eCOMMUNIQUE

GEORGIA-CUMBERLAND CONFERENCE
DIGITAL NEWSLETTER

calendar of events
Dec 6-7—**Bethlehem Live!**—GCA Church
Dec 7—**Festival of Praise**—Springfield Baptist Church, Conyers, GA
Dec 7—**Country Gospel Concert with Kenny & Donna Morse**—Jellico Church, TN
Dec 7—**Christmas Handbell Program**—Rossville Church, GA

Dec 8—**An Evening of Elegance: United in Love**—Snellville, GA
Dec 8—**GCA National Honor Society**—Georgia-Cumberland Academy
Dec 14—**GCA Festival of Carols**—Georgia-Cumberland Academy
Dec 14—**GCA Drama Vespers**—Georgia-Cumberland Academy
Dec 14-15—**Come, Walk Thru Bethlehem**—Oglethorpe City Park, GA

Dec 21—**Annual Christmas Concert**—Alpharetta Church, GA

Jan 4—**NAD Day of Prayer**
Jan 4—**Pioneer Outreach Rally**—Savannah Church, Pooler, GA
Jan 4—**Adventurer Directors’ Council**—Cohutta Springs (camp side)
Jan 5—**Pathfinder Directors’ Council**—Cohutta Springs (camp side)
Jan 8-18—**10 Days of Prayer**

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**Festival of Praise—Dec. 7**

This year’s Festival of Praise will be held Dec. 7 at 5:00 pm at the Springfield Baptist Church (1877 Iris Dr. SE, Conyers, GA). A joint effort of the South Atlantic and Georgia-Cumberland conferences, the day will feature music, praise, worship, and honoring ministry heroes. Guest speaker will be Dan Jackson, NAD president, and a highlight will be the Festival of Praise mass choir with director Jarrett Roseborough. If you’re interested in joining the choir, click here to fill out the interest form. Don’t miss this event!

**2015 GC Session Music Audition—Dec. 31**

The North American Division Music Committee for the 2015 General Conference Session (July 2-11 in San Antonio, TX.) is now accepting applications from musicians/groups desiring to perform at the 2015 General Conference Session. Applications can be downloaded at the 2015 General Conference website at gcsession.org. Click the “Music Application Packet” tab and follow all directions. Applications will be processed through Dec. 31, 2013.

**Children’s Ministries Convention—Feb. 7-9**
This year's theme is "Our Eyes are on You" and will feature guest speaker J.N. Mike Faison, a creative children's ministries presenter from Savannah, Ga. The convention will be held Feb. 7-9 at Cohutta Springs Conference Center. Register online at registration.gccsda.com; deadline is Jan. 26.

**Social Media: The Good, The Bad, The Ugly—Feb. 9**
This communication workshop will be presented by Ernest Staats, IT directory for Georgia-Cumberland Academy. The workshop is free and will be held on Feb. 9, from 10:00am to 12:00pm, at the conference office. Register online at registration.gccsda.com

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**-CHURCH & ORGANIZATION EVENTS-**

**Engagement and Marriage Preparation Weekend—March 14-16**
Couples who are planning on getting married this summer or who are seriously considering marriage are invited to attend a special weekend at Southern Adventist University. Couples will learn the secrets to successful marriage, the importance of a spiritual foundation, how to communicate effectively and resolve conflict, and how to deal with unresolved issues from the past. In addition, there will be practical and fun exercises using a well-established curriculum that has benefited hundreds of couples. The presenters will be Barry and Lilly Tryon and Alan and Nicole Parker. The event will take place from March 14-16, 2014 on Southern’s campus. For details, contact the School of Religion at 423-236-2976 or the chaplain’s office at 423-236-2787.

