

Home Office Weekly Update

from the UNITED CHURCH of GOD

February 13, 2025

Counting to Pentecost 2025: The Right Way

In 2025, some critics argue that the United Church of God will observe Pentecost a week too early. This controversy arises because Pentecost is the only Feast day without a fixed date, and its timing must be determined by counting.

The biblical instructions

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is mentioned as one of the “feasts to the Lord” in Leviticus 23. During this Feast, the Israelites were instructed to offer a Wave Sheaf, the firstfruits of their harvest (Leviticus 23:10-11). This offering is a key moment from which the count to Pentecost begins.

The count to Pentecost should always begin the day after the weekly Sabbath, as instructed in Leviticus 23:15-16: “And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering; seven Sabbaths shall be completed.” This count lasts for seven Sabbaths, and the fiftieth day marks Pentecost (the Feast of Weeks).

The correct way to count

The correct method to count Pentecost is straightforward. The counting always begins with the day after the weekly Sabbath from the Sunday within the Days of Unleavened Bread, rather than starting with the weekly Sabbath within the festival, as some argue. This approach ensures that the count always begins during the festival and never after it. If the count started after the weekly Sabbath within the festival, the count would usually begin during the festival but occasionally it would not, which would create inconsistency. This method confirms that the count follows the proper biblical sequence.

Joshua 5: A proof of counting

When we consider Joshua 5:10-12, we gain further insight into the correct method of counting to Pentecost. The Israelites were camped at Gilgal, just after crossing the Jordan River, and on the 14th day of the first month, they observed the Passover. In that year, Unleavened Bread began on the first day of the week, just as it does in 2025.

The following day, the 15th, was the first day of Unleavened Bread. On that Holy Day, the Israelites ate the produce of the land, which also marked the beginning of the new harvest. The only way this could take place is if the wave sheaf had been offered on the first Holy Day of Unleavened Bread, allowing the Israelites to begin eating the spring crop immediately. This action fulfilled the command in Leviticus 23:14 and meant that Pentecost would fall seven weeks from that day.

The text highlights the importance of this day as the key starting point for counting. It reinforces the correct understanding that the count to Pentecost should begin from the day after the Sabbath, even if that day is the First Day of Unleavened Bread. This example shows how to calculate Pentecost in a year when the Feast of Unleavened Bread begins on the first day of the week and ends on the weekly Sabbath, as it does in 2025. This is why we know that this year Pentecost falls on Sunday, June 1, 2025.

It's important to note that this is not a new teaching, but rather a continuation of the teachings upheld by the Church of God for the past 50 years. It was reconfirmed by the Council of Elders in the doctrinal study paper "Pentecost and Its Observance" found at ucgweb.s3.amazonaws.com/files/papers/UCG-papers-Pentecost-and-Its-Observance.pdf.

More detailed information can be found in the article "Counting Pentecost When the First Day of Unleavened Bread Falls on Sunday" at ucg.org/members/united-news/united-news-january-2005/counting-pentecost-when-first-day-unleavened-bread.

The biblical foundation

The correct method for counting to Pentecost in 2025 is firmly rooted in God-given instructions that have been upheld by the Church of God for decades. Leviticus 23 provides clear biblical evidence that the count to Pentecost must always begin on the

day after the weekly Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, ensuring that Pentecost is celebrated on the 50th day, which is always on a Sunday.

Joshua 5 further confirms the pattern, demonstrating that even in years when Passover falls on the Sabbath, the count must begin the next day—Sunday, the First day of Unleavened Bread —just as it will in 2025. By adhering to biblical guidance, we can confidently celebrate Pentecost on the correct day, ensuring alignment with the proper timing prescribed by God.

—Steve Myers, Operation Manager, Ministerial and Member Services

Death of Long-time Elder, Gerald Knochel

Gerald Arthur Knochel, 95, of Normal, Illinois died peacefully on Tuesday, Feb. 4, 2025. He was an elder serving the Central Illinois congregation.

Gerald was born on Jan. 27, 1930 in South Bend, Indiana. He married Phyllis (Troup) Knochel on Dec. 11, 1955.



