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Hampden Heights Sentinel

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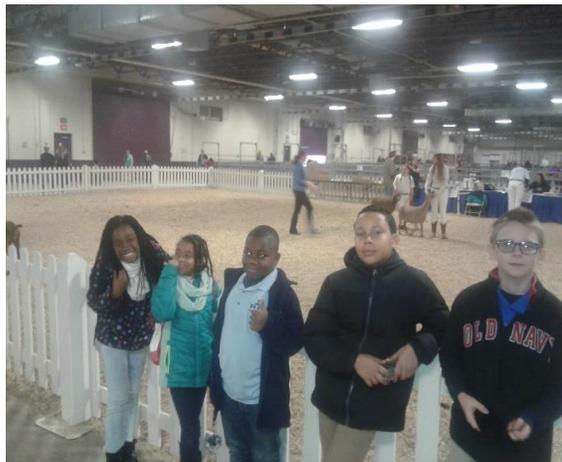
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Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. ~ 1 Peter 4:10 NIV ~

RJA News Corner by Lee Stahl, Principal

Students visit Pennsylvania Farm Show



Students at Reading Junior Academy spent a day at the Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg on January 11. Pictured above are some of our students taking in the goat judging event. Also, Mrs. Stahl is enjoying one of the butterflies in the butterfly tent. As always there were lots of animals to see. One of the highlights this year was being able to watch a calf being born. Some students enjoyed petting all the different kinds of rabbits. It was an exciting day!

Teachers and Pastors Together

When it was originally announced last spring that the conference was planning to hold in-service meetings on January 16-17, teachers were not thrilled with the idea of having three days of no school so soon after Christmas break. However, now knowing that we would have cancelled school on those two days due to the weather makes us feel a whole lot better. The intent of scheduling meetings at this time was to provide an opportunity for teachers and pastors to get together in hopes of being able to support each other in ministry. Pastor Joseph Kidder, from Andrews University, was the guest speaker. For the two days the teachers were present, he shared inspirational stories on how God is answering prayers. We were also challenged to pray more specifically and regularly for our students and church members. Pastor Kidder also presented research on the effects of church climate on church growth and how it can apply to schools as well. These two days were very uplifting!

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

The Pastor's Place

by Pete Maldonado, Pastor, Hampden Heights SDA Church

Communicating

Communicating is by far one of the most essential needed skills in order to survive. Although no one really teaches us how to communicate correctly, communication can be compared to oxygen. Without oxygen it is impossible to survive, and without the correct communication skills it can be very difficult to obtain even the basic needs.

Communication is a two-way road. One way is when you are actually speaking or conveying information to someone; the other way is when you're receiving information and trying to understand it in order to respond. It is essential that we understand which one we're doing and which one is needed when communicating.

I have to say my wife often thinks that I'm on the road of just communicating what I want and need, and not really listening to her. We seem to find a happy medium every now and then, and she has taught me how to listen better in our marriage. In the 21 years of being together we have learned to communicate with each other in order to make our relationship a loving and lasting one. She has taught me a great deal of how to listen not just to her, but to many people around us in order to be a support and help to anyone who needs to be heard. At the same time, she has learned to communicate to me the things that I need to do in order to better meet her needs and always continue to improve our relationship with each other and with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In the Bible we see an example of someone with great communication skills in Jesus. He had a continuous communication with His Father in heaven, and with others. This was observed by his disciples. In Mark 1:35 it tells us that Jesus will get up early in the morning before sunrise in order to talk to His Father.

"Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed."
Mark 1:35 NKJV

The disciples witnessed how Jesus would continuously go to speak to His Father not only privately, but also publicly. When Jesus fed the multitude, He openly spoke to His Father so that over 5,000 people were fed. When Jesus spoke openly to His Father, He communicated His request for His Father to raise Lazarus, and Jesus Himself called Lazarus to come out of the tomb. The disciples were in such awe of how Jesus communicated with His Father that they asked Him specifically to teach them how to pray to God.

