

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Vegetarian Taste Fest A Success! 1
- 7th Spring Musical Scores Perfect 10 2
- Investiture Marks Banner Year 2
- Vegan Vittles Draw Rave Reviews! 3
- Agape Feast Commemorates Passion 3
- A Transcontinental Worship Experience 4

*God moved in amazing ways for our event to receive complimentary coverage...on live TV news the morning of the event!*

## MAY EVENTS

- 4 | LAA Shadow Day
- 4 | LAA Vespers
- 5 | Church In the Park
- 15 | Vegetarian Cooking Class

## JUNE EVENTS

- 2 | Monthly fellowship potluck
- 10 | CPR class
- 12 | Vegetarian Cooking Class
- 17-23 | Vacation Bible School

## Vegetarian Taste Fest A Success! by Barbara Hagele

Middletown held its first annual Vegetarian Taste Fest on Sunday, March 25. Such an event is a big undertaking for a church the size of Middletown, but over 35 volunteers rallied to the cause. Each of the 20 cooks was asked to submit two of their best vegetarian recipes. The final selection of recipes was then made, based upon achieving a variety of dishes from pasta and entrees to salads and desserts.

All guests had the opportunity to sample over 20 vegetarian dishes and received a small cookbook containing all of the recipes. Samples were served in two-ounce cups, labeled with the number of the recipe in the book, which made easier for guests to mark recipes they wanted to make themselves.

The biggest challenge was getting the word out so people would want to attend. Since the budget was limited, it was necessary to find ways to promote the event that were cost-free. Eye-catching flyers were designed and distributed to libraries and local health food stores in addition to being mailed to the church's interest and inactive member lists. The event was accepted to be posted on the official City of Louisville events website. Of course, church members were encouraged to tell their friends and family about the event, passing along flyers inserted into the bulletins for several weeks.



A tray containing most of the Taste Fest samples

The question was, would it be enough for the event to be a success?

During the weeks before the event, registrations on the church website slowly came in. We had scheduled two sessions of forty guests each and prayed that God would fill them. In the last few days before the event, God moved in amazing ways for our event to receive complimentary coverage on a Christian radio station, in the Louisville Weekender, in the main Louisville newspaper, and finally, a spot on live TV news the morning of the event!

Excitement was high and all was in readiness—the fellowship hall was tastefully decorated and the food was ready. Guests entered through the church lobby where they registered and then were seated to wait for the doors to open. When the top of the hour arrived, each guest was given a tray to collect their samples and then were invited to have a seat at one of

the center tables. Mouth-watering vegetarian and vegan dishes Spinach (Saag) Curry, Easy Burger Burrito Skillet, Red Beans & Rice, Pancit (Filipino Rice Noodles), Ratatouille, Corn and Black Bean Salsa, and Vegan Carrot Cake.

Guests also received a ticket for a chance to receive one of the door prizes donated by local health food stores. At the end of the hour, the first group of guests moved into the sanctuary for a health talk on the advantages of a natural, plant-based diet with tips on how to begin. Finally, the guests passed through the Sabbath School wing hall where they had a chance to browse through excellent vegetarian cookbooks on display for sale. Exit surveys were traded for a pamphlet on “The 8 Secrets of A Long Life”.

God blessed with over 96 “Taste Festers” who could not rave enough about how good the food was and how nice an event we had planned. The event will be followed up with other health-related events such as Dinner with a Doctor, a monthly vegetarian cooking class, a natural remedies class, and CPR training.



Table seating arranged for 40 “Taste Festers”

## 7th Spring Musical Scores Perfect 10

Over 100 members and musicians from at least 10 area churches packed into Middletown's sanctuary on Sabbath, April 14 for the 7th annual Sing & Celebrate Spring Musical. This event brings together members of the Seventh-day Adventist congregations throughout our community in a musical worship experience. It was a special treat and a blessing to enjoy music from Louisville Hispanic, Pewee Valley, South Louisville, Magazine Street, La Grange, Louisville First, New Albany, IN, Jeffersonville, IN, and Madison, IN.

