
Home Office Weekly Update

from the UNITED CHURCH of GOD

May 15, 2025

From the President...

Unity and Oneness of Spirit

Greetings brethren,

I am thankful to God and to the Council of Elders for this opportunity to serve in the United Church of God along with each of you. We also wish to again thank our previous president, Rick Shabi, for his tireless efforts to further the mission of the Church.



John Elliott and Rick Shabi at Sabbath services, May 10.

What an incredible operation this is, in which we each play a very important part. As God calls whom He chooses, we individually and collectively get to model and share His words of life with others as opportunities arise.

To effectively model God's love with others, we must *be* that love. A core element of *agape* is "peace" which is translated from "eirene" defined in Thayer's as "harmony." Jesus prepared for His crucifixion and asked the Father to help us perform an important task for Him, by using this tool:

“That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me” (John 17:21-23).

Our Husband has tasked us with showing the world that God sent Him, and the proof is our being perfect in oneness with God and each other. I ask myself if I have fully achieved that, and sadly I have not, yet, done so. While accomplishing oneness may feel like a nice option, we must notice its centrality to each of our callings.

The unity of the Spirit

At a time when the apostle Paul was likewise facing death, he wrote to the Church: “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit” (Ephesians 4:1-4).

If we each endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in a bond of harmony, we can reflect the selfless love emanating from the Godhead through us as His human family. That *agape* love links His family in oneness resulting in a continuous building-up of Christ’s body of believers with every individual doing his and her share (Ephesians 4:16).

In order for us to be a unified light, we must have a mindset like our most holy Husband, Jesus Christ. “Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 15:5-6).

Achieving such oneness requires each individual member in the Body to change his or her mindset. That requires a desire, coupled with understanding, then application of all biblical directives with lifelong effort.

A recent sermon, “[Towards Oneness](#),” identifies a starting point to help reveal and replace basic obstacles to harmonious relationships. Then, through personal Bible study, we can locate vital tools and apply them to remove mental barriers and replace them with arms locked together with one another in unity. This is Christ’s directive to us. It is also our organization’s name.

Our Church ancestors achieved that goal beginning on Pentecost 1,994 years ago. Can we achieve it again in just two short weeks from now at Pentecost 2025? Rapid progress can be made by directing our mind to view everyone like Jesus does, “who gave Himself for us,

that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works” (Titus 2:14).

As a tool, I plan to fast just before the double-Sabbaths of Pentecost weekend. I invite you to also do the same with me on May 30, or at another time more convenient for you.

In Christ’s service,



John Elliott, President

PRESS RELEASE:

United Church of God Council of Elders confirms John Elliott as President

A *PRWeb* press release about John Elliott’s appointment as Church president is now live at prweb.com/releases/united-church-of-god-council-of-elders-confirms-john-elliott-as-president-302454803.html.

Digital placements are being seen by media outlets across the United States and countries around the world. It is also being directly distributed to area media in Cincinnati.

From Ministerial and Member Services...

Ministerial and Member Services is announcing that former Church president, Rick Shabi, has accepted to transition to serve alongside Richard Kennebeck as assistant pastor for the congregations in Jacksonville and Orlando, Florida until Mr. Kennebeck’s retirement.



Rick and Deborah Shabi

Mr. Shabi brings a commitment to serving God's people, along with extensive and well-known experience that will enhance the ministerial team in the area.

In this new role, he will assist in supporting the ongoing spiritual growth and care of the congregations. We look forward to the positive impact this team will have as they work together to serve and strengthen the brethren.

Please join us in welcoming Mr. Shabi to his new responsibilities as he returns to the Orlando and Jacksonville areas where he previously served for many years.

From Mail Processing...

Qualified Charitable Distributions

We wish to share some important information regarding the use of *Qualified Charitable Distributions* (QCDs) when donating as part of your Holy Day offerings.

QCDs are distribution of funds from an individual's Individual Retirement Account (IRA) payable directly to a qualified 501(c)(3) charitable organization such as the United Church of God, *an International Association* (UCGIA).

QCD donations are unique in that they require UCGIA to identify them specifically as QCDs and provide acknowledgement letters to donors instead of receipting them as we would a non-QCD cash donation.

If you choose to use a QCD to make a Holy Day offering, we ask for your assistance as follows:

- **Please do not place them in your local congregation's Holy Day offering collection.**
- **Instead, remit the Holy Day QCD donation directly to UCGIA:** United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027.
- **Ensure the donation is clearly labeled as a QCD and the Holy Day offering to which it applies.**

We deeply appreciate your faithful support of God's Work through your offerings. If you have any questions regarding QCDs or need assistance with the process, please don't hesitate to contact UCGIA at (513) 576-9796 or email Sarah Howard, donations processing manager, at Sarah.Howard@ucg.org.

