

Why
NOT
Christmas?



JUST THE FACTS

WHO:

The virgin will conceive a child!
She will give birth to a son
and will call him Immanuel
(which means "God is with us").
Isaiah 7:14

WHAT:

The child within her was
conceived by the Holy Spirit.
And she will have a son, and
you are to name him Jesus,
for he will save his people from their sins.
Matthew 1:20-21

WHERE:

And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah,
are not least among the ruling cities of Judah,
for a ruler will come from you
who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.
Matthew 2:6

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Clarification...

The term "Palestinian Covenant" in the article on "Eight Important Covenants of Scripture" in the November *Sabbath Recorder* is unfortunate. This should be corrected to read the "Land Covenant" or the "Moabite Covenant."

The scripture Deuteronomy 30:1-10 is part of a larger context of Deuteronomy 29:1-30:20.

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WHO ARE SEVENTH DAY BAPTISTS?

If you've never read *The Sabbath Recorder* before, you might be wondering who Seventh Day Baptists are.

Like other Baptists, we believe in:

- salvation by grace through faith in Christ Jesus.
- the Bible as the inspired word of God. The Bible is our authority for our faith and daily conduct.
- baptism of believers, by immersion, witnessing to our acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord.
- freedom of thought under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- the congregational form of church government. Every church member has the right to participate in the decision-making process of the church.

THE SEVENTH DAY

God commanded that the seventh day (Saturday) be kept holy. Jesus agreed by keeping it as a day of worship. We observe the seventh day of the week (Saturday) as God's Holy Day as an act of loving obedience – not as a means of salvation. Salvation is the free gift of God through Jesus our Lord. It is the joy of the Sabbath that makes SDBs a people with a difference.

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CHRISTMAS IS
OPTIONAL
FOR CHRISTIANS

There is nothing in scripture
commanding us to
celebrate Christmas.
You can take it or leave it.
You can take or leave
any part of it.

By Levi Bond

Come to another time and place with me...

Continued on next page

Imagine you are a member of a tribe on a remote island in the Pacific Ocean. Your tribe has had very little contact with the outside world for several generations. You pray to a God whom you do not know. God answers your prayer by sending a missionary by boat to your island. This missionary works to learn about your culture and your language. This missionary carefully and accurately translates the Bible into your language. The missionary teaches you to read. Then he departs to his home country, leaving you with the Bible to learn about God.

You read the Old Testament and learn that God is holy, but men are sinful. You read the Gospels and learn that God sent His Son to be a sacrifice for your sin. You accept that sacrifice. You read further to the letters to Timothy and Titus. You feel God calling you to be a pastor and start a church on your island. You continue reading the Bible to learn more about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. You also study the Bible to learn how to lead a church.

Will this new church ever come up with the following traditions by studying the Bible with no influence from outside cultures? Will they find out that Jesus was born on December 25? Will they begin lighting Advent candles for five Sabbaths before that day every year? Will they have the children act out the birth of Christ in a pageant every year? Will the adults form a choir and perform a cantata every year? Will they have Noble Fir trees cut and shipped to the island from a farm in Estacada, Oregon, to decorate the church and their homes? Will they hang stockings for a guy from the North Pole to fill with presents?

Of course not. These traditions are not found in the Bible. That is the basis of my reason for not celebrating Christmas. It is an argument from silence. There is zero evidence that the Lord, the Apostles, or any of the New Testament churches celebrated Christmas. It was a tradition developed sometime after the canon of scripture was closed.

Are members of a church on a remote island less Christian than we are because they do not follow these traditions? No, they are trusting Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and they are following the Bible to the best of their abilities.

We need to keep this in mind during the holiday season.

These traditions are not based on scripture. Celebrating them has nothing to do with our salvation. That is a good thing, because it would be a works-based salvation if it did rely on these traditions.

Over the past 20 years I have proudly rejected several Christmas traditions. I have also chosen to go along with some as I fellowship with other Christians. Below are a few tips from my experience that I hope we can all benefit from.

- Tip 1.** You can say “no.” The season easily fills up with invitations to a long list of events at church, work, mom’s house, and the list goes on. We all need to set some priorities and say “no” to things that are outside of that list. This is the basis of all the other tips on this list.

- Tip 2.** Take “no” for an answer. This is essential to my first tip. Do not be offended when a brother or sister in Christ says “no” to an invitation. This applies to parents, pastors, choir directors, and many others. Accept the answer gracefully and move on. Does whining or arm twisting do any good? It may be time to cancel or change a tradition if several people say “no.”
- Tip 3.** Stay on schedule with devotions. It is easy to put Bible study and prayer on the back burner during this busy season. Seventh Day Baptists should be setting the example here. The Sabbath is a regularly scheduled day for devotions.
- Tip 4.** Stick with your diet and exercise habits. The Christmas season can be terrible for your physical health. Many gatherings include lots of good food and drinks. It is fine to enjoy these meals, but we need to treat them like regular meals with reasonable portions. Stick with your exercise program; it’s good for you. Get plenty of rest. No Christmas event is worth compromising your health.
- Tip 5.** Tips 3 & 4 are regarding spiritual and physical health, but mental health is equally important. The season is very depressing for millions of Americans. Take care of yourself first. Then connect with the people around you who may be struggling. They need your encouragement.
- Tip 6.** Set a budget and stick to it. Sadly, Christmas is a financial disaster for many Christians. Does the Lord want His followers to run up credit card debt celebrating His birthday? Refer to Tips 1 & 2 if you are broke—there is no sin or shame in not buying things you can’t afford. If you have the money and want to give gifts, that is wonderful. Set priorities and stick with a budget. One trick I have used in recent years is to think of something everyone uses and get the same gift for everyone. This plan has a few benefits:
- A. Shopping is quick and easy. I go to one store, buy 20 of the same item and leave. No hassles running all over town to find gifts for everyone.
 - B. It is easy to stay on budget. I set my budget, divide by 20, and then I know what price range I am looking for.
 - C. It is fair to everyone and I am also prepared if someone unexpectedly shows up at the gift exchange. I just put their name on one of my gifts and they’re included.
- Tip 7.** You can stay home. Christmas is the worst time of the year to travel. Airline tickets are extremely expensive. Airports are crowded. Winter weather can ruin plans whether you are flying or driving. Why deal with all of that? I have found it is better to travel on regular weekends. Friends and family are more likely to be home and not away on their own holiday vacations. Staying home also gives me the opportunity to serve my employer and coworkers. I help keep the office open while others are taking vacations.

The bottom line is that Christmas is optional. There is nothing in scripture commanding us to celebrate Christmas. You can take it or leave it. You can take or leave any part of it. If you want to remove the stress of the season, then start saying “no.” SR



Why Celebrate Christmas?