**Announcements**

**Attention Pastors: Prepare-Enrich Marriage Counseling Training/Certification**
If you are interested in doing premarital or marital counseling, then you will want to attend a special certified training program on the campus of Southern Adventist University on Sunday, Jan. 19, 2014, at 9:00am. The program uses Prepare-Enrich, which is one of the most extensively used premarital programs in the United States. Just one day of training will enable you to become certified in this valuable program. If you take this course through the Prepare-Enrich website, the cost is $225; however, we are able to offer a live seminar at a price of $175 with an extra $25 discount for pastors and ministry leaders. The $150 cost includes a full resource kit, certification, and other counseling tools. For more information on Prepare-Enrich, visit their website at prepare-enrich.com. For information about the training, please contact Dr. Alan Parker at parker@southern.edu or to register for the Prepare-Enrich training workshop directly, please click here.

**News**

**Pathfinders Help Samaritan Center and Serve Community**
If you suddenly found yourself without a place to live, what items would you need for day-to-day living? As part of its social service...
outreach, the Samaritan Center (Ooltewah, Tenn.) gives out personal care kits.

Read the story

An Exciting Day for the North Knoxville Church
Sabbath, Feb. 2, 2013, was a joy filled day for members and friends of the North Knoxville Church.

Read the story

Facebook Connects 1,000-Plus Adventist Homeschoolers from Around the World
In 2008, Leigh Pritchett was a young mother from Leslie, Ga., who was interested in raising her children for God. A member of the Albany (Ga.) Community Church, she had a heart for homeschooling and started looking for resources that would help her in that mission. New to Facebook and finding no Facebook group for Adventist homeschoolers, she decided to start one herself.

Read the story

Saved From Suicide
The following is the firsthand account of a woman, who has asked to remain anonymous, about God rescuing her from taking her own life. He did it through the help of a flyer advertising an upcoming meeting, The Daniel Challenge, that the Ellijay Church (Ellijay, Ga.) was hosting.

Read the story

Students Study Nature with Butterfly Garden
Third and fourth graders at Savannah Adventist Christian School (Savannah, Ga.) excitedly changed into work clothes and garden gloves on Sept. 20, eager to work outside in their butterfly garden.

Read the story
To unsubscribe from this group and stop receiving emails from it, send an email to gccnews+unsubscribe@gccsda.com.

Spam
Not spam
Forget previous vote
Festival of Praise Info and Form

Music

We are thrilled to have Jarrett Roseborough directing the following two songs at the Festival of Praise this year: "I'm Gonna Sing Until the Spirit Moves In My Heart" by Moses Hogan and an original piece "Holy, Righteous and Worthy" by Jarrett Roseborough. To request a copy of the choir materials (sheet music, demo and rehearsal tracks) please complete the form.

As a preview of the style of music that has been selected, you may find a demo for "I'm Gonna Sing Until the Spirit Moves In My Heart" at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_XMN9xJAAh.

Rehearsal Schedule

The rehearsal schedule is as follows:

EAST ATLANTA: Sabbath, October 26th at 5:00 pm at Mountainside SDA Church, 3936 Rainbow Drive, Decatur, GA 30034–2213
NORTH ATLANTA: Friday, November 22nd at 7:00 pm at Atlanta North SDA Church, 5123 Chamblee Dunwoody Rd, Dunwoody, GA 30338
WEST ATLANTA: Friday, December 6th at 7:00 pm at Atlanta Berean SDA Church, 291 Hamilton E. Holmes Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30318. The exact building/room at the church campus will announced closer to the rehearsal date.
WARM UP REHEARSAL: Sabbath, December 7th at 3:30 pm at Springfield Baptist Church, 1877 Iris Drive SE, Conyers, GA 30013. The exact building/room at the church campus will announced closer to the rehearsal date.

Attire

Since it will be an international, multicultural program, on the day of the event we are asking that you wear modest attire that showcases your nationality or culture. For example, an American could wear a combination of red, white and blue.

