

the

APRIL 2008 EDITION

FOCAL Point

CENTERED ON ACTIVITIES OF TOLEDO FIRST SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH FAMILY



See! The winter is past. . . Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come. . .

Song of Songs 2:11, 12



✧ Learn Proven Financial Strategies in April ✧

We've certainly had our share of turbulent times lately. During the last several years, we've weathered the terrorist attacks of September 11, multiple corporate accounting scandals, several years of bear-market stock returns, and war in Iraq. The aftermath of these events has left many people concerned about the economic ramifications—not only for the country, but also for their own financial situations.

It's only natural to be concerned about the challenges we face. And yet, out of uncertainty can come opportunity. Even during turbulent times, you can comfortably ride out a financial storm if you have a sound financial strategy—if you're prepared.



**Turbulent Times
Financial Strategies
for Success**

Come to an educational workshop and learn strategies to enhance your potential for success in today's markets. Shanyn Stewart, Partner and Senior Wealth Advisor at Leach, Stewart, and Associates, will show you proven investment approaches that can help you thrive in uncertain times.

The workshop will be held 7:00 - 8:30 PM on Wednesday, April 9, and Saturday, April 12. Materials cost \$20. Space is limited. Please register by calling 419.882.6200. Free childcare will be provided. ##

Spring shows what God can do with a drab and dirty world. —Virgil A. Kraft

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If You Want to Walk on Water. . .

The Women's Study Group is reading the book, *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get Out of the Boat*. We would love to have you join us! We are learning that, like Peter, God wants each of us to get out of our own boat—perhaps ours is the boat of popular opinion, or of familiarity and comfort, or of money. Each is different and yet the same.

So how do you step out of the boat? A great place to begin is to ask yourself what you are most afraid of doing. Whatever that is, it may be just the thing that God is asking you to do. Sounds crazy, I know, but so does walking on water! And yet Jesus commanded Peter to do it.

In Matthew 25, we read with new perspective about the parable of the talents. Each servant was given talents: one 5, one 3, and another 1. All were given the opportunity to use their gift and yet the last servant, because he had been given only one talent, chose to bury it. What will you do with what you've been given?

The author gives four indicators of how to find your calling: [1] **Fear**. Is God calling you to do something that YOU can't do alone? In our weakness He is strong. [2] **Frustration**. What frustrates you that you just can't stand anymore (major issues like AIDS or homelessness, not small irritations). [3] **Compassion**. The thing that makes your heart bleed when you see it or hear about it. [4] **Prayer**. Ask. Prayerfully ask God what it is that He is asking you to do, then wait and listen for His answer. He *will* answer.

This is just a short overview of where we are right now in our study. We still have more, but I'd like to end with this thought by Gregg Levoy:

The Tragedy of the Unopened Gift

To sinful patterns of behavior that never get confronted and changed,
Abilities and gifts that never get cultivated and deployed
Until weeks become months
And months turn into years,
And one day you're looking back on a life of
Deep, intimate, gut-wrenchingly honest conversations you never had;
Great bold prayers you never prayed,
Exhilarating risks you never took,
Sacrificial gifts you never offered,
Lives you never touched,
And you're sitting in a recliner with a shriveled soul,
And forgotten dreams, and you realize there was a world of desperate need,
And a great God calling you to be part of something bigger than yourself

You see the person you could have become but did not;
You never followed your calling.
You never got out of the boat.

I'd like to challenge each of you reading this right now. Don't settle for anything less than the life Christ intended for you. Get to know Him better each day. Ask Him what it is that He is calling YOU to do — then get out on the water with Him and walk. —Kendra Bills ##

Connections celebrates 3rd Anniversary

The Connections Ministry, with its weekly 5 PM Saturday worship, is the "longest running lay-led, continuous, weekly ministry in our church," points out Ron Szczechowski, one of its organizers. "We average 25-30 young - and young at heart - weekly worshippers, who like a more contemporary style service."

Connections provides a relaxed, friendly environment with card tables, candles and mood lighting where they offer coffee, tea, hot chocolate and a variety of finger foods. Newcomers appreciate the friendly, loving church service and report that they "always feel welcome."

The sermon focus is purely biblical and all about Jesus Christ and faith in Him alone. David Case is the "voice" of Connections, but they often have guest speakers, such as Doug Bleyaert, head elder at Monroe Alliance, Monroe, MI.

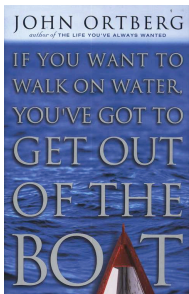
For over two years praise music has been led by Cory Payne, but Ron reports that he recently accepted a position at Stillwater Adventist Church near Dayton as their worship leader. Everyone will miss Cory and wishes him well.

