



Dr. Jessie Bradley
Editor

January—March 2024

Senior Express

Oakwood University Church
Debleaire Snell, Senior Pastor

Happy New Year Family & Friends,

God has blessed us to see another day, week, and year. 2024 is here and we didn't know how many of us would be able to rejoice, and count our blessings to see it.

Did you see the couple on Instagram soon to be married? The date, yes, this year on December 31, 2023?

We are excited to meet and greet all of our new church family members, take a look on pages 8 & 9. **Have you met any of them?**

To those of you who lost loved ones this past year, continue to count your blessings and trust in the Lord.

Congratulations and welcome to our newest nonagenarian, Mrs. Collar Willis.

Have you heard about the exciting meetings of HARAW?

The meeting dates are the 2nd Sunday of each month. **All retirees are invited and welcomed,** male and female to join. There is always lots of good food too. Plan to join us on

January 14, 2024 in the Family Life Center, Room 9.

You are the gate keeper of your relationship with the Lord. Continue to trust and obey.

Many families will not feel the excitement in the air for celebrating coming holidays and related events, because of the loss of loved ones, their homes or their jobs. **Take time to send a card, or make a call, and share some compassion.**



A worthy New Year's resolution, perhaps, is to take no hatred into the New Year without requiring it to restate its purpose. *Brault*

Your present circumstances don't determine where you can go. They merely determine where you start. *Qubein*

In order to be successful in the new year, stay focused, develop a positive attitude and be passionate with your dreams. *Qlurotimi*

Kindness, kindness, kindness. I want to make a New year's prayer, not a resolution. I'm praying for courage. *Sontag*

Heaven Is The Place To Be!

My Personal Testimony

by Shirley Iheanacho



For several years, at 5 a.m. daily, my prayer partner and I listened via phone to audio readings of the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy books. Recently, we listened to the reading of Ellen White's book, "Heaven." It was fascinating as a beautiful picture of heaven emerged in my mind, and I began to sing Mrs. Bridgewater's song, "How Beautiful Heaven Must Be."

A profound scripture that caused joy and excitement to bubble up in my heart was Revelation 21, verses 1-4 (ESV): "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

Verse 4 is especially meaningful to me because of my health challenge. I also lost a younger brother unexpectedly in 2021 and my dear 106-year-old Mom in 2022. Over the past several months, I have lost many friends.

Some of you have also lost loved ones, family, and friends recently, so you know what I'm talking about. The pain is real.

[Let me share these comforting words](#) in Chapter 17 of the book, "Heaven," that ministered to my heart: "Let the afflictions which pain us so grievously become instructive lessons, teaching us to press forward toward the mark of the prize of our high calling in Christ. Let us be encouraged by the thought that the Lord is soon to come. Let this hope gladden our hearts. "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Hebrews 10:37). "Blessed are those servants who, when their Lord comes, shall be found watching" (Luke 12:37). *Heaven* 160.1.

Imagine for a moment that in heaven, there'll be no sickness or pain, no dementia, no cancer, no arthritis or neuropathy, no more hospitals, jails, no wars, no crying, no sin, and no more death. And I like this: "The old will be young there forever, transformed in a moment of time" (Frederick M. Lehman). Best of all, we will be with Jesus and our loved ones and live forever in magnificent mansions, walk the streets of pure gold, and bask in the sunshine of God's unfathomable love. Heaven will far exceed our grandest expectations! The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 2:9 NLT, "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him."

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Oakwood University Church Fall Festival 2023

by Cecilla Yarborough



On Sunday, October 29th, 2023 the Fall Festival at Oakwood University Church began. Before the festive day we began with prayer, with Pastor Kimberly Mann, at the volunteer meeting.

Her list began with the 7 days of Creation. Volunteers raised their hands as she began to call out each day. Where will this creation day be located, inside or outside? What activity will the children be involved in to support the creation for that day? Do you have all of the material you'll need? Do you need anymore help. We also need judges for the "Trunk or Treat" cars. Volunteers responded to her calls.