Quite a few youth and young adults were featured in this year's line-up. The Louisville Adventist Academy Choir were new Spring Musical participants, with 20 students singing "Instruments of Peace". Lydia and Emma Ruckle and Karis and Katie McConnell, two sister duos from Louisville



Louisville Adventist Academy Choir

First, sang a beautiful quartet rendition of "Sweet Jesus". Mariam Prieto, a high schooler from South Louisville, sang "Blessings". Jocelyn Griffith from Louisville Hispanic sang a lovely duet with her mother. Nathan George, a Mount Pisgah Academy student whose family attends Pewee Valley, shared an original instrumental piano tune he wrote. Young adults Mia Hunter, a college sophomore, Joleece Starr and Priscilla Soto performed a

lovely string trio. The Hadley brothers also South Louisville lent their voices in a family quartet performed with their parents. And the Pewee Valley Chimes Choir included several youth bell players from three churches.

Our seventh Spring Musical scored a perfect 10, and we look forward to next April when we will once again share musical praise with our brothers and sisters in Christ!



L-R: Mia Hunter, Joleece Starr, and Priscilla Soto



Happy Pathfinders



Smiling Adventurers

## Investiture Marks Banner Year by Mindy Crecelius

Another busy, exciting year has just ended for the Middletown Soldiers of Christ Pathfinder and Adventurer Clubs. At the annual Investiture ceremony on Sabbath, April 21, 16 Pathfinders were awarded eight honors, such as archery, bridges, photography, and painting. Also, 10-15 awards per grade level were earned by 27 Adventurers, including finger painting, weather, animals, baking, courtesy, and prayer warrior.

Here are a few highlights from the 2017-2018 year:

- During the second weekend in June, both clubs enjoyed a family campout at Otter Creek Park.
- Pathfinders attended the Kentucky-Tennessee Camporee October 6-8 at Salt Lick Creek campground on Cumberland River in Gainesboro, Tennessee.
- Both clubs participated in

Christmas caroling and passing out gifts to the residents of Forum at Brookside nursing home.

- Pathfinders in grades 7-12 traveled to Indian Creek Camp in mid-February to attend the 7up Retreat and enjoyed camaraderie and team building activities.

Kudos to the leaders and members of both clubs for another banner year!

# Vegan Vittles Draw Rave Reviews!

by Marilyn Matherly

**D**r. Ryan Swain, a local pediatric anesthesiologist with an interest in people's health, was the featured speaker for Dinner With the Doctor on Sunday, April 8. Dr. Swain gave an informative presentation on the benefits of a whole-food, plant-based diet to about 40 attendees. He provided eye-opening evidence based on many substantial research studies on the benefits of adopting vegetarian and especially vegan lifestyles.

Approximately 40 people were present for Dr. Swain's talk, and he was available afterwards for a question-and-answer session and to talk one-on-one with many of the attendees.

After the presentation, the guests were served a free vegetarian meal prepared

by Brenda Reynolds and Marilyn Matherly with the help of Marian Spriggs. The delicious meal included



**Dr. Ryan Swain**

homemade vegan oat burgers dressed with condiments such as lettuce, tomatoes and onions; hearty pinto beans; chopped, oven-roasted potatoes; and sliced celery. Topping off the meal were vegan energy balls and vegan no-bake cookies.

Attendees shared many comments about how wonderful the meal was overall, how delicious the oat burgers were, and that they couldn't believe the burgers were made from oats. Many

people requested the oat burger recipe and were told they would have to attend one of the upcoming vegetarian cooking classes to learn how to make them.

Our free monthly vegetarian cooking classes began on Tuesday, April 17 at Middletown and will continue for the next several months. At each class, attendees will watch a live vegetarian cooking demonstration, sample the prepared dish, and receive a copy of the recipe. If you, a friend, or a family member would like to attend, call 502-244-6997 or 502-922-6493, or register at [www.FriendlyChurch.com/VCC](http://www.FriendlyChurch.com/VCC). The community is welcome!

*Attendees shared many comments about how wonderful the meal was...and that they couldn't believe the burgers were made from oats.*

# Agape Feast Commemorates Passion

**M**iddletown's annual Agape Feast passion commemoration took place on Good Friday, March 30. "Agape" is a Greco-Christian word referring to the highest form of love which God has for mankind.

To create a special atmosphere for the event, the tables in the fellowship hall were arranged in the shape of a cross and beautifully ornamented by Stephanie Karr and her team with greenery, glassware, candles, and tableware.