Event Details

The 2nd Biennial Atlanta Festival of Praise
Sabbath, December 7, 2013
Warm Up Rehearsal and Sound Check: 3:30 pm

Springfield Baptist Church
1877 Iris Drive SE
Conyers, GA 30013
http://gccsda.com/events/33527

Festival of Praise Interest Form

• Name
Pathfinders Help Samaritan Center and Serve Community

Collegedale Church Pathfinders Hannah Moody, Olivia Perry, Marisa Negron, and Lauren Luedtke help put together personal care kits during the Georgia-Cumberland Conference Pathfinder Camporee.

If you suddenly found yourself without a place to live, what items would you need for day-to-day living? As part of its social service outreach, the Samaritan Center (Ooltewah, Tenn.) gives out personal care kits. For the past five years, Pathfinders have put together these kits at the annual Georgia-Cumberland Conference Pathfinder Camporee. This year they assembled 900 kits!

The kits contain a pair of new socks, washcloth, comb, toothbrush and toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, lotion, and razor and shaving cream. These items help provide cleanliness and dignity to those in need and are given out to transients and domestic violence victims. Local organizations and church groups use them for inner city outreach, and they are given to other area social service agencies such as the Chattanooga Community Kitchen and the local Red Cross. In times of natural disaster, kits are provided to families in affected areas.

The Samaritan Center is the only social services agency in Ooltewah and provided essential emergency aid services to approximately 3,500 people in 2012. Last year, the Center gave out more than $90,000 in food to those in need, and volunteers donated 18,610 hours in service to the community. Its vision is to provide help for today and hope for tomorrow.

Next time you meet a Pathfinder, thank them for their service to your community!

Written by Marcella Morales, marketing director at the Samaritan Center
An Exciting Day for the North Knoxville Church

(From left) Illabelle Lee, church treasurer; Charles Young, Conference undertreasurer; Jeff Snyder, head elder; and Bruce Trigg, pastor burn the 10-year mortgage the church recently paid off.

(Left to right) Former pastors B.J. Boles, Paul Eirich, Ted Dubs, Russ Jensen, and current pastor, Bruce Trigg.

Sabbath, Feb. 2, 2013, was a joy filled day for members and friends of the North Knoxville Church. The day included celebration of the church’s 20th anniversary, the paying off of a 10-year mortgage, and a special mission offering to raise funds to build a one-day church.

For months prior to the event, with guidance from the homecoming committee and church board, the church family had worked tirelessly to prepare the church building and grounds, making everything ready for this special Sabbath.

Former pastors and their families came to be part of the day’s activities. Russ Jensen taught an in-depth, thought-provoking Sabbath school lesson. Ted and Jo Dubs shared their gifts with Jo leading music and also singing a solo in the afternoon. Ted provided an inspirational message for the worship service. Paul and Louise Eirich shared about their recent mission trip.
Everyone enjoyed a bountiful fellowship meal before the afternoon program, which included special participation from B.J. Boles, then Augusta First Church pastor; Rick Greve, northern region ministerial director; Charles Young, Georgia-Cumberland Conference undertreasurer; and the local pastor, church treasurer, and head elder. A highlight of the program was burning the mortgage, which had been paid off just a few days before.

As a result of this special Sabbath, the church was rejuvenated and has become even more focused on carrying out the mission to take the gospel to its community and the world.

Written by Bruce Trigg, pastor of the North Knoxville Church
Micah Jasionowski, son of Sheila Elwin of Atlanta North Church, was surrounded by cow nose stingrays at St. Pete Beach in September. He'd read about them online earlier in the day, so knew not to be alarmed.

In 2008, Leigh Pritchett was a young mother from Leslie, Ga., who was interested in raising her children for God. A member of the Albany (Ga.) Community Church, she had a heart for homeschooling and started looking for resources that would help her in that mission. New to Facebook and finding no Facebook group for Adventist homeschoolers, she decided to start one herself. It was a group that began small, but has grown rapidly throughout the years. There are now more than 1,000 Seventh-day Adventist families—approximately 10 from the Georgia-Cumberland Conference—networked in the Facebook group she began and hosts.

