
Home Office Weekly Update

from the UNITED CHURCH of GOD

July 3, 2025

New Treasurer, Financial Services Operation Manager named for United Church of God, *an International Association*

We are pleased to share that through a collaborative process by the Council of Elders and the office of the president, two new senior positions were appointed for the finance area of the Church this past Monday, June 30.

Theodore (Ted) Budge, former Senior Associate Dean and Chief Operating Officer of the Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California (USC) was named as treasurer of the United Church of God; and Linda S. Api, a long-time Certified Public Accountant (CPA) accounting and finance professional, was named as the Financial Services operation manager to oversee and direct fiscal and accounting matters for the Church.

We are grateful to have two very experienced professionals to now oversee the Church's financial operations and assist the Council and the president in their new respective roles. Mr. Budge, who is an elder in the Church, brings substantial executive experience to the position of treasurer working previously in senior administrative, Chief Financial Officer, and public accounting positions.

Linda Api has served as a corporate controller for a variety of companies in California and Ohio, and also has a public accounting background as a CPA. These positions are critical in providing excellent stewardship of the Church's resources, and we look forward to these two experienced professionals helping the Church conduct its affairs in a strategic and efficient way.

Mr. Budge will serve as a strategic adviser to the Council for policy, planning and operations. Mrs. Api will serve on the president's administrative team as an operation manager and oversee daily operations in finance and accounting—including reporting, compliance and operational efficiency. Drawing on her prior audit experience, Mrs. Api's

responsibilities will also include supporting the annual independent financial audit of the Church.

Both professionals hold related experience in other disciplines such as human resources, property management and development, and information technology—and the appointments add depth to an already strong team at the home office. Mrs. Api will serve in a full-time position working in Cincinnati, while Mr. Budge will serve in a pro-bono role without salary, traveling from Southern California to Ohio when necessary.

The Church must be vigilant stewards of the tithes and offerings given by faithful members to do the work of the Church and fulfill our mission. We as an organization have been blessed with dedicated and experienced financial professionals since the founding of the United Church of God, and we look forward to going to the next level of service.

Both Mr. Budge and Mrs. Api assumed their new responsibilities immediately after their appointment.

In Christ's service,



Tim Pebworth, Chairman



John Elliott, President

Additional *Beyond Today* Television Episodes and Shorts Recorded

Gary Petty was in Cincinnati July 1 for meetings and to record two new *Beyond Today* television episodes. We anticipate new *BT* episodes to begin airing on broadcast television in September.



Gary Petty returns to the *Beyond Today* TV studio.

In the meantime, new shorts and reels are being posted to YouTube and social media each week. So, Steve Myers recorded two more shorts on July 1 that will air this week and next.

John Elliott recorded his Feast of Tabernacles “welcome” message as well. This will be played at the Feast during the sermonette time on the opening night or first day of the Feast.

—Peter Eddington, Assistant to the President

Faith, Forward and Full Sail Ahead

Turning back or pressing on?

Just days before reaching the New World, Christopher Columbus’ crew started to panic. They begged him to turn the ships around, worried they wouldn’t have enough wind, food or water to make it back home. They were tired, afraid and unsure if the journey was worth it anymore.

But Columbus refused to give up. He urged them to keep going.

The power of a single word

Now, history doesn’t give us the exact words he used in that moment—but there’s a powerful phrase that’s often linked to it: “Adelante!”—which means “Onward!”

Whether or not Columbus actually said that specific word, it perfectly captures the heart of what happened. He pressed forward. The crew didn't turn back. They kept going. And just three days later, they reached land.

And what a powerful word for us today.

Faith that moves forward

That word adelante holds something important for us as disciples of Christ. Because let's be honest: sometimes we feel like that crew. We get tired. Life gets hard. Our faith feels routine.

Adelante is more than a command to move forward—it's a call to live forward. It invites us to keep growing, learning, discovering. Spiritually, there is always more ahead: more to understand, more to experience, more to give, more of God to know.

Living the long journey

The apostle Paul understood this well. He wrote in Philippians 3:12–14: “Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

Even after all he had experienced, Paul wasn't finished. He didn't settle. He pressed forward.

And so can we.

We too are on a journey of continual growth. Have you discovered something new in God's Word? When was the last time a familiar scripture moved you in a fresh way? Psalm 119:18 gives us a simple but powerful prayer: “Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law.”

The Bible isn't boring—it's deep, alive and life-changing. But we have to keep coming back to it. Keep digging. Keep learning. Make it your goal to discover something new in Scripture each week—even each day. You'll be amazed how much more God wants to show you.

A shared mission

It's also important to realize we are not on a solo voyage. The journey to the Kingdom of God is something we take together. God has placed each of us in the body of Christ for a reason—to build, encourage and work side by side in proclaiming the gospel.

Every person, every gift, everyone matters. Everyone has something to give.

Let's not lose our spiritual momentum. Let's not grow stagnant or satisfied with where we've been. There is too much at stake—too much ahead—for us to slow down or drift backward.

Together, let's encourage one another: **Adelante**.

Let us press on in love, in truth and in bold proclamation of the gospel.

Let's proclaim to the world: **Adelante!**

The gospel goes onward

Our calling shouldn't be mundane—it is a great adventure. An adventure of growth, of joy, of trials overcome, of faith refined and of a new world ahead.

Sure, there will be storms. Yes, it gets hard sometimes. But when it does, remember that word—**Adelante**. Don't turn back. Don't settle. Don't coast. The voice of our spiritual Captain calls out clearly: "Follow Me." "Keep going." "Press on."

Because just like Columbus and his crew, you're closer to something incredible than you may realize. The Kingdom of God is ahead. And Jesus Christ is leading the way.

