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Hampden Heights Sentinel

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BUT IN YOUR HEARTS REVERE CHRIST AS LORD. ALWAYS BE PREPARED TO GIVE AN ANSWER TO EVERYONE WHO ASKS YOU TO GIVE THE REASON FOR THE HOPE THAT YOU HAVE. BUT DO THIS WITH GENTLENESS AND RESPECT... ~ 1 PETER 3:15 ~

RJA News Corner

by Lee Stahl, Principal

A New School Year Begins

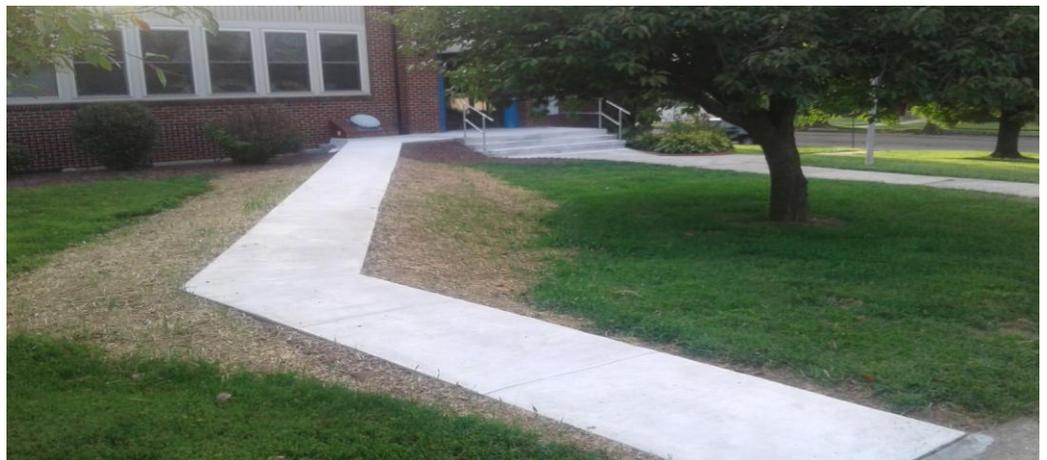
Reading Junior Academy started its new school year on August 17. We are starting out the year so far with 81 students, with 22 being new to our school this year. We are still hoping to enroll more students by Labor Day.

Spiritual Focus

Mr. Stahl led out in the first school chapel by introducing this year's spiritual theme, **Be Great! Serve...** The theme is based on Matthew 20:26, where Jesus said, "whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant." The staff at RJA is determined to promote the example that Jesus gave in serving others by providing opportunities of service to our students. Additionally, we recognize that serving others is not limited to performing service projects, but that we all have opportunities to serve others by the way we conduct ourselves with those around us. Serving others is included in the way we treat our classmates, friends, parents, teachers, and guests. We hope to see everyone become great, based on Jesus' definition.

New Walkway/Entrance

One of the new projects completed over the summer included a new handicapped accessible walkway to the front entrance of the school. Mr. Stahl was able to get some assistance from Pastor Pete, Pastor Tom, Russell Yehl, and Matthew White in pouring and finishing the concrete porch and walkways. This has been a project that had its beginnings over 6 years ago. We are thankful that it is finally completed.



Church & School Picnic

If you haven't heard yet, the annual picnic for the Reading Area churches and school is scheduled for Sunday, September 11, at the Shoemakersville Park. Please plan to attend! Bring food and/or drinks to share. Also, please bring, chairs, table games, softball glove, and other activities to enjoy throughout the afternoon. It all begins at 12:30 PM. We plan to start eating at 1 PM. We hope to see you there!

Reading Junior Academy... Educating Today and for Eternity!

Health Ministries

by Arleen Johns

NEWSTART: Trust

I hope you have enjoyed these 8 months of newsletter articles as we explored the NEWSTART acronym. The last one is TRUST. Trust in divine power. Perhaps you have been trying to improve your lifestyle using these 8 health principles but you realize that your efforts to change the habits that may have impaired your health have been fruitless. Have you considered that the power to change may need to come from *without* rather than *within*? Psalm 103:14 says "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we [are] dust." Bottom Line--We need God's help! We need to connect with Him to trust Him. How? Through prayer, reading His word, communing with Him, through the things He has made. This trust in divine power has the potential to influence many aspects of mental and physical health. Depression, for example, is both a symptom and syndrome. It can be triggered by a major upheaval in your life and can, by itself, cause major changes in your health. Science shows that depression can worsen pain symptoms and lessen the likelihood that its victims will

engage in healthy pursuits.