“I wanted a group where Adventist home educators could discuss curriculum, share in the daily challenges and joys of homeschooling, and network with like-minded people,” Pritchett said.

The SDA Homeschool Families group page has connected families from within the Georgia-Cumberland Conference and Southern Union,
but also from many countries around the world. Mothers and fathers from the United States, Australia, France, Canada, Mexico, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, and many other countries all network together via the Internet in the common task of homeschooling Adventist children.

Group members demonstrate why homeschooling in the Adventist population continues to grow and thrive. Michelle Matlock, a parent from Owosso, Mich., believes that through homeschooling she can bless her children with values, morals, and wisdom as they mature in their relationship with Christ. Additionally, Barbara Frohne, a mother from Walla Walla, Wash., hopes to give her children more than just the basics. Her goal is to help them pursue interests in other areas and to take advantage of opportunities for the individualized instruction that homeschooling allows. Many in the group express the belief that, while not for every family, for them, home education is the best way to teach their children about God and help them in the formation of godly characters.

Adventist homeschoolers find themselves in a niche group, sometimes feeling separate from other Christian homeschool support groups and from the parents of children who attend parochial schools. The online forum gives Adventist homeschool parents a place to share ideas and concerns unique to them as home educators. Christine Kabush of Marsing, ID, notes that this group has been the first where she has been able to discuss and find support for homeschooling from non-familial Seventh-day Adventist sources. She said that it has been refreshing to find that her homeschool family is far less alone than they'd thought. Group member Evelyn Yaeggy from Brooklyn Center, Minn., said the social network has helped her build confidence in herself as her children's teacher; it has allowed her to take a glance into the homes of others, and it gives her a sense of normalcy when she looks back into her own home. Wendy Smith from Walla Walla, Wash., said although group conversation runs the gamut from requests for help to the sharing of enthusiastic projects and ideas, the overall tone is positive.

“Homeschooling can be a lonely world for parents because you haven’t chosen the most traveled and accepted path for your child,” said Sheila Elwin from Pine Lake, Ga., and a member of the Atlanta North Church. “Finding the Adventist homeschool group on Facebook has helped me feel like part of a large Adventist family—one so diverse it embraces everything from classical education to school-in-a-box to unschooling. And, for the first time in our homeschooling adventure, I feel genuinely a part of Adventist education.”

The members of the group know they are educating their children for now and for eternity. That common purpose is a uniting factor, and it makes a difference when parents are all facing the same direction—even when their feet are planted in different soil.

Written by L. Lehmann

L. Lehmann is a former homeschooling mom and is a member of the group SDA Homeschool Families.

Look for the group at www.facebook.com/groups/sdahomeschoolfamilies/
The following is the firsthand account of a woman, who has asked to remain anonymous, about God rescuing her from taking her own life. He did it through the help of a flyer advertising an upcoming meeting, The Daniel Challenge, that the Ellijay Church (Ellijay, Ga.) was hosting.

Her Story

Up until seven years ago, I lived a normal life. I had been married for 32 years to a wonderful man. We both worked hard. Life was not always on the mountaintop, and we had our share of being in the valley, but with God’s help and guidance, we overcame. We had two beautiful children and several incredible grandchildren.

Then I was told I needed to undergo emergency surgery. After that, my life was never the same. The doctor tried several different kinds of hormone therapy, but my life never really returned back to normal.

My daughter-in-law decided she didn’t want to be a wife or a mother anymore, so my son moved back home with his 8-month-old. I raised my grandson for five years, which brought much joy into my life! Having him close helped me deal with my health problems.

Some time later, my son remarried his ex-wife, at which point she refused to let me see my grandson anymore. She said he and I were too close. I found that to be the hardest valley I had ever encountered.

