

December 2008

Please forward this newsletter and/or print out copies for your local church bulletin board and for distribution.

We are sad to report the death of Spencerville church treasurer, Scott Handel, 44, who suffered a terminal malignant brain tumor. He was a great supporter of Adventist Christian education, co-founding a non-profit organization to provide worthy students with scholarships to give them the same educational opportunities to which he attributed much of his personal and professional success. Please keep his wife Kimberly, and daughters Allison and Juliana in your prayers. The family will receive visitors at the Hines-Rinaldi Funeral Home, 11800 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland on Saturday, December 6, 4:00-8:00 p.m. A memorial service is planned for the following Sunday, December 14, at 2:00 p.m. at the Spencerville Church, 16325 New Hampshire Avenue, also in Silver Spring.

Spencerville Adventist Academy (SAA) will host a "Messiah" sing-a-long on Sabbath, December 6, at 4:00 p.m. in the Spencerville Church Sanctuary. Guest soloists and an orchestra will enhance the experience for participants. The event is free and opened to the community. Copies of Handel's "Messiah" are available for pre-purchase through the school for a minimum donation of \$10. Please contact Robert Martinez or Jane Lanning at SAA at 301-421-9101 ext. 125 for a reserved personal copy.

The Chesapeake Adventist Single Adult Ministries annual Christmas party is planned for December 13, 2008, 6:30 p.m. at the Hunan Manor Restaurant in Columbia, Maryland. Contact Fred Thomas at fmthomas1950@yahoo.com or (410) 992-9731 for details or to RSVP.

During this holiday season, the Hallmark Channel, Hope Channel, Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), NBC, and other local television affiliates will be airing several of the Christmas programs produced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America in the past years. The shows airing are *The Greatest Gift* (2001), *God Comes Near* (2002), *Christmas in My Heart* (2003), *The Wondrous Gift* (2004), *All is Bright* (2005), *Love's Pure Light* (2006), and *Christmas at Cadillac Jack's* (2007). Check your local listings to find out when any of these shows are scheduled to air in your area or visit www.nad.adventist.org.

Sabbath, January 3 has been designated a Day of Prayer by the North American Division. It provides a call to spiritual consecration and prayer as we enter the New Year. There will be a 60-minute broadcast carried on Hope Church Channel featuring Derek Morris, Ron Clouzet, Ruthie Jacobsen, Dwight Nelson, and Don Schneider. The broadcast will be shown live at 2:00 p.m. EST, and re-broadcast at 6:00 p.m. EST.

The first of two Family Ski Days being organized by the conference Youth Ministries department is planned for January 4, 2009 at Big Boulder Ski Resort in Lake Harmony, Pennsylvania. A skiing or snowboarding package (for ages 9 and up) is offered for \$30. The fee includes equipment rental, a lesson and a lift ticket. All-day tubing costs \$35 and 3-hour tubing is \$20. There are special instructions for registering for this trip that include downloading and completing forms, as well as emailing your registration. Talk to your church youth leader or contact Carl Rodriguez at crodriguez@ccosda.org or 410-241-4919 by Tuesday, December 30 for details.

Register to attend Health Summit 2009—Festival of Health: Prayer, Faith and Wholeness by logging on to www.nadhealthsummit.com. This popular event, sponsored by the North American Division, will be held in Orlando, Florida, January 30-February 7, 2009. The "train the trainer" health seminars, taught by experts, are geared for health ministry directors and volunteers, pastors, health care professionals, community service/outreach volunteers, youth leaders, and women's and personal ministry leaders.

Join fellow Adventists in a national campaign of walking 10,000 steps per day for improved health and fitness. *InStep for Life* is a simple, effective program for Adventist churches and schools to help people develop an active lifestyle. The campaign runs January 1, 2009 to June 2010. There are no membership fees, and no meetings. Simply register, get your pedometer, and walk! You can learn more or register your church by contacting Chesapeake coordinator Katia Reinert at (301) 891-6102 or kgreiner@ahm.com.

Are you a talented musician who would like to perform at the 2010 General Conference Session in Atlanta, Georgia? To apply, visit www.gcsession.org/music. Applications must be received by January 31, 2009.

If you are involved in health ministries, plan now to attend a *Health Ministry Team Building Training* course sponsored by Adventist HealthCare. The class will be held February 21-22, 2009 at Washington Adventist Hospital in Takoma Park, Maryland. There is no cost for the training, however, you must register by January 30 by contacting Katia Reinert at (301) 891-6102 or kgreiner@ahm.com.

The Evangelism Committee met on December 1 to review funding requests from more than two-thirds of our churches for the coming year. In addition to funds already committed to special and ongoing projects, the committee voted to disburse a supplementary \$250,000, bringing the grand total to nearly \$500,000. Look for an in-depth report on how Chesapeake is responding to the North American Division 2009 *The Year of Evangelism* emphasis in the January *Currents*.