By Jasmine Lynch

I love celebrations: birthdays, anniversaries, Thanksgiving, graduations, Resurrection Sabbath, Veterans Day, Labor Day, Dr. Martin Luther Kings Day—but I do not celebrate Christmas and Easter because of their pagan origin.

The birth of Jesus was predicted from Creation (Genesis 3:15) that He would be the seed of a woman. Throughout Bible prophecies you will find the birth of Jesus mentioned directly or indirectly. Isaiah 7:14 foretells that He would be born of a virgin; Isaiah 11:1, that He would be a descendant of Jesse and King David; and Micah 5:12 tells us that He would be born in Bethlehem. Then there are several scriptures that tell us how people would treat Him, the kind of life He would live, and how He would die. However, there is no specific scripture that gives His birthdate. Scholars (historical and Biblical) all agree that He was not born on December 25. Therefore, to celebrate Jesus' birthday on December 25 is celebrating a lie. If it were true that He was born on December 25, would you as a Christian celebrate His birthday the way the world celebrates it today?

Christians are the light of the world. Jesus said that He is the light and the truth. As light bearers of the Gospel, why would you celebrate a lie about Him? The truth is, in Rome, December 25 was celebrated as the birthday of Mithra, the god of light. Christians began celebrating the birthday of Jesus around 250 AD. In 325 AD Roman Emperor Constantine re-assigned the meaning to the birthday of Jesus, the true God of light. The heathen also celebrated the birth of their sun god Tammuz (Ezekiel 8:14-18) on December 25, thousands of years before Jesus was born. (*Pagan Origin of Christmas, Easter, Halloween*)

The prophet Jeremiah warned: *“Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them. For the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers that it move not.”* (Jeremiah 10:2-4)

Is that the tradition of the Christmas tree today?

Although the Bible does not tell us the specific day on which Jesus was born, we can be very certain that He was not born December 25 because we know for sure He was not born in December. The shepherds would not be out in the field at night during the winter and rainy season. (Luke 2:9-11) It does not take a theology degree to discover this fact. It has been historically and Biblically documented that Jesus was thirty-three-and-a-half years when He was crucified. It is historically and Biblically documented that He was crucified around the Passover time—which has been during March/April from that time until now and has not changed. Count six months forward or backward from March/April and Jesus' birth would be September/October. That is so simple that people can't believe it. Let's find corroborating evidence from the Bible.

It is necessary to start with John the Baptist, cousin of Jesus, who was the fore runner of Jesus. I Chronicles 24:7-10 tells us that the eight-course called Abijah of the Priestly function fell to Zacharias which was in the fourth month, Tammuz (June). The first month of the Hebrew calendar was Abib (Deuteronomy 16:1).

Elizabeth got pregnant after Zachariah completed his priestly functions and went home. (Luke 1:5-25)

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, he told her that Elizabeth was six months pregnant. (Luke 1:36) John would be six months older than Jesus. Therefore, Jesus was conceived at the beginning of the eleventh month Sebat (January/February) and born nine months later in the month of Tishri (September/October) *"Chronology of Jesus birth"* (author unknown)

It is easy for Christians to get caught up in pagan celebrations because we follow traditions. Let's face it, many of these are very enticing and fun especially for children. Not wanting our children to feel left out and different from their friends, we allow them to participate with their friends and classmates. They grow up thinking it's OK and never bother to question the practice and so they continue the traditions. I remember one of my sisters saying she cannot believe that I take all the fun out of Christmas, telling my children that there is no Santa Claus bringing them gifts and not putting up a Christmas tree.

It wasn't until I went to Rome and saw how the pagans used statues of the twelve apostles and Greek gods and goddesses to decorate the buildings that the priests used to live in (many of which are now museums), that I realized why there are so many admonitions by Paul to separate ourselves from the world. The Greeks and Romans had no problem mixing Christianity and paganism. Jesus did not ask us to celebrate His birthday, but asked us to celebrate His Crucifixion, and His return by the observance of the Lord's Supper or Communion. (I Corinthians 11:23-26)

In the interest of full disclosure, I use the holiday to get together with my family and we have a family meal and fellowship with each other because that is when family members get holidays from work and can travel to be with each other. I use the time to teach the little ones, and now the grandchildren, why we celebrate the family and teach them the truth about the birth of Jesus and why He came. We should seize the opportunity to teach the truth at home, at work or at church, but we should not join in the heathen practices. I find that many individuals who come to church on Easter and Christmas have no idea of the truth. While you have them as a captive audience, you should use the time to teach the truth even if it destroys their idea of "fun." SR

References:

Origin of Jewish/Christian holy days:

"Chronology of Jesus birth"/gestation events relative to the birth of Jesus and John (author unknown)

www/http Proclaim and defend.org-a-chronology-of-Jesus-birth

CHRISTMAS IS
OPPORTUNITY
FOR CHRISTIANS

Jesus is the perfect gift given to us.
It's up to us to choose
how we will receive this gift,
how we will celebrate it, and
how we will share it with others.

By Pastor Scott Hausrath

A season of opportunities is the Christmas season. Every year our society hands us some wonderful opportunities to glorify Jesus and invite others to draw closer to Him. Are you taking advantage of these opportunities?

Autumn is one of my favorite times of the year for many reasons. One is college football, which is my favorite sport. The college football season gives us some wonderful opportunities to connect with people and share together an exciting activity.

Another season of opportunities is the Christmas season. Every year our society hands us some wonderful opportunities to glorify Jesus and invite others to draw closer to Him. Many of us, for example, are invited to company Christmas parties, neighborhood holiday receptions, school winter musicals, etc. All of these events provide us a natural platform for sharing with people what the “Christ” in the word “Christmas” is all about. Are you taking advantage of these opportunities?

The key word here is opportunity. We often discuss what Christmas is, or what it is not, but we have an opportunity to take a “bigger picture” perspective here. For example, some people decide not to celebrate Christmas because of its pagan origins. The bigger picture, however, is this: **Christmas is what we make it.** During the Christmas season we have the freedom to worship pagan gods, if we so choose, and some people do make this choice. However, we also have the freedom to worship the one true God and to celebrate the birth of His Son, Jesus Christ. If we celebrate the birth of Jesus as a family, we can invite others to join our celebration and in this way help them to see the true significance of Christmas.

Some people say that the actual date of Jesus’ birth is not specified in Scripture and they point to the research of many scholars who say that Jesus was definitely not born on December 25. They refuse to celebrate Christmas, therefore, because it’s actually celebrating a lie. The bigger picture, however, is this: Many of us acknowledge that we don’t know the date of Jesus’ birth, so we don’t claim December 25 as Jesus’ birthdate. December 25 is a date on which we celebrate Jesus’ birth, no matter when it actually occurred. What’s important about His birth is not its date, but its actuality. This is why God didn’t tell us exactly *when* Jesus was born; He just told us *that* Jesus was born. What we celebrate on December 25, therefore, is the fact that God came into this world in human form to rescue us from our sin. What matters is not *when* Jesus appeared, but *that* He appeared.