I am so ashamed of the many wrong choices I made after that. I divorced my husband, and the consequences for my numerous poor decisions started catching up with me. It seemed like no matter how hard I tried, I just could not forgive myself and get my life back on track. Knowing how much I had disappointed my children, grandchildren, and, most importantly, my Heavenly Father was more than I could handle. I decided to end my life.

I made plans to go to Pigeon Forge, Tenn., and end it there. On my way out the driveway, I was impressed to get the mail. When I opened the mailbox, the only thing it contained was a brochure about a seminar. More junk mail, I thought, and threw it on the passenger’s seat.

When I arrived in Pigeon Forge, I got everything unloaded from my car and into the motel room. I threw everything on the bed and began to cry and pray, knowing this would not be easy. As I sat down on the bed, my eyes focused on the piece of junk mail I had gotten out of my mailbox earlier. The brochure looked as huge as the bed. I knew God wanted me to read it, so I picked it up and began reading.
As I read, I realized I had never heard anything like this before, and I became really interested! A church wanted to help me with my health! I went outside with the flyer in my hand and began walking up and down the river behind the motel. I prayed and asked God for His guidance.

Peace began to overtake me. I had not experienced that kind of peace in years. I knew I could not do what I had gone there to do—I had to get home and sign up for this “Daniel Challenge” program!

I am so thankful for everyone who had a hand in putting together that seminar. My life will never be the same—I am forever changed! I am most thankful to God for giving me the desire to stop at the mailbox that day to grab the “junk mail” it contained!

The Rest of the Story

One evening during The Daniel Challenge, an elder noticed a young man with fishing gear walking toward the small lake that is nestled in the valley on the church property. Understandably, the lake is not open for public use, so the elder went to let the youth know he shouldn’t be there. As the elder approached him, he found out he was actually the son of one of the people attending the meetings. The elder told him he was welcome to fish but would appreciate him releasing anything he caught.

The young man had good success with his angling, so the next night, he brought a friend. When the elder saw this, his first response was to explain that he had given permission for the one but not both. Instead, he simply went over and asked how things were going. They were both doing well and had caught a couple of large fish.

Following that night’s meeting, the participants went down to walk around the lake for a few minutes, as they did each evening. As the lady who shared her story about “a foiled trip to Pigeon Forge” was walking by the two youth fishing, she recognized the one young man’s friend. He was none other than her grandson, whom she had raised in her own home. He was the best friend of the son of one of the other attendees. She had not seen him for several years, but because of the great God we serve, she was able to visit with him three times throughout the rest of the week.

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope” (Jer. 29:11, NKJV).

Written by Jeffrey Skaggs
Photo by Kmiragaya/Dreamstime.com
Third and fourth graders at Savannah Adventist Christian School (Savannah, Ga.) excitedly changed into work clothes and garden gloves on Sept. 20, eager to work outside in their butterfly garden. Each student was able to dig a hole and plant one specially selected nectar or host plant in the garden planted by last year’s class outside their classroom windows. With help from an adult, students added the right amount of soil amendment and water.

The garden has host plants for Gulf Fritillary, Monarch, and Swallowtail butterflies. Students have also placed in the area a small dish of water, stones, and fruit to attract Emperors, Buckeyes, and more.

The garden has provided easy opportunity for third-graders and fourth-graders to view several species of butterfly and numerous Ruby-throated hummingbirds and even to observe a Gulf Fritillary laying eggs on the passion vine that last year’s class planted. The eggs hatched into tiny orange and black caterpillars, and Esther Martinez, principal and teacher, brought several inside for students to observe. Martinez hopes this year’s students will be able to experience the miraculous process of metamorphosis.

The benefits of the garden project have extended beyond just one classroom. Students from all three of the school’s early childhood wings have visited the caterpillars in the classroom and have walked through the garden, enjoying God’s book of nature.

Written by Esther Martinez, principal and teacher
Photos contributed