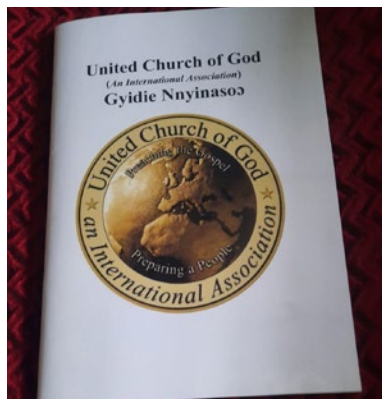


## UYC REPORTS AND PHOTOS INSIDE!

See pages 7-16



## Translation of Study Aid into the Twi Language



Stephen Kusi works on the translation project.

by Paul Moody

UCG is excited to report the successful completion of a translation and printing of the study aid, *Fundamental Beliefs*

of the United Church of God, into the Twi language!

Twi is a major dialect of the Akan language family spoken predominantly in Ghana's southern and central regions

where around 85 percent of the population speaks it either as a first or second language. With approximately eight million speakers, Twi is also spoken in parts of Côte d'Ivoire, as well

as by smaller populations in Togo and Benin. An estimated 98 percent of UCG members in Ghana's 10 congregations speak Twi as a primary or secondary language, with 85 percent being more proficient in Twi than English. This makes the study aid's publication into their native tongue such a valuable tool.

Many thanks go to Stephen Kusi, a former ABC student and Ghana resident, for his tireless work over the past several months to make this goal a reality. The translation involved many hours of intensive research and attention to detail. It was truly a labor of love on Mr. Kusi's part.

The study aid went to the local printers in Ghana at the end

of May with 500 copies being produced. These will be distributed among the Ghana Church members first as Mr. Kusi accompanies the rollout with a multi-congregation tour reinforcing our fundamental beliefs and guiding the members through their study of this study aid.

It is our hope that this translation of the *Fundamental Beliefs* will further solidify our Ghanaian brethren in the foundational doctrines of the Bible which we hold so dear. This translation will also provide the Church in Ghana with another tool for "Preaching the Gospel and Preparing a People" for the return of Jesus Christ and the sooncoming Kingdom of God. **UN**

## Ambassador Bible College Welcomes Class of 2025

by Frank Dunkle

CINCINNATI, Ohio—A new school year has begun for Ambassador Bible College. On Sunday, Aug. 17, 2025, alumni from previous classes welcomed the new class by hosting a welcome picnic at the home office. This year's theme was "Outer Space: Not of this World," featuring themed food, décor and activities. After the meal, the new students formed teams to take on an interactive activity, which allowed them the opportunity to learn their way around the home office.

On Monday, the faculty



conducted an orientation to explain how the ABC program works. This included reviewing class schedules and various

policies to help everything go smoothly. President John Elliott welcomed the students in an opening address.

Of the 16 students, 12 come from around the United States, two from Canada, one from Mexico and one from Trinidad.

They are enthusiastic and eager to take on the challenges of a school year studying God's Word. **UN**

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## 2 Johnnie and Hazel Lambert: 45 Years of Faithful Service



L-R: Johnnie and Hazel Lambert, Victor and Beverly Kubik

On Sabbath, June 21, 2025, Johnnie Lambert and his wife, Hazel, were honored in church services by the Buffalo, New York congregation for 45 years of faithful service to God as an elder in the United States and Europe. Victor and Beverly Kubik came to make the presentation for this event.

Johnnie and Hazel Lambert's journey began in Atlanta, Georgia in 1963. Johnnie, born on Jan. 5, 1942 in Athens, Georgia, and Hazel, born on May 13, 1940 in McRae, Georgia, met during their early adult years and were

married on March 20, 1965—a union that would blossom into a life defined by faith, family and tireless service to others.

In 1966, while attending Georgia Tech, Johnnie began listening to *The World Tomorrow* radio broadcast by Garner Ted Armstrong during his morning commute. Intrigued and moved by the message, he quietly requested the Bible Correspondence Course from the Church's headquarters in Pasadena, California. However, Hazel discovered the materials when they arrived in the mail, and rather

than confronting Johnnie, she began studying them herself. Unbeknownst to each other, both were being drawn toward the same spiritual path.

In early 1968, the Lamberts requested a ministerial visit from the Worldwide Church of God. By December of that year, Johnnie and Hazel were baptized in Atlanta, beginning their lifelong commitment to serving God and His people.

The couple attended their first Feast of Tabernacles in Jekyll Island in 1969, with their young family growing to include three children—Bryant, Lisa and Lori—all born in Atlanta.

In April 1973, the Lamberts moved to the Southern Tier of upstate New York after Johnnie accepted a job offer. Coincidentally, that same year, the area became the site of the first daily *World Tomorrow* television broadcast in the United States. With the closest church congregation in Rochester, they faithfully made a four-hour round trip to attend services for two years until, in March 1975, they helped found the Corning, New York congregation with minister Ozzie Engelbart.

Johnnie was ordained a deacon in 1976 and later a local

elder on Pentecost in 1980, ordained by Britt Taylor and Jim Franks. Together, he and Hazel built a thriving self-employed business in commercial pipe insulation and other construction trades, which they operated for over three decades.

Alongside their business and church responsibilities, Johnnie and Hazel were deeply involved in Youth Opportunities United (YOU), where Johnnie devoted over 20 years to coaching basketball and track and field, mentoring countless young people.

In May 1995, following their conscience and conviction, Johnnie and Hazel resigned from the Worldwide Church of God and became part of the newly formed United Church of God. That same month, they opened their home to begin a new congregation, planting seeds that would grow into lasting spiritual fruit.

With a heart for international service, Johnnie expressed a desire to go wherever he was needed. In 1997, Victor Kubik and Ozzie Engelbart asked him to assist with the Feast of Tabernacles in Estonia. Johnnie responded, "Where is Estonia?" Despite the uncertainty, he said yes, then added, "I don't

know if Hazel will agree to go." But Hazel did, and the two began a remarkable chapter of overseas service.

From 1997 to 2005, they traveled to Estonia for every Spring Holy Day and Feast of Tabernacles. They later purchased an apartment to serve as a church office and a hub for printing and distributing literature across Eastern Europe and Russia. For many years, they made four monthlong trips annually to manage this work—until the pandemic in 2020.

Johnnie was appointed Senior Pastor for Eastern Europe and Scandinavia and later became the Buffalo and Elmira, New York congregations' pastor in 2010. Through it all, Hazel has stood faithfully by his side, her quiet strength and warm spirit deeply felt by all who know them.

The Lamberts' legacy spans continents and generations. Their devotion to God, Church and family—including five grandsons now aged 14 to 20—continues to inspire and bear fruit. Through faith, service and steadfast love, Johnnie and Hazel Lambert have lived a life that reflects the very heart of Christian service.

*Victor Kubik*

## A Heartfelt Farewell to Rex and Patty Sexton

On July 5, 2025, the United Church of God's Portland congregation gathered to celebrate the remarkable 46 years of service by Rex and Patty Sexton. The event overflowed with warmth, laughter and gratitude as members from Salem, Albany, Seattle, Spokane and beyond came together to honor this dynamic duo. Their legacy of faith, love and dedication has touched countless lives, and this special occasion was a beautiful testament to their enduring impact.

Rex's ministerial journey began in 1982, serving the Salem and Albany congregations under pastor David Mills. For over four decades, he faithfully pastored in Pasco, Spokane, Anchorage and the Tacoma-Olympia-Portland corridor. Beyond pastoring, Rex served 11 years as a teen camp director and a decade on the Council of Elders. As one speaker noted, quoting 2 Corinthians 3, the true mark of his service is the "epistle written in our hearts"—the people he nurtured and guided. His

passion for teaching and mentoring new leaders has shaped many in the Portland congregation, leaving a lasting legacy.

Patty, Rex's partner for nearly 50 years, is cherished for her warm, loving personality and big heart. A true "mom" to many, especially at Northwest Camp, her hospitality and care for children have created cherished memories.

The celebration featured touching tributes, including a video from a Council of Elders member and heartfelt messages from the youth. Children shared stories of Rex's rodeos, ziplines and fishing trips, while praising Patty's kindness and "chicken hypnosis." The couple's three children—Ryan, Holly and Bridget—and their 11 grandchildren were also honored. The congregation acknowledged the family's sacrifices, noting in a tribute, "Your unselfishness has not gone unnoticed," praising their grace in sharing their parents with the Church.

As Rex steps into retire-



ment, the couple eagerly anticipates new adventures—spending time with family, traveling and perhaps building more treehouses for their grandchildren. Patty, however, remains dedicated to her work, with no plans to retire yet, as she loves serving others. The congregation presented them with a plaque, a gift card and a weekend getaway to the coast, ensuring they can relax and celebrate their 49 years together. A humorous "business card" for Rex, proclaiming "no address, no phone, no



Rex and Patty Sexton with a group of youth from their congregations.

business, no email, no money," brought laughter to all.

The event concluded with a symbolic passing of the torch to the new pastor and his wife, Carl and Kathy Kinsella, who received a pair of "shiny boots" to carry on the work Rex and Patty so faithfully performed. As we bid farewell to their full-time

ministry, we know their legacy will endure through the countless lives they've touched. With heartfelt gratitude, we wish Rex and Patty joy, rest and many more adventures in this new chapter, confident their love and faith will continue to shine brightly.

*Carl Kinsella*



*United News* (ISSN 1088-8020) is published six times per year (in January, March, May, July, September, November) by the United Church of God, an International Association, 555 Technecenter Dr., Milford, OH 45150.

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**Media and Communications**

**Services Manager:** Peter Eddington (Interim)

**Managing Editor:** Heidi Braun

**Copy Editors:** Lena VanAusdie, Robert Curry

**Doctrinal reviewers:** Robert Berendt, Ben Light, Dave Mills, Mario Seigle, Rex Sexton, Anthony Wasilkoff

**Web-first article doctrinal team:** Aaron Dean, John LaBissoniere

Scriptural references are from the New King James Version (© 1988 Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers) unless otherwise noted.

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**AUSTRALIA:** United Church of God—Australia, GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Qld. 4001, Australia. Phone: 07 5630 3774 International calls: +617 5580 8477 Email: info@ucg.org.au

**BENELUX countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg):** P.O. Box 93, 2800 AB Gouda, The Netherlands. **BRITISH ISLES:** United Church of God—British Isles, P.O. Box 705, Watford, Herts. WD19 6FZ England. Phone: 020 8386 8467 Fax: 020 8386 1999

**CANADA:** United Church of God—Canada, P.O. Box 144, Station D, Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1, Canada. Phone: (905) 614-1234, (800) 338-7779 Fax: (905) 614-1749 Email: info@ucg.ca

**CAMEROON:** United Church of God Cameroon, BP 10322 Bessengue, Douala Cameroon.

**OTHER FRENCH-SPEAKING AREAS:** Église de Dieu Unie—France, 7 chemin de Monfaucou - Lot 21, 33127 Martignas sur Jalle, France.

