May 1, 2015

Weekly News From Around the Columbia Union Conference

A Call for Prayers, Healing and Service This Sabbath – Please Join Us

From the Officers of the Columbia Union Conference, Allegheny East Conference and Chesapeake Conference

Like many of you, we watched the events in Baltimore this week and have been praying for the family of Freddie Gray, the residents of the city and all those impacted by the unfortunate incidents that occurred.

We were thankful to see Seventh-day Adventist pastors among the clergy who marched through the communities calling for peace, hosted prayer vigils and hugged and prayed with youth involved.
Many members are wondering what to do for Baltimore and how to help them move forward. In talking with local pastors and leaders and assessing needs, we’ve learned that there are three things we can do now:

**Pray** – This Sabbath we’re asking churches in Baltimore and across the Columbia Union to have special prayer for the people of Baltimore, for the issues they are grappling with, and for a peaceful end to the unrest here and in other cities.

**Partner** – As people of faith, we have an opportunity and obligation to seek answers and solutions to the spiritual and social needs of our communities. This Sunday our Adventist Community Services leaders will host training on positive community engagement and also discuss the possibility of developing a mentoring and tutoring program and youth center in Baltimore.

**Serve** – This Sabbath afternoon and all next week, Adventist Community Services leaders are planning to distribute water and personal hygiene products to the families and elderly in the neighborhoods that lost their convenience stores and businesses due to the fires and looting.

**Donations Needed:**
Toothpaste, Ensure Protein Drinks, Feminine Hygiene Products, Adult Diapers, Baby Diapers, Bath Soap, Bottled Water

**Volunteers Needed:**
· Sabbath, May 2 at 1-3 p.m. – Immediately following the 11 o’clock worship service, church members and volunteers are needed to walk block by block praying with and for residents of the community. Please meet at Berea Temple, 1901 Madison Avenue in Baltimore.
· Sabbath, May 2, 3-6 p.m. – Members and volunteers are needed to donate and distribute toiletries and bottled water to residents in need. Meet at Berea Temple
· Tues., May 5 through Thurs., May 7 from 3-6 p.m.; Sunday, May 10, 2-5 p.m.; Sunday, May 17, 2-5 p.m. – More volunteers and donations needed. Meet at Berea Temple

Jesus said, “Whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant” (Mark: 10:43, NKJV).

As a church family, we have a great opportunity to experience the mission by demonstrating Jesus’ care and compassion, offering healing and hope and being part of the long-term solution. Please join us in showing our communities how much the Seventh-day Adventist Church cares by praying, partnering and serving.

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**Related News**

[Adventist Police Officer Affected by Violence in Baltimore, Urges Members to Share Second Coming Message](#)

[Baltimore Adventists Gather, Pray for Healing](#)

[Baltimore Adventist Pastors Join Forces for Peace in Baltimore](#)

[Chesapeake Conference Urges Members to Pray for Peace in Baltimore](#)

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Adventist Police Officer Affected by Violence in Baltimore, Urges Members to Share Second Coming Message

Michelle Bernard

**Adventist Police Officer Affected by Violence in Baltimore, Urges Members to Share Second Coming Message**

**Story by Beth Michaels**

Darryl Smith, a Baltimore police officer and a member of Allegheny East Conference’s Capitol Hill church in Washington, D.C., has been on duty during the recent rioting and violence in Baltimore. Although he was hit by several bricks thrown by the crowd during Saturday evening’s ruckus, he says he is doing fine and continues to serve.

What has it been like to participate in the unprecedented violence in the “Charm City”? “I was just telling a couple of my friends that when the crowd started cursing and yelling and chanting, I felt like I could imagine what it must have been like for Jesus when Pilate asked the crowd what to do with Jesus and they yelled, ‘Crucify Him!’” he says. “I could feel a demonic spirit go through the crowd and then they became more violent.”

He adds, “I think this type of activity is only going to get worse as we approach the end time and the Lord comes to take us home. But Jesus is not coming only for black people, or only for white people, or Asian people. He comes for those who have on the right ‘uniform’—those who are covered by the blood of Jesus.”

As we move past the incidents in Baltimore, Smith personally suggests that Adventists continue to “warn people about what’s coming. We know the Bible says in the days of Noah that you’re either on His side or not. We need to be more vocal about letting people know, in love, that they have a choice to make.”

