



# Hampden Heights Sentinel

## HIGHLIGHTS:

- RJA was busy demonstrating the true Christmas spirit. Page 1
- Are our desires in alignment with God's? Page 2
- At my back I often hear time's winged chariot changing gear. Page 2
- To allow that God sees differently...is to allow the truth. Page 3
- What's going on in our church this month. Page 4
- Calling all ginger lovers! Page 4
- Where's the evidence? Page 5
- When we're discouraged with God. Page 6

## INDEX:

RJA News Corner	1
Grace's Outpost	2
Notable Quotes	2
Going Deeper	3
Calendar of Events	4
Recipe of the Month	4
The Crow's Nest	5
Children's Page	6
Church & Newsletter Information	6

*Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy. ~Proverbs 28:13 NIV~*

## RJA News Corner

by Lee Stahl, Principal



### Partnering for Eternity student shares his experience. Submitted by Cory Calapino

I've known my mentor, Mr. Lutz, for many years, even before the program, Partnering for Eternity (PFE) was started at RJA. My third-grade teacher used to take us to his house to rake leaves in the fall. Mr. Lutz had a dog named Rescue when I first met him. But Rescue died, so our class built a headstone out of small sticks and leaves the next time we visited him.

When PFE started, I was excited to find out that I would be helping Mr. Lutz. At that time, I knew he was older, but never realized his struggles of everyday life until I got to know him better. He now had another much smaller dog, named Mugsy. He is a fur ball of energy and curiosity.

In the five years of doing PFE, I learned a lot about Mr. Lutz. He is happy man. He is a jokester, and he loves to paint. I also learned that his health is not very stable. Every so often we would get a phone call notifying us that Mr. Lutz was in the hospital, and we would visit him every time. I know he appreciated our visits. We created a bond with him. Not a money bond or even a friend bond, but one much greater – a family bond.

Because Mr. Lutz was like family, we talked about everything – school, work, family affairs, homework, etc.

Even when school was over for the summer, we still did our weekly visits. We sometimes buy him food, which he likes a lot. Even though it was only one hour a week, our lives have been changed forever. He is and will always be part of our family!

### Dude! Do you hear what I hear?

RJA held its annual Christmas program on December 7. We continue to be blessed with a great turnout of people supporting the work of our students and staff. This year's play was titled, "Dude, Do You Hear What I Hear?" While the actors did an outstanding job at presenting the various characters of the story that included campers, store personnel, police, news reporter, and mannequins; the true stars of the program go to the children's choir that boldly sang out a message in music.



### RJA Students at Opportunity House! Submitted by Kathryn Federowski

"They were some of the nicest people." Adrian Pena, one of RJA's 6th-grade boys said in describing their field trip to The Opportunity House homeless shelter on December 17, 2019. "Even though they looked mean or scary, they were pretty cool. It felt good to make people laugh and smile."

(continued on page 6)

**Grace's Outpost** by Ashley Richards

"Show me a sign of Your favor, that those who hate me may see and be put to shame, because You, Lord, have helped me and comforted me." – Psalm 86:17, ESV

Where does *desire* fit in the life of the Christian? I think it's easy to squelch desire when it's so easy to associate it with sexual or selfish desires, especially in comparison with good Christian duty and doing what we know we ought to do, and verses like Jeremiah 17:9 that tells us the heart is deceitful above all things.

But then what do we do with verses like Psalm 37:4, which says, "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart"? Or Proverbs 10:24: "What the wicked dreads will come upon him, but the desire of the righteous will be granted"? Clearly, the Bible leaves room for desire to be honored, especially when desire comes

with the right intent.

And then I think of Hannah. The yearning of her heart steals your breath. If you're being honest, doesn't it steal yours, too? Have you ever desired something as desperately as Hannah longed for a child?

Hannah is a perfect Bible hero, because she's so easy to identify with. What have you desired so passionately it breaks your heart? What have you yearned for so much it leaves you breathless? Is it a husband? A child, like Hannah? A dream? Freedom from sin that shackles you? Can you taste her desperation, her yearning, her *desire*?

Part of me wonders why we don't hold up Hannah as a champion of what following Jesus looks like, rather than the idea of whitewashed Christians, with stained-glass masquerades, that you can find walking through any

given church on any weekend, like zombies.

And yet, when what we desire is Godly, we know our desire isn't really ours. It's not ours to hold, it's not ours to control. And isn't that the worst part? Giving our desire to God?