**CARIBBEAN:** United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. Email: info@ucg.org

**EAST AFRICA (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda):** United Church of God—East Africa, P.O. Box 75261, Nairobi 00200 Kenya. Email: kenya@ucg.org

**GERMANY:** Vereinte Kirche Gottes, Postfach 30 15 09, D-53195 Bonn, Germany. Phone: 0228-9454636 Fax: 0228-9454637 Email: info@gutenachrichten.org

**ITALY:** Via Faruffini, 20 - 20149 Milan, Italy. Phone/Fax: (+39) 335 8470591. Email: info@ucgitaly.org. Website: ucgitaly.org

**MALAWI:** P.O. Box 32257, Chichiri, Blantyre 3, Malawi. Phone: +265 999 823 523. Email: malawi@ucg.org

**NEW ZEALAND:** United Church of God, P.O. Box 10468, Te Rapa, Hamilton 3241, New Zealand. Phone: 0508-463-763

**NIGERIA:** United Church of God, P.O. Box 2265, Somolu, Lagos, Nigeria. Phone: 803-323-3193. Email: nigeria@ucg.org

**PHILIPPINES:** P.O. Box 1474, MCPO, 1254 Makati City, Philippines. Cell/text: +63 (2) 8804-4444. Website: www.ucg.org.ph. Email: info@ucg.org.ph

**SCANDINAVIA:** Guds Enade Kyrka, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027 U.S.A. Email: norden@ucg.org

**SINGAPORE:** United Church of God, P.O. Box 535, Brisbane, Queensland, 4001, Australia.

**SOUTH AFRICA (and Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland only):** United Church of God, Southern Africa, PostNet Suite #28 Private Bag X025 Lynnwood Ridge 0040. Phone: (+27) 0797259453. Email: RSA@ucg.org

**SPANISH-SPEAKING AREAS:** Iglesia de Dios Unida, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. Phone: (513) 576-9796

**TONGA:** United Church of God—Tonga, P.O. Box 518, Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

**SWITZERLAND:** Phone: 49 228 945 4636. Website: http://www.vkg.org

**ALL OTHER SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONS NOT LISTED:** United Church of God—Australia, GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Queensland, 4001, Australia

**ZAMBIA:** United Church of God, P.O. Box 23076, Kitwe, Zambia. Phone: (0026)0966925840. Email: zambia@ucg.org

**ZIMBABWE:** United Church of God, c/o M. Chichaya, No 15 Mukwa St, Eiffel Flats, Kadoma, Zimbabwe. Phone: (+263) 772-922-362. Email: zimbabwe@ucg.org

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# Operation Manager's Update

## Ministerial and Member Services



*Devin and Tiffany Schulz*



*David and Sharon Fitch*



*Ron and Rose Bell*



*David and Debbie Bensinger*



*Jeff and Alisa Lockhart*

We're happy to announce that in mid-June, Devin Schulz began to pastor the congregations in Des Moines, Iowa and Omaha, Nebraska, replacing Mitch Knapp who has retired. Mr. Schulz will also pastor Cedar Rapids, Iowa, replacing David Schreiber. Mr. Schreiber will continue pastoring Southern Minnesota and La Crosse, Wisconsin.

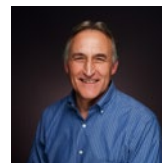
David Fitch was appointed pastor for the Elkhart, Indiana; Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo and Lansing, Michigan congregations, replacing Devin Schulz.

On June 21, Johnnie Lambert retired from the pastoral ministry; Ron Bell now pastors the Buffalo and Elmira, New York congregations.

On July 5, David Bensinger was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Debbie, serve the congregation in Boise, Idaho.

In mid-July, Jeff Lockhart was appointed the pastor of the congregation in Fort Worth, Texas. He and his wife, Alisa, also continue to serve the Montego Bay and Kingston, Jamaica congregations.

Please remember to support and pray for these faithful men and their wives as they take on new responsibilities in serving God's people. May their efforts be blessed by God—and may more be moved to step forward in service as the need continues to grow. **UN**



*Steve Myers is the Ministerial and Member Services manager for UCG and an elder who serves in the Cincinnati, Ohio area. He can be reached at steve\_myers@ucg.org*

## Canadian Ministerial Conference

Elders and their wives from across Canada came to Toronto for the biannual Canadian Ministerial Conference. There were 44 in attendance from June 21-22, 2025. The conference began Saturday evening with presentations from Gary Antion and John Elliott. Mr. Antion's topic was "Preaching Lessons from the Apostles." He used examples of Paul, Peter and Christ to help convey the privilege and actions needed to shepherd the flock.

John Elliott's topic was "Our Common Denominator." Mr. Elliott reminded the group: "Our mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God in all the world, make disciples in all nations and care for those disciples." He stressed the importance of collaboration (sharing resources, training, conferences and the Feast). He also stressed the importance of mentoring and teaching others.

Sunday presentations included "The Seven-Fold Work of the Ministry" presented by Anthony Wasilkoff. His points included: being an example; daily prayer, Bible study and fasting; preaching and teaching; visiting the brethren; pro-

viding counsel; conducting ceremonies; and overseeing and administering the local church.

This was followed by Rainer Salomaa's presentation "Essential Principles of Leadership." Mr. Salomaa emphasized godly leadership as servant leadership. He reminded all that the most important example and role model is Jesus Christ.

Gary Antion then covered the topic of "How to Handle a Crisis." Mr. Antion discussed key points on how to bring a person through difficult times. In conclusion he reminded the group that Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit brings ultimate comfort. He also reminded everyone that there are times when a crisis requires trained professionals and then it is appropriate for a referral.

Each ministerial conference includes a review of some key policies. Michael Erickson ably walked the group through some key policies, hitting the high points. Mr. Erickson encouraged all elders to review all of the Church policies and procedures on a regular basis.

"The Evangelical Conundrum" was the topic covered by



Paul Wasilkoff. He pointed out some of the complex challenges and tensions faced by the evangelical community in the modern era. This includes navigating faith and doctrinal purity while engaging with culture and popularity.

Mr. Wasilkoff encouraged the group to not despise the small things (small church), but to value quality, stand fast and hold the traditions. We may be tempted by the fact that big churches are/appear successful and feel compelled to emulate their practices, but Scripture supports reasons to resist these notions.

The last presentation was "The Future of the Church" by John Elliott. He asserted that future details are only known by God, but He gives us clues and

glimpses into the future. A vibrant church is where we grow, live God's blessings and be a light to the world. Mr. Elliott said that our members are always an integral part to bringing people to the Church and our congregations need to reflect a great place to be. We need to pray for God to open and soften hearts towards Him and the truth.

The ministerial conference provides an important opportunity for elders and their wives to strengthen existing bonds, develop new relationships and promote unity within the ministry of the Church. Everyone left with a sense of rejuvenation, uplifted and encouraged to continue the work of Jesus Christ.

*Almeda Lucas*



## Linda Api



Linda was born and raised in Southern California. In 2021, she and her husband, Jesse, began the process of relocating to Cincinnati to provide housing for the ABC students. As of now, all of their children and their spouses reside in Ohio, with the exception of their daughter, who lives in Florida.

Linda holds a liberal arts degree from Ambassador College in Pasadena, California, and later earned a bachelor of science in business administration from California State University, Los Angeles. She is also a certified public accountant (CPA) in the state of California. Her professional career spans over 40 years in the field of accounting, primarily within the real estate and service industries.

Outside of work, Linda enjoys spending time with Jesse and the extended family they share. Both have a love for traveling, gardening, home renovation, volunteering in different capacities and car repair.

At the home office, Linda is responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the Financial Services Department. Her duties include preparing financial reports for the President, the Council of Elders and department heads, as well as supporting the ministry and members in areas such as offerings, tithes and Feast of Tabernacles business office functions.

Linda says, "In my new role, I aim to enhance the department's accessibility and service to both the ministry and members, making interactions as smooth and efficient as possible. We are actively evaluating our processes to improve overall effectiveness and efficiency. I am grateful for the opportunity God has given me to serve through the use of my skills, and I look forward to building stronger connections with both the home office team and those we serve on a personal level." **UN**

## Bradley Bales



Bradley Bales was recently hired as a website content editor for the United Church of God. In his new position, he helps manage content for the Church's new streaming apps, as well as setting up AI read-throughs of study aids and articles that lack audio versions.

Bradley is from the small town of Carlisle, Iowa. He comes from a fam-

ily of four (parents and sister) and has spent most of his life in Iowa, attending his home congregation in Des Moines.

Bradley graduated with a degree in computer science from Iowa State University in December 2019, just in time for the lockdowns to start rolling out. He's kept busy with miscellaneous jobs for the past few years, including window washing.

One of Bradley's hobbies is video editing. He enjoys the process of taking a chunk of "unrefined" material and turning it into something an audience can enjoy.

Bradley shares, "I enjoy being responsible for two different ways that people can more easily get the truth, and I look forward to whatever other assignments I am given." **UN**

## Melody Porter



Melody Porter was recently hired as an outgoing mail processing clerk and warehouse assistant for the United Church of God. In her new position, she handles the process of inserting

literature for mail and preparing it for shipment.

Melody has lived in Cincinnati, Ohio her whole life! She was born in the area and grew up attending the Cincinnati East congregation.

Melody's hobbies include creating art, Bible study and taking care of her pet bunny.

A recent high school graduate, Melody has a background of working in logistics. She was previously employed by Total Quality Logistics. About her new role, she shares, "I'm excited to help preach the gospel through my role in the process of distributing our Church's literature!" **UN**

## Ted Budge



Ted Budge was recently appointed Treasurer for the United Church of God. Ted, a native of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Kim (Popham) Budge, originally from Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, were married in 1985. Both are alumni of Ambassador College and now live in Pasadena, California, where they are in the process of rebuilding their home after it was lost in the Eaton Fire.

Kim has worked in the educational field as an elementary school teacher and a school administrator. In 2013, she earned a Certificate of Congressional Recognition from United States Congresswoman Judy Chu for her leadership and community outreach at New Horizon School.

Ted and Kim have three sons, two daughters-in-law, and four grandchil-

dren. Since 1993, Ted has served as an elder in Southern California.

Ted has a B.S. in psychology from Ambassador College, a B.S. in business administration (accounting) from California State University, Los Angeles and an M.S. in taxation from California State University, Northridge.

Ted Budge began his career in the accounting department of the Worldwide Church of God while also teaching accounting at Imperial High School. He and his wife were also actively involved in the Summer Educational Program (SEP) in Orr and Pasadena. Ted primarily served as a business manager and office manager. Additionally, he contributed as a counselor and participated in the canoeing and waterskiing programs. Kim worked as a counselor and in the canoeing and communications programs, and served at SEP locations as a counselor in Alaska, South Africa and New Zealand.

Ted took on the role of the first Controller at the United Church of God. He transitioned to public accounting with PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. This experience paved the way for his move to the University of Southern California (USC), where

he advanced through increasingly senior positions at the Medical School as well as the College of Letters, Arts and Sciences. In his last full-time position at USC, he served as a Senior Associate Dean and Chief Operating Officer of the Keck School of Medicine, overseeing financial and administrative operations. Now semi-retired, Ted continues to contribute to the non-profit sector in various capacities, including serving on the Board of Directors of two non-profit organizations.

As Treasurer, Ted will support the Council by offering guidance and insight on matters related to policy, planning and operations. He will be responsible for monitoring the financial health of the organization ("Be diligent to know the state of your flocks" Proverbs 27:23), ensuring accurate financial reporting, sound budgeting practices and adher-

ence to all applicable financial regulations and standards. In this role, Ted will collaborate closely with Linda Api, Financial Services Operations Manager, to effectively manage the Church's financial affairs.

Ted loves to travel, spending time with family and friends, camping, as well as golfing as time provides, and notes: "It has been 30 years since I served as Controller in the Home Office, and I'm honored by the opportunity to once again contribute—this time as Treasurer. I look forward to applying the knowledge and experience I've gained over the years to support and further the mission of the Church. I'm also eager to reconnect with those I have worked with in the past and to build new relationships as we move ahead together." **UN**



## Why a Men's Weekend? Strengthening Spiritual Leadership in God's Church

While women's enrichment weekends have become a meaningful and anticipated part of Church life, the Northwest Men's Weekend stands as a rare and valuable counterpart—perhaps the only event of its kind in the United Church of God.

Some men might assume they don't need such a weekend. They may think, "I'm okay—I got this," imagining that a men's event must be a Church version of a group therapy session or emotional "cry fest." I wouldn't be surprised if a few even picture a hand-holding sing-along of "Kumbaya," or worse—line dancing. But nothing could be further from the truth.