When you recognize that some of your past habits may have contributed to your sickness, then it's time to "trust." Trust in the deliverance offered by Jesus Christ. Trust in the power of a God who created you – a God who loves you, and who even died for you. When we feel we cannot change our bad habits, then trust that *God can!* Hand over control and trust in *His power* to give you the strength to make the right decisions. The result? Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10).

Peter expresses his trust in God this way: "Casting all your anxiety upon Him for He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7). Anxiety (or worry) is a state of mistrust and has led to many dire and evil consequences, from drug addiction to suicide. It can cause high blood pressure, heart disease and even cancer. Resentment, hate, and anger cause anxiety. Anxiety and resentment may indicate a lack of the necessary trust that leads to a peaceful and content existence (see Matthew 6:25-34). Anxiety is gripping our nation due to

natural disasters, economic insecurity, broken families, and social deterioration. This is the time to cast your anxiety upon God and trust *Him*.

Consider this--those who attended religious services more than once a week enjoyed a 7 year longer life expectancy than those who never attended. Older adults who considered themselves religious functioned better and had fewer problems than those without faith. Patients comforted by their faith were three times more likely to be living six months after open-heart surgery than those who found no emotional support in a belief in a personal God.

A study of 855 high school seniors revealed that students who go to church are less likely to become delinquents, drink alcohol, or use marijuana than other teens, boys or girls.

Dr Ted Hamilton states that trust in someone outside of ourselves actually releases healing hormones into our bodies that contribute to the healing process.

For example, if you are fighting obesity and have developed high blood pressure and type-2 diabetes, then the first step to recovery is to realize the dire situation in which you find yourself – a situation of sickness that can lead to death. Maybe your doctor has already warned you of an impending stroke or heart attack. When this realization of the gravity of your situation sinks in, you are headed in the right direction. The next step is to develop **trust**; complete trust in God, the Creator of the universe, our forever Friend.

Ellen G White writes "those who in everything make God first and best, are the happiest people in the world." Trust changes a person's outlook, observes hospital chaplain Marti Jones. If you are a trusting person, you are likely more positive. When you know God cares for you, you are able to rely on the fact that God is leading, even in the physical care you are receiving,

Won't you consider giving Him a chance to show you what He can do? He's waiting to give you strength and comfort like you've never had before.

Credits: NEWSTART website, CREATION Health

Sentinel Survey Results

by Bob Kondracki

Well, the results of the Sentinel newsletter survey are in! First of all, I want to thank all of the people who took the time to participate in the survey. We certainly value your effort and input on this important church ministry.

The survey insert was in the bulletin for two consecutive weeks. It is disappointing that in that time, from the large

membership that we have in our church, only 14 people chose to return surveys. Be that as it may, we did receive some very valuable feedback and suggestions, and we will attempt to shape the newsletter around the interests of the people who participated in the survey and appreciate the Sentinel the most. Ashley and I chose not to contribute to the survey

so as not to add any personal bias to the results. There are apparently some rather polarizing columns in the newsletter, judging from the responses we got. Some columns were rated highly by some, very low by others. By far the most popular and consistently rated feature of the newsletter was the Meet a Member column. Nothing else was even close, with the next

most popular feature a distant second. The results, from most popular to least popular are as follows:

1. Meet a Member
2. RJA News Corner
3. Observation Post (tie)
Recipe of the Month
5. Health Ministries
6. Grace's Outpost
7. Children's Page
(continued on page 5)

Grace's Outpost by Ashley Richards

I'm *really* looking forward to meeting Jesus.

After all the darkness of last month's column, I figured it would be nice to contrast last month's with this. Despite all the trouble we'll go through, despite all the pain, the death, the anguish, the persecution—and I am choosing not to focus on that right now—I'll get to be with Jesus. Not just for a second, not for just a fleeting prayer, but *forever*. I'll be able to be with Jesus for just as long as I like.

And oh. my. goodness. I had no clue how much I desperately want that. I can talk to Jesus any time I want now, and I'm so glad that He hears me every single time. But—and I know I'm not alone in this—sometimes it's not as easy to hear Him back, and I am so excited for the day when I'll never have to tell Him goodbye, when I'll be able to hear His laugh—audibly!—and feel His bear hugs, when I'll be able to see the twinkle in His eye, when I'll be able to hear His wisdom and humor.