Some people say that we should not participate in the traditions of Christmas because they are heathen practices. Sometimes they object, for example, to having a Christmas tree. The bigger picture, however, is this: Christmas traditions are a wonderful platform for sharing our faith in God. We can invite our neighbors into our homes to join us in decorating our Christmas tree. We can invite them to help us put up our nativity scene. We can invite them to join us in making our favorite Christmas cookies. Including our neighbors in traditions that hold special meaning for us pulls down some of the barriers between us and fosters the deepening of our relationships with each other. If we intentionally love our neighbors in ways like this throughout the year, we can more easily and more naturally share with them who Jesus is and how He can make a difference in their lives.

Some people say that Christmas is too commercial, that its real meaning has been lost because it’s being driven by retailers. I say once again that **Christmas is what we make it.** We can choose to focus our efforts on giving the perfect gift, or we can choose to acknowledge that the perfect gift has already been given. Jesus is that perfect gift which has been given to us. It’s up to us to choose how we will receive this gift, how we will celebrate it, and how we will share it with others.

May God deeply bless you and your precious family this Christmas season as you faithfully respond to the opportunities He entrusts to you. [SR](#)

Pro and Con

Whether to Celebrate Christmas or NOT

PRO: An Opportunity to Witness

Here in North America, and in other countries, this is a time when many families gather. Memories are made. Cultural foods and activities are enjoyed. Traditions are passed from one generation to another. Family stories are retold. One's heritage is remembered, along with family members of the past. When these things are practiced, they become an important anchor and education for our youth.

For many Christians, it is a time to emphasize and recognize the birth of Christ Jesus, celebrating that He was sent into this world by God, our Father, in order to offer salvation to all. Large numbers of Christmas cards and greetings are exchanged that continue to remind non-Christians of that very fact. The holiday gives opportunity to meet with our neighbors, witness to those we work with or someone we meet and speak of our Christian beliefs.

Churches know that their congregations will double and even triple at this time of year. Pastors, who preach Christ, often use these services wisely, offering the gospel and a chance to accept the Lord as a Savior to those who only attend once or twice per year. Christmas programs and media can offer Christian programming and music reminding all of "the REAL reason for the season."

CON: Let's Be Wise in Our Choices

Although the Bible does not tell us to remember Jesus' birth, but rather His death, many want to do as the angels did and celebrate His life that changed the world. When the opportunity of Christmas witnessing presents itself with thoughtfulness, kindness and patience, we can talk about the paganism involved and pure commercialistic pressures.

Jesus was not born in a winter month. It is more likely the census that caused Mary and Joseph to travel to Bethlehem was set just after fall, when people would have harvest money. The December date came about when Christian celebrations and pagan holidays were combined. Mithra, a pagan god, was thought to be born out of a rock on December 25. Suggest that Christmas is a season, not a date.

Evergreen trees used for decoration came from a Druid (pagan) tradition. Suggest a Nativity Scene be the central attraction in the home rather than a tree. Santa Claus, presents and stockings are from the many stories of St. Nicholas. Although fun, these have nothing to do with our Messiah. Therefore, there is no Christian reason to "shop 'til you drop". Jesus is NOT Santa. HE IS OUR KING! Suggest instead that like the Wise Men we SEEK HIM and HIS WILL. SR

My Personal Beliefs as Christ Follower

by Cheri Appel



Rob Appel
Executive Director

Christmas is a Time to Remember God's Gift to Us

Christmas is a time to remember God's gift to us—the birth of Christ.

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."*

—John 3:16 NIV

God gave us the best gift we could ever receive, the most beautiful and holy of gifts. Whether or not His birth is on December 25, it is the celebration of the most important gift we have ever received.

Christ was sent down to not only give us eternal life, but to bring us an image of who we should be. We are to walk as Christ has, and live in His example. This Christmas we should remember the gift of God and the blessings He has brought us. We should remember Christ and the example which He set.

*I picked out some verses for us to reflect on, pray over, and remember
this Christmas as we gather in celebration.*

John 3:16—For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Isaiah 9:6—For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

John 1:14—And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Matthew 1:21—She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.

John 14:27—"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

Zechariah 9:9—Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

John 14:6—Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'

James 1:17—Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

2 Corinthians 9:15—Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift.

Luke 1:14—And you will have joy and gladness, many will rejoice at His birth.

Luke 2:14—Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!

Hebrews 5:9—And being made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.

1 John 5:11—And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

Young Adult

By Sarina Villalpando

Maranatha Community Church, Colton, CA

Capitulating to Culture or Redeeming It?

SDBs and Holidays

The question of the keeping of holidays and festivals among Seventh Day Baptists is for some a matter of dire importance which points at the purity of our faith. For others, it is seldom given a second thought as they carry out whichever traditions have been handed to them. Given those divergent postures, it is inevitable that the questions of how important these holidays and traditions are arise with some frequency among our people.

When we study the Scripture, we find there is little question that Jesus not only observed the holy days and festivals prescribed by the Mosaic Law (esp. in Leviticus 23), but that he did so perfectly. In addition to the holy days and festivals, Jesus seems to view important community events like weddings and public meals as opportunities to minister to lost and broken people.

Interestingly, however, Jesus is silent about the cultural clothes these festivals were almost certainly dressed in. There are about 1500 years between Moses giving the instructions about the feasts and Jesus' keeping of them. During that time, the people of Israel took the land, lost the land, (some) were taken into captivity, (some) returned from captivity, (a smaller group) eventually overthrew their Greek rulers, and then subsequently adopted at least some elements of their surrounding Greco-Roman culture. The Old Testament feasts kept by Jesus were almost certainly not kept the same in the first century as they were when they were originally given by Moses. Despite the reality of changing culture and language, there is no indication in the scriptures that these changes presented any real obstacle in keeping them, providing the heart of the keeper was aimed at the purpose for which the feast was given in worship and adoration of the giving God.

The question with respect to the festivals is whether we believe they remain as a commanded celebration for us or if they were specifically for the people of Israel and subsequently changed in some way or fulfilled in Jesus. Because they are part of the Mosaic Law, we should consider them in the same way we do the other commands of the Law. The majority of SDBs now (and throughout our history) have therefore approached the feasts warily, for fear of being pulled into legalism through the observance of them and other aspects of the Law. This is not to say that there are not some SDBs who observe the feasts or other elements of the Law—only to say that such individuals represent a minority both at present and historically.

The question of “Christian” holidays like Christmas and Easter is slightly different, however. For starters, there is no Biblical command that any days be recognized as holidays in the New Testament. Neither is there any prohibition of establishing celebrations of Biblical events. That said, there are no exact dates given for some events (like the birth of Jesus Christ), while others are dated relative to their proximity to Jewish feasts, complicating the establishment of a yearly holiday. Furthermore, there are no suggestions that early Christians kept any of these holidays. Instead, as the Christian faith spread in the third and fourth centuries, it sought to recast existing cultural celebrations as a means of teaching Christian truth as a contextualization strategy. This permitted people to retain some of their yearly rhythms while infusing them with new meanings.