Held annually in Seabeck, Washington, the Northwest Men's Weekend is designed with one core goal in mind: to help men grow into their God-ordained roles as husbands, fathers and spiritual leaders. Now in its 10th year, the 2025 theme was "Being a Spiritual Leader," taken from Titus 2:1-2. The weekend, held June 20-22, featured a series of meaningful presentations that explored the theme with biblical depth and practical relevance. But it wasn't just the speakers or the messages that made an impact—it was the contributions from the attendees as well.

Each session begins with a focused topic, but what follows is not a lecture. Instead, presenters lead interactive discussions that invite attendees to engage, ask questions and share personal experiences. This format brings the subject matter to life—not just explaining what God's Word says, but encouraging men to wrestle with how to apply it with integrity and honor in their daily lives.

Participants are encouraged to share—not as confessionals, but as brothers supporting one another's growth. These real-world insights add nuance and spiritual depth to each topic, whether it's leadership in the home, decision-making under pressure or confronting challenges with courage and humility.

What further sets the weekend apart is the Friday and Saturday evening "wine and cheese" socials. Men bring their favorite beverages, cheeses, meats and desserts to share, creating a relaxed setting for deeper conversation, laughter and fellowship. These informal gatherings foster lasting friendships and strengthen the bonds of brotherhood that God is building within His Church.

Though hosted by the Tacoma and Olympia congregations, the Northwest Men's



Northwest Men's Weekend 2025

Weekend has consistently drawn attendees from across the country—including this year from Colorado, California and Texas. Men come not only to learn and grow, but often to bring the concept home. Several participants have expressed a desire to replicate similar events in their own areas. But for such events to thrive, they require support and buy-in from local men who are willing to step forward and make spiritual development a shared priority.

Men leave the weekend challenged, encouraged and sharpened—better equipped to fulfill their responsibilities in their families, congregations and communities. It's a time to reflect on how we lead, where we can grow and how we can support one another—as iron sharpens iron.

The next Northwest Men's Weekend is scheduled for June 12-14, 2026, once again in beautiful Seabeck, Washington. Men are encouraged to mark their calendars and plan ahead. Space is limited, and early registration is recommended.

Watch for announcements in the UCG Home Office Weekly Update and a future edition of *United News*.

If you've never considered attending an event like this, give the Northwest Men's Weekend—or a similar event in your area—a try. God has ordained us to be spiritual leaders, and we can all use support in fulfilling that role. A weekend like this isn't just a retreat—it's a tool to help us grow into our God-given responsibilities.

Ken Loucks

## Honoring a Deceased Elder

### Ray Cowan



Ray Kenneth Cowan, a resident of London, Kentucky, was born on Dec. 5, 1936, in Brownies Creek, Bell County, Kentucky. He departed this life on Saturday, May 17, 2025, at the age of 88 years. He was

the beloved son of the late Dexter Cowan and Glessie Hensley Cowan. He was preceded in death by his stepmother Marie Cowan, brother Glendon Argene Cowan, and sons Timothy and Mark Anthony Cowan.

Ray is survived by his loving family, including his devoted wife, Norma Jean Smith Cowan of London, Kentucky; his children: Alethia Prettyman and her husband Tony of Hopkinsville, Kentucky; Kenneth Cowan and his wife Ester of Lake Wales, Florida; and Clarissa Cowan and her husband Bill Brady. He also leaves behind a cherished granddaughter, Mia Ashley Cowan, and two half-sisters, Brenda Brock and husband Charles of Pineville, Kentucky, and Deranda Miracle and husband Donny of Miracle, Kentucky, along with a host of other family and friends who mourn his death.

Ray retired from the National Cash Register Company as a field technician and was a devoted minister and elder of the United Church of God. Ray was known for his hard work and his exceptional skills in fixing and restoring almost anything. He excelled in physics, engineering, tool design, woodwork, mechanical and electrical work, showcasing his remarkable talent in various aspects of

design and restoration. Ray was a self-taught man in many skills.

We will all miss Ray's gentle smile and words of kindness and encouragement. He was a pillar of strength and a source of inspiration. Through his unwavering faith and dedication, he showed us what it truly means to live a life in service of God. During some of the most difficult times in our lives, he led us through the wilderness of doubt and despair, reminding us of God's faithfulness and love. Ray always went the extra mile for us.

Ray is known for having the heart of a shepherd, diligently caring for the family and Church members. He nurtured, protected and guided us towards greener pastures. He selflessly devoted himself to our spiritual growth and well-being.

During our grief, we find comfort in the promises of Scripture. Jesus Himself assured us that He is the resurrection and the life, and those who believe in Him will live, even though they die (John 11:25).

We can take solace in knowing that Ray now rests awaiting his name to be called to rise at Christ's return! Until that time, may his legacy forever remain in our hearts! UN



by Jesse Api

Shortly after the Feast of Tabernacles, on Oct. 27, 2023, Hurricane Otis struck Acapulco, Mexico. Home to approximately 900,000 residents, many of whom depend on the tourism industry for their livelihoods, the city was unprepared for what became an unprecedented disaster. Mexican news outlets first reported the sudden arrival of Hurricane Otis—a Category 5 storm with sustained winds of up to 165 miles per hour—late at night. With no warning or evacuation notice, the hurricane's impact was both devastating and historic, marking the first time a storm of this magnitude had made landfall in this part of the Pacific.

Local brethren described Hurricane Otis as the most destructive storm they had ever experienced. Striking in the middle of the night, the hurricane caught everyone off guard. Families were awakened by terrifying winds that roared like a freight train and sounded, as some described, “like the end of the world.” With no time to prepare, many took shelter in bathrooms or central rooms, clinging to safety as flying debris shattered windows and tore apart structures. Outside, the storm uprooted trees and toppled power poles, filling the night with deafening crashes and creaks. Roofs were ripped away, and personal belongings were sucked into the air by the forceful winds. Torrential rain flooded homes, soaking whatever was left behind. In the darkness, families huddled together and prayed for survival.

In the aftermath of the disaster, conditions remained critical. Widespread flooding had submerged much of the lower-lying areas, while the air was thick with the stench of contaminated black water and scattered debris, compounding the severity of the situation. Numerous buildings had been devastated, with furniture, clothing, shattered glass doors and windows swept into Acapulco Bay.

To this day the marina is still lined with damaged vessels—many capsized, wrecked, or even overturned onshore. As of the latest reports, authorities have confirmed at least 52 fatalities, with 32 individuals still unaccounted for. An avalanche



*The Ramirez family*

also resulted in additional loss of life. Amid the widespread destruction, all members of the Church were safely located and expressed deep gratitude to have survived.

As Acapulco began the slow process of recovery, another setback occurred less than a year later. In 2024, while the city was still struggling to rebuild, Hurricane John struck. Though a Category 3 storm, John inflicted significant damage due to the already fragile infrastructure. The storm caused widespread power out-



*Trash, debris and dark water*



*Temporary roofing*

ages, water shortages, flooding and mudslides. Massive boulders—some larger than small homes—were dislodged and crashed onto roads, sheds and homes. One mudslide near a member's home stranded the family, making it impossible for them to return for several days.

On Nov. 26, 2023, the Mexico home office, with partial funding from the Good Works program, was able to purchase a used church van. This vehicle was instrumental in delivering aid. Two trips were made to Acapulco to provide critical provisions to the brethren. During the first trip, the extent of the devastation became clear: every member's home had been significantly

impacted. Many were living together in single rooms under makeshift roofs fashioned from tarps and salvaged materials. Access to power, clean water, food and basic supplies was scarce. The delivery of water, canned goods and mosquito repellent was met with deep appreciation, as these were among the most urgently needed items.

Following this visit, a decision was made to repair the damaged roofs of members' homes and continue supplying food, clean water and cleaning products. Upon returning to the United States, additional funds were raised to support this initiative. It was

estimated that completing all necessary repairs would take approximately one year.

In March 2024, Jesse Api drove his utility vehicle to Mexico to begin the rebuilding efforts. Initially, the plan had been to hire local labor in Acapulco. However, due to labor shortages and unreliability—workers often left jobs incomplete—this approach proved challenging. Jesse was soon joined by Aaron Dominguez, a deacon from Colorado who volunteered his time, and Roberto Hernandez, a member

Another challenge was sourcing construction materials. Supplies within Acapulco were scarce and costly, so materials had to be transported from cities located three to six hours away. To ensure durability against future storms, the new roofs were constructed using reinforced concrete. However, the weight of the concrete required rebuilding foundations and walls for structural support. Excavation for these new foundations was labor-intensive due to the rocky terrain—some rocks were as large as small houses. In one case, a massive boulder obstructed a planned corner foundation. After exhausting efforts to break it apart, the team adapted by using the boulder itself as the cornerstone, successfully drilling into it.

Transporting cement to homes presented further logistical issues. Narrow streets prevented truck access, and no equipment was available to pour concrete directly. Instead, all concrete had to be mixed by hand in the streets and carried in 80-100-pound, five-gallon buckets up makeshift staircases built from wood and stone. The physically demanding nature of the work meant that pouring one roof could take up to three days. Construction continued through rainstorms and high winds.

Despite the many obstacles, after nearly a year of dedicated labor, the project was completed. Each family once again had a secure roof over their heads. The brethren in Acapulco have expressed profound gratitude for the support they received. Amid the chaos, destruction and uncertainty, they wondered how they would find food and water and how they could possibly rebuild. Their joy was immense when they realized their prayers had been answered through the kindness of individuals they had never met.

When asked who had provided such generous assistance, they were told about the Good Works program, as well as the generous contributions from church congregations and individual donors. The members of the Acapulco congregation send their heartfelt thanks to all who extended a helping hand during one of the most difficult times in their lives. **UN**



*The Hernandez family*

impacted. Many were living together in single rooms under makeshift roofs fashioned from tarps and salvaged

of the Mexico City congregation. Eventually, local laborers were hired at three times the normal rate.



Building on The Foundation—UYC 2025

It is hard to believe, but the 2025 summer camp season has ended. I would like to thank all our camp directors for their many weeks of planning that culminated in just a few days of camp. Their efforts have produced good fruit. I would also like to thank the 911 staff members who volunteered their time and energy at one or more camps. It takes everyone working together to make our camps successful.

This summer, 920 campers (425 teens and 495 preteens) attended one of our five teen camps or seven preteen camps. Individual reports for each camp are included in this issue

of *United News*. From all reports I have received this may have been the best season overall with the fewest number of injuries or incidents, for which we are profoundly grateful.

But our camps are more than just a physical camp experience. The mission of the United Youth Camps program is to support parents and the Church in teaching youth to develop their full godly potential—which is their calling into the Body of Jesus Christ and the work of the Church—while learning that God's spiritual laws are practical ways of living. Thus, our camp themes and the daily Christian living content created

each year is developed as part of that mission.

The camp theme this year was “Building on The Foundation.” Just as physical foundations are vital to the stability of structures, ensuring they can withstand the forces of nature, time and use, a spiritual foundation is even more important. The five daily themes were:

- The Blueprint
- The Cornerstone
- Living Stones
- Spiritual Tools
- Built on The Rock

These daily themes were developed in a way that they would build upon each other, to help the youth understand

the importance of starting out their lives on the spiritual foundation of God’s Word. Jesus summarized the importance of having a right foundation, when He said: “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock” (Matthew 7:24-25).

Thank you for your prayers and continued support of the United Youth Camp program, but most importantly, we thank God for His continued blessing upon our human efforts. Our efforts would not produce the proper fruit unless God is involved in our planning.

Finally, please pray for Winter Camp in December and for the annual camp directors’ meeting to be held in the month of November, as we begin planning for 2026.



