Weekly News From Around the Columbia Union Conference

May 8, 2014

Columbia Union Votes Location, Director for its School of Evangelism

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Young Adults Recommend Inclusion

Today the union's executive committee also voted to approve two recommendations from the young adult advisory subcommittee. Each conference executive committee must have at least one young adult member and each conference should appoint a young adult coordinator. Why make those recommendations? “Young adults are leaving our churches at an alarming rate,” shared Sanjay Thomas, who chairs the subcommittee. “When it comes to reclaiming and re-engaging young adults, the Columbia Union wants to take the lead and we don’t think there is a conference here that doesn’t want to do the same.” Pictured are committee members (first row) Natalie Chandler, Marcia Moore, Claudia Hernandez Barrientos, (back row) Tim Ko, Sanjay Thomas and Jason Ridley.—Story by Taashi Rowe

Columbia Union's Annual Report Released
The Columbia Union also released its 2013 annual report today, themed “Tell of His Good Deeds” highlighting its accomplishments as well as reports from its education and healthcare ministries and in-house departments and services. It also includes the union’s 2013 financial statement, which showed a $3 million tithe increase. “This is really a praise report that illustrates how God is working in and through His people in the Columbia Union,” said Celeste Ryan Blyden, vice president for public relations and strategic communication. The report is available online at columbiaunion.org/annualreport.

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**Mountain View Constituents Re-Elect Officers, Tithe Up by 9.21 Percent**

Delegates met Sunday, May 4 at the Valley Vista Adventist Center in Huttonsville, W.Va., for Mountain View Conference’s Fifth Quadrennial Session and voted to re-elect, for a third term, Larry Boggess as president and Victor Zill as secretary/treasurer (pictured). “I envision a dynamic, Holy Spirit-filled church
family, hastening the coming of Jesus ... [as they] engage their friends, neighbors and communities with the love of Jesus," said Boggess as he shared his vision for the upcoming term.

Zill shared that the financial position of the conference is stronger now than the prior four years. During that time, members returned $9.6 million, which meant a tithe increase of 9.21 percent. "Giving per member for tithe ranks second highest within the Columbia Union," Zill said, "and is the eighth highest within the North American Division, highlighting the faithfulness of God's people."

While membership declined due to deaths and relocation, Zill reported that at the end of 2013, membership stood at 2,283. He also noted that during the quadrennium, 301 people joined the church in the Mountain View territory.— Story by Valerie Monkone

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Shady Grove Adventist First Hospital in Maryland to Achieve Breastfeeding Designation

Shady Grove Adventist Hospital in Rockville, Md., is the first hospital in Maryland and one of only 177 in the United States to achieve baby-friendly designation through the World Health Organization and the United Nations Children’s Fund. The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative is a global program that encourages and recognizes hospitals that offer an optimal level of care for infant feeding.

The baby-friendly designation promotes breastfeeding as one of the most effective preventive health measures for both infants and mothers. In addition, mothers who breastfeed have a decreased risk of breast and ovarian cancers. Only 7.2 percent of babies in the United States are born in a baby-friendly designated facility.

"The Birth Center at Shady Grove Adventist Hospital is committed to helping new mothers breast feed successfully. As part of this, we work with our physicians, nurses and lactation consultants to ensure that we are providing expert guidance and support to each family," says Carol Chandler, RN, interim director of perinatal services at Shady Grove Adventist Hospital—Story by Susan Griffiths

52 Graduate from Chaplaincy Program
After three months of instruction from the International Alliance of Chaplains and Law Enforcement, based in New York, a group of 52 Hispanic pastors and lay members were certified as chaplains last month. The graduation ceremony took place at Chesapeake Conference’s Baltimore First church in Ellicott City, Md. The chaplains will serve in hospitals, prisons throughout Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia.

Orlando Rosales, Chesapeake Conference’s Hispanic Ministries coordinator, was especially proud of the large contingency of Chesapeake chaplains (40) that participated in the program. “It is a clear sign that our brothers in Chesapeake wish to be more useful, having greater preparation to participate in something that will allow them to better serve the church and the community.” Pictured are three lay chaplains from Chesapeake: Ada Rivera, Cristina McConnell and Yolanda Flores.