It seems we must address the real issue at the heart of the questions we might have about holidays and festivals: as (mostly) Gentile believers in our contemporary context, we must make a choice about which cultures we will honor and borrow from in our celebrations and how and why, and make our celebration, however conceived, about Jesus.

If we choose to keep the Old Testament feasts, we must admit that we are populating our keeping of the feasts with a different culture than the one into which they were originally given. We will take from historic and current Jewish traditions what we can and reform them for our own celebration of Jesus Christ. This will likely lead us away in key respects from the Jewish festivals to honor the Messiah most Jewish people have not realized—most Jewish people would find one or more aspects of our celebration of the festivals deeply foreign. Likewise, the Old Testament passages which command the festivals do not instruct us to recast the days to honor Christ, so we must go beyond the written commandment if we are to honor Christ in the festival.



Council
on History

Rev. Nicholas J. Kersten

Director of Education
and History

We must make a choice about which cultures we will honor and borrow from in our celebrations and how and why and make our celebration, however conceived, about Jesus.

On the other hand, if we choose to adopt the dominant cultural tradition and celebrate Christmas and other Christian holidays, we have other challenges. The first of these is that some aspects of our current "Christian tradition" (candles, trees, special foods, etc.) are cultural relics from the pagan festivals which were repurposed so long ago. Perhaps even more dangerous is that current cultural pressure on these holidays (especially Christmas) in the form of commercialism and consumerism could distract us from the real purpose of the holiday such that we worship an idol instead of Jesus Christ.

Even larger than the confused cultural sensibilities in the options are the challenges in Biblical consistency. If we contort our principles of interpretation to allow or disallow certain things, we stray, no matter which final position we adopt. If we allow our current cultural baggage to cause us to justify our desired practice using scripture, we name our idol, and in a way that is possibly worse than some tepid celebration of a reconstituted festival or misconceived holiday. Whatever position we adopt, we must be prepared to use it broadly, applying the same principles to the same sorts of issues. As one example: if someone would say that a Christmas tree, with its lights and decorations, is an idol, they must also then contend with a more pressing and ubiquitous idol: their television. The texts applied to naming the tree as an idol could as easily be applied to the TV (and other things).

SDB icon A.H. Lewis wrote more than 100 years ago about these dangers in his book, *Paganism Surviving in Christianity*. In it, he not only identifies what he believes are pagan elements in the way Christians lived in his day, but also the broader questions of interpretation which gave him greater concern. Lewis seemed to believe that only a divinely inspired faith could withstand the corrupting power of pagan culture, and that if people kept their eyes on the scriptures and did their research, they would arrive at the truth: **"...It is clear proof of the divine character of Christianity, that it was not wholly destroyed by its contact with paganism."** Lewis seems to have had trouble with how closely the contemporary keeping of holidays echoed the pagan ones, not with the repurposing of the pagan holidays as such: that the supposedly Christianized pagan festivals had too much pagan and too little Christ.

More recently, my predecessor as Historian Don A. Sanford suggested in a small tract called "Holidays and Holy Days" that the greater risk to contemporary Christians is in missing a special opportunity to celebrate a Biblical event, skipping the debate on pagan roots and Jewish law and moving to the action step. He favorably quotes English historian Thomas Fuller (1608-1661) who wrote: **"Things said to be ever done will prove to be never done unless sometimes solemnly done,"** before suggesting that we ought not miss the opportunity to take time each year to celebrate Christmas: **"...The celebration of the Nativity adds to our consciousness the importance of Christ's presence throughout the rest of the year."** As with Lewis, Pastor Don seems to think that the part that is important is how you honor Jesus in the holiday, not the surrounding cultural trappings.

The difficulties with the various positions are why Seventh Day Baptists must continue to give space for conscience while seeking unity in our churches about these things. If we are being honest, our own cultural sensibilities can be as big a factor in our decisions about festivals and holy days as anything we find (or don't find) in scripture. No matter our decision, we should commit ourselves to honoring Jesus Christ as Lord and loving our neighbors as ourselves, even if they make different choices than we do in these things. Honoring Jesus as King should be our highest goal and our most basic expectation. May you celebrate the birth, sinless life, blameless death, and triumphant resurrection of Jesus Christ this month! SR



Christian
Education
Council

Rev. Nicholas J. Kersten
Director of Education
and History

Too Busy!



“‘Crazy-busy’ is a great armor, it’s a great way for numbing. What a lot of us do is that we stay so busy, and so out in front of our life, that the truth of how we’re feeling and what we really need can’t catch up with us.”

—Brené Brown

Lately, I’ve been catching myself responding to the question, “How’ve you been?” with things like “really busy.” It’s true, I am busy. Between working two jobs and family and friend commitments, volunteering, and laundry (there are always mountains of that) I run a thin line between Energizer Bunny, Sleepy the Dwarf, and Rip Van Winkle. Many other people are busy, too, so using this line seems almost like a perfunctory cop-out to me—similar to responding to the question of “How are you today?” with “I’m good.” This is a surface answer—you don’t need to spill your guts to everyone you meet. It’s okay to give that answer; however, what if that’s all the answer you can give?

What bothers me about leaving things at *busy* is when I try to follow that up with something more specific. I can’t say anything beyond the generic, even if I want to share something more. I can’t seem to figure out anything to say. I’ve been so *busy* running around doing things that stopping to appreciate the moment or just rest and do some introspection hasn’t happened in a long time. I’m a functional robot because all my energy is going into staying in motion to complete the mile-long list of tasks I have waiting in queue. Taking the Sabbath can help—it’s a time of rejuvenation, after all. But honestly, sometimes that’s just like pushing the pause button or, depending on the week, a different kind of hustle. I’ll participate in the Sabbath but my heart isn’t enjoying it like it should.

We can trick ourselves into thinking we’re really involved in our lives—but if we can’t feel or think beyond the *busy*, I think it’s an avoidance tactic. Facing our own life and its imperfections isn’t easy. Keeping our bodies, minds, and souls in near constant motion is a great way to avoid it and, over a prolonged period, leads to a sort of apathy. That’s my check: if I can’t say how I’ve truly been feeling over a period of time beyond *busy*, I need to slow down and do some reflection because I’m becoming a slave to the *apathy of busy*.

Apathy is not the life Christians are called to live. *Busy* is not the life Christians are called to live. Enslaved to these things is not the gift Jesus was born for and died to give. When we allow *busy* to create a wall around us, not only do we keep our own emotions away, but it can also keep other people away. When we can’t extend beyond our wall to know even ourselves, you can bet that we’re missing a lot in the world around us. How can you carry out the great commission when you can’t see beyond what is right in front of you?