Pastor Marius Serban welcomed the group of about 75 adults and children in attendance and set the tone for the service. Following a light, candlelit meal of bread, crackers, fruit, and various spreads, worshippers were invited to move quietly to the foot-washing area set up by the Deaconesses to participate in the Ordinance of Humility. Afterwards,

Pastor Marius preached a special homily entitled "Where Are You?" connecting God's call to the first Adam in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:9) to the cry of the second "Adam" (Jesus) to His Heavenly Father as He suffered in anguish on the cross (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34). Then the elders and deacons served the symbolic bread and wine of The Lord's Supper.

Next, a solemn Tenebrae Service was performed consisting of first lighting 15 white candles, then alternating readings of the seven last sayings of Jesus Christ with congregational singing. "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross", "The Old Rugged Cross", "O Sacred Head Now Wounded", and "The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power" were among the selections sung. One candle was extinguished after each reading and song as the

overhead lights were lowered. After the final candle was put out, attendees exited the room reverently while meditating on Jesus' sacrifice.

***"Amazing love! How can it be that You, my King, should die for me? Amazing love! I know it's true, and it's my joy to honor You, in all I do, to honor You!"***



**Tables arranged in the shape of the cross**



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**"A safe environment... where people relationships become kingdom relationships"**

# A Transcontinental Worship Experience



**Pastor Marius in Romanian folk costume**

International Weekend 2018 was held on March 2 and 3 to celebrate the cultural diversity of the Middletown church family, and this second annual celebration proved to be just as exciting as the first!

The planning committee worked tirelessly for several months to create a spectacular experience, and God truly blessed their efforts. To set the stage for the event, the lobby,

hallway, and fellowship hall were festively decorated with colorful international flags and welcome banners. The gorgeous backdrop designed and created last year by Travis Kelley and Jennifer Zingg for the inaugural event was reassembled and put on display in the sanctuary.

Friday evening's delicious Asian-themed supper featured Indian and Japanese cuisine. The International Concert featured a dozen beautiful songs sung in the native tongues of Haiti, Cuba, Ghana, Philippines, India, Romania, Brazil, and Liberia—from five continents!

As members come and go through membership transfers, the number of countries represented at Middletown changes constantly, yet cultural diversity remains a constant and welcomed characteristic of the church family. Twenty countries were featured during the regal Parade of Nations, and at least two additional countries are present within the congregation that were not included.

The next morning, Community Church School featured more international music, a mission story dramatization, and lesson study taught tag-team-style by several Sabbath School teachers. During International Worship, worshippers were delighted by music performed by out-of-town musical guests. The Citadel, a trio from Ghana representing a larger ensemble from the Ghanaian Seventh-day Adventist Church in Columbus, Ohio, came as guests of Middletown's Asamoah family.



**A grouping of flags from around the world**

Also, Pastor Lalmuansanga Chawngthu and the 30-plus-member Indianapolis Mizo Seventh-day Adventist Choir from Greenwood, Indiana were invited by Martin Lalnunsanga and Babie Lalremsiami, both natives of northern India.

Pastor Marius Serban wore a traditional Romanian national folk costume for the occasion. His sermon was based on Genesis 11:27-31, the story of Abraham and his father leaving Chaldea and heading towards Canaan, the Promised Land. Unfortunately, the father stopped in Haran and did not continue on. The object lesson was that like earthly immigrants, believers are looking for a better country, a heavenly country, the New Jerusalem, with mansions prepared by Jesus for those who love Him.

Once again, the well-attended International

Potluck featuring cuisine from across the globe was scrumptiously and lovingly prepared by Middletown's finest cooks. Though the crowd of diners was larger than last year's, the food supply never diminished, everyone was cooperative and patient, and the line moved along speedily.



**Stanley and Rose Cooper of Liberia**

We look forward to the next International Weekend on the first Friday and Sabbath of March 2019. Prayerfully, this and other similar events will continue to break down barriers amongst people from various walks of life and foster unity despite our differences. In the words of this year's theme song:

***"Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me. Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be. With God as our Father, brothers all are we. Let me walk with my brother in perfect harmony."***



**L-R: Glowee Woodruff, Jean Priest, and Kathy Rishaug from the Philippines**



**A group of Mizo singers from Greenwood, IN**