—Story by Cristina McConnell

Noticias Graduación de Capellanía

Impulsado por los ministerios hispanos de Chesapeake Conference, en la persona
del Pr. Orlando Rosales, en Diciembre 2013, un grupo de 52 participantes entre pastores y hermanos laicos (uno de Allegheny East Conference, 11 de Potomac Conference y 40 de Chesapeake Conference) recibimos una inspiradora instrucción por la organización oficial de capellanes: International Alliance of Chaplains Law Enforcement and Clamor por New York.

Fue hasta el día jueves 24 de Abril del presente año (2014) a las 11 am que los graduandos, familiares y amigos nos dimos cita en la Iglesia Adventista de Baltimore First para celebrar la graduación de 52 Capellanes que para la Gloria del Señor estarán sirviendo en los estados Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, y Washington D.C.—Historia por Cristina McConnell

Spotted: WAU Graduates Singing for Joy

This past weekend, some 359 students graduated from Washington Adventist University in Takoma Park, Md., with a total of 361 degrees (two graduates received dual degrees). Pictured are a small group of graduates singing during the consecration services on Friday night at nearby Sligo church.—Photo by Randolph Robin

Alumnus to Take the Helm at Shenandoah Valley Academy
John Wagner, EdD, currently interim president of the Union College in Nebraska, has accepted the position of principal at Shenandoah Valley Academy (SVA) in New Market, Va. Wagner, an SVA graduate, comes to the school with a broad leadership background.

Upon his graduation from SVA, Wagner attended the Washington Missionary College in Takoma Park, Md., now the Washington Adventist University, for one year then transferred to Atlantic Union College (Mass.) where he received a bachelor’s in biology and religion. He then attended the Andrews University (Mich.) where he received a master’s in counseling and guidance. He also holds a doctoral degree in education, received from the University of Florida.

The seasoned leader, who also served as pastor of administration at Sligo church, has served as president at several Adventist colleges and nonprofit organizations.

—Story by Dan Jensen

READ MORE ON POTOMAC’S WEBSITE

Washington Adventist Hospital President to Leave Adventist HealthCare
Joyce Newmyer, president of Washington Adventist Hospital (WAH) in Takoma Park, Md., announced this week she will be leaving the organization to become a regional president and CEO with Adventist Health in Oregon. The role, for which she was recruited, includes overseeing multiple hospitals in Oregon and Washington. Her last day is May 30.

"It’s been a blessing to work with the executives, employees and physicians at Washington Adventist Hospital and across Adventist HealthCare," Newmyer said. "While I’ll be returning to the West Coast where I was raised, I know the caring and skilled team of staff and physicians will continue to focus daily on our mission—a mission that is at the heart of all we do to demonstrate God’s care and improve the health of the community."

Newmyer joined WAH in 2009 as senior executive officer and campus administrator and was promoted to president in March 2011.—Story by Diana Troese

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5 Questions for Albert Kelly

Meet Albert Kelly, mayor of Bridgeton, N.J. and member of the Allegheny East Conference’s Bethany church in Bridgeton. He manages a city of 25,000. He founded an agency and leads an army of 700 who daily work to eliminate poverty in Southern New Jersey. He also organized a coalition of churches, which over the last eight years, have fed 25,000 people. He calls it Faith in Action. Today during the Columbia Union Conference Executive Committee meetings, Celeste Ryan Blyden, vice president of public relations and strategic communication, interviewed him to find out how and why he does it all and how he’s helping to tell our church’s story in a public and faith-filled way. Pictured are union officers and Blyden praying for Kelly. Read the interview below:

Q: How and why did you become mayor of Bridgeton, and what does it entail?
A: Prior to running for mayor, I served on the local school board for several terms, served on the local community college board of trustees and also was elected to the Bridgeton City Council. Community service is something I truly believe in therefore I ran for mayor believing I could use my experience to make a difference in my hometown.

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Why Our Churches, Schools and Hospitals Need to be on Social Media

“Any church that doesn’t have a Facebook page may not be doing relevant ministry,” says Noah Washington, senior pastor of Allegheny East Conference’s Bladensburg (Md.) church.

Washington and his media team update their Facebook and Twitter accounts with pictures from the church service and videos of their praise team and groups. Bladensburg has a weekly attendance of between 375 and 400, but their Facebook page has more than 1,200 fans.