It's so easy to say, "Today or tomorrow, we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there, and engage in business and make a profit" (James 4:13, NASB). *I will be a mom. I will fall in love. I will be a missionary because I want it. But what could be harder than saying, "God, I want this more than my next breath, more than a thousand years, more than anything, more than just about life itself, but I choose to bend my will to Yours. Let Your will be done."*

But honestly, what else could we do? There's a fine line between desire and selfishness, and His plan is far greater than our own.

"But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me." (Micah 7:7, NASB)

What a beautiful thought it is to know that God *loves* to give us the desires of our hearts. He longs to fill our lives with joy! He does not withhold joy and desire from us out of spite, or in a desire to make us one-dimensional, commandment-keeping robots. God has so much joy, so much desire, Himself. And He does not withhold our desires from us to be spiteful, but because He has a *much* better plan for our good.

God holds not only the world, but also our *desires*, in His hands. He brings them to fruition in His *perfect* time. He honors our desire. He cares for both our needs and our hearts.

Oh, how He loves.

What a beautiful God we serve.

**Notable Quotes** selected by Bob Kondracki

You miss 100% of the shots you don't take.  
~Wayne Gretzky~

At my back I often hear time's winged chariot changing gear.  
~Eric Linklater~

He who fears being conquered is sure of defeat.  
~Napoleon Bonaparte~

A bit of fragrance clings to the hand that gives flowers.  
~Chinese proverb~

He who asks a question is a fool for five minutes; he who does not ask a question remains a fool forever.  
~Chinese proverb~

We occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of us pick ourselves up and hurry off as if nothing had happened.  
~Winston Churchill~

It is an old habit with theologians to beat the living with the bones of the dead.  
~Robert G. Ingersoll~

I prefer to be true to myself, even at the hazard of incurring the ridicule of others, rather than to be false, and to incur my own abhorrence.  
~Frederick Douglass~

Next to a battle lost, the greatest misery is a battle gained.  
~Duke of Wellington~

Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?  
~Abraham Lincoln~

Men are apt to mistake the strength of their feeling for the strength of their argument. The heated mind resents the chill touch and relentless scrutiny of logic.  
~William E. Gladstone~

Chess is war over the board. The object is to crush the opponent's mind.  
~Bobby Fischer~

You must be the change you wish to see in the world.  
~Mahatma Gandhi~

## Going Deeper by Barbara Snyder

### Casting Stones

So it's Christmas and the New Year. It comes around routinely and each year our country is immersed in stuff, lots of stuff. I have determined to cut down on the stuff, and perhaps treat these holidays much like any other day. I know Christ has been born and that His arrival has opened to us a new hope; so it seems that keeping this thought paramount will cure me of the stuff, and get me back to the basics. Yet I am convinced that the basics are even more deeply basic than I, and we, had first thought.

I will elaborate. I was reading John 8, and in verses 1-11 discovered another basic. The story is a familiar one, that of the attempted trickery of bringing to Jesus a woman caught in adultery. The crowd of men, (I say men because scripture says they were religious scholars and Pharisees. Ellen White writes that some of them were the same people who had been involved in bringing this woman to sin.) with stones in their hands, repeat the law of Moses on the punishment for adultery. If Jesus says, "Yes, stone her," He appears to uphold the law. But Jesus knew that the law really says stone both those caught in the act, and a witness was necessary to convict. They were trying to trap Him into saying something incriminating so they could bring charges against him. It was a set up from the beginning.

The remainder of the verses dealt with how Jesus bent down and wrote in the sand with his finger. He was writing the sins of the men there who were ready and probably quite happily anxious to get this stoning underway! When it dawned on the crowd that the writing referred to their sins, the men dropped their stones and left, beginning with the eldest. I'm guessing that the younger ones stayed longer because they had more hormones thrashing around in their blood and perhaps less occasions of sin than the elders.

To get personal, I remembered that I have a person in my life who has hurt me deeply. There is another person who is enabling the first individual to continue to do things that will, by their very nature hurt me. At one time I actually wished them harm! I'm not proud of that fact, but it is true. Although I have by God, been granted a relief from this negative feeling of wishing harm on others, I have been shown a bit more of the depth of my capability to evil. We all have it and we all have to face it.

Jesus in the scripture says "He who is without sin, cast the first stone." I heard during this time of prayer that I have a sin and I cannot cast a stone, ever. When Jesus said to the woman, "Where are your accusers?" she said that there were none. I cannot accuse. I have stones in my hand and don't meet the criteria for throwing them. But Jesus, now, He meets the criteria. He has no sin, and

yet He did not accuse her either. If Jesus cannot, I can never.