The Year End Meeting of the North American Division (NAD) Committee held at the General Conference headquarters in early November was “an inspirational call to action for the division’s 58 conferences” report’s Chesapeake president Rob Vandeman. In addition to the repeated challenges to do evangelism on an unprecedented scale, the gathering of conference and institutional leaders made some very difficult decisions. The most far-reaching decision related to the annual cost of living adjustment. Typically, the adjustment is based on the June U.S. Consumer Price Index and becomes effective in July of the following year. While in June 2008 the index was 5%, the division leadership recommended cutting back to a 2.5% adjustment. When this was presented at the year-end meeting it was overwhelmingly defeated. An alternative proposal for a 1.25% adjustment was floated and it failed by a margin of 110 to 66. In the end, the vote was to give no cost-of-living increase in 2009. Conference presidents cited the current economic situation, tithe expectations in many of the conferences, the impact of an increase on church school budgets, and the notion of showing solidarity with the many people in our churches who have lost jobs, homes, etc. The leaders struggled with the decision due to their concern for the front-line employees, i.e., pastors and teachers, as well as the large body of retirees who will be impacted by the freeze.

Conference Finances at a glance show a slight bump in our tithe gain. Through October our tithe is up 1.2% as compared to the same point in 2007. While we traditionally end the year on a strong note, we are watching expenditures carefully in case the gain does not increase significantly. The salary freeze will make it easier to present a balanced budget, but other factors beyond our control will certainly present their own challenges. A word of thanks to the faithful saints throughout Chesapeake who, in spite of the difficult economic times, continue to support God’s work with their tithe and offerings.

Chesapeake members are prayerful people. Here’s an update of prayer initiatives that are happening throughout our conference:

~ Several of **Atholton** (Columbia, Maryland) church’s key prayer ministry leaders attended the November conference-wide Prayer Emphasis Weekend and returned to their church with renewed enthusiasm to grow the prayer ministry program. They have since met regularly to develop plans for future activities.

~ In addition to having weekly prayer meetings, members of the **Dundalk** church gather for an hour one Friday evening each month to bring specific prayer requests to the Lord.

~ The **Hagerstown** church is busy getting ready for the annual Day of Prayer and Fasting on January 3. They carry a prayer theme through Sabbath School and church and then have praying, training, sharing time in the afternoon that concludes with a communion service.

~ When the **New Castle, Delaware Spanish** church held a recent series of evangelistic meetings, groups met at 4:30 each morning to walk and pray for the speaker and attendees. So many people attended on opening night, the meetings had to be moved to a larger church. Twelve people gave their hearts to the Lord and were baptized.

~ The **New Hope** church in Fulton participated in a 24/7 prayer experience in November. They set aside four prayer rooms, each with a different theme, and invited people to come and pray anytime, day or night, for seven days. More than 250 people took part in this moving experience that culminated with a personal communion service. The New Hope staff closes the church office for 15 minutes at noon each workday to read scripture and pray together.

~The **Pikesville** church held a Week of Prayer in late November, featuring Pastor Sedley Johnson as the speaker. About 100 people attended the meetings each evening.

~ The **Spencerville** church in Silver Spring has an active team that meets each Sabbath morning to pray for people on a prayer list, for the pastors, the church, and our country. The group stays in touch through email during the week to pray for specific requests. A member recently organized a 24-hour vigil for Scott Handel to lift prayers to God on his behalf. NAD prayer ministries coordinator Ruthie Jacobson spoke at a meeting held in October. The congregation surrounded the pastors and prayer ministry leader and offered a special prayer of blessing. The pastoral staff meets Mondays to begin the week with prayer for members, the church, the school and for specific requests.

~ The **conference Prayer Ministries team** sponsored a Prayer Emphasis Weekend in November. Elder Jerry Page and his wife Janet, of the Central California Conference led this spiritually uplifting gathering of more than 100 people representing 24 Chesapeake churches.

~ The **conference office staff** assemble for a formal worship each Monday morning and pray specifically for one church each week, as well as for our members, pastors, teachers, and schools. The staff also meets informally on Thursday mornings for a short devotional and to pray for specific joys and concerns.

~ A list of **Prayer Priorities for Chesapeake** has been developed by conference administration. These will be shared with each congregation early in the New Year so we can focus together on the needs in our churches, schools, families, and communities. The conference executive committee will begin their quarterly meetings with a season of prayer using these priorities as a guide.

December Sunset Calendar and Offering Schedule:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Sunset</u>	<u>Offering</u>
Dec 6	4:43	Local Church Budget
Dec 13	4:43	Inner City Ministries/World Budget
Dec 20	4:45	Local Church Budget
Dec 27	4:49	Chesapeake Advance

Note: Sunset times published above are for Baltimore, Maryland. For Delaware and the Eastern Shore, subtract two minutes. For West Virginia and Western Maryland, add three minutes.