He says that the church’s social media efforts have had a tremendous impact. “We’ve had people attend service because of our Facebook and Twitter accounts.”—Story by V. Michelle Bernard

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White House Official Speaks at the Church's 12th Religious Liberty Celebration

http://t.e2ma.net/message/6964e/6diogi[5/14/2014 4:31:27 PM]
Last Wednesday the International Religious Liberty Association, the North American Religious Liberty Association, Liberty magazine and the Seventh-day Adventist Church hosted their 12th annual Religious Liberty Dinner in Washington, D.C. The annual event was well attended by Columbia Union members and a senior White House official delivered the keynote address.

The annual dinner has become a tradition in the U.S. capital—referred to by one of the evening’s honorees as “the best religious freedom party in town”—and underscores the case of the hundreds of millions of people who are mistreated because of their faith, now more than 60 years after the United Nation’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Pictured is Melissa Rogers, who is President Barack Obama’s principal advisor on faith issues, delivering the keynote address.—Story by Ansel Oliver/Adventist News Network

READ MORE AT ADVENTIST NEWS NETWORK

Oakwood University Wins $25,000 Campus Pride Grant
Oakwood University ( Ala.) is among three Historically Black Colleges and Universities that won a $25,000 grant in The Home Depot's 2014 RETOOL YOUR SCHOOL Campus Improvement Grant Program. The results were announced this past Monday morning. Oakwood's win in this year's competition will allow the university to re-seed the softball and soccer fields behind the Ashby Gymnasium, as well as install sprinkler systems.

According to the competition rules, Oakwood was selected because of a combination of the social media activity and voting score. The three applicants with the highest votes and most social media activity, as determined by the sponsor during the voting period, was awarded with the Campus Pride grants.—Story by Oakwood University Staff

Correction

In a story titled "Spotted: Chesapeake's Pathfinders Fundraising," which appeared in last week's Visitor News Bulletin, we incorrectly identified the Pathfinders pictured as members of the Good Hope church. Good Hope is the English-speaking ministry of Chesapeake Conference's Washington-Spencerville Korean church in Spencerville, Md. We regret the error.

Columbia Union Members in the Media

Making A Difference: Danville Elementary School
Adventist Health taps health industry vet to lead Northwest operations

UPCOMING EVENTS

OHIO

May 9-10: Lonnie Melashenko, former speaker/director, will speak at the Westlake-Brooklyn church's joint “Revival and Homecoming” event. He will speak Friday at 7 p.m. and Saturday at 11:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. This weekend of spiritual emphasis and outreach will be the first mini-series for Pastor Melashenko in the Greater Cleveland area. The Westlake church is located at 2335 Columbia Road in Westlake. For more information, call Pastor Laszlo Hangyas at (440) 785.9215.

VIRTUAL

April 9-May 15: Adventist photographers from across the North American Division are invited to participate in inSpire's 2014 Facebook Photo Contest. Both amateur and professional photographers may enter. The idea is to spotlight God's creative power and to provide opportunities for His people to share their gifts. Prizes range from $100 to an iPad Mini. Winners will be selected based on
a combination of how many people like the photos on Facebook, and the rankings that will be given by inSpire's photography judges. The contest ends at midnight on May 15. MORE
Columbia Union Votes Location, Director for its School of Evangelism

May 8, 2014 · by Taashi Rowe · in Columbia Union News, Uncategorized

At its mid-year meetings, the Columbia Union Conference Executive Committee vote several key initiatives and recommendations.

Story by Taashi Rowe

During the Columbia Union Conference’s mid-year meetings held this week, church leaders gathered for presidents’ council, administrators’ council and the Washington Adventist University Board of Trustees. The group voted to go forward with proposals for a Columbia Union school of evangelism for young adults that would be based in Philadelphia. The school will be launched in September 2015 with a goal of 16 students who will study a curriculum focused on homiletics, leading Bible studies, small group leadership, urban ministry, health ministries and nonprofit leadership. They also voted a director of the school who is prayerfully considering the call.

2015 Evangelism Initiatives Shared

Rubén Ramos, vice president for Multilingual Ministries, also reported on a yearlong evangelism program for Hispanic churches slated for 2015 under the theme “Vivangelismo” (LivEvangelism). The theme reflects a belief that everything the church does, in one way or another, is about bringing people to Christ. The year would start out with a lay festival in Ocean City, Md., in February and end with a weeklong caravan of harvesting in November. Throughout the year, Ramos hopes to see at least 1,000 small groups formed, 15 new churches planted and 2,500 new disciples baptized across the union.