**Read our other articles on this topic:**

- Baltimore Adventists Gather, Pray for Healing
- Baltimore Adventist Pastors Join Forces for Peace in Baltimore
- Chesapeake Conference Urges Members to Pray for Peace in Baltimore
- North American Division Issues a Call for Peace in West Baltimore
- Photos: Baltimore Adventists Gather, Pray for Healing
- Update on Baltimore from Columbia Union Conference Administration
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Baltimore Adventists Gather, Pray for Healing

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Baltimore Adventists Gather, Pray for Healing
Story by V. Michelle Bernard

Shaken and saddened by the death of Freddie Gray and violent riots in their city, Seventh-day Adventists from across Baltimore gathered at Allegheny East Conference’s Berea Temple Wednesday night to pray for healing in their city.

“I dare you to let this be the beginning of pestering God … till He heals our land,” said David Franklin, senior pastor of Miracle Temple. “We are lifting our voices to God so he can lead the City of Baltimore.”

Pastors from eight Baltimore churches attended and led the service, where they petitioned God to be with the hurting members of the community, Mayor Stephanie-Rawlings-Blake, police and the church.

Click here to see a slideshow of the event.

Jose Cortes, Jr., associate ministerial director for evangelism at the North American Division, also encouraged the members to go into the community and be the “hands and feet of Jesus” and the “heart and hands of the community.”

Vincent Dehm, lead pastor of Re-Creation church, encouraged the group to work together and forgive injustices. “As long as we are divided, the enemy wins,” he said. “I believe we can rise above this to get better.”

Lifelong Berea Temple member Eleanor Waters-Gibbons says she attended because she sees a need in the community and wants the church to help, even if they are afraid.

“People are coming to church, afraid to walk around the corner,” she says. “Because if we go to the corner right now we see drug dealers. And, those same people are God’s children and we can minister to them greatly … I’m praying to God that we can come [together] as a church to go out and do what Jesus wants us to do.”

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- Baltimore Adventist Pastors Join Forces for Peace in Baltimore
Lifelong Berea Temple member Eleanor Waters-Gibbons and her granddaughter Niarahkane Kane wait for the service to start.

The congregation forms a circle of prayer around Berea Temple in Baltimore. Photo courtesy Richard Thomas, Sharon Adventist church

- Chesapeake Conference Urges Members to Pray for Peace in Baltimore
- North American Division Issues a Call for Peace in West Baltimore
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Baltimore Adventist Pastors Join Forces for Peace in Baltimore

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Baltimore Adventist Pastors Join Forces for Peace in Baltimore

Story by V. Michelle Bernard

Amidst looting and violence in Baltimore following the death of Freddie Gray, several Seventh-day Adventist pastors from area congregations joined the group of clergy who gathered to walk through the city in an effort to encourage the youth to cease rioting and go home.

Reginald Exum, pastor of the Edmondson Heights church; David Franklin, pastor of Miracle Temple; and DuWayne Privette, pastor of Sharon church, marched with the group.

“Tonight God used the clergy to prevent loss of life,” says Pastor Exum. “I held gang members in my arms and we wept together. I also wanted them to know I understand their anger. I have been wrongfully slammed to the ground in Baltimore by police. Now they know they have a God and a pastor who empathizes with them.”

Exum adds his church is already engaging the community in the healing process that was needed before tonight [Monday]. “Our mission is “Being Encouraged by Christ, Educating our Church, and Embracing our Community.” EVERY ministry is geared to “embrace the community.” The church has active Adventurer, Pathfinder, men’s, women’s and 50+ ministries to help the “community rise above the decay of this world,” he says.

Pastor Franklin says he is urging his congregation to pray. “We do not want see anyone else being killed or harmed by the violence that has erupted. Going forward the systematic problems that perpetuated the violence must be addressed and we plan to work with local leaders to address those issues. Dr. King was right when he said that “riot is the language of the unheard.” We to want give a platform for those voices to be heard,” he says.

The Sharon church also hosted a special prayer line at 7:30 p.m. to pray for peace in the city.

Stay tuned for further updates.

*Story updated April 28. 9:50 a.m.