The one thing that perplexes me still about relating these scripture passages with my own experience is how do we, both as individuals and a church, accuse, bring to "trial", and condemn? When Jesus finished, He said "...Go and sin no more." If Jesus touched the woman's heart figuratively with the hand of God, how can we who are sinners, work in this world of sin? The Father and Jesus see in a different way. We see in ways that we can feel, touch, experience, hear, very limited. To allow that God sees differently and that the conclusion is heavenly in purpose, is to allow the truth to open us up to Jesus' work in us, and to us, to the Word in the World.

"Go and sin no more." This woman was touched by God, and that is why what He said (Go and sin no more.) was truthful and not presumption; to the woman, it was empowering, and not impossible. Until we exercise the Holy Spirit, and better yet, vice versa, we cannot rightly say this to anyone whom we think needs changing.

There are so many situations not in the Bible that our world deals with every day. I asked someone recently, "Do you think the Bible is outdated?" But I already know the answer to that question. The Bible is not outdated. We, however, are not exposing ourselves to its power. This is our work to do.

The rest is God's. We can never use the stones of the Bible to condemn. Unless we are versed in its use and connected to the power source of the Holy Spirit to change US, we are useless to our Lord to help or change others.

How has the church dealt with the situations not in the Bible? We avoid them! But we cannot! There are many of them that we are figuratively throwing stones, but we are not dealing with them! For some, we just touch the edges. Think about these for starters: prison ministry, alcohol and drug detox and rehab, in serving our returning armed forces with the issues they carry such as PTSD, race relations, in LGBT communities, in abortion issues, rape, immigration, homelessness, and unwed mothers or adoption of high-risk infants. There are countless communities of sorrow and helplessness that we have not touched. Oh, for the wisdom that we so desperately need!

Jesus is our only hope, our Friend, our counselor and our problem solver. No stones allowed. Blessed be His Holy Name.

Amen.

**Calendar of Events** submitted by Wendy Hughes

Date	Day	Event	Time	Sponsor	Leader	Location
1/2/20	Thursday	Prayer Meeting	6:30 PM	Personal Ministries	Dena Kondracki	Fellowship Hall
1/5/20	Sunday	Youth to Farm Show	All Day	Youth Ministries	Wendy & Daren Hughes	Harrisburg
1/8/20	Wednesday	Prayer Meeting w/Meal	5:30 PM	Personal Ministries	Lorraine & Dwight Edris	The Edris' Home
1/9/20	Thursday	Prayer Meeting	6:30 PM	Personal Ministries	Dena Kondracki	Fellowship Hall
1/15/20	Wednesday	Prayer Meeting w/Meal	5:30 PM	Personal Ministries	Lorraine & Dwight Edris	The Edris' Home
1/16/20	Thursday	Prayer Meeting	6:30 PM	Personal Ministries	Dena Kondracki	Fellowship Hall
1/18/20	Sabbath	Potluck	Lunchtime	Church	Deacons/Deaconesses	Fellowship Hall
1/22/20	Wednesday	Prayer Meeting w/Meal	5:30 PM	Personal Ministries	Lorraine & Dwight Edris	The Edris' Home
1/23/20	Thursday	Prayer Meeting	6:30 PM	Personal Ministries	Dena Kondracki	Fellowship Hall
1/25/20	Sat/Sun	Lock-In	6:00 PM-11:00 AM	Youth Ministries	Wendy & Daren Hughes	Fellowship Hall
1/26/20	Sunday	Fire Extinguisher Training	10:00 AM	Security Committee	Bob Kondracki	Church grounds
1/29/20	Wednesday	Prayer Meeting w/Meal	5:30 PM	Personal Ministries	Lorraine & Dwight Edris	The Edris' Home
1/30/20	Thursday	Prayer Meeting	6:30 PM	Personal Ministries	Dena Kondracki	Fellowship Hall

**Recipe of the Month** by Arleen Johns

**Triple Gingersnap Cookies**

**Ingredients**

- ¾ c butter (I use smart balance)
- 1 c brown sugar
- ¼ c molasses
- 1 egg (I used 3 TBS aquafaba -garbanzo bean water)
- 2 ¼ flour
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 2 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp cream of tartar

- ½ tsp nutmeg
- ½ tsp cloves
- 1 TBS diced crystallized ginger
- 1 to 2 TBS minced fresh ginger root
- 1-2 pinches cayenne pepper-add more for more kick.

