

BUENA VISTA *Blessings*

STORIES OF FAITH, FELLOWSHIP AND SERVICE
VOLUME 1 ISSUE 2 OCTOBER 2026

From Generation *to Generation*

"One generation shall praise Your works to another, And shall declare Your mighty acts." -Psalm 145:4

Every generation becomes part of a story that began long before us and will continue long after us.

In the life of a church, we see that story unfolding all around us. We see it in those who have faithfully walked with God through many seasons of life. We see it in the memories and influence left behind by those we have loved and lost. We see it in children discovering Jesus, in members stepping out to serve our community, and in a church family preparing a place for generations yet to come.

In this issue of *Buena Vista Blessings*, we have the opportunity to look both backward and forward. We remember the life of a beloved member, celebrate an extraordinary 100th birthday, look back on a wonderful week of Vacation Bible School, follow the progress of our new church building, and see how prayer and service continue to reach beyond our church walls.

Each story is different, but together they remind us of something important: God's faithfulness does not belong to just one generation. Those who came before us planted seeds from which we continue to benefit today. Now it is our turn- to faithfully serve, encourage, build, teach, pray, and share Jesus with those around us.

And someday, another generation will carry the story forward.



SHARE YOUR *Story*

**God is working throughout
our church family- and
we'd love to hear about it!**

Have a testimony, ministry update, outreach story, special milestone, or photo you'd like considered for a future issue of *Buena Vista Blessings*?

Contact Michelle Hall

Your word, O Lord,
endures forever.

PSALM 119:89



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BUENA VISTA
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

Reflect Jesus • Serve Our Community • Grow as a Family

Remembering Luke Henson

NOVEMBER 3, 1945 - AUGUST 16, 2026



On August 16, our church family said goodbye to longtime member Luke Calvin Henson. At 80 years old, Luke left behind a lifetime of memories – of faith, family, hard work, music, and a marriage that lasted just one month shy of 62 years.

Luke's story began in an unusual way. Born in Baltimore, Maryland, he didn't quite make it to the hospital. Luke was born in the doctor's car on the way there. For years he wasn't even sure whether he had a birth certificate; later, he and Linda sent away for a copy and learned that the doctor had indeed recorded his birth.

A LOVE STORY TOLD THROUGH LETTERS

Luke and Linda met during their senior year at Echo Valley Academy. Linda remembers seeing Luke and thinking, "That's the man I'm going to marry." After graduation Luke moved to Florida while Linda remained in Virginia, and their relationship grew mostly through letters. They began corresponding that July; and just three months later, on September 20, they were married – becoming the first couple married in the newer section of the Buena Vista church. Years later, great-granddaughter Mayleigh read some of those letters and declared, "Granddaddy was a romantic guy."

A FAITH THAT WAS LIVED

Church was important to Luke, and he was a faithful attendee who did not like being late. He had a favorite seat, too; Linda remembers one Sabbath when someone's belongings were in Luke's usual spot, but he moved them and sat down. (*It turned out they were Patty's.*)

Music was an especially important part of Luke's faith. He led song service, sang special music, and sang in the church choir. One of his favorite hymns was "What Heavenly Music." Camp Meeting brought together two things Luke loved: fellowship with fellow Adventists and music. Whenever they could, Luke and Linda brought their RV and stayed for Camp Meeting. He never wanted to miss the song service and loved hearing so many voices joined together in worship.



A LIFE OF HARD WORK

Luke worked for several years as an inhalation therapist at Washington Adventist Hospital before returning to this area and beginning a nearly 40-year career at Western State Hospital. Western State sent him to school to become an LPN, and he went on to work there for 39 years and 10 months.

When Luke retired, he received an engraved brick from the old Western State site in Staunton. It stayed beside his bed, and even when Linda picked it up just to dust it, Luke wanted to know what she was doing with it. **"I put a lot of sweat into getting that brick,"** he would tell her. After leaving Western State, Luke started a water-hauling business, delivering water to families who relied on cisterns, before eventually turning it over to his son Billy.

