

Home Office Weekly Update

from the UNITED CHURCH of GOD

March 6, 2025

From the President...

Greetings brethren around the world,

It is a pleasure to be able to write to you from the home office, especially having had the opportunity to meet so many of you over the last few years. Indeed, we are a worldwide family whom God has called and is in the process of making us one.

During our lives, there are things that come about that we may not understand now. Some have had unexpected early deaths in their families, others have had serious health issues that forever altered their lives, others have had businesses or homes just taken away.

We may question why at times, but through it all we learn to have faith and know God is in control. When we go through tests or trials, God is looking at what is in our hearts. Ultimately, it is our hearts that God is most concerned with.

How do we respond to unexpected trials? How do we handle setbacks in our lives? And what are the real motives in our hearts? In Psalm 139:23, David asked God to search his heart. As we approach Passover, do we ask that of ourselves? And when going through trials, do we wait for God, as David says (Psalm 27:14) or do we take matters into our own hands?

God is watching us all. We are in a training program for eternity, and only those who truly put their faith in Him and look and trust in Him will be there when Christ

returns. Jeremiah 17:10 says: "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to

give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.”

As we are just six weeks from Passover, when we appear before God having examined ourselves and done the necessary preparation, so we may take the Passover in a worthy manner, keep that scripture in mind, and another one like it that we find in Proverbs 3:5-6, which I have quoted regularly over the past few weeks.

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

Thank you

Let me thank all of you for the very gracious and kind emails, texts and phone calls you have sent my way in light of the Council’s decision not to renew me to a second term as president of the United Church of God. Much has been accomplished in moving the work forward during my first term, and my prayer is that the work will continue with vigor, zeal and boldness—always keeping Christ’s commission in mind, always following His lead. Jesus Christ is the head of His Church.

Many have asked if I will continue doing the *Biblical Worldview (BW)* episodes. The answer is *yes*. Those will continue, as the Council has asked me to do (and I am happy to do so). Expect a new *BW* next week. We live in a world that is quickly changing, and it is imperative we continue to preach the gospel and warn the world of what is to come.

Many have asked if I will continue the weekly Wednesday evening Zoom Bible Studies that we have been doing since 2020. The answer is also *yes*. Even after we relocate from Cincinnati, we will continue with those studies for the many who join us each week. Those have been a joy to do, and it is wonderful to have so many from so many places join us online each week. If you would ever like to join, you can find the link, and all past Bible Studies, at www.ucg.org/congregations/home-office-bible-study.

Pre-Passover daily Bible reading program

As I close this letter for this week, let me bring your attention to a Bible reading program we have assembled which will lead us with scriptures each week up to Passover and through the First Day of Unleavened Bread.

Beginning tomorrow (Friday, March 7), a link to the reading program for each day of each week will be available on the home page of UCG.org. Please see the full announcement about it below.

The program begins in Exodus as God prepares Moses and the people of Israel for their departure from Egypt, then progresses into the epistles where we are admonished what to “put out” of our lives then “put in” as we eat of the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Then, the New Testament scriptures that speak of Christ’s days and words leading to His final Passover on earth, remind us of His love for all mankind and His desire for us to be “one.”

It will be pleasing to God and unifying for His people, *all over the world*, to be reading, meditating and examining ourselves in light of the scriptures we read each day. The word of God is unifying—if we read it, heed it and apply it into our lives. My prayer is that we all do this and strive to come together as one, bringing glory to God’s name as we live our individual and collective lives.

Take care, brethren. Our thoughts and prayers are with and for all of you.

In Christ’s service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rick Shabi', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rick Shabi

Passover Preparation

Join us for a daily Bible reading

Brethren, as God’s people united by God’s Spirit and truth and led by our Savior and soon coming King, Jesus Christ, let’s together, everyone around the world, join in reading some Scriptures together as we prepare for the Passover this year.



Beginning March 7 and continuing through April 10, we have created a [website landing page showing scriptures to read each day](#)—along with passages from our own United Church of God [Bible Commentary](#) where available.

Be sure you read the words from your Bible as well as from our commentary, and include your children in this, as we all read and meditate together on God's word. Don't miss out on this valuable opportunity for daily Bible reading and study. The reading schedule is available by going to <https://www.ucg.org/news/daily-bible-reading-pre-passover-scripture-readings>.

Let's take advantage of this special activity as the entire Church throughout the world reads and meditates on the same passages each day.

From Ministerial and Member Services...

Roland Lecocq Credentialed

We're happy to announce that on Feb. 27, 2025 Roland Lecocq was credentialed as an elder by the United Church of God. He and his wife, Claire, serve in the Geneva, Switzerland (French speaking) area.



Roland and Claire Lecocq

Death of Harold Clement

With both sadness and hope in the resurrection, a long-time elder, Mr. Harold Clement, died on Feb. 5 at the age of 91. Mr. Clement was a man of unwavering faith, having lived God's way for 68 years since his baptism. Ordained as an elder in May of 1972, he devoted himself to serving and uplifting God's people—offering

encouragement, anointing the sick, counseling, speaking and praying fervently for others. His love for God's truth was evident in every conversation, and he was always eager to share the incredible hope he firmly believed in.