"In this manner, therefore, pray:
Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is

the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."
Matthew 6:9-13 NKJV

Prayer is a vital form of communication that is of divine nature. Although Jesus did teach us how to pray, what we don't understand is that our prayers are transformed into groanings by the Holy Spirit before they reach the Father.

"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Romans 8:26 NKJV

Our oldest daughter at one time developed the habit of not telling the whole truth. She would pray for God to help her to stop, but would find herself still failing and continuing to have difficulties telling the truth. On one occasion she started to hoard all her veggie meat in order to throw it away later. She hid several napkins in her trashcan in her room. When Virginia found the decomposing smelly food and asked her what it was, she told her mom not to touch it because it was a spider. My wife went and grabbed it and saw the massive amount of veggie meat that she had prepared for lunch throughout the week wrapped up inside the napkins. Virginia was very upset, and felt a sense of betrayal because this was one more lie added to the numerous ones our daughter had been telling.

Feeling too upset, my wife asked me to handle the situation. I spoke to our daughter and ask her "Sweetheart, why were you hiding your veggie meat?" She told me she didn't like it. When I asked "Why did you lie to mom?" She told me that she didn't know. I asked her if she prayed to God to help her with telling the truth. She said she was praying, but God wasn't listening. I smiled at her and I told her that often God gives us the opportunity after we pray, to act on what we are asking Him to do because He has given us the power to do it for ourselves.

God is continuously communicating with us in different ways. One of God's most essential attributes in communicating is listening to us. There are four major communication skills that help us understand others. One is engaged listening, another is non-verbal communication, also managing stress in the moment, and finally, making yourself understood in a respectful way.

Our oldest son's name is Jadiel, which means "God listens," which I think is pretty cool. If you ask him, he doesn't always think that God is listening to his prayers. He believes God listens, but not always to him. The good thing about that is that he still continues to go to God with the hope of God answering him in a noticeable way. This is a very important quality that we should all possess. That is; the belief that God is listening to us, and that He will answer our prayers when He sees fit, according to His good will.

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Grace's Outpost by Ashley Richards

"Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful." – Luke 6:36, ESV

Mercy is the lesson Jesus is teaching me lately.

We'll call her Stella. She's not Stella, but I enjoy making up names to protect the people I know, so she'll be a Stella today.

Stella is... a gem. I write it sarcastically, but I believe that one day I'll come to believe it. I could tell you so many stories about Stella, but for the sake of brevity (and her privacy), I'll refrain myself. There's no point, not when Jesus is teaching me how to show her mercy. But for the sake of clarity, let me paint you a brief picture. I've worked with Stella for almost as long as I've worked at Panera, which will be just over five years, by the time this article is printed. She's grumpy, belligerent, often has little respect for authority, and holds her own opinion of herself as quite nearly flawless. She often fails to do her job, not to mention the fact that she refuses to lend a helping hand to those around her who are in legitimate need. She loves to spin crazy, fanciful (false) yarns about her life experience.

Every time I see her, she makes a point of acting like I'm her best friend, but, behind my back, she constantly berates my work, actively tries to get other associates to replace my position, and complains about me to anyone who will listen.

I'm not sure I've met a more vindictive, selfish, awful person in my life. Not that I have worked with so intimately for such a long period of time, anyhow. For a time, I tried to put up with it. I tried to help her, tried to befriend her, be kind to her, ignore the bad, knowing that was just Stella. It was just Stella, being Stella. I didn't like it, but she wouldn't ever change, so what was the point in getting upset?

But from there, she started actively slandering my character and work ethic, which... makes me see red. Very little makes me as angry as when someone maligns my character without any justification. And over time, it just... built. Hate is a strong word, and I might not have hated Stella, but I was bitter toward her. I certainly didn't love her. I resented her. I've thought some of the most despicable things about her, and thinking about it now it makes me sick.