FARM LIFE, CARS & NASCAR

For several years Luke raised baby calves, sometimes bottle-feeding as many as six at once. Linda remembers the bottles cluttering her kitchen, while great-granddaughter Erica loved going to the barn to help him. Luke also enjoyed working on cars and once rebuilt an engine for a Mustang. And then there was NASCAR: Dale Earnhardt was his favorite driver, and watching the race each week was one of the things Luke truly enjoyed.

NEARLY 62 YEARS TOGETHER

From two young people writing letters between Virginia and Florida grew a marriage that lasted nearly 62 years and a family of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. There are many ways to measure a life, but Luke's was more than numbers. It was found in love letters saved through the years, a treasured brick beside his bed, and a voice lifted in song. Most of all, it was found in the faith that was so important to him and in the family he loved and with whom he shared his life.

Perhaps one of the most fitting memories of Luke is of him sitting at Camp Meeting, surrounded by fellow believers and listening to hundreds of voices joined together in worship, wondering, **"If it sounds this good here, what is it going to sound like in heaven?"**

Today, as we remember Luke, we hold close one of the promises from Scripture that meant so much to him:

"I will never leave you nor forsake you." — Hebrews 13:5

Until that day when we are reunited, we remember Luke with love and with the same hope in which he placed his faith—the hope of seeing one another again.

BUILDING IN FAITH:

Our New church update



Just a few months ago, our church family gathered on Bares Wood Lane to break ground for our future church home. Since that special day in May, what was once a vision on paper is beginning to take shape.

We are grateful for your continued prayers and faithful financial support. God has been leading and providing, and we are encouraged by the progress taking place!

CELEBRATING OUR PROGRESS

Over the past several months, contractors have completed a number of important steps:

- ✓ A storage container has been delivered, providing a safe and secure place for contractors' materials
- ✓ Temporary electrical service is now available on site.
- ✓ A security camera has been installed to help protect the project.
- ✓ The footers, foundation wall, and slab for the Sanctuary are now in place, along with the conduits and plumbing beneath the slab.

Standing on the site today, we can clearly see the footprint of the place where our church family will one day gather to worship, grow in faith, and serve our community.

TRUSTING GOD'S TIMING

Construction does not always move as quickly as we might hope, but every completed step is another reason to give thanks. We are grateful for God's provision, for the faithful prayers, and for each milestone that brings us closer to the day when we can worship and serve together in our new church home.

As we continue forward, please keep the building project in your prayers—that God will guide each decision, provide for every need, and allow the work to unfold according to His perfect timing.



WHAT'S NEXT?

The next major step is the erection of the Sanctuary's superstructure, which is anticipated to begin during the second week of October. As the walls and roof begin to rise, the vision we have looked forward to for so many years will become even easier to see.

Once the Sanctuary superstructure and roof are in place, work can begin on the footers, foundation walls, conduits plumbing, and slab for the Fellowship Hall, kitchen, bathrooms, and Sabbath School rooms.

"For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." - 1 Corinthians 3:11

Rainforest Falls MORE THAN A WEEK OF VBS

For one unforgettable week in July, our church was transformed into Rainforest Falls, where children explored the wonders of God's creation while discovering more about His love and character.

This year, we welcomed **43** children to Vacation Bible School. While we were thankful for every child who walked through our doors, one number made the week especially meaningful: 34 of those children came from our surrounding community.

That meant VBS gave us the opportunity to build relationships with children and families beyond our church walls and share with them a simple but important message—that they are known, loved, and cared for by God.

Throughout the week, children learned that God is our Creator, God knows everything, God is our safe place, God loves us, and God is forever. Those truths were reinforced through Bible adventures, music, crafts, games, snacks, and the relationships formed with their leaders.

IT TAKES A CHURCH FAMILY

Rainforest Falls was also a wonderful example of what can happen when a church family works together. An incredible 52 staff members served during VBS, with approximately 15 additional volunteers helping behind the scenes. Long before the first child arrived, volunteers were planning, building sets, creating decorations, preparing lessons and crafts, organizing games, purchasing supplies, preparing snacks, and transforming the church into a colorful rainforest.