Len Martin  
UYC Coordinator



Camp Buckeye

CAMP Buckeye 2025 took place in Delaware, Ohio for the second year in a row. We had a great group of 74 campers and 81 staff this year. It was a hot week, but the campers had a wonderful time and thoroughly enjoyed the large pool to cool down.

We started each day with a Christian living class focused on “Building on The Foundation.” We discussed God’s great plan and His love for them and how that should motivate us to trust and obey Him.

The campers participated in a variety of fun activities: arts and crafts, team building, BB guns, archery, field games, swimming and fishing. During the week we had a couple of thunderstorms roll into the area, but each time they either missed camp or arrived at times that didn’t disrupt our camp program.

Every year at Buckeye, our 13-year-olds (those who would have been preteen campers last year and are on staff for the first time) are on our “service crew.” This op-

portunity allows them to serve in a unique way under the guidance of Frank Dunkle. This team of staff does whatever needs to be done: cleaning the dining hall every day, delivering water coolers at each activity, cleaning and maintaining the bathrooms, and anything else that needs done for camp to run smoothly. At the end of camp, we have a small ceremony where we present them with a certificate acknowledging their service and their graduation to the staff team. It teaches them the value of service, doing the work behind the scenes—even the things that aren’t fun. We had nine service crew graduates this year.

We are thankful for God’s blessing and protection on Camp Buckeye once again. I am thankful for all the prayers, support and service of the Church. It is what allows our camps to operate and be successful.

Aaron Creech

Camp Colorado

ON June 15-18, 2025, 36 campers and 53 staff gathered together at the beautiful Highlands Camp and Retreat Center for Preteen Camp Colorado. The theme this year was, “Building on the Foundation.” Camp coordinators, David and Joy Jones, as well as the teen and adult staff worked together to model to campers how to use the Word of God as the master blueprint for laying the foundation from which to build their lives.

Brian Wilhelm, a member in the Denver congregation who builds custom homes, led the first Christian living class. He gave each dorm a mock set of blueprints, and had them work together to determine which pieces needed to come first so that they could build a secure home on a solid foundation. He then tied this into how we can use God’s Word as our master blueprint with Christ as our Chief Cornerstone.

Each day of camp, campers began and ended their days with learning about God’s ultimate plan for their lives. These lessons learned were incorporated into every activity: field games, slingshot, ax-throwing, hiking, Gaga Ball, drama, choir, multi-ball, canoeing, etc. Each evening of camp found the campers around the camp fire, singing songs and watching the sun set over Mount Meeker. There was even an evening of roasting marshmallows and making s’mores before heading to the camp dance.

Of particular focus this year at Camp Colorado was the theme of building strong and supportive family-like relationships in each dorm and treating each member

with respect. Campers were challenged to treat one another like brothers and sisters throughout camp and to encourage one another in every challenge they faced. This went so well, that the staff at Highlands Camp and Retreat Center commented on how well our campers got along and how respectful they were. Their lights were definitely shining.

Another lesson that we learned this year was how to “pivot” and “adapt” the plan when unexpected events occur. When thunder and lighting storms moved in and pushed us inside, forcing us to adapt our overall plan for the day, rather than get frustrated and discouraged, the campers went forward with enthusiasm. By the end of the day, after the weather had cleared, we found that we were still able to get all the campers through the Hidden Room as well as have fun with impromptu team building exercises put on by Mr. Nathan Ekama, lead counselor for 1B.

Camp Colorado 2025 was a huge success. Our numbers were smaller this year, but our camp was blessed with an intimate family atmosphere where campers and staff formed relationships that they will carry forward with them. We are already looking forward to the 2026 camp season and making plans. We invite you to join us at Camp Colorado and become part of our beautiful family.

Joy Jones



## Camp Florida

Now in its fifth year, Camp Florida returned to the scenic Florida Elks Youth Camp just outside of Orlando from May 26–30. We welcomed 65 energetic preteen campers, eight adorable mini campers, 31 dedicated teen staff and 65 remarkable adult staff. With a total of 169 enthusiastic participants, it was our largest camp ever—and one to remember!

Throughout the week, God’s blessings were evident in countless ways. From beautiful weather to protection and peace, it was clear that God was with us. Camp offered something truly special: a chance to step away from the distractions of the world and fully enter “The Zone”—a place where fun meets faith, and friendships flourish.

This year’s theme, “Building on The Proper Foundation,” (1 Corinthians 3:10–11) served as the spiritual cornerstone of the week. Campers explored the idea that God, our Master Builder, has provided each of us with a foundation, a blueprint and a cornerstone—Jesus Christ—to guide our lives. Through daily Christian living classes, evening Compass Checks and meaningful dorm time with dorm parents, campers were continually reminded of God’s plan and purpose for them.

Of course, camp was also packed with fun and adventure! Campers dove into a full

schedule of swimming, canoeing, archery, sports, arts and crafts and the ever-popular water games. New this year was a thrilling water slide and a team-building course that brought kids together in exciting new ways. Camper favorites included tie-dye shirt making, the wild and competitive Gaga Ball arena, the adrenaline-pumping Big Swing, and a lively dance party capped off with a surprise visit from our beloved friend, Jelly!

One of the week’s grand finales was the rain gutter boat race, where campers raced their handmade boats built in woodcraft. Another inspiring moment came through service—campers and staff teamed up to clean over 600 plastic portable lockers for the facility’s upcoming summer season. It was a small way to give back, and a big reminder that service is a key part of living God’s way.

But perhaps the most lasting part of camp was friendships. Bonds were formed that will stretch far beyond the gates of Camp Florida—connections rooted in shared laughter, growth and God’s truth. Thank you to every camper, parent and staff member who helped make this year our best yet! Here’s to building on the foundation—and building memories that last a lifetime!

*Bert and Tricia Merring*

## Camp Gilmont

WE are grateful to God for another successful year at Camp Gilmont! From July 27–30, 46 preteen campers along with 34 adult and 13 teen staff enjoyed a camp experience that was abundant with His blessings. Throughout the year many prayers were offered up regarding the weather as we expected that Texas summer temperatures could be quite high. God provided wonderful cloud cover for the first day of camp, and we powered through the sunny days by maximizing water activities and the large pavilion play area.

Fun activities included utilizing the swimming pool and splash fountain two afternoons in a row. A new activity this year for the four eldest dorms was archery, while the two youngest dorms got to experience an “epic playmix” of dancing, small pin bowling, marble sets, Legos and a Play-Doh station. A variety of sports, water games, arts and crafts, hammock circle, Bible charades, music, line dancing and free time under the pavilion rounded out the activities. Camp photos can be viewed on [tinyurl.com/y9787nwv](https://tinyurl.com/y9787nwv), in addition to the UYC Facebook page.

The UYC theme of “Building on The Foundation” was well received and reinforced within various activities and in the Christian living classes. A notable project this year was the making of cards for those affected by the flooding of the Guadalupe River. One of our staff members has a direct connection to an area resident who is putting together supplies for victims and survivors and will deliver the cards. The cards were beautifully decorated with colorful jeweled stickers, glitter paint, markers and crayons. Some of the campers made multiple cards and many of the cards included words of encouragement and Bible verses. It was moving to see our youth express heartfelt concern for those who are in the midst of trials.

We are deeply thankful for the labor of love of our adult and teen volunteers who come serve at camp. It is vital and much appreciated. We couldn’t have camp without you! As always, camp goes by very quickly, and we’re looking forward to Camp Gilmont again next year when we return to an early summertime slot.

*Jim and Laurel Moody*

## Camp Ironwood

THIS year, 101 preteens (which included more than 20 mini dorm campers ages 5 and under), 20 teens and 69 adults enjoyed four days of living, playing and working together “God’s way” at the beautiful country setting of Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch in southern Minnesota. We were blessed with campers and staff from Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, North and South Dakota, Michigan, Texas, Tennessee, Ohio, Wisconsin and of course, Minnesota!

Our camp goals centered on enriching the children’s lives by providing meaningful opportunities to build friendships with others who share their beliefs, deepen their relationship with their Heavenly Father, and participate in a variety of engaging and challenging activities.

We began each day with Christian living classes in three separate groups—campers, teen staff and adult staff—all focusing on the camp theme. The goal of this summer’s classes was to help the children understand that Jesus was the One who spoke from the burning bush, who led Israel through the Red Sea, who gave the Ten Commandments, and was the Rock who guided the Israelites through the wilderness for 40 years. He was there in the beginning (“the Word” in John 1:1)—and then came, lived a perfect life, set us an example of how to live and died for our sins. We also emphasized the hope and promise of His return, when He will reign

as King of Kings. This is the One they were to build their life on . . . whose love for them is everlasting.

We also studied the parable of the foolish man who built his house on sand, emphasizing the lesson that it’s not enough to simply know Jesus—we must also put into practice what He taught. Campers also enjoyed the new Jelly video and soon started trying to memorize all the words to Mark’s Graham’s very inspiring song: “He Is.”

During the day, campers experienced a variety of daily activities including zipline, horseback riding, slip-n-slide, team challenge, creek walk, field games, archery and sling shot, climbing wall, petting zoo, swimming, arts and crafts as well as evening fun including: campfire sing-a-long, novelty Olympics, treasure hunt, carnival and dancing with Jelly.

Jamie Schreiber, who filmed many of the camp activities, made a short highlight video that can be viewed at: [youtu.be/hXIxTYF6Tgo](https://youtu.be/hXIxTYF6Tgo).

We are very thankful for the support of the UCG home office and blessed by the service of an amazing group of camp staff, as well as the many contributions and prayers from local brethren. We give all thanks and praise to God for blessing us with another memorable year at Camp Ironwood!

*David Schreiber*



“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock”  
(Matthew 7:24).





# Camp Ochoco

SEVENTY-TWO campers came together at Camp Ochoco from July 13-16 for four days filled with fun, friendship and spiritual growth—all centered around this year’s theme: “Build on the Rock.”

Each morning began with Christian living classes designed to bring the theme to life in creative and memorable ways. One class used braille Legos to show how communication and understanding can be built even through barriers. Another used colored building blocks to demonstrate the importance of having a strong spiritual foundation.

Throughout the day, campers rotated through a variety of engaging activities, including archery, wilderness exploration, aquatic kickball, swimming, field sports, gaga ball, dance, Bible Explorers, pickleball and arts and crafts. The pool and water sports were a huge hit, especially during the hotter afternoons. In arts and crafts, campers expressed the theme tangibly—creating decorated backpacks and building

lighted houses “on the rock.”

A new feature this year allowed teen staff to participate in scheduled activities during their free time, giving them a chance to enjoy camp from a camper’s perspective while continuing to serve as positive examples. Their energy and hard work were a key part of the camp’s success.

Evenings brought everyone together around the campfire for songs, skits and spiritual lessons to close the day. This year, special guests from South Africa added an international flavor, sharing stories that reminded everyone of the global nature of God’s Church and our shared foundation in His truth.

Camp Ochoco continues to be a place where preteens can grow in confidence, character and faith—all while having a blast. The foundation built here is one that will last.

*Jeff Richards*

# Camp Seven Mountains

CHRISTIANITY is a lot about building proper relationships. And camp is a unique opportunity to grow in this endeavor and build on the Cornerstone of the church—Christ. That is what Camp Seven Mountains 2025 was all about.

Lily Massie, 17, of the Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania congregation, was one of the many helping hands at camp. She’s been going to Seven Mountains since she was 2. Going from camper to staff was a natural next step. “[It allows] me to give back to the camp and help create special moments for others,” she said.

The activities—volleyball, field and water sports, arts, crafts, archery, Bible classes and more—are a small part of the camp adventure. “A highlight from this year was watching the campers really engage with each other,” Lily said. “I had two campers who had never gone to a camp before and were very nervous . . . but ended up having a blast by the end.”