Frank Bondurant, vice president for Missions Development, also shared an evangelism plan for 2015 for English-speaking churches that would include the partnership of Allegheny East, Chesapeake and Potomac conferences. The three conferences will share resources and, starting April 11, launch various evangelism outreach efforts.

Young Adults Recommend Inclusion

The group also voted to approve two recommendations from the young adult advisory subcommittee. Each conference executive committee must have at least one young adult member and each conference should appoint a young adult coordinator. Why make those recommendations? “Young adults are leaving our churches at an alarming rate,” shared Sanjay Thomas, who chairs the subcommittee. “When it comes to reclaiming and re-engaging young adults, the Columbia Union wants to take the lead and we don’t think there is a conference here that doesn’t want to do the same.”

Also today the union released its 2013 annual report, themed “Tell of His Good Deeds” highlighting its accomplishments as well as reports from its education and healthcare ministries and in-house departments and services. It also includes the union’s 2013 financial statement, which showed a $3 million tithe increase. “This is really a praise report that illustrates how God is working in and through His people in the Columbia Union,” said Celeste Ryan Blyden, vice president for public relations and strategic communication. The report is available online at...
Blyden also interviewed Albert Kelly, a member of Allegheny East’s Bethany church in Bridgeton, N.J., founder of an anti-poverty agency and mayor of Bridgeton, which has a population of 25,000. Kelly shared how his faith informs his work in each area and how his efforts to build relationships are raising awareness of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in southern New Jersey. Read the interview here.

The new president and CEO of Adventist HealthCare was also introduced and he shared his vision for the future of Adventist HealthCare.
Mountain View Constituents Re-Elect Officers, Tithe Up by 9.21 Percent

At Mountain View Conference’s constituency session, held Sunday, delegates re-elected their top two officers for a third term and they received good news about the financial picture of the smallest conference in the Columbia Union.

Story by Valerie Morikone

Delegates met Sunday, May 4 at the Valley Vista Adventist Center in Huttonsville, W.Va., for Mountain View Conference’s Fifth Quadrennial Session and voted to re-elect, for a third term, Larry Boggess as president and Victor Zill as secretary/treasurer. “I envision a dynamic, Holy Spirit-filled church family, hastening the coming of Jesus … [as they] engage their friends, neighbors and communities with the love of Jesus,” said Boggess as he shared his vision for the upcoming term.

Zill shared that the financial position of the conference is stronger now than the prior four years. During that time, members returned $9.6 million, which meant a tithe increase of 9.21 percent. “Giving per member for tithe ranks second highest within the Columbia Union,” Zill said, “and is the eighth highest within the North American Division, highlighting the faithfulness of God’s people.”

While membership declined due to deaths and relocation, Zill reported that at the end of 2013, membership stood at 2,283. He also noted that during the quadrennium, 301 people joined the church in the Mountain View territory. As they ramp up for the next five years, the officers will continue inviting more people to follow Jesus. They are in the end phase of their Reach Appalachia initiative where they’ve teamed up with the Voice of Prophecy to mail Bible study request cards to every member in their territory. They are also one of three conferences that the North American Division has allocated to receive the 2015 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, which they’ve earmarked for 2015 evangelism.

At Sunday’s session delegates also voted to disband the Richwood (W.V.) church and hold constituency meetings every five years instead of every four years.

Kathryn Styer, a delegate from the Romney (W.Va.) church, said, “This was my first constituency meeting. I really learned a lot and appreciated the necessary organization [happening] behind the scenes in God’s church.”
The Potomac Conference Administration is pleased to announce that Dr. John Wagner, currently the president of Union College in Lincoln, Neb., has agreed to accept the position of principal at Shenandoah Valley Academy in New Market, Va.

Many people are unaware that Dr. Wagner is a graduate of SVA. Upon his graduation, Dr. Wagner attended Washington Missionary College (Md.), now Washington Adventist University, for one year then transferred to Atlantic Union College (Mass.) where he received his B.A. in Biology and Religion. He then attended Andrews University (Mich.) where he received an M.A. in Counseling and Guidance. Dr. Wagner served as Dean of Boys at two academies and was principal at both Madison Academy in Tennessee and Forest Lake Academy in Florida. He also oversaw 26 schools as the superintendent of schools within the Rocky Mountain Conference.