The other day, I read the parable of the two servants who owed money in Matthew. You know the one? The one man owed the king such a massive debt, he could never repay, and he begged the king for mercy, and time, and he would repay every bit of it. The king forgave his debt, and almost immediately afterward, after leaving the king, the servant came across a fellow servant who owed him a pittance. The first servant demanded that the second servant pay him immediately, and when he couldn't, he threw him into debtor's prison. The king found out about it, and, furious, he exclaimed (I'm paraphrasing here!), "I forgave you a *massive* debt, and what do you do in return? Demand your neighbor's miniscule debt be repayed? Why could you not show mercy, like I showed to you?!" The king threw the first servant in debtor's prison until he was able to repay his debt.

And then Jesus whispered to me, "Stella's your fellow servant, Ashley."

And I was *floored*. I mean, it wasn't like I didn't know what I had been thinking, doing, harboring, was wrong. I did. Every time I complained about Stella to someone else I felt wracked with guilt.

That's not who I was supposed to be. I knew I should love her. I knew *someone* needed to. I knew Jesus did, and I knew that I should. I felt guilty that I knew I should and I still did not. (It's so easy to just join in when everyone else complains, to join in with the misery, to feed the self-pity!)

"I've rescued you from so *much*, Ashley," Jesus continued. "You need to forgive Stella. You need to love her."

And I knew He was right. (He's *always* right.) So I said, "Okay, Lord."

I don't think it's going to be easy, but I'm trying. That was a little over a week ago. The frustrations and anger have run deep, but I'm starting to realize that Jesus' love and mercy run deeper into my heart. Anger and bitterness are not burdens I cannot be free of. Jesus can take my burden and replace it with His easy, gentle, peace-giving love. Jesus can teach me how to love Stella, and even better, Jesus can *redeem* Stella. I've been given so much mercy—how dare I not extend that mercy on to Stella?

Notable Quotes selected by Bob Kondracki

One day my daughter said to me, "Life is not fair, life is not fair." I got fed up. I said, "You're cute, that's not fair. You're smart, that's not fair. Your family's well off, that's not fair. You were born in the U.S., that's not fair. Darling, you better get down on your knees and pray that things don't start getting fair for you."
~ P.J. O'Rourke~

If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.
~Martin Luther King, Jr.~

People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf.
~George Orwell~

You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time.
~Abraham Lincoln~

When wealth is lost, nothing is lost; when health is lost, something is lost; when character is lost, all is lost.
~Billy Graham~

Prayer is the key of the morning and the bolt of the evening.
~Mahatma Gandhi~

Growing Up Into Christ

by Barbara Snyder

Coming from a Fundamentalist religious background, I find it both beneficial and baffling that as we grow in a relationship with Christ, our perceptions change also. When the chosen people were leaving Egypt after 400 years, first as renowned immigrants, then as imprisoned slaves, they too were in the Fundamentalist stage of being. After all, once several generations of slavery passed, they were thoroughly indoctrinated into their own self-imprisonment. They had been told when, where, and how to work. Their children were taken as babies and killed for population control. Their deeply ingrained spiritual customs, beliefs, and traditions had been buried and lost sight of under their fears, and the state-imposed burdens. They were liberated by the leader (Moses) who had recently arrived to their territory and who withstood the Pharaoh's challenges and threats by predicting and calling down ten catastrophic plagues. Their perceptions needed to change. How else could a childlike generation grow in a few miles of travel to the Promised Land? They needed instruction, patience, renewed and personal contact with this God, who their leader evidently knew. Second hand benefits and knowledge from Moses was not what the Lord God wanted for this large and newly liberated group of people. Each individual was being invited to know this true God personally and freely.

God has always been personal. In the beginning He started with first one, then two individuals. Each one was loved by Him, and tested by Him separately. The man

and woman were each other's community, and therefore each other's helper and contributor in strength, motivation and purity. But both were expected to choose their Creator for themselves personally. Because God loves this way, and because He knows us intimately, in a way no one else can, He communicates to us individually. Praise the Lord, that's the way I like it. When the people of Israel said at the foot of the mountain..."Whatever the Lord says we will do," they were saying something like..."Whatever He wants is OK with us. You, Moses, you handle it. You are His and we would like to depend on you for direction." The Israelites were accustomed to voices of authority telling them what to do, what is right, and how and when to respond. They were not used to following with their hearts, their reason or their free will. They were accustomed to "only one option thinking," and their vision had narrowed over generations.