After each day was completed, she began to go through other activities for the day. Registration, Photo booth, Pie eating contest for children and for adults, Train Rides, Trunk or Treat area, Live Animals Station, Face Painting, Hay Ride, Food Station, Balloons, Cotton Candy Booth, Food Venders, Judges for Trunk or Treat, DJ with speakers and music for the day.

On the day of the festival, all of the rooms in the Family Life Center were decorated and were active with volunteers, parents and children of all ages and many visitors in colorful costumes. Pastor Mann reported, **"Over 600 People registered (Which means we had close to 700 people because we know everyone didn't register.)"**

105 faces painted

500 walking tacos served

400 goodie bags passed out

4 Trunks Showcased

48 Pies eaten

6 Days of Creation taught and The Sabbath taught to over 400 kids (Now that's evangelism!)

1 runaway llama caught & brought back!"

This beautiful day was a big hit for the church and the community. If you missed it this year be sure to look for the announcements for this TREAT next year!





Kathleen Woodfork Coleman is a privileged child of God, fourth generation Seventh-day Adventist, proud “PK”, and the daughter of Elder Robert L. and Jean Woodfork. Kathleen attended Oakwood College, now Oakwood University, then on to complete her BS in nursing from Columbia Union College, now Washington Adventist University. She later completed her MPH at Loma Linda University. She has been a nurse/health promoter for 49 years and just recently retired after 35 years of service as a nurse from the Adventist Health System.

Kathleen co-founded the Association of Black Seventh-day Adventist Nurses, was featured in the book "The Path We Tread, Blacks in Nursing Worldwide" and co-authored research with four other Faith Community Nurses on the "Impact of COVID-19 on the Practice of Faith Community Nursing". Their research was recently published in the April 2023 *Journal of Christian Nursing*. As she continues in the nursing realm, she is serving as the president of the Adventist Association for Faith Community Nursing. Kathleen is married to David Coleman and together they have 4 children and 12 grandchildren.

Since growing up in a pastoral family home, Kathleen has experienced firsthand some of the issues that impact the ministerial family. Because of this close connection she has a special interest and a real passion for the health and wellness of our first families, and serves as the Intervention Coordinator for the NAD (*North American Division*) Pastor’s Health and Wellness Initiative.

Clergy health has been a growing concern in many denominations over the nation. It is impossible to adequately describe the intricacies of this crises that pastors are facing, but here are a few quotes, that can lend some insight:

“Many pastors today feel tired, overcommitted, embattled, and under-resourced. They’re often so focused on helping take care of others that they forget to take care of themselves... They experience many burnout and spiritual exhaustion symptoms such as fatigue, loss of appetite, changing sleeping patterns, spiritual doubt, and emotional withdrawal from community and family.” ([Top 10 problems facing pastors in 2023 \(subsplash.com\)](https://www.subsplash.com))

“The front-line leadership in the Seventh-day Adventist church, pastors and their families, experience levels of stress that are not sustainable for the future health of the Church”. (Executive Summary of the 2014 Adventist research study)

- 84% say they’re on call 24 hours a day.
- 54% find the role of pastor frequently overwhelming.
- 53% are often concerned about their family’s financial security.
- 48% often feel the demands of ministry are more than they can handle.
- 21% say their church has unrealistic expectations of them.
- [4 Hidden Struggles Most Pastors Face - Lifeway Research](#)

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Sharing a Few Thoughts

by Evelyne Izeogu

I grew up in Haiti, where rice was one of the basic food staples that people consumed regularly (those who could afford it, of course). We used to buy it at the open-air marketplace, where it's measured by steel cans. Pre-packaged rice in plastic bags, as sold in the US, was almost nonexistent. The rice from the marketplace often came with tiny pebbles, and one of the pre-cooking instructions was to sift through the rice and remove them. But no matter how meticulous one was, some pebbles ended up in the cooked rice anyway. Oil is used in Haitian rice recipes. Thus, the Haitian proverb: "In the company of rice, little pebble gets to enjoy some grease" (literal translation).