Dr. Wagner received his Ed. D. in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Florida in 1978, shortly thereafter joining the faculty at Union College as Vice President/Dean. Dr. Wagner went on to serve as President of both Southern College (Tenn.) and Union College (Neb.), the President and CEO of The Joseph E. Mertz Memorial Educational Foundation, Inc. in Indianapolis, Ind. and President and CEO of Prevent Blindness Indiana.

More recently, Dr. Wagner was the Pastor for Administration at the Sligo SDA Church in Takoma Park, Md. from February, 2007 through August, 2011. Union College invited him to be the interim president in August of 2011, subsequently asking him to be their President, the position he is currently serving.

The Potomac Conference looks forward to seeing what God has in store for SVA through the leadership of Dr. Wagner and appreciates the experience and perspective he will provide. We ask for your continued prayers as the new administration moves forward in the coming year.
Joyce Newmyer, president of Washington Adventist Hospital (WAH) in Takoma Park, Md., announced today she will be leaving the organization to become a regional president and CEO with Adventist Health in Oregon. The role, for which she was recruited, includes overseeing multiple hospitals in Oregon and Washington. Her last day is May 30.

“It’s been a blessing to work with the executives, employees and physicians at Washington Adventist Hospital and across Adventist HealthCare,” Newmyer said. “While I’ll be returning to the West Coast where I was raised, I know the caring and skilled team of staff and physicians will continue to focus daily on our mission—a mission that is at the heart of all we do to demonstrate God’s care and improve the health of the community.”

Newmyer joined WAH in 2009 as senior executive officer and campus administrator and was promoted to president in March 2011. Under Newmyer’s leadership, the hospital has received numerous national and state awards for its quality care. It has also achieved significant progress in patient safety and quality metrics, patient experience results, employee engagement and financial performance.

Newmyer is also an active member of many community groups and is currently chair of the IMPACT Silver Spring Board of Directors.

Terry Forde, president and CEO of Adventist HealthCare, announced Newmyer’s decision to the organization and will lead in choosing her successor. “I want to thank Joyce for her years of service and for her contributions to the hospital and Adventist HealthCare,” Forde said. “She has a group of dedicated leaders, employees and physicians at Washington Adventist that will help ensure a bright future for the hospital.”
Meet Albert Kelly, mayor of Bridgeton, N.J. and member of the Allegheny East Conference’s Bethany church in Bridgeton. He manages a city of 25,000. He founded an agency and leads an army of 700 who daily work to eliminate poverty in Southern New Jersey. He also organized a coalition of churches, which over the last eight years, have fed 25,000 people. He calls it Faith in Action. We call it, and Mayor Kelly, a blessing. I recently interviewed him to find out how and why he does it all and how he’s helping to tell our church’s story in a public and faith-filled way.

Q: How and why did you become mayor of Bridgeton, and what does it entail?

A: Prior to running for mayor, I served on the local school board for several terms, served on the local community college board of trustees and also was elected to the Bridgeton City Council. Community service is something I truly believe in therefore I ran for mayor believing I could use my experience to make a difference in my hometown.

I am the first [Seventh-day] Adventist to hold this position and I believe being an Adventist means I must uphold the beliefs of the church and, most of all, be a Christian. As mayor I am the chief executive of my community and I see it as being the main servant, cheerleader and collective visionary for the direction we can move toward as a community.

Q: What is your day job?

A: My full-time employment is that of the president, founder and chief executive officer of Gateway Community Action Partnership, the designated anti-poverty agency for three counties in southern New Jersey. Our annual budget is over $52 million and we employ 700 employees with over 40 different programs.

Q: How have you used your triple roles—public sector, community service and local church leadership—to make a difference and raise awareness of our faith?

A: I was baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1976, and served under a number of great local pastors. This has helped me grow in my awareness of how God wants us to serve Him by serving others. I have been blessed to be able to have a job in the private sector that enables me to use the resources that I have gathered in the public sector and integrate my faith in all that I do on behalf of my city.

Q: Has this impacted the way Adventists are viewed in the community? How so?

