
Home Office Weekly Update

from the UNITED CHURCH of GOD

July 17, 2025

In the Storm, Trust the Light

We often sing the hymn, “God is our Refuge and Our Strength” during services. Those words, taken right from Psalm 46, really express how deeply we trust God to care for and protect us. It’s such a powerful reminder of our faith and reliance on our loving Creator.

In verse 10 of that psalm, there’s another way to express that trust: *“Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”*

The Hebrew word often translated as “be still” is *raphah*, and it carries quite a range of meanings—things like to let go, to become weak, to release or to relax. While “be still” is a good translation, it’s really interesting to dig deeper into the original Hebrew.

A more literal way to understand it might be “cease striving” or “let yourself sink.” It’s all about surrendering control and placing deep trust in God’s sovereignty. That’s the heart of the verse: stop trying to manage everything—and know that God is God.

Releasing control

Understanding that original word reshapes how we read this verse. It’s not about being passively still. Instead, it’s an active choice—to release control, to let go of the fears and anxieties, and stop feeling like we have to manage everything ourselves. It’s a surrender—not giving up hope, but giving up self-reliance. We don’t need to control every part of our lives; instead, we can rest in God’s care.

Sometimes anxiety and worry can make God feel far away, but the truth is, He’s never distant. Psalm 145:18 reassures us: “The LORD is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth.”

A light in the storm

The meaning of *raphah* reminds me of a story I heard when I was just a boy—a story that’s stuck with me ever since.

There was an old sea captain, a man weathered by decades at sea. One night, a fierce storm blew in. His ship was tossed by waves taller than he'd ever seen. The wind roared and the crew's hope started to fade. The compass stopped working and thick fog made it impossible to see anything. They were lost.

The captain's courage began to falter. "What if we don't make it out of this?" he wondered. But then, a phrase his father once told him came back to his mind: *"When you can't control the storm, trust the light."*

Just then, through the wind and the rain, he spotted a faint glow in the distance—a lighthouse, standing firm against the storm. He called out to the crew: "Look—there's a light in the darkness!"



Eierland Lighthouse—Texel, Netherlands

Wave after wave, they moved toward the light. And as the storm began to ease, they finally made it safely into the harbor.

Standing on deck, the captain quietly looked at the lighthouse, filled with a sense of peace. *"When you can't control the storm, trust the light."*

At that moment, he knew: God is that light—steady, unwavering, always faithful, guiding us through life's toughest challenges.

Choose peace

So, when the storms of life rise and your thoughts feel like they might drown you—choose peace. Choose *raphah*. Trust the Light, and still your heart. You can feel God's never-failing presence and strength in your life, knowing: "The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge" (Psalm 46:7).

When we rest in that truth, even life's fiercest storms lose their power.

"When you can't control the storm, trust the light."

Because the storm may rage... but the light of God never fades.

Raphah.

—Steve Myers, Operation Manager, Ministerial and Member Services

From Ministerial and Member Services...

Ministerial Services is pleased to announce that Jeff Lockhart will now serve as pastor of the Fort Worth, Texas congregation. He and his wife, Alisa, continue to serve the Montego Bay and Kingston, Jamaica congregations.



Jeff and Alisa Lockhart

Hymnal App Refresh

We recently released an exciting update for the [Hymnal App](#) for Android and iOS. This update includes both a Scriptural and Topical Index, a copy of the Holy Day Calendar, and the ability to auto-play the default playlist of all hymns, or a custom user-created playlist—ideal for song leaders choosing their set of songs on a given Sabbath.



We are continuing to fix bugs and improve the overall user experience, but if you find something not working correctly, there is also now a “report bug” menu option.

In addition to reading the hymnal lyrics, you can also play an audio track of the piano accompaniment—with or without chorale voices.

The United Church of God [Hymnal App](#) is now available with hymns in English, Deutsch, Español, Français, Nederlands and Italiano.

Happy hymn-ing!

—Corbin Rose, Senior Web Developer

Upcoming Events

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](#).

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