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Chesapeake Conference Urges Members to Pray for Peace in Baltimore

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Rick Remmers, Chesapeake Conference president, is urging members to pray for peace in Baltimore City. Remmers released a statement Tuesday afternoon encouraging members to pray during the “Prophecies of Hope” meetings, in church on Sabbath or during the Wednesday morning prayer call.

“Our hearts go out to the family and friends of Freddie Gray as they grieve the loss of a loved one and seek answers and understanding,” said Remmers. “We offer sincere condolences and continue to pray for his family.”

Read the complete statement here.

To join their Wednesday morning prayer call from 6:30-7, dial (605) 475-4000 using participant code 72152#.
The Administration of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America, issued the following statement on April 28, 2015, in response to the growing number of demonstrations following the funeral of Freddie Gray who died tragically in Baltimore, MD:

The Seventh-day Adventist church in North America is deeply saddened by the tragic death of Freddy Gray and the heartache it has caused his family and the Baltimore community. We extend our deepest condolences and continue to pray for his family.

In order to bring about change, we must engage in open, honest, civil, and productive conversation about the rights and equality of every member of our community. We pray that peace will prevail, for violence will only begat violence. To bring a lasting peace we, as a Church Community, must also descend on Baltimore with the love and compassion that Jesus modeled for us, not just now, during this time of turmoil, but in the years to come.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church stands ready to provide any and all resources necessary to help transform an oppressed, hopeless people into a vibrant, thriving community filled with hope.

We pray for the many citizens and clergy from various denominations including Adventist members that are participating in non-violent marches, encouraging peace. Pastor David Franklin, Miracle Temple Adventist Church; Pastor Reginald Exum, Edmonton Heights Adventist Church; and Pastor DuWayne Privette, Sharon Seventh-day Adventist Church have embodied love and compassion, taking to the streets to call for a non-violent solution.

The North American Division Adventist Community Services, the Columbia Union of Seventh-day Adventists, and the Allegheny East, and Chesapeake Conferences of Seventh-day Adventists, will lead a group of volunteers that will join the West Baltimore community in cleanup efforts, tentatively scheduled for tomorrow morning. Pray for these volunteers.

We admonish that those on either side of this conversation will strive to speak with peace, love, and grace.

We once again pray for the day when all of God’s children will treat each other without suspicion, bias, and hatred. As the Apostle Paul reminds us: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”
Shaken and saddened by the death of Freddie Gray and violent riots in their city, Seventh-day Adventists from across Baltimore gathered at Allegheny East Conference’s Berea Temple Wednesday night to pray for healing in their city. (Click here read the full story.)

Photos by V. Michelle Bernard

Greeters welcome visitors to Berea Temple in Baltimore

Photo by Richard Thomas

Lifelong Berea Temple member Eleanor Waters-Gibbons and her granddaughter Niarahkane Kane wait for the service to start.

Photo by Richard Thomas

David Franklin, lead pastor of Miracle Temple prays

North American Division Representatives Dorothy Keith and Julio Munoz lead the congregation in a responsive prayer

Photo by Richard Thomas

Vincent Dehm, lead pastor of Re-Creation church in Baltimore brought humor to the night, saying thankfully he wasn’t an Orioles fan.

Prayer was the main focus of the evening.

Photo by Richard Thomas

Jose Cortes Jr and Julio Munoz speak. Photo by Richard Thomas

Jose Cortes Jr speaks at Berea Temple. Photo by Richard Thomas

Jose Cortes, Jr., associate ministerial director for evangelism at the North American Division, also encouraged the members to go into the community and be the “hands and feet of Jesus.”

Congregants worship.

Photo by Richard Thomas

T. DuWayne Privette, pastor of the Sharon church in Baltimore prays at the Berea Temple

Worship leaders lift their voices in praise

Maurice Taylor, lead pastor of Berea Temple prays. Photo by Richard Thomas

Pastor Maurice Taylor, senior pastor of Berea Temple prays at the pulpit. Pastors and the congregation join
hands in a circle across the church.

The congregation forms a circle of prayer around Berea Temple in Baltimore. Photo courtesy Richard Thomas, Sharon Adventist church

Jose Cortes, Jr. and Pastor Edward Mason, a local Baptist pastor, join pastors from Allegheny East Conference’s Baltimore Extended Area Miniesterium
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