Ron encourages you to try Connections this week and bring someone with you who does not "do church" on a regular basis. This may be just what they're looking for [whether they know it or not]. ##



*In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple tree; in cocoons, a hidden promise: Butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be, unrevealed until its season, God alone can see. ##*

The Focal Point is published monthly by Toledo First Seventh-day Adventist Church ~
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International Food Fest was Fun Fest

March's social event was popular with young and old. Cheesecakes by the slice, hot dogs, spicy meat balls and tostadas are along the row in the first picture. (And many

other foods were ready for purchase.) Gary Gooden brought along some friends that he plays with in a band [far right]. They, along with an Irish tenor, entertained us

all evening. Also above, students show the handiwork of our face painters.

Thanks to all of you who participated in any way. You made the 2008 International

Food Fest a wonderful success.—DeLaura Caulder

P.S. Thanks to Jeff Batchelder for sharing his pictures. ##

CALENDAR OF EVENTS	APRIL 5	APRIL 7	APRIL 9 & 12	APRIL 28
	<i>Baptisms/HeartSong Community Lunch & Sing</i>	Town Hall Meeting, 7 PM	Turbulent Times <i>Financial Workshop</i>	Business Meeting

Honoring God's call

In the March 2008 issue of the *Visitor*, published by Columbia Union, Ohio Education Superintendent, E. Jay Colburn, describes Kells Hall as a "spiritually focused, mission-driven leader," who "shares the passion of his board and strategically provides students with the opportunity to experience a distinctive Adventist education."

Kells, principal and upper grades teacher at our own Toledo Junior Academy, is quoted in the article: "All

children, when given high expectations and ample encouragement, can achieve more than we usually give them credit, even those we might consider at risk."

Our TJA students "demonstrate superior academic growth" Mr. Colburn goes on to say. You may read the entire article in the *Visitor* online at columbiaunion.org ##



More Fruit!

There is a bonus fruit day this spring! Orders are due by April 4. Pick up is April 20. Order Valencia oranges @ \$26 full/\$14 half. California navels @ \$15/half case. Ruby Red grapefruit @ \$24/\$13 half. Tangerines @ \$22/half case. Please be sure to call the school office [419.841.0082] by Friday noon, April 4th. ##

Let's build a gym!

Did you hear? The school mortgage is paid! Great news because now we can raise

money to build a much-needed gym! Would you like to help with fundraising? Or just want more information? Contact Kyla Reams @ 419.283.1199. ##





Try it, you'll like it!

Vitality! Energy! Excitement! Enthusiasm! Energy! Innovation! Joy! Energy! Wisdom! Power! Praise! Energy! Life! What do these words all have in common? They are descriptive of the KidConnect worship service here at Toledo First.

Children are one of the focal points of our ministry at Toledo First. We believe that children are very special, and we do our best to care for them and teach them in a safe and loving environment. KidConnect is for children ages 4-12, and features a hands-on approach to learn about Jesus and His love.

The ministry of KidConnect has an impact on the children of our congregation and on our community as well. I don't know how familiar you are with the ministry of KidConnect, but it is an incredible worship service. For example, all the kids you see at the children's story time each week exit to the fellowship hall to receive fantastic, age-appropriate teaching about Christianity, the Bible, the person and work of Jesus Christ, and plenty more.

A different Bible truth is emphasized each week and taught by Pastor Aly through examples from the Bible, nature, and everyday life. It is a place where children can grow in wisdom, faith, and friendship. Music, fun activities, stories, teaching, and discussion give the children varied opportunities to learn biblical principles that will stick with them throughout the course of their lives.

In addition to the teaching, the children in KidConnect, learn, at a very young age, to do Christianity in community. They build friendships where they can talk about their lives, and discuss the struggles they face as children following Christ. Recently the kids took a step of faith and decided to sponsor two children through Compassion International. Thirty-two dollars a month is life changing for a child sponsored through Compassion. It was thrilling to watch these kids struggle with which child to sponsor and reach the conclusion that they could not choose just one child, they had to choose two, and by faith they will raise the funds to do it.

I started volunteering at KidConnect in November and I have to tell you it is one of the most rewarding ministries I've ever done. It's exciting to have the kids in the church know you by name and be happy to see you each week. You too could have David Ashley and Alex Bills and many others

as your buddies! Kid ministry is the best! Try it, you'll like it!! —David Case

"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 3:14-15 ##

Are you willing to explore your potential with a small group?

Call it whatever you like. The list of names is endless.