So let that word ring out today:

Onward in your calling. Onward in discovery. Onward in proclaiming the gospel.

Onward Christian Soldiers!

There is more to discover. We've got more to do. And God is with us every step of the way.

Adelante!

—Steve Myers, Operation Manager, Ministerial and Member Services

From Ministerial and Member Services...

Johnnie and Hazel Lambert Honored for 45 Years of Service

On Sabbath, June 21, 2025 the Buffalo, New York congregation honored Johnnie and Hazel Lambert for 45 years of faithful service in the U.S. and Europe. Victor and Beverly Kubik presented the tribute.



Johnnie and Hazel Lambert (left), and Victor and Beverly Kubik at services in Buffalo.

Johnnie and Hazel began their spiritual journey in the late 1960s after independently studying *The World Tomorrow* broadcast and *Bible Correspondence Course*. They were baptized in 1968 and soon became deeply involved in church life, raising their three children—Bryant, Lisa and Lori—with a foundation of faith.

After moving to upstate New York in 1973, they helped establish the Corning congregation in 1975. Johnnie was ordained a deacon in 1976 and an elder in 1980. Together, they operated a successful business and served youth through coaching in Y.O.U. (Youth Opportunities United) for over two decades.

In 1995, the Lamberts joined the newly formed United Church of God and began hosting a congregation in their home. In 1997, their international ministry began with service in Estonia. For over a decade, they supported the Church in Eastern Europe, including establishing a literature hub in Tallinn.

Johnnie later served as senior pastor for Eastern Europe and Scandinavia, and from 2010, pastored congregations in Buffalo and Elmira. Through it all, Hazel's steady support and kindness have deeply touched those around her.

Their enduring legacy of love, service, and faith continues to inspire across generations—including their five grandsons.

—Victor Kubik

Feast Coordinator Conference 2025

The annual Feast of Tabernacles Coordinator Conference was held on Monday, June 30, via Zoom, with approximately 35 coordinators and home office staff in attendance. President John Elliott opened the meeting by welcoming all coordinators, including—for the first time—senior pastors representing international areas. Traditionally, this meeting has only included Feast coordinators from the U.S., Canada and the Caribbean. Senior pastor Mario Seiglie expressed appreciation for the invitation and noted the value of the expanded participation.

Mr. Elliott emphasized that the Feast is not just an opportunity for fellowship, but more importantly, a time to connect more deeply with God and receive spiritual nourishment.

Following his remarks, Steve Myers, Ministerial and Member Services operation manager, provided several updates and project announcements aimed at improving Feast planning. These included efforts to standardize audio-visual equipment, to compile a list of qualified volunteers, and to offer training sessions with a national festival sound coordinator. Additionally, the young adults Bible study will now have a unified theme across all sites and be scheduled earlier in the Feast to encourage connections early in the week.

Next, Charles Melear, conference planner for the United Church of God, reviewed the 2024 Feast survey results, last year's attendance figures and current registration statistics. National music director, Scott Delamater, discussed special music planning, choir director coordination, and the organization of music-related responsibilities. Tanya Winger from Financial Services, who oversees the business managers responsible for processing offerings and managing Feast expenses, mentioned that a new eight-minute training video is now available for those assisting with Holy Day offerings.

After a short break, several I.T. team members provided guidance on generating reports for registration and volunteer information, including those serving as ushers, song leaders and other roles. Presenters included Tory Trone, Lena VanAusdle and Dave PerMar, who each spoke on their areas of expertise. Though often working behind the scenes, their contributions are essential to the success of the Feast.

The meeting concluded with about 45 minutes of open discussion, during which attendees addressed questions, comments and potential challenges. Coordinators expressed appreciation for the opportunity to hear from one another and recognized the importance of staying united in purpose and approach as they prepare for the upcoming Feast. Overall, the conference was a productive and encouraging time, reinforcing a shared commitment to making the Feast a spiritually enriching and well-organized experience for all God's people.

—Charles Melear, Conference Planner

60th Anniversary of the Church of God in Knoxville, Tennessee

The UCG Knoxville, Tennessee congregation invites you to come celebrate their 60th anniversary on Aug. 9, 2025 in the grand ballroom of the beautiful Brookside venue. It is located at 1221 N. Central St., Knoxville, TN 37917 in the Old North Knoxville neighborhood which is designated a National Historic District.

Past and present brethren from Knoxville and the greater east Tennessee area will join together to reminisce, share memorabilia and photos while enjoying a dinner banquet and then a dance in the evening. The day's events will begin around 1 p.m. with a meet-and-greet mixer with light snacks, followed by Sabbath services at 3 p.m. The evening's events will continue with a catered dinner served around 6 p.m., then additional fellowshipping and dancing after sunset until about 10:30 p.m.

All past and present attendees of any of the Church of God organizations area are invited to attend this special celebration. If you are interested in attending, want more information, or if you have any pictures or other historical items related to the Church of God in Knoxville that you would like to share, please contact Matthew Shaffer at cog.knox60th@outlook.com.

The cost for the evening will be forthcoming as soon as the menu has been determined. So please RSVP by July 31 at cog.knox60th@outlook.com if you are planning to attend.

—Len Martin, Pastor

Upcoming Events

July 6-13	Southwest Camp	Prescott, AZ
July 6-13	Boundary Waters Adventure	Minnesota
July 11-13	Women's Enrichment Weekend	Allenspark, CO
July 11-13	Michigan Camping/Tubing Weekend	White Cloud, MI
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. 9	Knoxville 60th Anniversary	Knoxville, TN
Aug. 22-24	Northern California Young Adult Weekend	Point Reyes, CA
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

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

STAY CONNECTED:

[Weekly Update Back Issues](#)

[United Church of God Email Updates](#)

[United Church of God Members Website](#)