promoting the “Builders for Jesus” campaign. Maria Hernandez, the local fundraising leader and the one who initiated the campaign, said, “It almost brought tears to my eyes when I saw the response from the kids.”

Will the kids raise a lot of money? “They might and they might not, but it’s not about money,” Grinchenko said. “The idea is to give what we can into Jesus’ hands and watch Him perform the miracle that we are not capable of doing.”

Ohio Conference Welcomes New Health Ministries Coordinator

Dan Thorward, MS, RN, CCEMT-P, was recently named the new Health Ministries coordinator for the Ohio Conference. Thorward replaces Chris VanDenburgh, who resigned last summer after serving Ohio for more than eight years. “I am very excited about this opportunity to work with people from around Ohio to improve their health,” said Thorward.

One of the first things Thorward has planned is to host a Health Ministries seminar at the Worthington church April 13. This seminar will focus on various components and aspects of establishing and maintaining a local church Health Ministries program. Thorward shared, “In Worthington, we have had success in using programs such as CHIP and Full Plate Diet to provide health education to our parishioners and to our community. I hope to empower local congregations to use these and other programs to develop their local health ministry so that together we can make a healthier Ohio.”

For more information, email Thorward at rdthorward@gmail.com.

Adventist Home Health Named an Elite Agency
Adventist Home Health, based in Silver Spring, Md., was recently named a 2013 HomeCare Elite agency, a compilation of the top 25 percent of Medicare-certified home health agencies in the United States. This is the fourth time and second consecutive year that Adventist Home Health was recognized.

In 2013 only 25 percent of qualifying home health agencies in the nation were recognized as elite. Adventist Home Health is the only agency in Montgomery County and one of only five agencies in the state of Maryland to achieve this recognition. HomeCare Elite winners are ranked by an analysis of publicly available performance measures in quality care outcomes, best practice implementation, quality improvement and consistency, patient experience and financial performance. “We … credit the commitment of our compassionate caregivers whose dedication has made it possible to continue bringing quality healthcare home to our community for more than 40 years,” said Keith Ballenger, vice president of Adventist Home Care Services, which oversees Adventist Home Health.

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**GC Theology Committee Reveals 10 Divisions Would Recommend Women’s Ordination**

At least 10 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church’s 13 world division Biblical Research Committees say they would either recommend the ordination of women to ministry or would allow it in some world regions without the matter harming church unity. The recommendations were unveiled last week at the General Conference’s Theology of Ordination Study Committee (TOSC), which was the third study meeting of the committee. The denomination is in the midst of a five-year process of studying the biblical foundation of the theology of ordination and how it relates to gender and its implications if women were to be ordained.

Last week’s meeting (pictured), held January 21 to 25 in Columbia, Md., featured
presentations on theology and descriptions of options for moving forward in worldwide unity regarding ordination as it relates to gender. Much of the discussion focused on the issue of “headship” as is found in 1 Corinthians 11. Papers from all meetings are available to view on the website of the Office of Archives, Statistics and Research. Artur Stele, TOSC chair and director of the denomination’s Biblical Research Institute, told delegates on Friday that the time for researching and studying of the issue had come to an end. “From now on, we’re going in a new direction. From now, including the June meeting, we’ll be looking for solutions,” Stele said.—Story by Adventist News Network; Photo by Ansel Oliver

READ MORE ON ANN'S WEBSITE

New Jersey Member Preaches in the Streets

Mavie Brown, a member of New Jersey Conference’s Phillipsburg church, recently took to the streets in her neighborhood to tell people the good news of Christ’s return. When asked why she chose to speak out during a street fair, Brown said, “People are searching for truth. … We see signs of His soon return all around us. Satan is seeking whom he can devour, and the powers of darkness fear because God is more powerful, and I want to continue letting His Spirit use me to bring people to Jesus!” Jose H. Cortes, New Jersey Conference president, said, "I'm so proud to see a young person, a member of the [conference's] executive committee ... preaching ... witnessing about Jesus's love and the Seventh-day Adventist Church." Click here to watch the video.

Takoma Academy Tigers Make Clean Sweep At Basketball Tournament

Congratulations to the Takoma Academy Tigers who made a clean sweep at the Southwestern University Hoops Classic in Keene, Texas. The event featured more than 40 teams from Adventist academies across the country. The boys varsity, girls varsity and girls junior varsity teams all won their respective divisions!

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**Can the 98 Percent be Overturned?**

In this week’s *Talking About Freedom* podcast, Walter Carson, host and Columbia Union Conference’s general counsel, talks with Rob Boston, communication director for Americans United and editor of the *Church and State* magazine, about the Establishmen Clause. Boston shares how his group, Americans United, helped bring its case against the Greece, N.Y., city council, to the Supreme Court. Even though 98 percent of the town is Christian, Boston’s group opposes sectarian prayers in city council meetings. [Click here to listen to the interview.](http://e2.ma/message/ecipe/6diogi)
Is Religion Still Relevant?

Have you read our #RelevantReligion Twitter chat? A. Alan Martin, pastor of the Younger Generation church in Texas; Dave Gemmell, associate director of the North American Division’s Ministerial Department, Raj Attiken, retired Ohio Conference president; and Jacob Gemmell (right); a young adult whose ministry uses art as a springboard for spiritual conversations; attempt to answer this very question.

"Before going into an evangelism routine, get to know someone’s perspective, their questions and their struggles with religion and God," Jacob Gemmell suggests.

Read more thoughts from our #relevantreligion Twitter Chat here.