Gerald and Phyllis became baptized members of the Worldwide Church of God in 1960. Gerald was ordained a deacon in 1964 and an elder in 1968. He and his wife attended Sabbath services with the Worldwide Church of God and the United Church of God for 65 years. His commitment to following God was evident in his enduring service to the local brethren.

A public visitation will be held on Sunday, Feb. 23, from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. at East Lawn Funeral Home, 1102 Airport Road, Bloomington, IL 61704. A formal service will follow at 11 a.m. at the funeral home.

The full obituary can be read
at <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/bloomington-il/gerald-knochel-12234400>.

—Ministerial and Member Services

In Loving Memory of Nancy Peyton

It is with deep sadness we announce the passing of Nancy Peyton, beloved wife of the late elder George Peyton, and member of the congregation in San Antonio, Texas. She died on Monday, Feb. 10, 2025 at around 5:30 a.m. She was a cherished member of our church, respected and loved by nearly everyone who had the privilege of knowing her.



Mrs. Peyton was a source of wisdom, strength, and encouragement to many. Her kind heart, thoughtful advice and unwavering support touched countless lives, leaving a lasting impact on all who crossed her path.

While we grieve her loss, we also celebrate a life well-lived—a life marked by friendship, compassion and faith. She will be deeply missed but fondly remembered. We all look forward to our reunion in God's Kingdom.

We are encouraged: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first” (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Thank you for keeping her family and loved ones in your prayers during this difficult time.

—Ministerial and Member Services

Retirement of Randy Stiver

Ministerial and Member Services announces the following will take place immediately: Randy Stiver will be fully retiring from pastoral ministry, and as a result, Nick Lamoureux will be adding Rapid City, South Dakota to his pastoral responsibilities, with assistance from Ken Skorseth.



Randy and Linda Stiver

We deeply appreciate Randy and Linda’s years of dedicated service to God and His people, and pray for all the best in their retirement.

—Steve Myers, Operation Manager, Ministerial and Member Services

Search Jelly and Friends on Spotify!

Exciting news! Jelly has brand-new music available now on Spotify! These Bible-based songs help kids learn about God in an engaging and memorable way.



Jelly's music is designed to inspire faith, bring joy and teach important biblical lessons through catchy tunes and uplifting messages. Whether at home or on the go, these songs are the perfect way to help kids grow in their love for God. Stream now and let the fun begin! (Album 2 is also available on Amazon and Apple Music.)

To view all 16 episodes, visit: ucg.org/jelly.

United Youth Camps 2025

Eden Nature Park, Davao City, Philippines

Summer camp in the Philippines is scheduled from June 8–15, 2025. It will be held again at the Eden Nature Park in Davao City, Mindanao region. Luzon pastor, Epifanio Rey Evasco, is the camp director. You can contact him at rey_evasco@ucg.org for more details.

Here is a link to all of our UYC international camps: uyc.ucg.org/international-camps.

Upcoming Events

Feb. 28-Mar. 2	Southeast Weekend	Atlanta, GA
Mar. 8	60th Anniversary of Church in Maryland	Columbia, MD
Mar. 14-16	Portland Area Women's Enrichment Weekend	Canby, OR
Mar. 15-16	Women's Enrichment Weekend	Springfield, MO
Mar. 21-23	Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Family Weekend	Coppell, TX
Mar. 28-30	Women's Enrichment Weekend	Fairmont Hot Springs, BC
May 3-5	General Conference of Elders Annual Meeting	Cincinnati, OH
May 8-11	Mammoth Cave Camping Weekend	Mammoth Cave, KY
May 23-25	2025 NW Regional Teen Formal	Salem, OR
July 13-16	Preteen Camp Ironwood	Stewartville, MN
Aug. 26-Sept. 1	United Teen Camp	Westerose, AB
Sept. 7	UCG Gear Grinder Bike Ride	Minnetonka Lakes, MN

Upcoming activities may be sent to weekly_update@ucg.org. Additional calendar information is available on the [members' website](#).