Harold Clement

His example of faithfulness and service has touched countless lives. Though he now sleeps, we look forward to the time when he will awake in the resurrection at Christ's return. "Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints" (Psalm 116:15).

Obituary: Carolyn Vernich

Carol Vernich, 91, of Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, widow of elder Bill Vernich, passed away on Friday, Feb. 14, 2025. She was born April 29, 1933 in Queens, New York the youngest of four daughters.



Carolyn Vernich

Carol grew up in New Jersey and moved to Gary, Indiana. She graduated from Lew Wallace High School and worked as a secretary until she met and married Bill Vernich Sept. 15, 1956. They were married 67 years and had five children together and lived in Ohio, Wisconsin and Tennessee. Carol was a devoted wife and mother, and was ordained a deaconess in the Church of God 1982.

She is survived by her five children, eight grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

Tribute to Marita Villacote

It is with great sadness we announce the passing of Marita Tañega Villacote, age 68, devoted wife, mother and faithful servant of God on Feb. 24, 2025, in Tacloban City Hospital, after succumbing to cardiac arrest.

Marita's life was a testament to her unwavering commitment to her family and her faith. Born in Catbalogan, Samar on June 28, 1956, she grew up to become a talented and dedicated individual. She worked as a records custodian and as a secretary to the office of the general manager in Leyte II Electric Cooperative in

Tacloban City.



Marita Villacote

In March 1981, she married her beloved husband, elder Raul Tabinas Villacote, and together they embarked on a journey of service to God and His people. They were baptized in June 2001 and were pioneering members of the United Church of God in Leyte, Eastern Visayas. They went on to faithfully serve as pastor and wife of United Church of God congregations in Visayas, Mindanao, and Sabah, Malaysia.

She has finished her race and now awaits the resurrection. She was preceded in death by their daughter, Haidee, and is survived by her husband, Raul and son, Lily James. Marita's legacy of love, faith, and service continues to inspire and uplift the brethren.

—Steve Myers, Operation Manager, Ministerial and Member Services

Verbal Announcement for Sabbath, March 8

2025 Italy Feast of Tabernacles Announcement and Registration

Sabaudia, Italy will again be a Feast site for the Church in 2025. Due to planning deadlines in Italy, registration must begin next week, Wednesday, March 12.

Go to <https://www.ucg.org/members/feast-of-tabernacles> for more details.

2025 Italy Feast of Tabernacles: Announcement and Registration

Join us for the Feast of Tabernacles at the Hotel Oasi di Kufra along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea in Sabaudia, 100 kilometers from Rome.

Your Italian brothers and sisters in Christ are pleased to welcome you back to our historical site. We have enjoyed the Feast in this region for decades and the staff will welcome us as family.

The hotel is divided in two parts by the road. One part, Kufra Sea, is facing the sea while the other one, Kufra Lake, is facing the lake of Paola, which divides the shore from town. They are basically one big venue that all share the same services and access to the beach. Everyone will eat meals together in the main dining hall.

Registration begins on Wednesday, March 12, at 12 p.m. EDT. There are about 300 available spots for oversea brethren. However for those who applied in 2024 and couldn't get in, they will have first priority and should have already received an email with instructions on how to proceed. If you were turned down in 2024 and did not already receive an email, please immediately send an email to feast@ucgitaly.org and let us know what your plans are so you will be reserved a spot.

To register on Wednesday, March 12, at 12 p.m. EDT, go to:
<https://www.ucg.org/members/feast/sites/sabaudia-italy>

2025 French Feast Site Announcement

[Please share the following announcement on Saturday, March 8 and 15.]

Your French brothers and sisters in Christ are pleased to welcome you back to Roquebrune-sur-Argens, France, for the Feast of Tabernacles in 2025! The Feast will be held on the beautiful French Riviera at Club Miléade La Gaillarde, near the well-known tourist destinations of Saint-Tropez and Saint-Raphaël. We have enjoyed the Feast in this region of France for many years, and this will be our fourth time celebrating the Feast at this seaside location.

Located an hour south of the Nice airport, Club Miléade La Gaillarde is situated just across the street from the beautiful Mediterranean Sea with 180-degree ocean views and an underpass walkway to the well-known beach of La Gaillarde. The outdoor heated pool and children's play area overlook the water and the hotel's main building has a restaurant and bar, playroom for children and a spa where visitors can schedule a massage, enjoy a sauna or relax in the indoor jacuzzi overlooking the sea.

The auditorium for church services is located next to the main building and the hotel accommodations—many with ocean views—are a short walk from the main complex. This site's room-and-board package provides the opportunity to experience full-course buffet-style French meals while enjoying fellowship with other brethren from around the world.

We plan to offer three afternoon excursions to nearby points of interest.

Registration will open at 12 p.m. EDT on Monday, March 17, 2025. For further details, visit www.ucg.org/members/feast-of-tabernacles and the 2025 UCG Feast of Tabernacles Locations Facebook page.

Upcoming Events

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 6–13	Boundary Waters Adventure	Minnesota
July 13–16	Preteen Camp Ironwood	Stewartville, MN
Aug. 26–Sept. 1	United Teen Camp	Westerose, AB
Sept. 5–7	Cleveland Women's Enrichment Weekend	Brunswick, OH
Sept. 7	UCG Gear Grinder Bike Ride	Minnetonka Lakes, MN