A: I believe so. Many of our residents know me by the church because what I have been doing is not new. We as a church have been working in the community long before I became mayor. For example we have been operating our
soup kitchen for eight years. Each Sunday we provide meals to the homeless and hungry. We recently passed the 25,000-meals count. Word of mouth literally (no pun intended) has been the main source of advancing the work of feeding the less fortunate.

Under our pastor’s leadership we recently began to go out each fourth Sabbath and give our free meals in the community, we call this Faith in Action. We position ourselves in the center of town and at the senior citizen complex, and give out a hearty meal and Bible tracts.

Q: What have you learned from this unique opportunity God has blessed you with?

A: To use a slogan from a national company, sometimes you need to “Just Do It.” We become paralyzed by analysis trying to study the obvious, but we need to follow God’s Spirit and just start serving.

Success will come by serving God first and others will join by our willingness to serve. We as a local church talked about the need to serve meals on weekends when other soup kitchens were closed and one member said, “Let’s get started and stop talking about it.” That was 8 years ago and the first of 25,000-plus meals.
Why Our Churches, Schools and Hospitals Need to be on Social Media

We Share Tips to help get your Social Media Ministry Started

Story by V. Michelle Bernard

“Any church that doesn’t have a Facebook page may not be doing relevant ministry,” says Noah Washington, senior pastor of Allegheny East Conference’s Bladensburg (Md.) church.

Washington and his media team update their Facebook and Twitter accounts with pictures from the church service and videos of their praise team and groups.

Bladensburg has a weekly attendance of between 375 and 400, but their Facebook page has more than 1,200 fans.

He says that the church’s social media efforts have had a tremendous impact. “We’ve had people attend service because of our Facebook and Twitter accounts.”

David Franklin, associate pastor of Allegheny East’s Berea Temple in Baltimore uses Facebook to interact with his church community and viewers of Let’s Pray!, a Hope Channel show he co-hosts.

“We respond to every post and share encouraging messages as a way to provide hope for folks going through difficult and/or dark moments in their lives,” he says.

Franklin continued, “Social media is a neighborhood. In the same way building relationships with the neighbors that live next door can (possibly) result in leading them into a relationship with Jesus and potentially becoming active members of your church, … building relationships through social media can [also] grow a ministry.”

Social media has played a big role in how Adventist HealthCare interacts with their consumers and the community in recent years says Bronson Arcuri, social media and video specialist at Adventist HealthCare.

Adventist Healthcare has close to 25,000 Twitter fans and nearly 10,000 fans on their Facebook pages. They also have a blog, (http://blog.adventisthealthcare.com/) which shares health tips, community and health news and other useful news.

“We’re able to be more accessible to a bigger audience than we’ve been able to in the past. This has gone a long
way in helping us spread our message of wellness to the community. It has also helped us address any community concerns brought to our attention,” he says. “It’s kind of cliché now, but a lot of it comes down to speaking with your audience rather than speaking at them.”

**Chip Dizárd**, a social media expert and member of Chesapeake Conference’s New Hope church in Fulton, Md., agrees that the goal of social media should be listening and giving. “We need to have two-way communication instead of just a push, we need to pull and push information out.”

Besides regularly interacting with your followers, it can also help to encourage your community to interact with you. Washington gets his church members active by encouraging them to tweet quotes during the sermon.

**How to do it**

Dizárd says your content is what will drive people to your church or ministry. “The old stale stock information is no longer relevant in this information age.”

He says a church can aggregate content from ministry blogs then add their own opinions to it, and post current world events as conversation starters.

One commonly cited roadblock to starting a social media ministry is lack of free time or a perceived lack of good content.

“I believe you make time for what’s important and if social media is important you will find time to share. … You create content every week you preach a sermon.”

Dizard says that transcripts of a sermon, audio of a sermon, tweetable moments from a sermon and updates about upcoming events are all good content for social media.

Some larger churches can be active on many platforms. For example, the New Hope church runs Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vimeo and Spotify (goo.gl/YbNkw9) accounts. Smaller churches might not be able to do that.

All the social media channels can quickly overwhelm people when they’re first starting out, says Arcuri. “You should start by focusing on being where your audience is, and for most demographics right now that means Facebook,” he says.

Christopher Thompson, an associate pastor at Allegheny West Conference’s Ephesus church in Columbus, Ohio, says his church has had a Website for years and has ramped up their use of social media in the last couple years. They use them to share encouragement, information about projects and events, and to reach out and stay connected to the people in their circle of influence.