Got a Favorite Hymn? Share it With Us!

January is almost over and you’ll soon lose your chance to win a My Story My Song DVD from Hope Channel. Share your favorite hymn on facebook.com/columbiaunionvisitor and you could win!

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARYLAND

February 1: The first Potomac Conference ministry training for the year, EQUIP 2014, will be held at Sligo church in Takoma Park, Md. More than 20 seminars will be presented to equip you in ministry. Click here to register.

February 2: The Allegheny East Conference is leading an officers training for the Metro/Baltimore area at the Emmanuel-Brinklow church in Ashton, Md. Training will be offered from 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m. for all church departmental leaders in the following areas: stewardship, health, Sabbath School, personal ministry and discipleship, family and marriage/couple ministry, singles ministry, men's ministry, Youth Ministries and community services. There will be additional classes on leadership and ministry collaboration. Click here to register and download your training materials, which you must bring with you.

February 12-16: The Global Adventist Internet Network (GAiN) Conference invites all interested in communication, evangelism and technology to a conference focused on finding new ways to fulfill the Gospel Commission. Information on the conference can be found at
OHIO

February 1: Ohio Conference's Youth Winter Retreat is a free spiritual retreat specifically for high school students! This is a time of worship, Bible study, prayer and intentional focus on our relationship with Jesus! Allan Walshe, the chair of the Department of Discipleship at Andrews University (Mich.) will speak. Click here to register and receive a free lunch.

February 21-23: During the GODEncounters weekend in Oregonia, Sam Leonor, chaplain at La Sierra University in California, will speak. Attendees will focus on prayer, music, fellowship and small group discussions. Click here to get more details and check out pictures!

OVERSEAS

February 13-19: Young adults invited to participate in the North American Division's Ignition Mission Trip to Haiti. The trip will take young people to a Restore a Child orphanage. Young adults can also continue on to the Ignition Convention in Miami that starts on February 19. For more information on joining the trip, contact Gael Murray at Gael.Murray@nad.adventist.org.
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January 29, 2014 · by Taashi Rowe · in Allegheny West Conference, Health & Lifestyle, Uncategorized

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“Southeast … did a great job setting up the location for the event,” said Hugh F. “Trey” Daly III, Ohio state’s director for Enroll America. He, along with federal and county officials, joined Cleveland groups at the event. The church worked with Brenda Delgado, external affairs liaison/marketplace outreach lead for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Regional Office in Chicago, to organize the event.

Delgado, who is also an Adventist, spoke to the congregation during the worship service. She complimented Pastor Hurst and Southeast members for hosting the event. Hurst, who is also the conference’s Adventist Community Services director, is helping Delgado set up similar events at other churches in the Cleveland area.

The Southeast church is an official certified application counselor organization and several members are training to assist in enrollment. Open enrollment continues until March 31, and Pastor Hurst indicated that there will likely be other enrollment events at the church.

The enrollment event was one of three community events at the church that weekend. They distributed food Sunday and hosted a Martin Luther King Jr. birthday celebration Monday. “These events are a fulfillment of one of our frequent prayers—for our church to be a beacon on the corner and our light to shine brightly,” shares Hurst.
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Highland County Celebrates 50 Years

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“We are in a very rural area of Virginia, with a little over 2,000 souls in the entire county. This averages out to be about four people per
square mile,” said Joe Pappalardo, elder. “There are also not a lot of places for employment here, so when someone goes off to college, they probably won’t be coming back.”

Heaven's Mountain Band, from Churchville (Va.) provided gospel music during the service and at a special concert after the fellowship meal, Jan. 18.

Two events were held to celebrate the anniversary that some feared would never happen. A small gathering on the actual year-to-date 50th year anniversary was held on Dec. 28, 2013. This intimate service included testimonies from several members and a period of reminiscing on the challenges and blessings the congregation has seen. The congregation also received a video from Ted Wilson, the General Conference President and son of Neal Wilson, in which he expressed his gratitude for the work being done in Highland. About 75 people attended the second service, Jan. 18th. Many community members came to learn the history of the small church down the road. Guest speakers included Elmer Malcom, whose father donated the land the church is built on, Roger Mace, who once served there as pastor and John Miller, who helped build the church.
John Miller, member of the Staunton SDA Church, recounts his involvement in the beginnings of the Highland Church as a sister church of Staunton.

Pastor Roger Mace, former pastor of the Highland Church, spoke about his ministry there and how his idea of holding meetings in Monterey was met with resistance. Eventually, the local town council approved it and by the grace of God, the meetings proceeded and were well attended by residents.

Today, the church’s 13 members continue the fight for the Kingdom with unique community Bible outreach programs, including an interdenominational Bible study, where sometimes non-Adventist attendees outnumber the members. “We follow the Amazing Facts guideline,” said Pappalardo, “so we are discussing Bible truths, but this dynamic allows us to approach topics in a non-confrontational way and have both sides consider a different viewpoint. It also helps us dialogue about the state of the dead and the Sabbath.”

Pappalardo says tradition is one of the biggest challenges faced while trying to bring more to the church. With many people having five or six generations attend the same church, most will not consider going somewhere else. However, the small, close-knit community allows Highland members to be aware of individuals’ needs, allowing them to reach out and pray for people in a very pointed way.
Though the church has faced hardships, the members will not be deterred from doing the work of God. “We believe God has sustained us and trust that He will continue doing so,” said Pappalardo. “There are souls nearby that will respond to God’s truth and God’s banner must be flown in all places, large and small.”

-Tiffany Doss
This article is not available!