**Directions**

- Beat sugar and butter until creamy, mix in aquafaba and molasses.
- Add fresh and crystallized gingers (I ground mine together and make a paste)

Combine dry ingredients, add to wet till well combined.

Refrigerate at least 2 hours, or overnight.

Shape dough into 1-inch balls; bake 2 inches apart on parchment covered sheets.

Bake in preheated oven at 300 deg for 24 minutes- if using 2 pans, switch top to bottom after 12 minutes.

## The Crow's Nest by Bob Kondracki

### The Star of Bethlehem

*Who commands the sun not to shine, and sets a seal upon the stars; Who alone stretches out the heavens and tramples down the waves of the sea; Who makes the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades, And the chambers of the south;*

*~Job 9:7-9~*

This article is a little late, and would have been more-timely in last month's issue, but the subject is more complex, and took more time than I anticipated, and I didn't want to wait till next year to present it.

At this point, you'd be hard pressed to find someone unfamiliar with the story of the 3 magi following the Star of Bethlehem to find Jesus. It's a Christmas tradition, and a story that warms our hearts when we hear it, and most of us simply take it for granted. But what exactly was the star, and is it actually historical, or was it something made up by the early church? Is there any tangible evidence for a star the Bible describes as doing things stars, by the laws of physics, can't possibly do?

If you take to studying the Star of Bethlehem event, you'll likely find all kinds of explanations as to what it was, or whether it was even possible. Some of these would include that it was a single planet, a comet, an exploding star or super nova, or, from the religious sector, perhaps a group of angels. There are many theories. Well, as it turns out, fairly modern contemporary

science can shed some light on this subject.

In the early 1600s, Johannes Kepler discovered the math for calculating the laws of planetary motion. It is the same math, with a few minor tweaks, that NASA, and other space programs still use today. Kepler was a religious man, and he also looked for the Star of Bethlehem, but he never found it.

One problem Kepler had was that the math was quite laborious. That's a huge amount of calculations to do on paper, and one small mistake could throw everything off. Another problem was, his dates were a little inaccurate, so he was looking for the star in the wrong year. Kepler was using the death of King Herod as a reference point for his search. He based his dates on the writings of Flavious Josephus, a Jewish scholar and historian. Josephus inferred (they didn't use our dating system) that King Herod died in 4 BC. But older manuscripts, dated before 1544, and found in museums today, say Herod died in 1 BC. Somewhere along the line, the date was erroneously copied from the original manuscripts. That means instead of looking for the star in 5-7 BC, the historically accurate date would be 2-3 BC. If you look in the skies between the years 5-7 BC, you find nothing. But if you look between 2-3 BC, amazing things appear.

As stated earlier, the math is enormous for calculating astronomical movements. Fortunately, we now have computers to do that for us. The software presently

available allows us to recreate the sky from anytime, and anywhere in the history of the world with mathematical precision. In other words, it's infallible.

As previously noted, a study like this can quickly become very complex. So, I won't go into elaborate details in such a short column with limited space. But the Lord gives us His approval in the Bible to search the skies for signs He's provided us. In the 38<sup>th</sup> chapter, He reminds Job that it was He who created the stars and constellations. And regarding the coming of the Son of Man, Luke 21:25 tells us there will be signs in the heavens. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Matthew, the Bible also gives us clues to identifying the Star of Bethlehem. It does indeed take some time and study to understand the clues, so I will try to summarize instead of going into elaborate detail. If we use modern day software to recreate the sky, based on the hints of Matthew, and the accurate time of Herod's death, we see that the Star of Bethlehem was not really a star at all. It was, in fact, two stars. The star did some very peculiar things not characteristic of stars per say. But as it turns out, part of the star's strange behavior can be explained by retrograde motion. This causes stars to appear to move erratically. It is when something appears to be moving one way when in fact it is doing something different. A good example would be when you are passing another car on the highway. The other car seems to be moving backwards because we are

viewing it from a moving platform. This phenomenon explains how stars can appear to stop, or even move backwards. If we use our astronomy software to look at the sky at the appropriate time, we see that the planets Jupiter and Venus were so perfectly aligned and close together, that to the naked eye, they appeared to be a single star...the brightest star anybody had ever seen. In addition, because of retrograde motion, they appeared to stop directly above Bethlehem. At this time, our software also shows us that there was a blood moon, a lunar eclipse that occurred at precisely the time the Bible tells us it did.