For Lizzy White, 9, of the Saratoga Springs, New York congregation, fun, plus church friends, equaled awesome. “I keep coming back to camp, because it’s so fun and I get to do it all with friends,” she said.

White latched onto family-building during Bible lessons. “Learning about God

with friends, I think, is the best thing about camp,” she said. “This year, I enjoyed learning about God’s blueprint to help us become part of His family.” And that’s what the camp program is all about—building a family.

Seven Mountains director Andy Duran said this year’s theme focused in on God’s ultimate plan for His church. “For these young ones who grow up with the church, it is these little moments of understanding that help them see the tremendous opportunity God is offering them,” he said. Seven Mountains feels like a family for this very reason.

As a family, it can be hard to say goodbye. As the familiar sounds of laughter, fun and cheers filled the dining hall on the last day, one camper ran to give a staff member a big hug. “I don’t want to go home,” Rachel Cockrell, 9, of the Portsmouth, Ohio, congregation said. “. . . I’m a little tired, but camp is so fun. I don’t want to leave!”

If you’re interested in a camp experience like this, check out the program description at <https://www.ucg.org/members/uyc>. But be prepared—you might just want to camp here every year!

*Amber Duran*

# Camp Cotubic

THIS year, 88 campers and 63 dedicated staff gathered at Camp Cotubic for an unforgettable week centered on the theme “Building on The Foundation.” From start to finish, the week was filled with energy, encouragement and spiritual growth.

Each day began with Christian living classes exploring what it means for Jesus Christ to be our Cornerstone, the solid foundation upon which we build our lives. Campers learned about spiritual tools like prayer, Scripture and the Holy Spirit, and were encouraged to see themselves as living stones in God’s spiritual temple.

Following the morning classes, campers jumped into a variety of activities designed to stretch them mentally, physically and socially. Returning favorites like the high ropes course, climbing wall and zipline, speedaway, waterfront, arts and crafts, softball and team building were as popular as ever. New this year, horseback riding gave campers a chance to try something completely different, and our annual camper-staff game was leveled up with the introduction of a mega volleyball net, creating hilarious and memorable moments for everyone involved.

One of the most inspiring parts of camp is witnessing teens rise to a challenge. Whether it’s conquering a fear of heights, praying during dorm discussions, or sup-

porting each other through tough moments, the campers showed incredible courage and compassion. Success looked different for every individual, but the beauty was in how each dorm became a family—encouraging, celebrating and sometimes even carrying each other through to victory.

Our staff once again went above and beyond—not only in organizing and leading activities—but in mentoring, guiding and modeling what it looks like to walk with God. Every game, every meal, every class was rooted in reinforcing the camp theme and helping teens apply it to their lives back home, because that’s the bigger picture: The Zone isn’t just a camp environment—it’s a way of life. It’s a glimpse into the peace, joy and unity that Jesus Christ will establish at His return. Camp is a reminder that we are called to live this way now—not just for one week, but every day.

As always, there’s room to improve, and we’re already working on ways to make 2026 even more incredible. But for now, we’re grateful for the memories, the growth and the glimpse of God’s Kingdom we shared.

*Joshua Creech*

# Northwest Camp

THIS year, 104 campers, 69 staff, and two mini campers have come together at Camp Magruder on the beautiful Oregon Coast to learn more about God and His blueprint for our lives. Our theme this year “Building on The Foundation” has been well received, and many analogies and lessons have come through the Christian living classes, leading to many important discussions about what God is doing in each of our lives.

Given the record high temperatures around the country this summer, we have very much appreciated the weather on the coast, which has been in the low 60s with sun in the afternoons, with cooler temperatures in the mornings and evenings, and minimal wind for this area at this time of year. We enjoyed our train ride with the Oregon Coast Scenic Railway with an antique steam locomotive which departed from Rockway Beach, and went through Garibaldi along the incredible vistas of Tillamook Bay before returning us to camp.

The activities this year have been enjoyed by all, and our staff has worked very hard to make them something to remember. In addition to our standard activities:

boogie boarding and skim boarding on the beach, softball, ultimate Frisbee, pickleball, dance, archery, volleyball, waterskiing out at Lake Lytle, arts and crafts, excellence in living and speedaway, this year, we’ve added a team-building class that is largely based on theater improvisation games and has been thoroughly enjoyed by the campers.

We were blessed this year to be joined by Mr. Vivien Botha, Mr. Nigel Schuller, his wife Charlene Schuller, and their children Ryan and Sarah from Cape Town, South Africa. Their presence, as well as our staff and campers from Australia, Netherlands, and Canada have added a real international flair to our camp for this year.

Now that camp has concluded, it’s increasingly more difficult to be apart and back in the world. The time we had together at camp this year was a much-needed respite. We’re all looking forward to the day when the Kingdom of God is here and permanent—the ultimate conclusion of the vision of God and the blueprint and plan for our lives we’re here to learn about this week at camp.

*Benjamin Light*



## Camp Pinecrest

FOR the 29th season, UYC made Camp Pinecrest in Southeast Missouri our home away from home for both campers and staff alike. Adjacent to the Mark Twain National Forest, Pinecrest offers a peaceful and scenic setting—the ideal backdrop to reflect on the greatness of our God and His divine plan for our teens.

This year’s theme, “Building on The Foundation,” emphasized that we can build on no other foundation than Jesus. He is the chief cornerstone who gives us not only a secure foundation, but He also provides the measurements for how we should live our lives. And for each of us, as living stones, we come together with Him placing us perfectly together, our lives being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. This topic is essential for everyone to grasp, particularly for our teenagers who encounter distinct challenges specific to their generation. Jesus as our foundation has been the support for all Christians to weather the storms that life brings.

This was one of the largest camps we have had in many years, with 122 campers and 72 staff members. But even with the size, all aspects of the camp operated smoothly and normally because the teens and staff worked so well together, being led by His Spirit. Joy and the essence of fun were felt throughout the entire week and never waned. It is so energizing to experience the fullness that camp offers as the teens and adult staff come together with a common purpose to grow closer to God and experience His love with each other. All credit goes to our Father and His Son!

Camp does not occur without the help and support of the many volunteers who come together each summer. And camp does not run smoothly without the co-operation of all the campers. So, I pass along my thanks to all who attended Camp Pinecrest this year and to all who prayed along with us for a blessed camp. It was another amazing and memorable year from our Father and our Savior!

*Mike Phelps*

## Southwest Camp

THIS year’s Southwest Camp brought together 56 campers, 53 staff and one junior camper in the beautiful setting of Prescott, Arizona. Centered on the theme “Building on The Foundation,” the camp provided a spiritually rich environment where teens deepened their walk with Jesus Christ—laying a foundation that will guide them long after camp ends.

Christian living activities included daily themed sessions, daily memory scriptures, Bible journaling, Bible class, Bible Q&A and thoughtful integration of the theme into every aspect of camp life. Campers also enjoyed a wide variety of activities such as archery, arts and crafts, kayaking, hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, volleyball, field sports and dance. Evenings brought the entire camp together for group activities and meaningful campfire time.

Sabbath services were a highlight of the week, enriched by the involvement of both campers and staff, including several outstanding special music presentations. The week concluded with a celebratory banquet and dance, bringing joyful closure to a week filled with faith, fellowship and fun.

We are especially grateful to our volunteer kitchen staff for the delicious meals that fueled our days—and to all our staff, who went above and beyond by modeling what it means to live with Jesus Christ as our Cornerstone. Their example helped bring the camp’s theme to life in a powerful and lasting way. We thank all our members for their support, including prayers for the safety and success of our United Youth Camps!

*Brent Fogelson*

## Camp Woodland

WHAT a wonderful time it was at Camp Woodland in Temple, Georgia! This was the second year to be on the Heritage side of the camp, which is much nicer than the Junction side and closer to all the daily activities.

This year we had a total of 115 people, comprised of 55 campers, 54 staff and six mini campers. The smaller camp attendance figures made it much easier and quicker to get through the food lines, find a place to sit and eat, and allow for the opportunity to really get to know everyone at camp.

Several activities remained from previous years, such as archery, basketball, canoeing, kayaking, dance class, speedaway, softball, swimming, ultimate frisbee and volleyball. We were able to schedule two times at the swimming pool for each dorm, which was a welcome relief from the heat. There were two new activities this year—the Adventure Course, which is a medium height multilevel ropes course through the trees—and arts and crafts.

In arts and crafts, the campers built a foundation using mini one-twelfth scale bricks and faux mortar (from sand and wood glue). They would then assemble a birdhouse and attach it to their foundation and then personalize their house by painting it. This activity intended to show the importance of having a solid, level foundation, as well as a cornerstone in the design. The goal was for the campers to understand it takes a deliberate, planned approach to build a solid foundation.

The daily Christian living classes each morning provided focused instruction and

clarity to the overall camp theme of “Building on The Foundation.” Each morning after breakfast, the campers quickly reviewed the previous day’s theme and memory verse before proceeding to the present day’s content, so they understood what it takes to build their lives on God’s Word and Jesus Christ’s example.

Our evening activities included two nights of open activities, where campers could sign up for the activity they wanted to participate in without having to stay together as a dorm. One evening activity, for the second year in a row, was the “Grill-n-Chill,” where we had an outdoor picnic-style dinner followed by playing lawn games. We also played Bible Bowl one evening, and it was quite impressive to see the amount of biblical knowledge among many of the teens.

One evening we held a Novelty Olympics event where campers were mixed between dorms to compete at various events. One event was titled, “Dunk the Directors,” where Len Martin, Philip Aust and Marcus Lucas each took a turn in a water dunk tank. Each camper team was allowed three minutes to throw as many pitches as possible in an attempt to dunk a director. Everyone loved it!

I would like to thank Marcus Lucas and Philip Aust for their help this year to make Camp Woodland the success that it was, and I am very pleased to announce Marcus Lucas as the director of Camp Woodland beginning next year! Thank you for your continued prayers and support of the entire camp program.

*Len Martin*

## Boundary Waters

THE Boundary Waters Adventure (BWA) is a challenge program of the United Church of God for young adults. During the week of July 6, 11 young adults joined five staff for a journey of approximately 50 miles through the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness of northern Minnesota. Participants from 10 different states came to this unique remote area for an amazing experience.

BWA does more than tour beautiful scenery. The program stresses spiritual growth, leadership training and building positive relationships. Canoeing and camping inherently involve cooperation, trust and teamwork—which are vital traits for Christians seeking to serve the Church and help preach the gospel.

The program included various formal and impromptu group discussions and each young adult presented an evening “trail talk” on a spiritual principle of his or her choice.

The Boundary Waters provide an excellent setting for this program. After orientation and training at a campsite on Echo Lake, the group divided into two teams—to conform to size restrictions within the Wilderness Area—and began their adventure paddling down the Little Indian Sioux River to Loon Lake and beyond. The adventurers saw bald eagles and beavers, and enjoyed hearing the call of the wild loon. They had opportunity to do cliff jumping and endured some rain, along with swarms of mosquitos. The two groups

reunited for a restful Sabbath at a campground on Lake Mukooda before emerging from the wilderness on Sunday.

Along with gaining valuable experiences, these adventurers created or deepened friendships. They also joined an existing community within the Church of God, made up of many people who took part in the canoeing program that for decades was part of SEP (Summer Educational Program) based near Orr, Minnesota.

Next summer Challenger Sierra will be available, led by Scott McKeon and Troy Phelps. Any young adults who want to share a spectacular experience should apply early!

*Frank Dunkle*





## Camp Wildrose (Canada)

CAMP Wildrose hosted a small, but unified and joyful group this year! There were 19 campers, four junior volunteers (16+) and 20 staff in attendance. This year’s theme was “Standing Strong in the Armor of God.” Our Christian living classes, morning sessions and Sabbath game focused on “putting on God’s armor so that we may stand against the devil’s schemes.” Our lessons also discussed the weapons Satan uses to attack us, and how we can keep our armor strong so that Satan cannot cause it to weaken and fall off. The Sabbath game highlighted God’s gift of armor mentioned throughout the Bible.