Many years ago, I started to reflect on that proverb within the context of my relationship with God and the people in my network. God provides for His children by making them "rice people" and "pebble people." The "pebble people" enjoy some benefits (material, intellectual, emotional, or spiritual) while in the company of "rice people." The amazing part of the concept is that no one is pebble or rice all the time. Sometimes, God calls us to be rice; other times, we are pebbles. Without false modesty, I find myself identifying with a pebble most of the time. Nevertheless, God uses me in awesome ways that cannot be mistaken for coincidence when He allows me to be rice. The instances are many.

A powerful example happened a while ago but is still vivid in my mind. Because of a short-term disability, I was delinquent in my mortgage payments for two months and needed a \$5000 miracle to satisfy the past due amount. I pleaded with God to provide the money. One day, while I was still at home, a supervisor from my job called me to announce that a wealthy donor had sent \$5000 to each employee of the organization. Needless to say, I was overwhelmed and overjoyed by the miracle. I thanked God for answering my prayer and also blessing my colleagues (the pebbles in my company as rice). When I had the chance to communicate to my colleagues how the miracle came about, they all agreed that God had blessed them while blessing me and expressed that they always counted me as a blessing before that miracle. Truthfully, I often felt like a pebble for having been associated with such a group of wonderful, caring colleagues.

My heart is full of gratitude when I pause to think about all the "rice people" in my life: my husband, my son and stepchildren, siblings, in-laws, nieces and nephews, cousins, colleagues, who have been there for me in good and less-good times; my special friends who are sources of inspiration, support, and encouragement to me; my grandchildren who bring me a lot of joy; my fellow church members, especially the OUC Sabbath School Class #3 members who are mission-oriented and work hand-in-hand to accomplish God's work; my fun-loving team of close friends who always stand by me, and enjoy hanging out for "belly-full" fellowships and laughter. ***Continued on page 9***

Unlocking the Secrets of Healthy Aging Through Food

Submitted by Bethani Dennis, RN
RN-BSN Nursing Student at Oakwood University

Are you ready to savor a hearty and healthy journey into your golden years? Good news! Nourishing your body with the right nutrients can be your secret weapon to thrive as you age. Here is an overview of seven evidence-based resources to help you decide where to make improvements in your eating habits as an older adult!

1. Nutritional Transition: Embracing Change

As time ticks on, our bodies undergo magnificent changes that affect how we absorb nutrients. The [National Institute on Aging] (<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/eating-well-you-get-older>) illuminates the path toward dietary adjustments essential for our evolving needs.

2. Fuel Your Golden Years with Essential Nutrients

Nourishing our bones and brains becomes paramount. Discover why calcium, vitamin D, B6, and B12 are superheroes in the aging game with the guidance from the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics] (<https://www.eatright.org/health/wellness/healthy-aging/healthy-eating-for-older-adults>)

3. A Diet That Shields Against Chronic Conditions

Bid adieu to health woes! The [American Heart Association] (<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/healthy-eating-for-older-adults>) reveals the power of a heart-healthy diet in staving off diseases that lurk in our later years.

4. Diverse Diets, Sound Minds

Did you know that your diet can be your brain's best friend? Delve into how a colorful diet can positively impact mental health and cognition, as shared by the [Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health] (<https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/nutrition-and-cognitive-health>).

5. Beyond Food: The Social Feast

It's not just what's on your plate—it's who's around it! Dive into the soul-soothing connections and communal dining explored by the [National Institute on Aging] (<https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/social-psychological-and-environmental-influences-eating>).

6. Navigating Nutrition and Weight in Later Years

Let's steer clear of malnutrition! The [CDC] (<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyaging/nutrition/index.html>) offers insights to ensure your journey includes a healthy weight balance and nutritious sustenance.