He says, “It’s absolutely essential for church leaders to have a web presence. … When we want to know more, we google it. It’s even true for people we want to know more about. We just google them whether it’s the president or a pastor. With that said, I think it’s safe to say that [to many people in today’s world] if you’re not online, then you don’t exist.”

**Follow these social media tips from Adventist HealthCare:**
• Don’t get discouraged. Getting social media followers can take a long time, so don’t sweat it if you get stuck at a number. Just keep on posting and offering useful, regular updates.

• Set realistic goals. If you have a church with 200 members then 100 Facebook fans could be a huge number for you.

• Publicize your channel. Make sure your printed materials list your social media addresses so people know they can find regular information there.

• Post relevant topics. In addition to sharing information about your group, make sure to share information your followers find useful. A social media site needs to be useful to your followers, not just to your organization.

• Highlight people. Highlight individuals as much as you can. It does not have to be all the time, but it’s a great way to get people to learn more about your group and the services you provide.

• Keep it fresh. Don’t forget to show the personable side of your organization; be informative and approachable.
At religious liberty celebration, White House official stresses commonalities

White House Official Melissa Rogers, who is President Barack Obama’s principal advisor on faith issues, delivers the keynote address at the 2014 Religious Liberty Dinner on Wednesday, April 30 at the Willard InterContinental hotel in Washington, D.C. [photo: Ansel Oliver]

Association honors policy director of U.S. watchdog of international religious freedom

May 06, 2014 | Washington, D.C. | Ansel Oliver

On the day the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom released its 15th annual report, its policy and research director encouraged a group of religious liberty advocates to redouble their efforts.

“Sadly our report shows us that the forces of intolerance are on the move, be they repressive governments or extremist groups,” said Knox Thames in describing the report monitoring religious liberty worldwide.

Thames, who has worked throughout his career to promote freedom of conscience and has known friends in other countries killed for speaking out against religious intolerance, described religious repression and violence as “casting a shadow” to create darkness. The answer to combat the darkness, he said, was “light,” and invoked the symbol of a flame, which is used by many faith groups.

“Heart conditions the way are globally, we need to redouble our efforts. … I know that if we all carry individual lights into dark places, the darkness is pushed back,” he said.

Thames delivered his remarks the evening of April 30 after receiving the International Award during the 12th annual Religious Liberty Dinner in Washington D.C., held this year at the Willard InterContinental hotel.

The annual dinner has become a tradition in the U.S. capital—Thames in a lighter moment called it “the best religious freedom party in town”—and underscores the case of the hundreds of millions of people who are mistreated because of their faith, now more than 60 years after the United Nation’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The annual gathering honors those who work to protect and promote religious freedom and draws members from the diplomatic community, U.S. government, religious leaders of various faiths, and religious freedom advocates. The dinner is jointly sponsored by the IRLA, the North American Religious Liberty Association (NARLA), Liberty magazine and the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Attendees also heard from Melissa Rogers, special assistant to the president and executive director of the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. In a keynote address, Rogers, who is the principal advisor on faith issues to President Barak Obama and the administration, stressed the need to focus on commonalities in working for religious freedom in the U.S.
“Americans don’t always agree on the specific applications of these principles,” Rogers said. “Indeed, it’s when we have serious areas of disagreement that we ought to double down on trying to find areas of agreement. Because when we don’t, we are apt to start treating one another as enemies rather than as opponents on particular issues, we are apt to miss opportunities where we can work together to do real good for our neighbors, and we are apt to forget that that which unites us is far greater than that which divides us.”

Rogers said an example of various groups finding common ground was in 2009 when President Barak Obama created an advisory council on faith-based and neighborhood partnerships, which she chairs, to examine how government works with religious groups to serve people in need.

The task force, Rogers said, was comprised of advocates for religious freedom and separation of church and state. She said the group has helped more clearly define roles of religious organizations as they receive governmental funding for charity work—beneficiaries receiving federal funds aren’t required to participate in the religious activities of the provider.

“May we always maintain this country as a place of incredible religious diversity and remarkable religious cooperation and peace,” Rogers said to end her speech.