With Christmas right around the corner, it is the *busy* season for a lot of people. There are preparations to make, parties to attend, gifts to give, and family to spend time with. It’s also the perfect time to not let all of that become *busy-ness*. Take an actual Sabbath to renew yourself with the truth of Christmas, the birth of a baby that changed the end game for us. Don’t let the rush of the holiday season numb you to the hope and promise this season brings and therefore numb you to the new life offered to others through the birth and death of Jesus. SR



Women's
Society

By Katrina Goodrich

Tribal Dance and SDB Worship

You can experience quite a variety of worship styles due to regional preferences or the importation of culture from other countries if you visit some of the different Seventh Day Baptist congregations in the USA & Canada. Being a westerner, I was somewhat naive to the variety of cultures also to be discovered on the African continent. Many people, even some Africans, presume that the majority on that continent have similar cultural practices and preferences. I soon discovered that there also can be quite a variation there as well, depending upon the regional heritage and how it has been influenced by European colonization or immigration from other nations.

However, usually when I am visiting groups that are in a general region and share some historical heritage and language connections, they tend to have more similarities in their practices and worship styles. This is why I found the variations particularly interesting on my June visit to Africa this year.

I had been saving the last of our known French language countries in Africa to visit with Bill Shobe, pastor of the Dodge Center SDB Church in Minnesota. Many years ago Bill studied French and spent some time in Paris where he experienced a life-changing encounter with Christ that altered his destiny. Bill has miraculously retained his ability to speak conversational French without regular practice and was excited about the opportunity to put this talent to use by accompanying me to Rwanda, Ivory Coast, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (the DRC).

These countries are not very divergent in their relation to the equator and all are influenced by European colonization and use French as an official language. Having been to Rwanda on a previous trip, I anticipated correctly that our congregations just over the border in the DRC were rather formal in their worship expression. The leaders wear western style suits and they kneel to pray in services and in home settings. They tend to have an exuberant, but orderly service with a schedule. And much of their music is translations of traditional western or European hymns sung *a cappella* or accompanied by simple instruments.

When we went to visit in Kinshasa in western DRC, I expected to experience a similar church culture, but was interested to find that they were a bit more enthusiastic in their services. They had adopted big hats for the ladies, and hand raising during their praise music time. The songs were usually local language or French-translated modern choruses. The accompaniment was mouth blown police whistles by several of the women, tambourines, keyboard, and even an electric guitar.

After that you would expect the final stop in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, to be something like one or the other or somewhere in between. Actually, to me they were in a separate category altogether. Their worship centered around adapting West African traditional or tribal dance to choreographed praise numbers, free form congregational dance, and dramatizations of Bible stories or modern skits to illustrate biblical principles.

Individually and together these were beautiful examples to me of Christ followers worshipping God in ways that were meaningful to them. Had I videoed and shown each how others were worshipping they would have likely asked, "Are those Africans?!?" To which I would have said, "Yes, but more importantly, those are Christians."

Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee.



FOCUS on
Missions

By Clinton R. Brown
Executive Director

—Psalm 67:5



People Get Ready

Last month I shared my first idea about how we can “get ready” as Seventh Day Baptists to serve the Church when she returns to the Sabbath. The first idea was to pursue Biblical counseling, training to help with the woundedness of people sitting in our churches. Doug and I just returned from Florida where we spent a weekend training a group in Daytona Beach. Then we head to New York City the first weekend of December for another training. If a group in your church is interested, please contact me at grandmamack@comcast.net for further info.

The second idea I have about how we can “get ready” is to turn our focus onto Children’s Ministry. The Barna Group, who specializes in statistics, says that 90% of Christians come to Jesus before the age of 21, with the bulk of us meeting Jesus between the ages of 4 and 14. Logic says to me that if we are serious about evangelism, we should be flipping the focus of our churches away from adult-centered ministry to child-centered ministry. I have been challenged to describe what this might look like as most of us will defend our church focus citing that we have camp programs, VBS, Sabbath School, etc. The first place I would look for evidence is in our budgets. Look at your church budget, including the pastor’s salary, and determine what percentage of the budget is used for children’s ministry. If we are serious about children, what about a children’s pastor? Since most of our churches cannot afford more than one pastor’s salary, what about considering a children’s pastor as the senior or only pastor? Why is the assistant pastor in training relegated to youth ministry and then “graduates” to the senior pastor position, leaving the youth ministry? Is there even a specialty in seminary for children’s pastor? How welcome are children in the worship service—i.e., how do we welcome children to participate and be part of the ministry team of our worship services? Do children and youth consider themselves part of the ministry of the church—or do they only see themselves participating when they grow into adulthood?

I grew up in a Southern Baptist Church and I have to say that my church did this well. Sunday evenings were dedicated to Training Union (like Sunday School) and we were always taught evangelism techniques and challenged to share our faith with our friends. Sunday evenings, we led the worship time, played piano and organ if able, ushered, collected offering, and if we chose to, even preached the sermon. I think I began leading the song service with my friends playing the piano and organ when I was in junior high. When I was a senior in high school, I taught a junior high girls Sunday School class. This may have been unusual, but I think this church was serious about calling kids into ministry.

I don’t have answers—but I think we need to be asking some questions and taking a hard look at what we are doing with children. There is no Junior Holy Spirit. So if children have the same Holy Spirit we adults do, what does that say to us about their call to ministry? Are we selling our kids short by assuming they are not ready to be ministering where they are planted? Are we training them to do so?

Next month, I will share some of the things we will be trying at Conference to call children into worship in a way they can engage and share the truth that they are ministers of the Gospel right now. [SR](#)

By Jane Mackintosh
Conference President





THE GIFT THAT KEEPS GIVING!



Servant Leadership Development

A SUMMER OF SERVICE: LEADERSHIP FOR A LIFETIME

2019 DATES AND INFORMATION

- January 8, 2019 — **DEADLINE for Student Applications**
- January 31, 2019 — **DEADLINE for Church Applications**
- June 12 – 16 — Project Director Training
Camp Harley Sutton, Alfred Station, NY
- June 12 – 20 — SCSC On-Site Training
Camp Harley Sutton, Alfred Station, NY
- June 20 – July 25 — On-site Projects
- July 25 – 28 — SCSC Evaluation
- July 28 – August 3 — SDB General Conference in Lancaster, PA

Information and Forms can be found at:

www.seventhdaybaptist.org/ministries/womens-board-scsc



COMING NEXT SUMMER!!