REMINDER: World News and Prophecy—Daniel

The World News and Prophecy [landing page](#) now has 22 video recordings available.

Check back each week for a new class recording. The second part in the series to follow soon will be about the book of Revelation.



Complete list of class recordings

A complete list of all Ambassador Bible College class recordings can be found by navigating to “Ambassador Bible College” on our website’s “Member” menu. Then, click on [“ABC Courses.”](#)

On the Courses page you will find all our class recordings—mostly audio recordings from over the years. But those recorded on video are now tagged “Yes” in the right column of the class course recordings list.

—Peter Eddington, Media and Communications Services

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico Feast Site

Join us for the Feast of Tabernacles in Puerto Vallarta! Plenty of spots are still available for this unforgettable Feast site, but with rising costs, this may be our final year at this stunning destination.

Don’t miss this chance to celebrate together in paradise at an all-inclusive resort in Mexico! For more details, visit our festival registration page at ucg.org/members/feast/sites/puerto-vallarta-mexico.

—Mario Seiglie, Puerto Vallarta Festival Coordinator

Good Works Proposal Deadline Approaching

There's still time to submit your proposal for Good Works projects for the second half of the 2025 calendar year!

If you have a great idea for a project (local or abroad), please run it by your local pastor, and with his approval, please contact Lena VanAusdle at GoodWorks@ucg.org or visit ucg.org/members/outreach/good-works for more information.

The deadline for proposals is May 31, 2025.

Brown County Indiana Pentecost Weekend

Final Call for Discount Rate

Thinking about gathering with friends and family for an exciting weekend of spiritual growth, fellowship and celebrating God's Holy Day?

The popular UCG Pentecost Weekend in Brown County, Indiana holds a unique tradition—a cherished time for spiritual growth, fellowship and celebrating God's Holy Day. The weekend includes something for everyone, blending moments of fun with opportunities to connect and share.

Gather with friends and family at our various activities, like the "Potluck in the Park." On Sabbath evening, experience the highlight of the weekend at the inspiring "Concert for God," a powerful event where music and praise for God unite us in reverence and joy. This unforgettable weekend is designed to uplift and deepen your faith as we grow together.

UCG discount rates for the Abe Martin Lodge and the Brown County state park cabins are available and open for reservations through May 20. This year we have the added convenience of a special UCG Pentecost weekend website that includes reservation information, schedules, sign-up capacity for the Concert for God, and more!

Click on pentecostbrowncounty.ucgevents.org for more information.

Special note: to receive the low rates for accommodations, the Brown County staff asks that members call (877) 563-4371 and make reservations through a DNR reservation agent with the UCG group code (if you try to use the online booking option you may not be able to use the discount code 0530UG). Look for the "Book My Stay" section on the website for

instructions. If you are using a cell phone, you can call directly from the Pentecost weekend website.

Questions? Contact Jamie Snyder at (317) 709-3561 or email: bjsnyder@themekgroup.com

Upcoming Events

May 23–25	Northwest Regional Teen Formal	Salem, OR
May 26–30	Preteen Camp Florida	Umatilla, FL
June 1	Pentecost	
June 8	Laurel Church Picnic	Columbia, MS
June 15–18	Preteen Camp Colorado	Allenspark, CO
June 15–22	Camp Cotubic	Bellefontaine, OH
June 20–22	Northwest Men’s Weekend	Seabeck, WA
June 20–22	Troyers Hollow Campout	Charm, OH
June 29–July 6	Camp Pinecrest	Fredericktown, MO
July 6–13	Southwest Camp	Prescott, AZ
July 6–13	Boundary Waters Adventure	Minnesota
July 11–13	Women’s Enrichment Weekend	Allenspark, CO
July 13–16	Preteen Camp Ironwood	Stewartville, MN
July 13–16	Preteen Camp Ochoco	Prineville, OR
July 13–20	Switzerland Adventure	Glarus Nord, Switzerland
July 18–25	Camp Woodland	Temple, GA
July 20–27	Northwest Camp	Rockaway Beach, OR
July 23–27	Camp Wildrose	Darwell, AB
July 27–30	Preteen Camp Seven Mountains	Spring Mills, PA
July 27–30	Preteen Camp Buckeye	Delaware, OH
July 27–30	Preteen Camp Gilmont	Gilmer, TX
Aug. 3	Kids’ Rodeo and Fun Day	Portland, OR
Aug. 22–24	Northern California Young Adult Weekend	Point Reyes, CA
Aug. 26–Sept. 1	United Teen Camp	Westeros, AB
Sept. 5–7	Cleveland Women’s Enrichment Weekend	Brunswick, OH
Sept. 7	UCG Gear Grinder Bike Ride	Minnnetonka Lakes, MN

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