The children were able to enjoy canoeing and tubing on Lac Ste. Anne, and a giant slip n’ slide. Other activities enjoyed were volleyball, field hockey and kick-ball, as well as archery, teamwork challenges and slingshot practice. The craft this year was a glow in the dark lantern with silhouette pictures. Our younger children played parachute games and blew gigantic bubbles with a homemade soap solution. The evenings were filled with fireside activities and traditional bannock (an unleavened flatbread) and s’more snacks. The oldest campers put on a skit about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego using God’s armor in the fiery furnace. A story-telling activity had us all laughing, and campers of all ages had great fun with their

made-up game of Ankle Tag every evening.

One of the biggest highlights of camp is the Friday evening music social with line dancing and musical games. This year we had a fashion show with “models” featuring the latest styles in crepe paper streamer design. Musical chairs, the Canadian Hockey Cokey, beach ball fun, hot potato dance and ice cream sundae treats were all camp favorites.

On the Sabbath, many of our youth participated in the services doing songleading, technical support, prayers and special music. Services were webcasted and watched by many of our local congregations. A few guests attended the camp services as well and enjoyed lunch afterwards with all the campers and staff.

On Sunday we held traditional potato sack and three-legged races, followed by a blindfolded watermelon eating contest and a tug of war challenge.

Our small group experienced a true family setting with all ages working and playing together. God, throughout His Word, encourages His people to dwell in unity, calling it “good and pleasant.” Camp Wildrose experienced this bond of harmony and headed home strengthened in God’s armor.

*Susan Davis*



## Camp DR Congo

FOR the second year in a row we had our youth camp in Mibulu (Lubumbashi) DR Congo, on the property owned by the Church.

For five days, 42 campers and six staff participated in the camp. Every morning we had compass check, and every evening we held a Bible study.

In addition to spiritual instruction, we had a variety of activities. Our sports activities included football and other games. We thank the home office for their help and support, making camp possible.

*Moise Mabout*



## Camp Jamaica

AFTER 10 years Camp Jamaica was a reality for our teens again! Eight campers ages 13-17 and seven volunteer staff gathered at Shortwood Primary School in Kingston from Aug. 10-15, 2025 for an experience of fun, spiritual enrichment and bonding.

Every morning, we were up at 5 a.m. to stretch in the cool of the morning. As the sun rose at 5:30 a.m. we had Christian living, prepared by the staff to share elements of the Zone. Then it was time to prepare breakfast, including foods like ackee and saltfish, baked beans and fried plantain!

Activities during the day included volleyball, team challenges, archery, learning a choreographed dance routine (to be performed at the Feast), football (soccer), pool time and downtime to rest. Football was a highlight, supervised by Trinidad Church member Annan Ramnansingh, a highly respected national championship coach.

After dinner Jeff Lockhart led interactive discussions about each step of the theme: Blueprint, Cornerstone, Living Stones, Spiritual Tools and Built on the Rock. At the first

session each camper was given a piece of graph paper to design a “blueprint” for his future. Each evening, campers added 2-3 scriptures (to the two-by-two-inch squares within a large rectangle), like John 3:16-17; 1 John 3:2-3; Isaiah 28:16; 1 Peter 2:5; 2 Timothy 3:14-15; Matthew 7:24-25 and more, to have key memory verses all in one place.

Camp started out with a fun “BINGO” icebreaker where campers and counselors learned interesting facts about each other, and before we knew it, it was time for the closing ceremony participation awards!

A big thank you to Mrs. Sonia Davis (camp director), the Kingston congregation volunteers, the Ocho Rios young adult counselors, the Lockharts and Annan (who traveled internationally), and those who gave financially to make this camp possible. We appreciated the camper and staff shirts donated by the Dallas-Fort Worth-Lawton members and Camp Woodland!

*Jeff and Alisa Lockhart*



## Camp Mexico

FROM Aug. 3-10, 2025, we held camp for the second consecutive year in Tepotzotlan, two hours north of Mexico City. The theme, “Building on The Foundation,” shaped our daily Bible studies and connected numerous activities that reinforced the key elements of each lesson.

On the first day, campers received a T-shirt, a water bottle, a notebook and a plastic backpack as gifts, all of which were very useful. But camp wasn’t all about receiving. Campers gave presentations on their daily lessons, washed dishes every day, and wrote greeting letters to the elders. The staff provided excellent service, supporting each of the activities with enthusiasm and camaraderie. We were blessed with hearty and delicious food every day in the dining room.

One highlight was the “Talent Night,” in which kids and teens performed their singing and dancing acts, and the entire staff presented their funny dance titled “Gangnam Staff.” Another notable activity was “Fair Night,” in which campers had

to participate in one of the booths to earn tickets to exchange for elote “corn on the cob,” soft drinks and delicious hamburgers.

In addition to the various sports played, we also had a forest rally, paintball, rock climbing, archery, ziplining, game night, boats on the lake and a dance with crazy hats made by the campers themselves. Our now classic activity, the Friday night meal preparation by campers, featured lasagna and apple crumble this year—it was delicious!

We held Sabbath services on site, with messages especially geared for campers. The campers gave a choir presentation for special music.

God blessed the 33 campers and 24 staff members from Chile, Guatemala and Mexico with a week full of blessings. We are deeply grateful to the Church, as well as to LifeNets, for their financial support to support these activities, which are so important for the future of our spiritual family. Camp was a great success!

*Gabriel García*



Camp Woodland

“For no other foundation  
can anyone lay than that which  
is laid, which is Jesus Christ”  
(1 Corinthians 3:11).



Camp Peru





## Camp Peru

AFTER more than 15 years, the United Church of God in Peru joyfully hosted its first youth camp, held from Aug. 3-5. The event took place in the town of Chosica, located about 30 miles east of Jorge Chávez International Airport in Lima. This new youth camp provided a spiritually enriching and community-building experience for the young people of our congregation.

We had a total of 13 campers and six staff members, including three youth coordinators who came from Chile to contribute their experience to the development of the camp.

Four biblical classes guided campers in understanding how to establish their faith in God the Father and Jesus Christ to grow spiritually.

Delicious meals were prepared by the staff—providing wholesome nourishment to start each day. Each morning began with energetic group activities. These included dynamic team-building exercises to activate both personal and group engagement. Campers enjoyed healthy competition by participating in their favorite sports: soccer for the boys and basketball for the girls. Volleyball united them in shared play.

Afternoons offered refreshing time in the large pool. It was encouraging to see more experienced swimmers helping those still learning—emphasizing the UYC spirit where attendees support and strengthen one another.

Following a light snack, staff organized classic games such as sack races, musical chairs and the creative “Kiwi” challenge—where campers built towers using tin cans in a test of strategy, speed and dexterity.

After dinner, the day wound down with reflective conversations. These quiet, spiritual moments allowed campers to consider the day’s lessons and prepare their hearts for what lay ahead.

The rapid growth of the Church in Peru, particularly among young people, finding a spiritual home and encouragement here, was powerfully illustrated by this first youth camp in 15 years. We are deeply thankful—to God, the parents for their trust, the enthusiastic youth participants and the dedicated volunteer staff who invested their time and talents to make this event unforgettable.

*Marcelo Saavedra*



## Camp Philippines

FROM June 8-15, camp was held at Eden Nature Park, Brgy. Bayabas, Toril, Davao City. This year’s camp gathered a total of 50 campers: 20 boys accommodated in two dorms and 30 girls in three dorms, supported by 40 serving staff and joined by 15 mini campers. Camp activities officially began with advanced training and orientation for counselors and staff from June 3-6. During this period, they reviewed camp manuals and participated in forums aimed at improving the overall camper experience.

Each day started with dorm time focused on prayer, meditation and housekeeping. A key component of the camp was the Christian living classes held each morning. The day concluded with a compass check session in the evening, where campers reflected on the day’s challenges and lessons learned. Campers also took turns preparing breakfast for the entire camp, assisted by kitchen staff, and were graded on quality and teamwork.

Campers attended career guidance workshops to help them choose educational and professional paths. Service workshops were also offered to prepare campers for serving in their home congregations. Boys participated in songleading and public speaking workshops, while girls learned unleavened bread baking and flower arrangement. Campers further enjoyed a variety of outdoor sports and team-building activities,

including basketball, soccer, volleyball and park adventures such as the Skyride (zipline), SkyWheel, Sky Bicycle, horseback riding and the Sky Swing, which was a favorite among both campers and staff.

Another highlight of the camp was the Skills Development Workshops, which included basic webcasting setup, computer troubleshooting, graphic design, online job orientation, baking, networking and dance workshops. One of the most memorable events was the Island Tour to Talicud Island, Island Garden City of Samal, a one-hour boat ride from Davao City. Campers participated in their final Christian living class on the island, followed by outdoor games and swimming on the island’s white sand beaches.

The final day featured the Biblympics, a Bible Bowl Quiz Bee, followed by Sabbath services in the afternoon. The camp concluded with a talent show and awards night, highlighted by a cowboy-themed program where campers showcased their talents and received certificates and awards. We are truly grateful to God for another enjoyable, meaningful and successful year of camp. Campers left encouraged and excited, already looking forward to next year’s camp.

*Rey Evasco*



## Camp Switzerland

THIS year, UCG Germany–Austria–Switzerland held a camp from July 13-20 in the Swiss Alps, in Glarus Nord (North), Mullernalp. At the heart of the experience was fellowship with brothers and sisters in the faith, Bible study and the enjoyment of God’s beautiful creation. Campers came from the United States, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

We spent Sunday afternoon exploring near the house, and many were struck by the dramatic proximity of the surrounding mountains. The next day, after our morning Bible study (we held one every morning) the group took an outing to Lake Klöntal (in Deutsch: Klöntalersee), which is considered one of the most beautiful lakes in the Alps. On clear days, the north face of the Glärnisch is reflected perfectly in the water. One member was baptized in the lake. Afterwards, many took a refreshing dip in the cool alpine water—with a magnificent view of the Glärnisch massif mountain.

The most demanding trek took place on Tuesday. We began by driving 2 kilometers (about 1.24 miles) by car to Fronalp. At Fronalp, we took group photos with a stunning view of the Tödi massif, the highest peak in the Glarus Alps. Our trail continued along the edge of the UNESCO World Heritage site of Sardona towards the Schilt. Upon reaching the summit ridge (2,245 meters [about 7,365 feet] above sea level), we turned back due to a sudden change in weather. The actual summit of the Schilt was only

about a 10-minute walk farther. The next day, due to rain, we enjoyed a more relaxed pace with a visit to an indoor swimming pool with a water slide, and some shopping.

On Thursday, the weather improved. We traveled across the Klausen Pass and hiked up to the Griess Glacier Lake. For many, it was an awe-inspiring experience to witness a glacier, high alpine peaks and a mountain lake all at once. On our return journey, we visited the alpine dairy on Urnerboden—the largest alp in Switzerland—as well as a striking waterfall.

On Friday, we took a short hike towards the local mountain behind our house: the Nüencharm. In the afternoon, we visited the Läderach chocolate factory, and later enjoyed the sandy beach at Gäsi on Lake Walen. From Gäsi beach, there is a lovely view of the lake’s southwestern shore—including the tallest waterfall in Switzerland (as defined by the canton of St. Gallen).

On Saturday, we attended Sabbath services in Winterthur and celebrated the day together with our brothers and sisters from UCG Switzerland.

On Sunday, we tidied up and all the campers returned home happy and content. Though we stayed in very simple conditions, the fellowship with brethren and harmony with God’s creation made this week a truly unforgettable experience.