The long trip to the Promised Land was a necessity. It could have been shorter, as in hindsight we well know, but it wasn't. God was dealing even more so with the reality of their spiritual immaturity. This is so true with us. I have been on a spiritual journey where I to have been on a merry-go-round, but minus the merry. It is no light thing to stray from the best life as God shows us in His word. But it is a reality that a great many of us need a wider loop. We take a longer time. We pursue a harder trail. But then again, even Moses did that. Even he had to go through a maturing process by living a nomad existence

for decades until he was ready, and the Lord's people could wait no more to be released. But better to go the long route than to take a short cut on character, and have a less close relationship with Jesus. Christ waits for that unity of our character with His, for that is the only perfection there is.

In a perfect world, in God's perfect presence, there is a perfect way. In the real world, with our imperfect perception, understanding, fellowships, in a world of policies, habits, routines, past histories, past and present obligations, and conflicting values, a perfect way either becomes blurred or hidden, or becomes missing in action under an interpretation by someone else of the law. Whole countries, foundations, associations, companies, and religions (yes, spiritual denominations) become conspirators in keeping individuals under the interpretations of the law.

I would like to challenge you to consider that relationship in Christ opens up for all an ever-widening path for decision making, spiritual work, personal relations, and contact with our churches, even different denominations. Please let us not get into an Adventist ghetto and shun others who do not think the way we do, both in and out of the church. If Jesus didn't want to share His good news, He would not have chosen Jerusalem as the central area for the Jewish state. The Promised Land was at the gateway to the world at that time. All of the civilizations traveled in the vicinity of the Holy Land. Calvary was chosen at a crossroads. The crucifixion was at a time

when millions of people traveled for religious gatherings, and all the heathen nations knew it. Traffic during those times was heavy, so there would be more exposure to the events going on. God's place and time is no accident. Neither are we an accident. We should pray that we receive the grace to be as magnanimous to God and to ourselves and others as He is to us. Let us not treat ourselves as slaves, keeping from ourselves our gift of reason, and love. Let us not be irresponsible, saying to our leaders, "Whatever you say, we will do. We cannot make these decisions. You are the one with a relationship with God. We will be good followers."

If you read John 17 carefully, you may conclude that God's will is your will too. I once asked God to tell me what He wanted in a certain very serious and draining situation, and He immediately responded..."What do you want?" I think perhaps God is saying..."You decide and I'll support you." It goes on daily, no once and done answer...and probably the more mature we are spiritually the more our options open up. He doesn't want an automaton, but a real person, who loves Him, and to also love herself. And in a reciprocal meaning...He wants us to love ourselves in order to love Him. Think about that for a while and consider where these thoughts might lead you. It might just be your path through the Sinai.

He is with us on our journey.

Recipe of the Month by Elizabeth Hill

Here is a very simple recipe that everyone seems to love!

Banana Cream Pie

- 1 cup cold milk
- 1 package (3 to 4 Oz.) instant vanilla pudding
- 1 carton (8 Oz.) frozen whipped topping, thawed, divided in half
- 1 nilla wafer cracker crust (9 inches) (graham cracker or a

- regular prepared pie shell works too.)
- 3 medium firm bananas, sliced
- 1/2 cup whipping cream
- Heaping tablespoon powdered sugar
- Additional banana slices, optional
- In a large bowl, beat the milk and pudding mix on low

- speed for 2 minutes; beat in vanilla. Fold in whipped topping.
- Pour 1-1/3 cups pudding mixture into pie crust. Layer with banana slices and remaining pudding mixture.
- Whip cream and powdered sugar until thick and fluffy Spread on top of pie. Garnish with additional banana slices if desired
- This is best served the same day. Yield: 8 servings.

- Vanilla Wafer Pie Crust
- 1 1/3 cup vanilla wafer crumbs
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- Combine all ingredients. Mix well. Press mixture into bottom and sides of a lightly greased 9-inch pie plate. Bake at 375 degrees for 5 minutes. Cool. Yield: one 9-inch pie crust.