7. Mediterranean Magic for Your Health

Discover the wonders of the Mediterranean diet! Laden with fruits, veggies, lean proteins, and wholesome fats, it's a flavorful concoction that safeguards against age-related illnesses. Explore this delightful adventure with the [Mayo Clinic] (<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/mediterranean-diet/art-20047801>).

These credible sources illuminate the pathway to vibrant aging by unlocking the secrets of nourishment. Find books, websites, and support groups that offer a wealth of information on healthy eating. Get connected with "Diet Can Cause It, Diet Can Cure It!" by Maya Irby Thornton for further guidance. Remember, as you embark on this journey, a healthier lifestyle awaits you!

In conclusion, let's reflect on the importance of these key nutritional points and embrace a lifestyle that fosters better health. As a parting note, here's a quote from Ellen G. White: "The relation of diet to intellectual development should be given far more attention than it has received."

So, are you ready to embark on a delectable journey to wellness? The adventure awaits!

YOU WANT TO LIVE A LIFE THAT PLEASES GOD AND GIVES HIM GLORY?

by Katherine Davis, Chaplain

A study of the powerful Word of God will do just that -- 'twill build your faith, will deepen your relationship with God and dramatically impact every area of your life. As we study God's Word, He is speaking to us and we will experience an encounter with Jesus which will

- 1) light our way, giving wisdom so we can clearly see which way to go,
- 2) help us grow in faith and Christ-likeness,
- 3) transform our characters (the only thing we'll take to heaven)
- 4) make us complete and equipped for every good work,
- 5) bring reconciliation,
- 6) keep us from falling for Satan's persuasive lies, and
- 7) reveal to us earth's final events.

Oh how powerful the Word of God is! You can be victorious in your walk with God. Dear ones, you are encouraged and challenged to give God the opportunity to do something amazing in your life.

DON'T WAIT! DO IT TODAY! EMBRACE THE WORD OF GOD!

Order and study the following FREE Bible Study Lessons:

Breath of Life - www.breathoflifestudy.com

OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY CHURCH
Membership Transfers and Profession of Faith
September - November 2023

Submitted by Marilyn Lang, Clerk

Transfers In:

| Name | From Church | City/State |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Ates, Clarence | Dallas Fellowship SDA | Dallas, TX |
| Buituron, Priscila | Allegheny West Conference | Columbus, OH |
| Campbell, Patrick | Macedonia SDA | Hempstead, NY |
| DeCanal, Catherine | First SDA | Huntsville, AL |
| DeCanal, Nathanael | First SDA | Huntsville, AL |
| DoBynes, Micah Cook | Park Hill SDA | Denver, CO |
| Franklin, Dorian | McDonald Road SDA | McDonald, TN |
| Franklin, Maya | McDonald Road SDA | McDonald, TN |
| Franklin, Nia | McDonald Road SDA | McDonald, TN |
| Gardner, Mari-Edi | Berean SDA | Atlanta, GA |
| Gardner, Meagan | Berean SDA | Atlanta, GA |
| Johnson, J. Alfred | Columbia Community Center | Columbia, MD |
| Johnson, Paula | Columbia Community Center | Columbia, MD |
| Lemon, Arbree | Straford Memorial SDA | Chicago, IL |
| Neckles, Margaret | Shiloh SDA | Brooklyn, NY |
| Noble, Elizabeth | First SDA | Huntsville, AL |
| Page, Jynia | Pittsburg SDA | Pittsburg, CA |
| Pancorbo Cruz, Gerson | Allegheny West Conference | Columbus, OH |
| Ross Sr., Compton | Ephesus SDA | Birmingham, AL |
| Snell, Deborah | Maranatha SDA | Tallahassee, FL |
| Snell, Larry | Maranatha SDA | Tallahassee, FL |
| Williams, Randy Jr. | Emmanuel SDA | Mobile, AL |
| Wilson, Marisol | Central English SDA | El Paso, TX |