*Marco Waller*

### Winter Camp 2025

Don't miss out on the best way to spend your winter break—join us at Winter Camp!

Held in the beautiful Lake Geneva area, Winter Camp is all about fun, fellowship and faith, with

Bible classes tailored for teens. Enjoy comfortable dorms, exciting activities, delicious meals and plenty of time to socialize.

Camp is held from Dec. 29, 2025 to Jan. 4, 2026.

Explore the Zone as we build lifelong friendships and make unforgettable memories.

Visit [ucg.org/members/uyc/teen/WinterCamp](https://ucg.org/members/uyc/teen/WinterCamp) to sign up today!











Northwest



Pinecrest



Southwest



Woodland





Canada



DR Congo



Jamaica



Mexico



Peru



Philippines



Switzerland



Boundary Waters





Windsor's Special Sabbath



L-R: Aidan, Andrew, Tarra, Laurie, Brian, Audrey, Caleb (Photo: Elizabeth Oulette)

A few years ago, the Windsor, Ontario congregation, under our former pastor Patrick Read, asked Brian McGuire of the Ann Arbor, Michigan congregation if he would be able to minister to our brethren from time to time. Even though he had a busy

life scheduled with a lovely wife and four children to nurture, a vitally important job to maintain and a busy ministry in the United Church of God as a speaking elder, he agreed to assist every fifth Sabbath of the month. He and his wife were faithful to their commitment, bringing their young family with them, who set an example to all as each followed in the Scriptures with notetaking. It wasn't long before the two oldest boys, Andrew and then Aidan, began to assist by leading hymns and giving prayers. As the four children grew into adulthood, they became involved in their own church ac-

tivities, so we saw less of them, and eventually Brian and Laurie came to Windsor by themselves. In all the many years, they missed only two Sabbaths: one because of illness and the other because of wintry weather conditions when all Ontario churches were advised to connect with Zoom at home. Time arrived when the children left home for higher education. Audrey attended ABC, and after university Andrew married his beautiful wife, Tarra. Because we kept asking about the children, Brian promised to get the entire family together under his roof one convenient weekend, and that all would visit

Windsor. The excitement of the promise turned into joy on the Sabbath of May 31, 2025, the day before Pentecost. The lovely McGuire children are now young adults. We stood in admiration as we witnessed the awesome transformation into young servants of God. Aidan led the song service, Caleb led in prayer and Andrew inspired us with the sermonette. Brian instructed us with a powerful, timely sermon. Thank you, Brian and Laurie, for sharing your love to our 11 brethren in the Windsor Church of God. Your steadfast love to God has been a beacon of light to your Canadian family. Marilyn Anderson

Two Congregations Meet for a Hike



On Aug. 3, 2025, about 20 members from the Metro East and St. Louis congregations met at the Salt Lick Trail in Valmeyer, Illinois for a beautiful 3-mile hike. Some hills were steep, and others not so much, but we all made it. The trail had a bunch of overlooks with pretty views, and it also had really nice wildflowers (my favorite part!).

Even little baby Gemma came! Her mother was carrying her in a sling the entire 3-mile hike. I can say that I recommend this trail a lot! We were in the middle of a heat wave (110 degrees Fahrenheit!), but on the day of the hike, we were blessed with beautiful weather. The end of the trail was a cliff with no railing, but it had the most breathtaking view. We could see for miles! We heard a tree fall, but it was far away, and everyone got home safely. We had a wonderful time, and a great hike. Evelyn Rose French, age 9

An Afternoon in the Garden



In June, over 48 women from the Cincinnati North and East, Ohio congregations came together for a warm and memorable afternoon at our ladies' social, hosted at the home office. The setting was beautiful—garden-themed décor, classical music, soft lights and floral touches created an inviting atmosphere. Guests enjoyed delicious, dainty snacks while catching up with friends and meeting new faces. The afternoon featured two roundtable discussion sessions filled with laughter, reflection and sincere connection. Questions ranged from fun ("What kind of potato would you be?") to thoughtful ("How can you use your gifts to serve the brethren?"). Attendees also completed a short survey, sharing their ideas for future women's events and service opportunities. A highlight of the day was hearing from Barb Welch, our pastor's wife, who shared a

heartfelt vision for our women's gatherings. "As women, we are the heart of the home—and the Church is our family. We can be the heart of that family too," she said. Her encouragement inspired everyone to build deeper relationships across generations and support one another in service. Many commented that the day felt like a true blessing—uplifting, energizing and full of purpose. With such a broad range of ages represented, it was a meaningful reminder of the strength and beauty in coming together. Plans are already underway for more events this fall and in early 2026. We look forward to sharing more meaningful time together in the months ahead. A heartfelt thank-you goes to the planning committee and volunteers who helped make the day so special. Your time and care are deeply appreciated. What a delightful day it was! Tanya Winger

Boise Congregation's Special Tradition



A few of the graduates from the past 40 years and the Bibles they received.

For more than four decades, the Boise, Idaho congregation has celebrated its high school graduates with a heartfelt and meaningful tradition: the gift of a Bible. Each spring, the congregation recognizes grad-

uates seniors and presents them with personalized Bibles as a symbol of encouragement, faith and continued spiritual growth. This year's recipients, Caleb Jorgensen and Samuel Jorgensen, were honored at the end of May. The tradition began over 40 years ago as a way to honor young members of the congregation and provide them with a lasting source of inspiration as they move on to college, careers or other new chapters in life. Church leaders see the Bible not just as a gift, but as a guide—offering wisdom, comfort and strength for whatever lies ahead. The congregation has given away an innumerable number of Bibles over the years. The oldest recipient was a woman who earned her GED at the age of 73. As the tradition continues, the congregation hopes these Bibles not only mark a milestone but also strengthen each student's relationship with God, reminding them that they are never alone as they move forward in life. UN





**Sydnee Elizabeth Tomes**

June 16, 2025

## Births

### Sydnee Elizabeth Tomes

Chris and Kaylee Tomes of the Sacramento, California congregation are excited to announce the birth of their fourth child, a baby girl named Sydnee Elizabeth Tomes. Sydnee was born on Monday, June 16, 2025 at 1:06 a.m. weighing 9 pounds 2 ounces and measuring 21.5 inches long. She was born at 41 weeks after a successful induced VBAC delivery. They are very grateful to God for all the many answered prayers in the success and safety of Sydnee's arrival. She has been such a sweet addition to their family and absolutely adored and loved by everyone, including her big brother, Amos (age 5), big sister, Sage (age 5), and big brother, Landon (age 2). Maternal grandparents are Tom and Debbie Randle of the Twin Cities, Minnesota congregation and paternal grandparents are Keith and Christy Tomes of the Sacramento and Reno, Nevada congregations.

## Weddings

### Nathan Martin and Katie Welch

Timothy and Linda Welch are pleased to announce the marriage of their daughter, Katie Welch to Nathan Martin, son of Leonard and Julie Martin on June 8, 2025.

## Anniversaries

### Jim and Mary Beth Philp

The East Texas congregation honored Jim and Mary Beth Philp on June 14, 2025 after Sab-



**Jim and Mary Beth Philp**

50<sup>th</sup> anniversary

bath services with a reception to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

Jim and Mary Beth met for the first time at Church of God services in Washington, D.C. A year later they were engaged at a regional formal dinner dance social held in downtown D.C. during the Days of Unleavened Bread. A few months later they were married after the Sabbath on June 14, 1975 in New Bedford, Massachusetts, at her sister's home.

Jim is originally from Colorado. After high school graduation, he went to Galveston, Texas, where he first heard the *World Tomorrow* broadcast. He then became a *Plain Truth* subscriber. He was soon after drafted into the Army and spent most of his two-year tour of duty working as an operating room specialist at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, D.C. After leaving the Army he was baptized in 1968 and remained in the Washington area working at Sears. In 1976, Jim was accepted as a student at Ambassador College, and the couple moved to Big Sandy. He has since been employed as an accountant for most of his working life. Jim serves as treasurer in the local congregation.

Mary Beth is from Connecticut and graduated from high school at the Norwich Free Academy in Norwich, Connecticut. She continued her education at the University of Connecticut where she graduated with a degree in nursing science. She learned about the Church through her sister, and was baptized in 1972. Music has always been an important part of her life, and in the last 30 years, she has pursued her passion for writing music of praise. She has presented many of her songs as special music over the years. Several of her songs are includ-



**Frances Elaine Anderson**

Dec. 10, 1927-June 12, 2025

ed in the UCG hymnal. She also serves as one of the pianists in the local congregation.

Jim and Mary Beth serve as deacon and deaconess in the East Texas congregation. They are the parents of two daughters and have six grandchildren.

## Obituaries

### Frances Elaine Anderson

Frances Elaine Anderson died on June 12, 2025, age 97.

Born to Ray and Mae Morris on Dec. 10, 1927, Frances grew up in the small Northeast Iowa town of Cresco. In high school, she enjoyed sports and singing in choir. Frances attended the Waterloo School of Beauty, graduating in the fall of 1950. In November 1950 Frances married Donald L. "Doc" Anderson, a young Cresco optometrist, and she practiced as a beautician. They enjoyed socializing, driving their sports cars, attending sports car races and raising cats and kittens.

Her son Eric was born in 1960, and Frances settled into a full-time homemaking job. In the early '60s she and Doc began to listen to the radio broadcasts of Herbert W. Armstrong. In 1965 Frances was baptized into the Church of God, together with her husband, her father-in-law and mother-in-law. Each Sabbath the family traveled across the Mississippi to attend church in Richland Center and Blue River, Wisconsin.

After moving to Waterloo, in the 1970s, Doc was ordained a deacon, serving in the Waterloo and later the Des Moines, Iowa congregations. In Des Moines, Frances was ordained a deaconess. The family enthusiastically enjoyed the Feast of Tabernacles in many locations around the United States and in England.



**Steven Lee Werst**

July 16, 1952-Aug. 14, 2025

Frances was constant in prayer and Bible study, and she was diligent in the care of her family, who suffered through some very serious and protracted illnesses. She continued to serve brethren, serve at church functions in different capacities, and sing in choir. Quiet, thoughtful and kind, Frances was a great listener and sounding-board for people and their troubles.

Widowed in 2007, as she aged into her late 80s and 90s, fatigue, mild dementia and finally a stroke in 2020 took their toll and separated her from church and social activities. Her son became her caregiver, just as she had cared for him through an extended and severe illness. A constant stream of cards and letters from friends came to her mailbox, which she would read over and over until they literally fell apart. Until the end, she listened to sermons on the Internet, read the prayer requests and enjoyed cat videos and comedy TV shows. Hospice aides helped in her last few weeks, making her death peaceful and nearly pain-free.

Her two brothers and two sisters preceded her in death. She is survived by her only son Eric. She was laid to rest beside her husband in Ankeny, Iowa, awaiting the return of the King.

### Steven Lee Werst

Steve Werst, 73, died on Aug. 14, 2025, in Coos Bay, Oregon. Born on July 16, 1952, in Twin Falls, Idaho, Steven lived a life marked by faith, dedication to family and a deep commitment to his work and community.

Steve began his professional journey in the construction industry, working alongside his brother Richard. After sustaining an injury on the job that ended his time in construction,

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Steve faced a pivotal moment. Through prayer and reflection, he found a new path that allowed him to remain close to the field he loved. He returned to school and became a building inspector, continuing to contribute his knowledge and experience to the industry with integrity and diligence.

A proud veteran, Steve served in the United States Army during the Vietnam era. Stationed in Germany, he worked in clerical support roles that were vital to military operations during that time. His service reflected his sense of duty and quiet strength.

Faith was central to Steve's life. A long-time and devoted member of the Worldwide Church of God—and later, the United Church of God—he found both spiritual grounding and companionship within its community. It was through this Church that he met Barbara in 1979. Their meeting marked the beginning of a loving partnership that would span decades.