I Know Who I Am by Wayne Johns

- Our security lies in knowing who we are in Christ.
- I am God's child (John 1:12).
- I am Christ's friend (John 15:15).
- I am united with the Lord (1 Cor. 6:17).
- I am bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
- I am a saint (set apart for God) (Eph. 1:1).
- I am a personal witness of Christ (Acts 1:8).
- I am the salt & light of the earth (Matt.5:13-14).
- I am a member of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27).
- I am free forever from condemnation (Rom. 8:2).

- I am a citizen of Heaven (Phil. 3:20).
- I am significant (Phil. 3:20).
- I am free from any charge against me (Rom. 8:31-34).
- I am a minister of reconciliation for God (2 Cor. 5:17-21).
- I am invited to have access to God through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:18).
- I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph. 2:6).
- I am always loved by God (Rom. 8:35-39).
- I am established, anointed, sealed by God (2 Cor. 1:21-22).
- I am assured all things work together for good (Rom. 8:28).

- I am chosen and appointed to bear fruit (John 15:16).
- I am able to approach God with freedom and confidence (Eph. 3:11-12).
- I am able to do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13).
- I am the branch of the true Vine, a channel of His life (John 15:5).
- I am God's temple (1 Cor. 3:16).
- I am complete in Christ (Col. 2:10).
- I am hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3).

- I am justified by Jesus Christ my Lord (Romans 5:1).
- I am God's co-worker (1 Cor. 3:9 and 2 Cor 6:1).
- I am God's workmanship (Eph. 2:10).
- I am confident that the good works God has begun in me will be perfected (Phil. 1:6).
- I am redeemed and forgiven (Col. 1:14).
- I am adopted as God's child (Eph 1:5).
- I am not troubled; Jesus is coming to take me to the home He has prepared for me (John 14:1-3).
- I am assured He is coming quickly (Revelation 22:7, 12, 20).

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The Children's Page by Ashley Richards

Have you ever heard of the story of when the apostle Paul was shipwrecked? Paul was a prisoner of the Roman Empire, on a ship with his friend Luke, and they were on their way to Rome to go on trial before the ruler of the Roman Empire, Caesar. They had put out to sea when it was starting to become winter, and the seas were unpredictable and dangerous, and Paul knew that their journey would not go well, and he warned the centurion, Julius, who was in charge of Paul and some other prisoners, but Julius listened to the captain of the ship instead, and they set out to sea. Sure enough, before too much time passed, the seas became violent and everyone was worried for their lives! The sailors wrapped the underside of the boat with rope to hold it together, and they started to throw the cargo overboard, in order to keep the ship from sinking, but nothing they did seemed to make it better. Do you think Paul and the others on the ship survived? What happens to the ship? If you want to know, you'll have to read the story (it's found in Acts 27)! Maybe your mom or dad will read it with you this afternoon. The words in this puzzle all relate to this story—but they're all mixed up! Can you figure out what the words are supposed to be? They can all be found in Acts 27, if you get stuck!

- 1. CHORAN
- 2. ENUCIROTN
- 3. IULJUS
- 4. DLAN
- 5. FEILATBO
- 6. ULPA
- 7. ROMTS
- 8. LOISARS
- 9. HSRKEWCP
- 10. DEILORSS



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that along their journey, before the big storm, Centurion Julius and his band of soldiers (guarding a group of prisoners) stopped at a city called Sidon, and in that city, Centurion Julius allowed Paul to get off the ship and go meet with some of his friends in that city, who encouraged him on his journey and helped strengthen his faith in Jesus? Can you imagine a policeman letting a criminal get out of a police car to go spend some time with his friends before they took him to jail?

The Pastor's Place (continued from page 2)

One of Charles Spurgeon's famous quotes on prayer says:

"You are before the Lord; let your words be few, but let your heart be fervent"

I do believe listening is by far more important than speaking, especially when it comes to communicating with God. It is my prayer that we are all listening for God's voice, not just today, but every day of our lives, as we continue to walk with Him.

May the Lord continue to bless you and keep you in His care.