Profession of Faith (In):

Otieng, Ms

Transfers Out:

| Name | To Church | City/State |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Burnside, Myrna Beckett | City Temple SDA | Dallas, TX |
| Collins, Anita | First SDA | Huntsville, AL |
| Huggins, Shon | New Jerusalem SDA Praise | Douglasville, GA |
| Maddox, Matthew | First SDA | Huntsville, AL |
| Mitchell, Aaron N. | Glendale SDA | Indianapolis, IN |
| Robinson, Dakota | Capitol Hill Adventist | Washington, DC |

Continued from page 4—Kathleen Woodfork Coleman

91% have experienced some form of burnout in ministry and 18% say they are “fried to a crisp right now” ([Pastor Stress Statistics - Soul Shepherding](#)).

There are differing opinions as to how many pastors are leaving the ministry, but the truth is our pastors are leaving the organized work. The literature states that the numbers range anywhere from 250-1700 per month. While the numbers are uncertain, the fact that pastors are leaving their pulpit is real!

It was because the NAD was listening to our pastors, that the Pastors Health and Wellness Initiative was born. The goal of the Pastor’s Health and Wellness Initiative is to provide ready resources to meet the health needs of our pastors— physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. We realize that the health of the pastor affects the health of the ministerial family and the congregation. Within the church, pastors are pivotal to the purpose for which we exist. We want to do all we can to see that all pastors thrive and flourish and live a full and balanced life so that they can fulfill the calling God has placed upon their lives. Kathleen feels it a privilege to participate in this very important work.

Continued from page 5 - Evelyne Izeogu

I know that Thanksgiving Day 2023 will have long passed by the time this article gets published, but I encourage each reader to give thanks to God for the “rice and pebble people” in their lives. Spread the concept of rice and pebbles and take time to acknowledge and express gratitude to the people God has placed in your network.

Evelyne Izeogu is a retired finance manager. Before retirement, she spent thirty-five years working in the area of fiscal management for nonprofit organizations in New York serving the disenfranchised. She lives in Harvest, Alabama, with her husband, Dr. Chukudi Izeogu. Evelyne is the founder of Marenn-Parenn Pou Haiti, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to assist children and families of a shantytown in Haiti to meet their immediate needs for basic education, food, shelter and healthcare. She enjoys getting involved in personal ministries, cooking gourmet plant-based dishes, writing and telling children’s stories.

PHOTO GRAPHY



Jan. 7, 21, 2024

every 1st and 3rd Sundays

Zoom ID 837 8279 1695

No Passcode needed

Oliver Shipe, Facilitator

*Join Us
New Classes
Central Time*

- New Beginners Class begins at 8 a.m.
- Intermediate Class begins at 9 a.m.
- Advance Class begins at 10 a.m.
- Contact Vivian to register at
256-655-2935 or vbrow.100@att.net

**Sponsored by the Senior Adult Ministries Department of
Oakwood University Church
Dr. Jessie Godley Bradley, Leader**

2024 Women's Devotional Articles "He Knows My Name"



Shirley Iheanacho
Feb. 8, July 22



Vivian Brown
Feb. 28



Eva Starner
Feb. 21, Dec. 19



Flore Aubrey Hamilton
July 20, Dec. 20



Prudence Pollard
July 1, Sept. 18



LaKeisha Williams
Aug. 11, Aug. 12



Lela Gooding
Aug. 15, Aug. 16



Edith Fraser
Oct. 25

Continued from page 2—Shirley Iheanacho

Fellow travelers, let us look forward with great anticipation to that spectacular moment when our Lord Jesus, with His angelic hosts, shall burst the azure skies in blazing splendor to get His children! I want to be in that number when the Saints go marching in. How about you? Indeed, heaven is the place to be! Let's Be There! God bless you.