Seventh Day Baptist General Conference

July 28 – August 3, 2019

Lancaster Bible College
Lancaster, PA



"Test Run" in Shiloh

Have you ever gone to the doctor for a check-up and got a report that was different than you expected? Recently, I went in for an annual physical and was told that my cholesterol was high. Dangerously high. At first, there was some denial. I am relatively young, active and have a well-balanced diet. I was not expecting to hear anything but positive results from a routine visit. Apparently, I was not as active and healthy as I thought I was. I should note that I am fairly stubborn when it comes to seeing the doctor. Unless I am in dire need of medical attention, I'd just as soon stay away. My willful neglect of my personal well-being could have been detrimental to my long-term health.

What if your church had a check-up for the spiritual body in the same way you go to the doctor for a physical check-up? Would you pass with flying colors? Would you be surprised if you found out there may be some areas where your church may not be as healthy as you thought?

About a year ago, my church in Shiloh started on the **Pulse** process as part of a "test run" with several other churches in the denomination. Early in the process, there is a group study of the book *Autopsy of a Deceased Church* by Thom Rainer. I'll admit, the title can seem a little off-putting and maybe even abrasive. After all, who would want to study a book about dying churches—and even worse, face the possibility that parts of the book may even apply to us?! But thankfully, there were a group of willing participants who joined in a group study. While not every part of the book applied to Shiloh, there were some eye-opening discussions that took place that helped set the stage for refocusing on what is important to us.

Following the study of *Autopsy*, **Pulse** material is set up to be studied in four sections—**"Setting High Expectations, Leadership and Relationship Skills, Outward Focus, and Process of Discipleship."** For Shiloh, I wanted to create a simple vision statement that was easy to remember and easy to apply. So, we came up with the following slogan: **"Love God, Love People, Serve Others, Make Disciples."** This statement represents a simple process of growth that we should all be able to follow. It all starts on the foundation of loving God. When asked what the greatest commandment was, Jesus responded with the following statement: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment."* (Matthew 22:38) If nothing else comes from our time studying together, my prayer is that we have a firm understanding of this command.

"Love God, Love People, Serve Others, Make Disciples."

Building on the idea of loving God, we studied various passages from the Sermon on the Mount. We recognized that Jesus was setting a new standard that was different than Old Testament law. He was teaching concepts such as turning the other cheek and going the extra mile for those in need. **Loving God means fully submitting to His will in our lives.** The more we understand and apply this, both in our personal lives and in church activities, the healthier our churches will be.

After this study on what it means to *Love God*, we transitioned to *Loving People* with a focus on leadership and relationship skills. We had good discussion on how to deal with conflict and sin in the church, based on Matthew 17. **A loving church will help people avoid sin by accountability and encouragement—and not by judgment and isolation.**

Currently, we are studying what it means to have an *Outward Focus* through serving people. This study included topics that looked at Jesus' attitude toward the outsider. Examples include Zacchaeus, Matthew (both tax collectors), and Pharisees. Lessons included points such as Jesus having an accepting attitude towards anyone who sought Him, Jesus intentionally spending time with "outsiders," and Jesus seeking to restore what was lost. **A healthy church invests time in the community with those in need.**

Moving forward, we will begin studying the *Process of Discipleship* and what it means to be committed to spiritual growth. We will be studying the relationship between Jesus and His disciples, and what set them apart from other individuals amongst the crowds that followed Jesus. **Are we willing to invest copious amounts of time helping people grow into Christ-like maturity?** Discipleship is more than attending programs together—it is a deeper, more personal relationship between people that extends beyond the walls of the church. The emphasis on discipleship will be that a healthy church has the intention to build committed relationships for the purpose of spiritual growth.

I am blessed to be a part of the **Pulse** team and thankful for the work the Lord is doing in our Shiloh church. I look forward to completing the study material and discovering how He will continue to move in and through our church to impact our Shiloh community. It has been a time of healthy self-reflection and fruitful discussion. Most importantly, the **Pulse** material has allowed our study group to regain a focus on what is important to us personally and corporately—which is celebrating our faith in Him!

By Frank Mazza
SDB Church of Shiloh, NJ

Georgia and Florida SDBs Gather for Association Meetings

SDBs from Georgia and Florida gathered together in Plantation, FL, from November 9 to 11, 2018, for their annual association meetings held at the Sawgrass Inn and Conference Center. The theme chosen by Association President Pastor Norman Fearon was “True to Conviction, Faithful to God.”

The celebration started on Friday evening as there was a powerful time of worship, testimony, and prayer focused on youth attendees led by Marc Downes and Pastor Garfield Miller.

On Sabbath, Association President Pastor Norman Fearon shared with the approximately 200 people present how God had inspired his theme to be “True to Conviction, Faithful to God” by using Daniel 1:1-20 as the point of exhortation for his message.

Later in the day, Conference President Jane Mackintosh shared about her 2019 Conference theme, “People Get Ready.” John Pethtel presented a lesson titled, “Cognitive Dissonance: Do Your Convictions Match Your Commitments?” Executive Director Rob Appel gave thanks to the Association for many years of support to him and the General Conference

and shared about how the search process is progressing for a new Executive Director. At the end of his presentation, he opened the floor to questions and at the end of his Q&A time, officials from the Association presented Rob with a gift of appreciation.

After a short break, we heard testimonies of God’s goodness to those who needed hope and healing. This was followed by a powerful time of prayer for any who needed healing. Pastor Andy Samuels gave a presentation on the work of the SDB World Federation and Pastor Garfield Miller shared about his mission trip with Pastor David Johnson to Sierra Leone which had just finished.

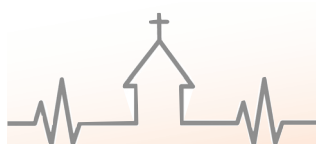
The evening continued the celebration with some fun and a concert. On Sunday, the Association completed its business followed by an invitation from the Association President for 2019, Grace Crouch, to “Let the Worshipers Arise.”

God is doing many things in the South Atlantic corner of our country. Please keep His work through our churches there in prayer.



Seventy-five church planting catalysts from cooperating networks and denominations in Canada gathered together to worship, network, pray, and partner at the 2018 Church Planting Canada Intersession in Kananaskis, AB. This biennial gathering is meant to facilitate the conversation of culture, research, ideas, and encouragement around the empty table of church planting in Canada. The facilitator for our meetings, John Caplin, helped to guide our times and focus our thinking over the course of two days.

The next Church Planting Canada gathering is the national congress which will be held in Montreal in October 2019. If you are interested in church planting in Canada, please contact the Director of Church Development.



Church
Development &
Pastoral Services

John J. Pethtel
Director

Words cannot express all the gratitude that our General Conference has for our volunteers. From those who serve positions at our General Conference sessions, to those who serve on councils and committees throughout the year, to those who voluntarily give of their time and money, to those who sacrifice to make our local churches stronger—THANK YOU! The Director Team and General Council appreciate you and your contributions to SDBs by actively advancing God’s Kingdom through your work.

Heartfelt 
THANKS
TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

Conference 2019 at Lancaster, PA

Come and see *JESUS!*

The Host committee is working to prepare for the 2019 Conference at Lancaster Bible College in Lancaster, PA, July 28 – August 3.