The recipient of this year’s National Award was Eric W. Treene, special counsel for religious discrimination in the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Recognition was also given to Seventh-day Adventist Minister Antonio Monteiro, who was jailed for nearly two years with a blood libel, a case that illustrates numerous people worldwide suffering for religious reasons.

IRLA Secretary-General John Graz called religious freedom a gift from God, but a “fragile gift.”

“We can lose it. The best way to lose religious freedom is to do nothing to promote it and defend it. … “And that’s why we have done our best to promote religious freedom around the world since our association was incorporated in 1893.”

Keynote speakers for the Religious Liberty Dinner in previous years have included Canada’s Minister of Foreign Affairs John Baird, former U.S. Secretaries of State and Senators Hillary Clinton and John Kerry, Senator John McCain, and members of the U.S. House of Representatives from both major political parties.

For more information, see irla.org.
Making A Difference: Danville Elementary School

DANVILLE, Ohio - NBC4 is committed to making a difference in school classrooms in Central Ohio. That's why NBC4 is giving away $30,000 to schools in need with the NBC4 Make A Difference School Grant.

The grants are divided into three size divisions, and one of the finalists in the small school division, as voted on and chosen by a panel of judges, is Danville Elementary School.

Some students who are behaviorally challenged at the school are benefiting from a unique opportunity that brings them out of the classroom and onto a campground.

Thanks to volunteers and donations, students in grades 2 through 6 at Danville Elementary School are learning how to approach school in a more productive way through equine assisted learning.

Every Friday, the students visit Camp Mohaven in Knox County, where horses are their teachers.

"Winston Churchill said it really well, if I may quote him. He said, 'The outside of a horse is good for the inside of the man,'" said Elizabeth Slater, a volunteer at Camp Mohaven.

Educators said they are finding the horses are also good for the students, some of whom have autism, and others who have ADHD.

"The kids that I work with have a lot of behavior problems for a variety of reasons, and so they come out here and learn to build a relationship with horses because the horses are non judgmental," said Lisa Muncie, an intervention specialist.

"When they learn they can control a 2,000-pound horse, it's great," Slater said.

A field trip to the camp last year is what Muncie said provided a breakthrough for some of her students both emotionally and academically.
"There's a young lady here with us right now, she hadn't really smiled in three years and now that she has been out here with the program, you can't smack the smile off of her," Muncie said.

Now, a special group of kids comes to the camp every Friday.

Through their work at the camp, they are gaining self-confidence among other things that can help them in the classroom.

The reward for their hard work is a long trail right on their favorite horse.

"I feel relaxed like I can take in the world, because there's not, I don't have to focus on the distractions inside of school," said Ian Elswick, a 6th-grade student.

After analyzing math and reading test results from students who've spent time at the camp, the numbers speak for themselves.

"What we noticed was the six kids I had last year, five of those six kids made as much growth in the half year when we compared what they did all last year," Muncie said.

If the school wins the $10,000 grant, they would be able to buy more helmets, halters, lead ropes and other necessary equipment to keep the program going. They would also be able to provide more extensive training for those working with the students.

We will announce the winners in the small size division next Tuesday on NBC4 at 6 a.m.
A hospital administration vet will take over the reins at Oregon's ninth-largest hospital.

Joyce Newmyer has been appointed president of the Northwest Region of Adventist Health. The group includes Adventist Medical Center, in Southeast Portland. Newmyer will become the facility's president and CEO.

She replaces Tom Russell, who in October was named corporate vice president of population health innovations for Adventist Health’s 19 hospitals in four Western states. Russell leaves his post May 30.

Newmyer served at Washington Adventist Hospital in Maryland for the past five years. She was president for the past three years. The facility landed on such lists as U.S. News and World Report's Top Regional Hospitals.

"Joyce comes to us with robust experience in complex urban health care markets," said Bill Wing, the executive vice president and COO of Roseville, California-based Adventist Health. "Her extensive background is centered on doing what is best for patients and the health of the community."

Along with the Portland facility, the Northwest Region of Adventist Health the Tillamook Regional Medical Center, Walla Walla General Hospital and 43 medical clinics, two home care agencies and two retirement centers.

Adventist Medical Center is part of Adventist Health, a faith-based, not-for-profit integrated health care delivery system serving communities in California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington. It employs 25,000 workers, including 4,500 staff physicians.

The hospital reported gross patient revenue of $704 million in 2012, the last period for which data is available.