

A Bittersweet Sabbath at Westvale Church

Two people were baptized and another person joined the church on profession of faith on May 20 at Westvale church in Syracuse, New York. Alla Toderiko and Marc Raymond Vreeland had been attending the church for quite a while but finally decided to take their stand for Jesus and be baptized. Sally Baker was brought up as a Seventh-day Adventist but then drifted away from the church for about 40

years. She finally came back to God and the church. She had been attending the Westvale church for a while before deciding to join the church family through profession of faith.

On May 20, the Westvale church was also privileged to have Richard Ortega, a guest speaker from the Rochester church, who shared during the message by Reynolds Rodriguez, the church's pastor, about witnessing for



Richard Ortega from Rochester church shares a story as Reynolds Rodriguez looks on.



The Westvale church congregation gathers around Reynolds Rodriguez, the church's pastor, for prayer.

God. Ortega shared how people can witness for God wherever they are. He shared his experience of helping to save a man from jumping over a bridge and ending his life.

The Sabbath was also bittersweet for the Westvale church because, after serving for only five months as pastor of the church, Rodriguez was leaving to serve as director for youth and young

adults in the New York Conference. At the close of the service, the congregation surrounded Rodriguez for a special prayer led by Sue Hayford, head elder. He was also presented with a gift from the church. The Westvale church members are sorry to see Rodriguez leave but know he will do well as a youth director.

—Joan Payne, elder, Westvale church

Joy of Troy Hosts Jamie Jorge in Concert

Joy of Troy hosted a concert featuring Jaime Jorge on March 19 for the Quadrant community, church, and surrounding areas. They advertised extensively to the community, and about 20 visitors attended the concert.

One of Joy of Troy's members, who lives in senior housing, has been active by leading a weekly Bible study in her residence. She always invites her friends to come to Communion when church members bring it



Joy of Troy members and friends pose for a group photo with Jamie Jorge, center back, and Anthony Whitlow, the church's pastor, kneeling front right, following the concert.

to her home. She brought a couple of visitors with her to the concert who had never

visited Joy of Troy church. They said they enjoyed the concert very much.

Two new visitors from the surrounding area also attended the concert because they saw it advertised on Facebook. Joy of Troy hosted refreshments after the concert and had an opportunity to connect with those who attended. What an opportunity to reach and connect with new visitors and reconnect with repeat visitors. It was a blessing to fellowship with the community and show them the friendship of God.

—Annette Barnes, elder, Joy of Troy church