President Mackintosh has asked us to arrange for a trip to **Sight & Sound Theatres** to see the production of **JESUS** on Thursday, August 1. Adult tickets (ages 13+) are \$56.25 and for children 3-12, \$24.75. Some of us have seen this show—it is amazing! By the use of special effects, Jesus and Peter are walking on the water and the boats are floating and rocking in the lake. It is a must see when visiting Lancaster. This show has been on stage all through the 2018 season and has been a sellout almost every day. We need to reserve seats early because of its great success. If you are planning to attend Conference and want to go to **Sight & Sound**, please let us know as soon as possible. You can email your request to sdmoncrief@yahoo.com. Your name and the number of tickets you need will be placed on our list. All tickets must be paid for by **March 1, 2019**. **The sooner we receive the payment the sooner we can secure the seat. We cannot hold any unpaid tickets.** There is an outside chance that we can get tickets right up to the week of Conference but, with the history of attendance for this show, it is unlikely. Please send your payment to

Stephen Moncrief, 385 Jericho Rd., Bridgeton, NJ 08302. Make your check out to the *Shiloh SDB Church*. If you have questions just email me or call 856-455-4419 and I will get back to you. We hope that you can attend Conference and the showing of *JESUS*. We look forward to hearing from you.

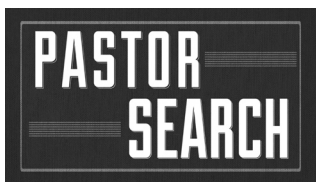
Other Items:

We will have a few more beds available for our use this year at Lancaster than we had the last time we visited there. When Registration time comes, be sure to **REGISTER EARLY**. Those staying for the full week will have rooms assigned to them first. Then we will do our best to accommodate everyone else. If you are planning to stay in a hotel, bed and breakfast, or campground, be sure to make your reservations early. Lancaster is a busy place in the summer— a popular vacation spot. We will have suggestions for off-campus housing later. You can always go online—there are many motels available within 8 miles of LBC.

The Youth Banquet will be held off campus on Wednesday at the Shady Maple Smorgasbord. It is the same place where it was held before when we were at Lancaster. The facility holds 1200 people + another 1000 on the banquet side. If you are a youth attending Conference, you will want to attend the Banquet. The Host Committee will be raising funds here in New Jersey to offset the extra cost of the Youth Banquet. If you are interested in helping with this, you can send funds to the above address.

We will be picking up and dropping off at the Harrisburg Airport or the Lancaster Amtrak/bus station. If you prefer to fly into Philadelphia, you can take the SEPTA train from the airport to 30th St. station; then take Amtrak from 30th St. station to Lancaster. The cost for Amtrak from Philadelphia to Lancaster runs about \$29.00 and has scheduled service from approximately 8:30 am to 9:45 pm. Just keep in mind that if you are leaving out of Philadelphia on Sunday morning, the first train out of Lancaster to Philadelphia doesn't leave Lancaster until 7:55 am. So you do not want to have an early flight unless you go to Philadelphia the night before. [SR](#)

See you in Lancaster next summer!
The Host Committee



The following SDB churches or groups have called new pastoral leadership:

Adams Center SDB Church (Adams Center, NY)
David Murphy, Pastor

The following SDB churches or groups are looking for pastoral leadership. Please keep them in prayer as they search for their churches' more preferable future.

Middle Island SDB Church (New Milton, WV)
First SDB Church of Hebron (Coudersport, PA)
Covenant SDB Fellowship (Hungry Horse, MT)

There are other potential vacancies in the near future. If you are interested in one of these vacancies, if you are called to pastoral ministry, or if you know someone who might be interested in pastoral ministry, please contact the Director of Pastoral Services by email at jpethel@seventhdaybaptist.org.

Listening to God

I want you to try to think of a time when you felt distanced from God—when it felt like you were trying to talk and there wasn't anybody there responding, or even listening. I've been struggling with listening to God and finding the different ways He speaks to me recently, and I hadn't even realized it. Once I noticed, I started thinking about the different ways that God was speaking to me, whether directly or indirectly, over the past month or so. Once I started thinking about it, it wasn't that God wasn't talking to me. It was that I wasn't listening to what He was trying to say. I've realized how easy it is to stop listening because you think you're too busy to take the time to listen—or not listen just because you're not being given the answers you want when you want them. Matthew 7:24 (ESV) says, "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock." So, as you go throughout the rest of your day, make sure that you're not just listening to what God is saying to you, but that you're also following what He says.



THE BEACON

By Becca Uhlich
Seattle Area SDB Church
Auburn, WA

OBITUARIES

PEDERSON—Constance Genevieve “Genny” Pederson went home to her Lord and Savior on September 20, 2018, in Bloomer, WI. She was 91 years old.

Genny was born in Milton Junction, WI, and married Loyal Pederson on October 24, 1946. In 1950, they moved to New Auburn, WI, and farmed together for many years. They were blessed with six children, 15 grandchildren, and 31 great-grandchildren.

Genny was a life-long member of the Seventh Day Baptist (Community Freedom Church) in New Auburn, where she served as deaconess and was involved with hospitality, music, teaching children, and numerous ministries. She often gave rides to Camp Wakonda and welcomed guest pastors or speakers into her home. In 2014, she was awarded the Robe of Achievement from the SDB Women’s Society.

Genny was involved in her community, specifically in homemaker clubs and 4-H in which she was a leader for 45 years. Genny and Loyal welcomed numerous foster children into their home, nurturing and giving them a stable life experience. Genny and Loyal were also both involved in the New Auburn Community choir, resulting in many new friends. It was a favorite seasonal activity for Genny after Loyal went home to the Lord in 1999.

The memorial service on Friday, September 28, was a celebration of a life well-lived for our Savior. Those attending were challenged to continue the legacy of faith shared by Genny Pederson.

ROBERTS—Ruthanna Roberts, 73, of North Ridge Avenue, Everett, PA, passed away on August 20, 2018, at her home.

Ruthanna was born on July 14, 1945, in Roaring Spring, PA, the daughter of the late John W. and E. Frances (Blough) Kagarise. On August 31, 1967, in the New Enterprise Church of the Brethren, she was united in marriage to Floyd W. Roberts.

Ruthanna was a lifelong member of the Bell Seventh Day Baptist Church, Salemville, PA. She was dedicated to the functions of the church, especially the children’s ministries.

She was a registered nurse at the Bedford Hospital for several years prior to starting her own day care center where she worked for over 30 years. She could often be seen walking with her little ones in Everett.

Mrs. Roberts was a graduate of Northern Bedford County High School Class of 1963 and attended Altoona Hospital School of Nursing for her RN Certification. She taught childbirth courses at Bedford Hospital for several years, volunteered at the Everett Free Library for story time, and was a member of the Everett Happy Senior Center.