Is Jesus not the most complicated, perplexing man you've ever known? Sometimes I think I've got a grasp on Him, and then I realize how completely wrong I am. Have you been there? I'm looking forward to heaven just so I can maybe catch a tangible glimpse of who He is. I was reading in the Psalms last night, and David was talking about the contrast of both God's power (and the way the whole universe stands up at attention to respect the authority of His spoken word) and yet how deeply and intimately God

loved him and watched over him. It reminded me of when God spoke to Job at the end of his trials and spoke of His power over the weather, and yet how Jesus had compassion over the sick in Judea just after John the Baptist died and He was yearning for peace and time to mourn His cousin's death. How can He be both so compassionate, intimate, kind, loving, and selfless, but also powerful, commanding, almighty, and wise? So full of the leadership we need rather than the leadership we want. He sees us just as we are and *loves* us and wants intimacy with us, but yet He makes the world go around, speaks galaxies into existence, and holds all power over all things. Much as we'd like to fit Him neatly into a box, He just won't fit. I'm desperate to spend eon upon eon with Him, understanding and loving Him more. I can't wait to see His plans for me after He's made this world right.

Sometimes I see Jesus in little things that happen throughout my day. I saw him that way today at work. There's this guy that's one of my coworkers—we'll call him Noah. Noah's worked with me at Panera for about a year now, although I don't work with him enough that I feel like I understand him well. He's likeable. He seems to have been brought up well and is respectful and kind, for the most part. We're cordial, but there's such an age (and experience) difference between us that sometimes it seems hard to relate to him—or at least that has prevented us from being good friends.

But today, one of my best friends there, one of the bakers (we'll call her Serena) and I were talking, and he overheard us. One of our former coworkers, who sexually harassed several of the girls who have worked at Panera when he did, had come into the store and had just been sitting in the dining room for hours. All the managers there today were new, and had no experience with this kid, and weren't inclined to take our stories seriously, but Serena was visibly upset. She was worried about the cashier girls, and remembering all the things he'd done in the past, and angry she couldn't do anything to keep us safe. We were talking about that, and some other worries I'd had in a separate area of my life, and how I was worried that this kid's reappearance made me worried that the two of them were connected. Noah showed concern, and was kind. I clocked out a couple minutes later, and Noah had followed me into the dining room as I was leaving, maybe because he was in charge of keeping it clean, but I think because he was worried for my safety. "I'll watch out for you when you leave," he whispered, so the other kid couldn't hear.

I walked taller as I passed through those doors. All my problems hadn't been solved, and that punk kid who had assaulted friends of mine was still there when I left. Noah's a high school kid, and I'm not sure what he could have done, but it was reassuring to know someone cared that much. I saw Jesus in Noah at that moment—in a powerful way. I may see a little of Noah when I think of Jesus' provision from now on—although maybe it was Jesus all along, and Noah just reflected Him well today. *It's okay, Ashley. Just go about your regular duties. You don't have to worry. I'll make sure you're safe. I'll stand up for you. I won't let him hurt you.*

I feel like it's only a small snippet—never mind His infinite strength and power—but I think I saw Jesus a bit today. I can't wait to meet Him in heaven and see Him—and His heart—face-to-face rather than through a mirror dimly.

It'll make all the things in this life worth it.

Meet a Member

by Ashley Richards

This month's member is no stranger to our congregation. Wendy Good is our church secretary (as well as our church clerk), and we are sure that you will have seen her around, even if you haven't been a part of our congregation for long.

Wendy grew up in the church, she explains. "As a young adult I began to identify with some of the other issues that other people my own age were also dealing with, and I began to come to church more because I wanted to and less out of guilt," she says. "As an older adult and after many Bible studies, I discovered that I had a friend in Jesus. Through even deeper study with Pastor Pete, I came to experience the Holy Spirit for the first time and that is what has changed my life." In addition to Garrett, and her mother (Mary Jane Morgan, who is a member here), Wendy has a few aunts and uncles who are

also members of the Seventh-day Adventist church across the country.

In addition to being the current church secretary (and clerk), Wendy has also served as a Primary Sabbath School teacher for thirteen years, and she was a crafts leader for our church's Vacation Bible School program for ten years. She says she'd like to move toward helping out with the new youth group, EDGE, in the future.

Wendy loves Hampden Heights, and her church family, she says. Her favorite part about Hampden is "the multicultural membership—I love that there are so many people from so many different countries and backgrounds."

Wendy has one son, Garrett, who will be 16 in a few months. Her husband, Kenny, passed away ten months ago. She enjoys reading, crafting, and gardening. In addition to being our church secretary, she is also a caregiver for Advantage Home Care (although she is out on worker's comp due to a shoulder injury). In addition to her son, she is very close to her mom, and her sister, who also lives on the eastern part of the United States.