Cell, GOB (Groups of Belonging) Nurture, Small, Care, Special Interest, Life, Bible Study, Seeker, Support or Friendship Groups are a few names that our church may choose to call its own. Whatever name we choose, small groups are groups of people who gather together frequently in homes, offices, church, restaurants, and coffee shops for the purpose of building relationships and helping one another grow in their relationship with Christ.

Groups can meet geographically, close to where the group members live, making it easy to get together for regular and spontaneous gatherings. Some groups could be life-stage specific like men's groups, women's groups, college age groups, post college age groups, as well as groups for singles over 30 and many more.

We are looking to start new groups!! You too can experience relational connectedness, mutual support, spiritual growth and serving others through a small group. Has God **planted a desire within you to share a particular interest and friendship with others?** If you have an idea, interest or even a slight notion about being a small group leader, host or participant, we want to hear from you. Call or email me with your thoughts, desires or interests so we can explore the possibilities. Resources and training for group leaders will be offered soon. Watch for information. ~ Carla Szczechowski, 419-866-8951, cszczechowski@ymcatoledo.org.

"They joined with the other believers and devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, sharing in the Lord's Supper and in prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together constantly and shared everything they had. They sold their possessions and shared the proceeds with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity— all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their group those who were being saved." Acts 2:42-47 ##

Concert is April 12

The Elementary Music Festival in Mt. Vernon was postponed due to bad weather in March, but it is now set for April 11-12 with the Festival Concert scheduled for Sabbath, April 12, 3:30 PM. Our Toledo Junior Academy upper grades will be participating. Every one is invited to attend. ##

Academy Days follow Festival

Mt. Vernon Academy's annual Academy Days will be held April 13-14. Students in grades 7 – 11 are invited to this free event. There will be a variety of fun activities and an opportunity to receive scholarship money for next school year. Questions? Call 740.397.5411, email esoper@mvacademy.org, or visit www.mvacademy.org. ##

Golf Outing rain or shine!

Mt. Vernon Academy's 11th Annual Alumni Golf Tournament will be Sunday, April 27 with registration at 8 AM and Shotgun start at 9 AM. Register by April 18. For further information, call 740.397.5411, x246 or email mvadev@ecr.net. ##

Disaster Training opportunity in Bucyrus

A 2-day event in disaster training will be provided by the Ohio Conference at the Bucyrus Church on the weekend of April 26-27. Registration is \$35, including lunch. It begins Sabbath afternoon with "Introduction to Disaster Preparedness," 3:30 – 6:00 and continues Sunday with "Donations Operations," 9:00 – 6:00. This training teaches the procedures for

establishing a Community Collection Center, a multi-agency warehouse and an emergency distribution center.

Upon completion you are certified to set up and operate typical Adventist Community Service disaster response operations under our agreement with FEMA, the State of Ohio, etc. Call 740.397.4665 to register.

You can find more information by visiting the website at ohioadventist.org and clicking on Departments, and then ACS Disaster Response. ##

Celebrate at Kettering

Everyone is welcome to attend the once in a lifetime convocation: "LOVE OF THE AGES—a Vision of Hope" in Kettering, Ohio, on May 10, 2008.

Clarissa Worley Sproul is a popular speaker in Ohio and she will sing and present a message in the afternoon entitled, "The Broken Family." God experienced His family breakup when Lucifer and his angels chose to leave their happy home. Learn God's plan for happiness in this life and in the life to come. God made your life for relationships; you can experience all that God has in store for you.

Other speakers include: Jon Paulien, dean of the School of Religion, Loma Linda University; and Jan Paulsen, president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

Musical guests include Take 6 and Ponder, Harp & Jennings.

Meetings begin at 9 AM and lunch will be provided to those who have made their reservation. Emailing your order is preferred or you may phone in your order. Email in your order at: information@ohioadventist.org. Phone in your order at: 1-740-397-4665 ext. 165. The deadline for

getting in your order is Friday, April 25, at twelve noon provided that tickets are still available. For more information go to ohioadventist.org. ##

Christian Record Services help the blind

Christian Record Services, the General Conference's ministry for the blind and visually impaired, receives a once a year offering from churches in North America. That offering will be April 12.

CRS serves nearly 30,000 readers with free large print, Braille, and audio magazines; a large Braille and audio lending library; and a lively Bible correspondence school. Recently 58 students graduated from Bible school studies.

You are invited to give so others may receive. ##

Mirth upon the earth

On April 1, you may well have a joke or two played on you. If so, enjoy the moment. Laugh, even if the joke is on you.

Christians have great cause for laughter on a daily basis. We can laugh because we know that no matter how much tragedy we see or may suffer personally, we have the assurance that God can turn it all around and bring great good out of evil.

The proof of that, for Christians, is Jesus' resurrection. —Charles Ferrell ##