Along with her husband of fifty years she is survived by son: Jeffrey A. Roberts married to Wendy (Waitkus), Hayward, CA; daughter: Brenda S. Bloom, Everett, PA; two grandchildren: Wayne M. Bloom and Katelyn M. Notestine; sister: Eileen married to Robert “Bud” Claycomb, New Enterprise, PA; brother: Dwight Kagarise married to Jeannie, Bedford, PA; and sister-in-law: Arlene Kagarise, New Enterprise, PA.

She was preceded in death by a brother, Orlo Kagarise, and sister, Lois Fletcher, and Lois’ husband, John.

The funeral service was held August 24, 2018, at the Bell Seventh Day Baptist Church with Rev. Darwin Steele and Rev. Andrew Camenga officiating. Burial was at Bennett Cemetery, Artemas, PA.

Memorial contributions may be made in memory of Ruthanna to the Bell Seventh Day Baptist Church, 1411 Salemville Road, New Enterprise, PA 16664 or the Everett Happy Senior Center, 101 West Main Street, Everett, PA 15537.

OBITUARY

SAUNDERS—Barbara (Louise) Crandall Saunders, 78, of Johnson Creek, WI, died at her home on October 23, 2018.

Barbara was born in North Hornell, NY, on March 10, 1940, the eldest of five children born to Dr. Burton B. and Carol Davis Crandall. She grew up in Alfred, NY, finished high school in Fayetteville, NY, and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from Syracuse University in 1962. She received a Master's Degree in Counseling from the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater in 1990.

On June 24, 1962, she married Herbert E. Saunders at the Verona, NY, Seventh Day Baptist Church. Barbara and Herb were blessed with three children, Brian, Peggy Sue, and Michael. She lived with her family in Little Genesee, NY; Plainfield, NJ; and Milton, WI; before moving in July to Johnson Creek, WI.

She taught first grade in various public schools in New York State, and later did substitute teaching in Plainfield, NJ. Barbara was an accomplished pianist and taught piano lessons for over 40 years. She studied organ and was the organist/choir director at the Plainfield, NJ, Seventh Day Baptist Church. She also played organ for the Plainfield Symphony and Chorus. She served as the organist at several Seventh Day Baptist Annual Conferences. Most recently she was the pianist at the Madison, WI, Seventh Day Baptist Church where she was a member. She was the Director of Music at the Reformed Church, North Branch, NJ, and most recently enjoyed a 30-year ministry as Director of Music at Hope Lutheran Church in Milton, WI.

When Herb was the Dean of the Seventh Day Baptist Center on Ministry, Barbara provided meals for the students, once as many as 18 at one three-week session. She also held discussion groups for pastors' wives during semi-annual Pastors' Conferences. During their time in Plainfield, NJ, and Milton, WI, Barbara (oh yes, and Herb) provided a home for 18 different people, several working at the Seventh Day Baptist Center.

Barbara was a gifted counselor, and because of her compassion and servant gifts, people seemed to be drawn to her for advice and encouragement.

Barbara was preceded in death by her parents and a brother, Brian. She is survived by her husband, Herbert, and three children: Brian (Heidi), Peggy Sue, and Michael (Heather) Saunders; and brothers: David, Brandon, and Stephen Crandall. She was loved by her six grandchildren: Aaron, Nicholas, Kailey, Rachael, Ella, and Tyler.

Celebration of Life services were held at Hope Lutheran Church, Milton, WI, on Sunday, November 11 at 4 p.m. with Rev. Glen Warner officiating.

Memorial Gifts may be made to the Madison Seventh Day Baptist Church, the Carbone Cancer Center at UW Hospital, or Rainbow Hospice of Johnson Creek, WI.

From THE SEVENTH DAY BAPTIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY

NEW LEADERSHIP POSITION OPENING

The Seventh Day Baptist Missionary Society is excited to announce a new leadership position opening: Chief Executive Director. This individual will be responsible for leading, facilitating, and organizing several key positions and programs within the Society. The Board of Directors is looking for someone who is:

- A person of integrity, actively growing in faith and functioning in spiritual giftings
- Passionate for and experienced in missions
- Dedicated to furthering the vision of the Society—to make disciples of all nations
- A strong leader and effective team organizer
- Successful at cross-cultural relationship building
- A highly capable administrator
- Able to work collaboratively with the SDB Conference of USA & Canada
- Very strong in written, verbal, and non-verbal communication
- Demonstrating faithfulness in their local Seventh Day Baptist church
- Able to travel globally as needed

(Don't let the inability to move keep you from applying.)

Interested candidates should send resumes to *president@sdbmissions.org*. Please direct questions to Danny Lee, 386-299-5709. We ask that all would join us in prayer as God leads us to the right individual for this position.

Board of Managers
SDB Missionary Society

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Luciano Barreto Nogueira de Moura Elected President of World Federation



Pastor Luciano Moura and wife, Liane

SDB World
Federation

By Pastor Andy Samuels
General Secretary

The General Secretary of the Seventh Day Baptist World Federation is pleased to announce the election of Pastor Luciano Barreto Nogueira de Moura as President of the organization. Pastor Luciano serves in the Seventh Day Baptist Conference of Brazil. His election was ratified by a majority of the World Federation member conferences after a recommendation by the Executive Committee. Pastor Luciano replaces the late Pastor Jonas Sommer, another Brazilian, who was tragically killed in a car accident along with his wife and two children, in February of this year.

As part of his testimony, Pastor Luciano Barreto Nogueira de Moura says, "I was captivated by Christ in 1992 and was baptized in Salvador, Bahia, in my homeland of Brazil. I attended a Presbyterian church for some years and after moving to Brasília, the capital of Brazil, I attended the Bethel Brazilian church. In 1999, I discovered the Seventh Day Baptist Church on the Fortaleza SDB church website and began to lead a small group in the home of a Seventh Day Baptist brother in Sobradinho, Federal District. I was ordained as a pastor in 2006. Since then, I have been pastor of the First Seventh Day Baptist Church of Brasília, a small group that met in my home until August of 2014 when we began renting a room in Brasília."

Pastor Luciano Moura was World Federation Vice-President for South America from 2003 to 2005. He attended the World Federation Sessions in Brazil in 2003 and in 2017, serving as a delegate for his conference. He graduated in Economics and Law, with post-graduate work in both areas and he is finishing Theological Studies by Andrew Jumper Post-graduate Center – Mackenzie University. He is a theological student at the Methodist University. He and Liane have been married for 29 years. They have twins; their daughter Ilara, who is single, and their son Gabriel, who is married to Paula; all of them servants of the Lord. [SR](#)



Whatever you believe and
hold true about Christmas,
this truth remains...

“For this is how God loved the world:
He gave his one and only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him
will not perish but have eternal life.”

—John 3:16

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