Five things you may not know about Wendy:

1. She has an associate's degree in Interior Design, and she worked for 20 years in that field before retiring to be a stay-at-home mom.
2. She loves vintage and antique items (her husband, Kenny, used to say that he was her antique).
3. She is very critical of herself.
4. She tends to be a people pleaser and doesn't say no when she should.
5. She misses her sister desperately since she moved away.

Recipe of the Month

by Elizabeth Hill

One more easy recipe for this summer season. We all like easy!

Strawberries and Cream Dessert Squares

Crust:

1 pouch (1 lb. 1.5 oz.) sugar cookie mix
1/2 cup butter or margarine, softened
1 egg

Filling:

1 cup white baking chips (6 oz.)
1 pkg. (8 Oz.) cream cheese, softened

Topping:

4 cups sliced fresh strawberries
1/2 cup sugar
2 tblsp. cornstarch
1/3 cup water
10 to 12 drops red food color, if desired

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Spray bottom only of 15X10X1 or 13X9 inch pan with cooking spray. In large bowl, stir cookie mix, butter, and egg until soft dough forms. Press evenly in bottom of pan. Bake 15 to 20 min. or until light golden brown. Cool completely, about 30 min.

In small microwaveable bowl, microwave baking chips uncovered on high 45 to 60 sec. or until chips are melted and can be stirred smooth. In medium bowl, beat cream cheese with electric mixer on medium speed until smooth. Stir in melted chips until blended. Spread mixture over crust. Refrigerate while making topping.

In small bowl crush 1 cup strawberries. In 2 quart saucepan mix sugar and cornstarch. Stir in crushed strawberries and 1/3 cup water. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture boils and thickens. Stir in food color. Cool 10 min. Gently stir in remaining 3 cups strawberries. Spoon topping over filling. Refrigerate 1 hour or until set; serve within 4 hours. Store covered in refrigerator.

Praying the Scriptures by Barbara Snyder

When I first starting praying and reading the Bible, all things were new to me. I absorbed information, feelings, and love like a sponge. I have never forgotten the energy and welcoming peace that I received during this time of my new life in Christ. I was ready to shout to the world what I was experiencing. My life was changed. My attitudes, wants, desires, positions on issues, and so much more were changed. I looked at my son with such love, such awe and such a huge desire to love him that I had joy in all things involving him, and this transferred to my work life also. I saw Jesus as real and loving, as I had never seen any "story" about Jesus before. Now He was an experience, not a character in a large, strange tradition.

However, over the years things changed. I fell into a habit of belief. This habit of belief kept me going to church, paying tithe, doing right, and keeping my children in line. Big mistake. Sometimes good habits lead to forgetting the energy, the surprise, the mystery of life and dedication. The Bible became a Sabbath School routine.

Gradually I rediscovered my Lord and used The Desire of Ages, Steps to Christ, and Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings to begin a deepening relationship again. Then still later I was taught by wonderful Christians how to look at scripture in different ways. I would like to share one of those ways (and why it works) with you. First, why it works...

Anatomically the brain has two sides. Physiologically one side attempts to master tasks dealing with the literal and analytic information such as mathematics, engineering, prioritizing, organizing, construction etc, and the other side of the brain absorbs via senses some of which are not identified. So far there are 5 well known senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste) and at least 11 more. These senses communicate meaning to us in ways and outcomes usually not named by us...sort of an intuition or a "knowing."

When we read slowly and repeatedly we allow the intuitive side a chance to learn. It is best to read a Bible passage slowly, and better yet to read it aloud 3 times.

Here is a guide for beginning a quiet time with Scripture.

1. Pray before beginning, inviting the Holy Spirit to instruct you.
2. Read a passage slowly 3 times using a limited number of verses. Generally reading whole chapters does not allow for the absorption of anything other than facts. Allow yourself the time to let the Holy Spirit talk! Using the Gospels and the Psalms are good places to begin this method.
3. Ask yourself questions such as: What is going on in the passage? Who is involved?
4. Look at the scripture from the eyes of someone involved in the passage. Think of the environment in which the passage is taken. Is it friendly? Is it pressured? Are the people calm, tired, anxious, weary, in grief, angry, confrontational?
5. Notice what attracts you, what gets your attention. Take on one of the character's parts. How would you feel if you were there at that time?

6. Sit with these verses for awhile. No need to think them through. Listen for God's response. There is not always a mountain top experience, but over time you will notice things you never noticed before.