Shirley C. Iheanacho is retired and lives with her husband Morris of 54 years in Huntsville, Alabama. They are the parents of three lovely daughters and grandparents to two grandsons. She is the author of the book, "God's Incredible Plans For Me: A Memoir of An Amazing Journey," and over 70 published articles in books and magazines.

Ellen G. White, Heaven (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2003), p. 160.

RELAXATION AND REFLECTION

By Marilyn Lang

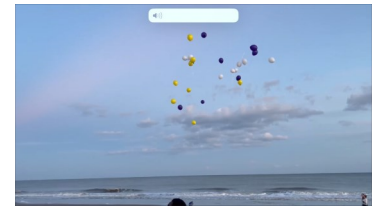


After a three-month deployment in Minnesota with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, I needed a vacation. Early in the year, we'd decided to return to Hilton Head Island, SC to renew our once traditional, every other year "Thanksgiving on the Beach" experience. We had not visited during Thanksgiving in five years since the illness and death of our dear friend, Joy Campbell. Because we were returning after a long hiatus, I decided to include a recognition of lost loved ones in our itinerary, with permission of immediate families.

Our ten-day journey began the Friday before Thanksgiving. We stopped in Charleston for a second visit this year and a tour of the recently opened International African American Museum. We were not disappointed! Our Sunday afternoon tour was just not long enough. We traveled south more than an hour to Hilton Head, arriving in time to experience the beach from our balcony before sunset. Other members of our 15-person group (family and 'family') arrived later Sunday evening and on Wednesday afternoon.



Days were filled with walks on the beach, rest during rain showers, shopping at the outlet and outdoor malls, and exploring the restaurants and bakeries of Hilton Head. Our special activity of remembrance was a *balloon release* at the beach before sunset on Wednesday. Memories of time shared with Joy (so appropriately named) there and Thanksgivings shared with our 22-year-old great niece, Layla, who we lost this year, were the basis of our reflections. After sharing remembrances, we released 24 balloons—yellow (Joy's favorite color), white (for Layla), and purple (one of the colors for suicide awareness and prevention). It was a bittersweet reflection but helped us lift the light of these two very precious loved ones still present in our hearts.



Our Thanksgiving feast with extensive and scrumptious menu contributions from each household was the capstone of the weekend. Culinary competition, karaoke and laughter reigned in our niece's condo with a healthy dose of football in the background. .

We were and remain thankful and blessed

WE WERE AND REMAIN THANKFUL AND BLESSED

Day by Day

Day by day Lord, let me trust You
 For the strength I need to press on.
 In weakness when I feel like quitting,
 Empower me to make me strong.

When unbeatable odds overtake me
 And life's stresses lay me low,
 When I'm lacking in endurance
 And can't discern which way to go

Then each day, Lord, motivate me
 To be strong amidst each test
 And in the midst of all life's struggles,
 Help me still to do my best.

For You are the source of my being,
 I depend on You in every way;
 Of Your strength, Your love, Your wisdom,
 Grant me to make it day by day.

Maureen H. Thomas

I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. Philippians 4:13.

Bottle Cap Collection for Oakwood Adventist Academy



Just a reminder to save all bottle caps in all sizes. Drop them off at the Elementary building during OAA business hours.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**“Expressing thanks has no expiration date!”
How often do you say, “Thank You”?**

Thank you to Pastor Debleaire Snell, our Pastoral Team, Media Team, Church family for your continued services to our sick & shut-in, bereaved families, Youth and Children’s Ministries. Our prayers continue for your continued faithfulness to our church family and the community,

Thank you, to the friends who contributed to this issue of the Newsletter and to Mrs. Vivian Brown for her continued dedication, time and talent in designing the Newsletter.

Thank you to the Medical Team of Doctors, Nurses, and Hospital Staff, and Caregivers that continue to provide daily services to the patients in need.

Our prayers continue for the families who lost loved ones this year.

Count your blessings daily, and rejoice in the Lord.



**In His Service,
Dr. Jessie Godley Bradley,
Senior Adult Ministries, Leader**

