
Home Office Weekly Update

from the **UNITED CHURCH of GOD**

August 28, 2025

God's Sabbath

Greetings brethren,

God's Sabbath is filled with deep meaning and purpose for those He is calling to be first fruit children in His divine family and the Bride for His Son. How we live our lives and how we honor His Holy Sabbath are significant indicators of our transformation from a former carnal mindset to one representative of a child of God (2 Corinthians 6:16-18).

On one level, the Sabbath celebrates our creator God having created our universal environment and then ourselves in His image (Genesis 2:1-3). The Sabbath is also anchored in Jesus Christ being Lord (supreme authority) of the Sabbath (Luke 6:5). The Sabbath further looks ahead in celebration of the approaching Millennium under Christ's governance (Revelation 20:6). These layered meanings rise to a spiritual crescendo as the Sabbath ultimately points to an everlasting rest for the children of God (Hebrews 4:9-11).

So, each weekly Sabbath marks great mileposts for humanity: its creation, salvation, abundant living and eternal life through Jesus Christ (1 John 5:20). We are called to raise the sanctity of God's Holy Sabbath in our hearts and minds, honoring its place as the seventh and Holy Day of each week.

At the same time, we should recognize how society attempts to create counterfeit forms of "abundant living" that are devoid of all the meaning and purpose found in the Sabbath. As people reduce God in their thoughts, they increasingly engage in "doing those things which are not fitting" (Romans 1:28). Carnal ambitions are growing with unbridled self-promotion, self-determination and self-gratification—largely through the exploitation of vulnerable fellow citizens (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

We see this increasing everywhere: mass shootings of the innocent and helpless, widespread theft through AI-developed scams, greed-based inflation, price gouging, manipulation of investments, lawless defiance of authorities, extortions via the Internet, piracy on the high seas, and militias ravaging communities and even entire nations.



In contrast, God’s “Sabbath people” are rooted and grounded in godly relationships, purpose and intent. The apostle Paul uses the term “conscience” 25 times in his writings. “Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith” (1 Timothy 1:5). From this pure spiritual foundation we are equipped to “wage the good warfare, having faith and a good conscience” (verses 18-19).

When we say we are “Sabbath keepers,” that identity must also correlate with a godly conscience. As we look to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, as “a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:21-25).

True “Sabbath keepers” are the separated Body of Christ—those who assemble with true hearts in full assurance of faith, stirring up good works as we come together with one another, God and our High Priest.

The weekly Sabbath of rest for the people of God moves us forward toward our goal of obtaining divine rest (Hebrews 4). In godly observance of both the weekly and annual Sabbaths, we find our identity, spiritual community and solace filled with anticipation of a very bright future.

“If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken” (Isaiah 58:13-14).

Let each of us redouble our commitment to be God-like brethren, faithfully observing each Sabbath in holy relationship with God, with Jesus Christ and with each other. And abundant life, as defined by God, will be fully realized in the future [*Sabbath-rest*](#) that this Day also promises.

“We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway of* the wicked one. And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life” (1 John 5:19-20).

With love, in Jesus Christ’s service,



John Elliott, President

From Ministerial and Member Services...

Death of Naomi Lucas

Thelma “Naomi” Lucas, wife of elder Shannon Lucas, died at home shortly after 6 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 25. She had been under hospice care during her last few days.



Naomi and Shannon Lucas

Funeral Services for Mrs. Lucas, affectionally known as “Naomi,” 92, of Gladewater, Texas will be held on Sunday, Aug. 31 at 2 p.m. at the United Church of God, Big Sandy, Texas meeting hall. Burial will follow at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery. Public viewing will be Saturday Aug. 30 from 3 to 7 p.m. at the Cunningham Funeral Home, 600 E. Main St., Kilgore, Texas. Interment will be at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery, Mt. Pleasant Rd., Kilgore.

Following the graveside service, Mr. Lucas and the family have invited everyone to join them for a meal and fellowship at the church hall. Donald Ward will be doing the funeral service.

—Randy Urwiller, Pastor, East Texas

From Ministerial and Member Services...

Two Teen Camps Held in Zambia



In Zambia, the week of August 17, two United Youth Camps sessions were held concurrently, 250 miles apart, in Verino and Mufulira. Camp can easily be described as joyful and fun working under the theme, “Building on the Foundation” (1 Corinthians 3:11). This theme is based on the seven elements of “The Zone.”



In Mufulira there were 79 campers aged 13–20 years, with 19 serving on staff. In Verino there were 48 campers and 28 staff. The week was filled with godly life lessons, such as Family Life and Moral Conduct.

Highlights of Verino camp

Jacob Chipempele reports: “Daily Christian living programs were delivered by pastors Filius Jere and Luke Banda. Sabbath was Youth Day, where youths led hymns and gave the sermonette.



“The other programs given by staff members were as follows: arts and crafts, business class, gardening, medication adherence, being rooted in class, dental talk, fish farming, public speaking, baking and music.”

Highlights of the Mufulira camp

Rodrick Epomba reports: “Moral Conduct class equipped youth with ethical principles that guide a person’s behavior and actions. This encompasses how we interact with others and make decisions based on what is considered right and wrong—adhering to good behavior, fairness, honesty and virtue—constantly doing what is right and striving to be the best version of oneself.



“Family Life classes reminded the youths how to communicate, show respect and give empathy, and the importance of support and love within the family unit.

“Outing day is always the most talked about, as it seems to be a special and fun day with new and special activities different from the usual camp activities. It was made up of swimming, volleyball, soccer and a boat cruise. Camp is always competitive with groups and individuals trying to do their level best by memorizing memory verses and other important lessons.”

New England's *Pride and Prejudice*-Themed Dance Weekend

The congregations of the New England area are delighted to invite you to a lovely autumn weekend inspired by the timeless elegance of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, set against the brilliant colors of fall leaves in New England.

On **Saturday, Nov. 8, 2025** please join us at **12 Woodward Avenue, Berlin, Massachusetts**. The afternoon will begin with **Sabbath services at 2:30 p.m.**, followed by a shared meal. After the meal, we will gather for a Regency-style dance, complete with graceful steps, fine music and the charm of a bygone era. Guests are encouraged to attend the dance in period attire to fully immerse themselves in the spirit of the evening. During the evening we will enjoy a traditional group dance that all are welcome to join.

The festivities continue on **Sunday, Nov. 9, in Concord, Massachusetts**, with three free historic site tours:

- Minute Man National Historical Park
- Old North Bridge
- Battle Road Trail

Following the tours, we will gather for a shared picnic—a perfect way to enjoy fellowship amid the crisp autumn air and colorful foliage.

Housing is available with our members; please reach out if you would like accommodations.

We look forward to welcoming you for a weekend of dancing, fellowship and Austen-inspired joy during one of the most beautiful times of the year in New England.

Reserve Your Place: <https://forms.gle/mfzt9BwaZqdUEUHa8>

If you have any questions, please contact Erica Rains or Faith Rains.

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Upcoming Events

Sept. 5-7	Cleveland Women's Enrichment Weekend	Brunswick, OH
Sept. 7	UCG Gear Grinder Bike Ride	Minnetonka Lakes, MN
Sept. 13	Salem 70th Anniversary	Albany, OR
Sept. 23	Feast of Trumpets	
Oct. 2	Day of Atonement	
Oct. 7-13	Feast of Tabernacles	
Oct. 14	Eighth Day	
Dec. 29-Jan. 4	Winter Camp	Lake Geneva, WI

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

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