7. Get into the habit of writing what you noticed. It could be one line, one word of thanksgiving, one thought. If you keep this in a journal or notebook you will notice that even as you write, something may be revealed to you. I will be honest with you...most people balk at this. They think they are not writers. I get that. Except you aren't writing. The Holy Spirit is writing with you. I have two friends who just starting doing this in the last year and now find it a familiar and good practice. No pressure though. Do what you can and let God do the rest.

Do away with "a text for the day with a hand on the doorknob." (quoted from my friend Morris Venden). Enjoy the beauty, the gratitude, even the pain as experienced by Jesus and his followers (you included) as you open yourself to Jesus in you via praying with scripture. God will bless you with His Presence.

Sentinel Survey Results (continued from page 2)

8. Movie Review
9. Book Review (tie)
- Mission Trip Central
11. Other columns/Non-specific articles

In response to the survey results, we will be dropping the Movie Review, Book Review, and Mission Trip Central, effective immediately. We will however, continue to offer

non-specific/guest contributions. My suspicion is that the "Other columns/non-specific articles" category finished last because of the ambiguous description of the column, not necessarily the content. We've had some very good "non-regular" contributors and articles over the history of the newsletter that would not justify this feature's low rating.

The Book Review is also being eliminated in part by default, because Stacy McLean can no longer do it, having other obligations now infringing upon her time. I would like to perhaps bring that column back in the future if somebody would volunteer to take it over. As a result of the changes, the newsletter is only 6 pages in length this month, but I am working on

new features, and I expect to expand back to our usual 8 page format as soon as possible.

As I mentioned earlier, we had some very interesting proposals for features that I'd certainly like to consider. So if you were one of the individuals that made a suggestion, now is the time to step up to the plate. (continued on page 6)

Hampden Heights Seventh Day Adventist Church

2706 Old Pricetown Rd. Temple, PA 19560

PHONE: (610) 921-0890

CHURCH EMAIL: HampdenHeightsSDA@comcast.net

SENTINEL EMAIL: HampdenChurch@yahoo.com

SENTINEL EDITORS: Bob Kondracki Ashley Richards

Pastor Pete Maldonado 413-222-6114

PMaldonado@paconference.org

We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.HampdenHeightsChurch.org

The Children's Page by Ashley Richards

Do you know the story of Queen Esther? This month's puzzle is based on her story, so it might help you to figure it out if you know it. Esther was a young Jewish girl during the Bible times who was selected to be the queen of the Medes and the Persians, but there was a man, Haman, one of the king's most trusted advisors, who hated the Jews very much and wanted to destroy them—including Queen Esther! Esther's uncle, Mordecai, heard about Haman's plan to destroy all the Jews, and went to Queen Esther to get her to do something about it. If you want to know what happens, though, you'll have to read her story for yourself! It can be found in the book of Esther in the Old Testament of the Bible.

- 1. ATANNIEHIL
2. AEEERRSTXX
3. UTKNEBA
4. TESHER
5. MANAH
6. SWJE
7. GINK
8. ACEMOIRD
9. MIPUR
10. ENEUQ
11. YALOR EDITC
12. TLKASCCOH
13. USSA
14. NECLU
15. TASHIV

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that Esther was terrified to go before King Artexerxes when she pled for the lives of her people? According to the Bible, the king had a golden scepter, and no one was allowed to go before the king unless called by him, and if you showed up uninvited, you would only be able to live if he extended his scepter. Her uncle challenged her to go despite her fear, though, encouraging her with the words "And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14). Even if you DO know all of that, DID you know that the same is true for you? It doesn't matter if you're 9 or 92, a boy or a girl, happy or sad, or any other thing. Jesus created you at this time, because He has a special purpose for you, and He believes in you, and He loves you! One day, you could do something just as amazing as what Esther did for her country!

Sentinel Survey Results (continued from page 5)

Some of the ideas would require someone who was willing to do the requisite work and maintenance on such a feature. Many of the suggestions would necessitate a fair amount of time and dedication, far more than Ashley and I would be able to invest to do them proper justice. Please see me and we'll talk about how we can go about implementing these ideas. The rest of the survey results, in a nutshell are as follows:

The mean result for how much impact the newsletter has on our church, from 1 (very impactful) to 5 (no relevance) was 2.6 5 people said they read it in its entirety. 5 said most of it. 2 half of it, and 2 browse through it.

It's not too late to voice your ideas or opinions. We are continually looking for ways to improve the newsletter, and if you think you have a good suggestion, please let Ashley or I know. And if you have concern for some of the columns that are being eliminated, by all means also let us know. The survey results were from only a small percentage of the church body. If we hear from enough people regarding a particular change, things can always be modified. As I have said in the past, we are always striving to make the Sentinel better. If you want to express your ideas, you know where to find us.