There is so much more that opens up when studying the astronomy of this time than just the Star of Bethlehem occurrence. The vision that John tells us about in Revelation 12:1-5 can also be seen in the perfect alignment of the heavens as well. We can also deduce Christ's death on the cross to April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 33 AD.

We must never blindly follow anybody's singular word or opinion on things, without also verifying it for ourselves. If you're interested in learning more about this subject, one resource I would encourage you to check out: [www.bethlehemstar.net](http://www.bethlehemstar.net)

There will always be doubters, cynics, and detractors. Personally, from studying various topics over the years, from evolution to archeology, I've discovered that the Bible is never in error. The easiest way to make yourself look foolish is to argue with God's Holy Word.

**Hampden Heights  
Seventh Day Adventist  
Church**

2706 Old Pricetown Rd.  
Temple, PA  
19560

PHONE:  
(610) 921-0890

CHURCH EMAIL:  
HampdenHeightsSDA  
@comcast.net

SENTINEL EMAIL:  
HHSentinel  
@yahoo.com

SENTINEL EDITOR:  
Bob Kondracki

**We're on the Web!**

See us at:  
[www.HampdenHeightsChurch.org](http://www.HampdenHeightsChurch.org)

**Children's Page** by Ashley Richards

Do you know the story of Elijah in the cave? It's one of my favorites! You probably know the story of Elijah on Mount Carmel, when there had been a famine in Israel for three years, and God commanded Elijah to have a competition to see whose God would be honored by their sacrifice by sending down fire from heaven. Of course, Elijah's God—the only real God!—sent down fire from heaven and consumed even the trenches of water around Elijah's altar! The story of Elijah in the cave comes directly after it. Jezebel, the evil queen, was so angry that Elijah's God was shown superior to her false god, Ba'al, that she threatened his life. Elijah traveled for 40 days and nights to get away from her! Elijah was angry and felt defeated, and didn't want to do God's work anymore—he even asked God to kill him! But God took him into a cave, and then there was a strong wind that shook the mountains and split stones in half, but God was not in the fierce wind. And then there was an earthquake, but God was not in the earthquake. And then there was a fire! But God was not in the fire, either. Then there was the sound of a gentle whisper, and God was in the gentle whisper. Elijah walked to the edge of the cave and spoke with God, and God anointed Elijah to do more jobs for Him! Isn't it wonderful that even if we do things to God that are not nice, God still loves us and uses us for His honor? And wouldn't it be amazing to stand on the edge of a cave in the mountains, and meet with God and hear His voice? If you want to read the story for yourself, it is found in I Kings 19:1-18.

E L I J A H B L W B L O E N E  
P R A L T A R S A P I O C H M  
C T G C J Z Y E L O W F O O D  
L A E L E A M N O W E O V R R  
O R N S Z E O I P E K I E E I  
A E T E E L U L O R D Z N B A  
K A L R B I N L N F A E A Y F  
E S E V E N T H O U S A N D I  
A N W A L R A Y A L K L T L O  
J Y H N A V I E T W Y O L V S  
O P I T F E N J R I V U A I A  
N A S W I L D E R N E S S E B  
Y R P A R A G H E D L A G U A  
R I E Y E I N U I R W N D L A  
E A R T H Q U A K E O M E W L

- |            |                |          |                |
|------------|----------------|----------|----------------|
| altars     | Elijah         | Horeb    | powerful wind  |
| Baal       | fire           | Jehu     | servant        |
| cloak      | food           | Jezebel  | seven thousand |
| covenant   | gentle whisper | Lord     | wilderness     |
| earthquake | Hazael         | mountain | zealous        |

**RJA News Corner** (continued from page 1)

Grades K-6 collected toiletry items and made cards to fill shoeboxes and gift boxes, for both men and women. Together they collected 48 shoeboxes! Grades 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> went on a field trip to The Opportunity House to pass

out the shoeboxes and talk with some of the people. "I didn't like it, I LOVED it!" "I liked seeing their faces when they opened their boxes," said 5th-grade girls, Destyne Ramos and Kelle Hendrickson. 120 people

were served chicken noodle soup and chicken sandwiches. The center filled 50 boxes of their own, RJA collected 48 boxes, and together we had the opportunity to help, serve, and bring happiness to

"some of the nicest people."

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