The investment went far beyond decorations and activities. Each child received a Book of Psalms to take home, giving them something lasting that could continue pointing them to God's Word after VBS was over.

PLANTING SEEDS FOR ETERNITY

Our prayer throughout the week—and still today—is that the impact of VBS will extend far beyond the memories of a fun summer program. We may never know the full effect of a Bible story, a song, a conversation, a smile, or a few hours spent showing a child the love of Jesus. But we can faithfully plant the seeds and trust God with what grows.

To every person who prayed, decorated, built, taught, led, cooked, served, cleaned, donated, encouraged, or simply stepped in wherever you were needed—**THANK YOU!** Rainforest Falls may have lasted only one week, but we pray the seeds planted in the hearts of these children and their families will continue growing for years to come.





WALKING IN Prayer



TAKING PRAYER BEYOND THE WALLS OF THE CHURCH

What would happen if we didn't simply pray for community, but intentionally walked its streets and prayed for the people who live there?

Led by Steve King, our Prayer Walk Ministry does just that. On the **fourth Sabbath** of each month, members head into neighborhoods throughout our community with a simple purpose—to pray.

As they walk, our team stops in front of individual homes and prays for the people and families who live there. They may not know their names or the circumstances they are facing— but God does. When they encounter residents outside, team members may, when welcomed, offer to pray with them personally.

Prayer walking helps us see our community differently. Instead of simply seeing houses, we begin to see the people who call them home— and intentionally bring their lives, families, needs, and spiritual well-being before God.

We may never know how God answers a particular prayer, but we can faithfully pray and trust Him with the results.



JOIN THE PRAYER WALK

Fourth Sabbath of each month

WALK • PRAY • SERVE OUR COMMUNITY

Celebrating a CENTURY 100

HONORING GENE HENSLEY ON HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY

This summer, one of our church members had the privilege of celebrating a very special milestone. **Gene Hensley** celebrated his 100th birthday!

For many years, Gene has been part of our church family, and reaching a century of life is certainly an occasion worth celebrating.

Several members of our church had the opportunity to visit Gene and help mark his special day, bringing birthday wishes and reminding him that although he may not be able to join us at church as he once did, he remains a treasured part of our church family.

One hundred years represents a lifetime of memories, experiences, changes, joys, and challenges that few of us can fully imagine. We are grateful for Gene and for the many years he has been part of our congregation.



Happy 100th Birthday, Gene!

Looking AHEAD

OCTOBER • NOVEMBER • DECEMBER 2026

WEEKLY



Sundays
Hopeful Hearts

*Check the weekly bulletin
for current meeting time.*



Tuesdays

6:00 PM – Women's Bible Study

7:15 PM – Prayer Meeting



October

OCT
10

Mountain Days

Stop by our church's table
at Buena Vista's
Mountain Days!



OCT
14

Church Board Meeting

7:00 PM

OCT
18

Baby Shower

Celebrating Jacob &
Charlotte Lawrence
See bulletin insert for details.



OCT
24

Pathfinder Induction Program

Followed by a fellowship dinner



Prayer Walk Ministry

Fourth Sabbath of the month

OCT
31-
NOV 1

Pathfinder Community Service Weekend



November



Throughout November Winter Coat Collection

*Help us collect warm winter coats
to distribute to those in need
in our community.*

NOV
11

Church Board Meeting

7:00 PM

NOV
14

Communion Service



NOV
21

Coat Packing

*Join us as we prepare
donated coats for distribution.*



NOV
28

Thanksgiving Worship Service



Prayer Walk Ministry

Fourth Sabbath of the month



December

DEC
5

Pathfinder Christmas Caroling & Community Outreach

*Pathfinders will visit local
nursing-home residents and
help distribute coats throughout
the community.*



DEC
19

Christmas Program



DEC
20

Pathfinder Ice Skating

at Generations Park



DEC
26



Prayer Walk Ministry

Fourth Sabbath of the month



MORE FELLOWSHIP AHEAD!

Our Social Committee is planning several opportunities for fun and fellowship in the coming months! *Watch the weekly bulletin and church announcements for dates and details as plans are finalized.*