Steve is survived by his beloved wife Barbara; his four children: Julie, Mary, Steven Jr. and Samuel; his six grandchildren; and his brothers Richard Werst and Jim Werst. He was preceded in death by his parents, James and Dora Werst, and his sister Patrica Hanks.

Those who knew Steve will remember him for his kindness, generosity, unwavering faith and deep devotion to family. Known for his joking nature and warm spirit, he brought lightness into every room he entered. His loss leaves a profound void in the hearts of all who loved him.

A memorial service will be held at a later date to honor Steve's life and legacy. May his memory bring comfort to those who knew him. **UN**



by Ernie Klassek

A member from the Perth, Australia congregation describes his experience learning about the Feast of Tabernacles.

I was about six or seven years old when I first heard the word “Laubhüttenfest.” German for “Feast of Tabernacles,” it meant something exciting for me, because “Laubhütten” means “huts made of leafy branches,” and “Fest” means “a feast—a time to celebrate.”

My parents and the gypsies in the basement of our drab block of flats in Berlin would talk about this Feast, but an elderly German couple became particularly interested when a Jewish family invited them for a meal during that Feast (Deuteronomy 16:14). The Jews, especially those bearded men with their black suits and hats, and how they decorated their balconies with greenery for a whole week in early autumn, have remained among my memories from the 1930s. The last time I saw them, they were herded into a police van by black-uniformed SS men late at night. My mother was crying.

More than two decades went by before this Feast was called to mind, first when I read about it in an English Bible, and then in German, because “Tabernacles” didn’t mean anything to me, whereas “Laubhütten”—“huts of foliage”—did.

When I looked up a Greek text, this word described “tents,” dwellings for people on the move or camping, and I wasn’t surprised since the King James Version refers to the tents of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as “tabernacles” (Hebrews 11:9). I wondered how, high up on a mountain, Peter would have made three huts of foliage, or three tents, as tabernacles for Jesus, for Moses and for Elijah (Matthew 17:4).

In Exodus 25, I read that the Lord told Moses to build a sanctuary in the form of a large, portable rectangular tent, called a tabernacle. I found the Feast of Tabernacles in Leviticus 23:34, 40 and 42, “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD . . . And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days . . . You shall dwell in booths [tents] for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths.’” In verse 41, they were told to keep it as a feast to the Lord forever in their generations. Sure enough, those Jews in Berlin were keeping this Feast in the 20th century, just as their ancestors, the children of Israel, had kept it long ago, in temporary dwellings.

Over time, I learned more about the Feast of Tabernacles: Solomon, probably the wealthiest king ever, offered burnt offerings to the Lord for the Feast of Tabernacles (2 Chronicles 8:12-13). At the end of 70 years of captivity in Babylon, people from the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi—by order of Cyrus king of Persia—kept the Feast of Tabernacles when they returned to Jerusalem (Ezra 3:4, Nehemiah 8). Jesus, of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5), went to Jerusalem to observe what the apostle John aptly called “the Jews’ Feast of Tabernacles” (John 7:2). The whole of the seventh chapter of John is devoted to telling us in detail what Jesus taught and how His teachings were received during the seven days of the Feast.



*A temporary dwelling provides a valuable lesson for the people of God.*

The apostle Paul said to the Jews in Ephesus, “I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, God willing” (Acts 18:21). In those days, traveling by sailing ship and overland (mainly on foot) to get to Jerusalem for one of the Feasts of the Lord (Leviticus 23:4) may have been a rare or even once-in-a-lifetime event for the widely-scattered descendants of the twelve tribes of Israel, Jews as well as non-Jews (Acts 2:9-11; 26:7; James 1:1). In this day and age, the Lord has His disciples, of many races and languages, who use every manner of fast communication and travel, traversing continents to diligently teach all nations to observe all things as He commanded them, sure of His promise, “and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20). And look what the Lord will do at the end of this age and the beginning of a new one, when He descends from heaven and comes to earth (Acts 1:11) and all the saints (Zechariah 14:5) will be with Him: He will teach all nations to come to Jerusalem and keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and every generation will keep it from year to year (Zechariah 14:16-19) for 1,000 years.

In the most glorious age of all ages, God will figuratively pitch His tent, His tabernacle, among people: John saw a new heaven and a new earth, and the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heav-

en from God, and he heard a loud voice from heaven saying: “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:1-4). And just as His saints in every nation on earth are even now Jews inwardly (Romans 2:29) and imitate Christ in all things (1 Corinthians 11:1) those people of all nations at the beginning of Christ’s reign on earth, together with everybody from every generation, once redeemed, will also walk through the twelve gates leading into the great city (Revelation 21:10-12; 22:14) the holy Jerusalem—the gates with names written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, because our Father and our Elder Brother want all people from every age, gathered around the tabernacle, to be in Their big, happy family (Ephesians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

Oh, how I look forward to seeing my parents there, and the gypsies, the elderly German couple, and the Jews—as well as the former SS men—from the 1930s: from the time when I first heard the word Laubhüttenfest—Feast of Tabernacles! **UN**



# 20 Light of Hope

## What's Wrong with Porn?

by Dr. Roy Fouch

What's wrong with porn? The simple answer to this question is that it is a sin. It is a sexual sin, because it involves lusting or adultery depending on the marital status of the person viewing it. It can become habitual, leading to an addiction. Once it enters this stage of use, breaking free from it can become very difficult. Once an individual becomes addicted to porn, it can lead to other forms of sexual acting out like phone sex or contact with other individuals who are participating in sexually addictive behaviors or affairs.

What does the Bible say about lust and other forms of sexual behaviors that impact an individual's mind, body and spiritual condition? In 1 Corinthians 6:18, the apostle Paul wrote, "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body."

And Jesus Christ revealed the spirit of the law, "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). Therefore, lust (sexual fantasizing and craving) is a sin against God. What Jesus said applies just as much to looking at a visual image of a woman or man as it does to the act itself. Therefore, virtually all deliberate viewing of pornography or gawking at a person in a sexual manner is sinful because of its lustful nature.

Peering at porn often starts as casual curiosity, but that often becomes the appetizer for increased indulgence in what God forbids. The frequent viewing becomes a habit, and the habit soon becomes an addiction.

Addictive behaviors often cause chemical alterations in the neurotransmitters of the brain which, in turn, alter moods. These changes can temporarily dull pain or produce pleasurable sensations and therefore reinforce the addiction.

***The apostle Paul wrote,  
"Flee sexual immorality"  
(1 Corinthians 6:18).***

When we become addicted, we become a slave to that sin. In John 8:34, Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." Repeated sins quickly enslave us much more than most people realize. Sins quickly begin to affect us and those we love, put distance between God and ourselves, and increasingly control us.

Typically, people who are quickly attracted to this form of addictive behavior do so to escape some emotional state such as depression, loneliness, anxiety, fear or shame, or to escape from the reality of their circumstances. As a man once told me, "In that world, I'm king."

Without God, we are slaves to the downward pulls of our own human nature. Jeremiah 17:9 in the Good News Bible describes it this way: "Who can understand the human heart? There is nothing else so deceitful; it is too sick to be healed." Galatians 5:19 in the Good News Bible says: "What human nature does is quite plain. It shows itself in immoral, filthy, and indecent actions." We must resist the "pulls of the flesh."

The pervasive and insidious influence of the corrupt world around us is another slave master. 1 John 2:16 says, "For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world." Without God, we're "in bondage under the elements of the world" (Galatians 4:3). In Romans



Guillaume Issaty/Unsplash

*Peering at porn often starts as casual curiosity.*

12:2, Paul wrote, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

To overcome the world and Satan's influence upon us, we must be solidly grounded in the Word of God and have an ongoing conversation with God regarding these matters. God tells us in James 4:7: "Submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

The sin of viewing porn is not only a sin against God and yourself but also affects your most intimate covenant relationship that God has ordained. This relationship reflects the relationship between Christ and the Church. It damages the intimacy you have with your spouse or with your future potential mate. You do not want to bring these behaviors into a future God-ordained covenant relationship.

Here are excerpts from "a letter to husbands about sexual integrity" published by the Center for Decency: "Before you take the first step down the road of sexual sin, consider the cost, the risk, the damage that will occur. I wish as a Christian woman, a wife, I didn't have to imagine you, my husband, choosing to engage in behaviors such as consuming pornography.

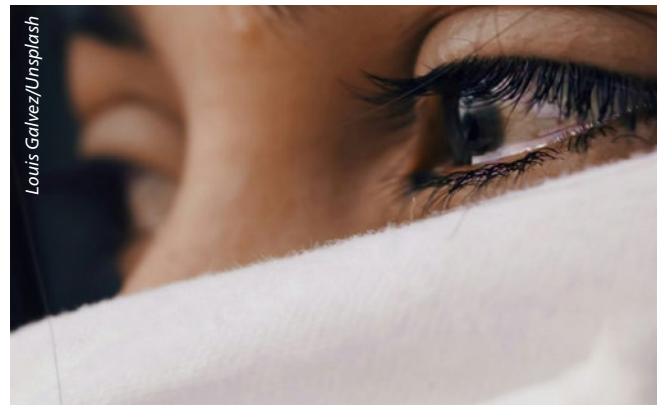
"Please consider the danger you are placing yourself in when you choose to give in to temptations, to lust and fantasize about being sexual with another woman, not your wife. The danger to your mind, your beliefs about women and sex and relationships and how easy and cheap they appear outside of the context of commitment and marriage vows."

This brief excerpt illustrates the impact porn has on the heart. Viewing porn is damaging to the one who indulges in it, your relationship with God, and the people you love most.

What can I do if I have a problem with porn? Understand you are not alone. Others in the Church suffer from this problem as well. The easy answer is to draw closer to God by seeking His help first. Secondly, there are Christian therapists who can assist you in your communities. Thirdly, Light of Hope has groups for those who have problems with pornography and for



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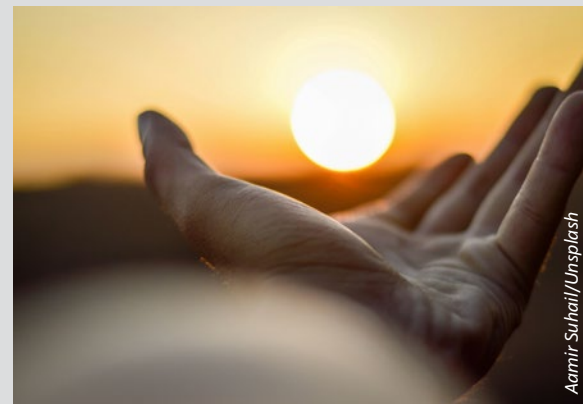
Louis Galvez/Unsplash

*If you have a problem with porn, you are not alone.*

their spouse. You can learn more about how you can join these groups by contacting [hope@ucg.org](mailto:hope@ucg.org) or calling (888) 241-6211.

Light of Hope currently offers a confidential support group for men who struggle with porn problems. Light of Hope is also offering a support group for women whose husbands struggle with porn. Contact Light of Hope for a confidential call to discuss these groups. **UN**

### Light of Hope Helpline



Aamir Suhail/Unsplash

If you are struggling to overcome challenges in your life and need additional guidance, please know you're not alone. You can contact the Light of Hope Helpline at (888) 241-6211 or email us at [hope@ucg.org](mailto:hope@ucg.org).

This confidential resource, provided by the United Church of God, connects individuals with licensed mental health professionals within the Church who are ready to offer support and help you find constructive, godly ways to address your challenges.



# GN

## The Good News

### Co-Heirs With Christ in the Coming World Tomorrow!

The trials and sufferings in this life are truly not worthy to be compared with the glorious future in God's Kingdom.

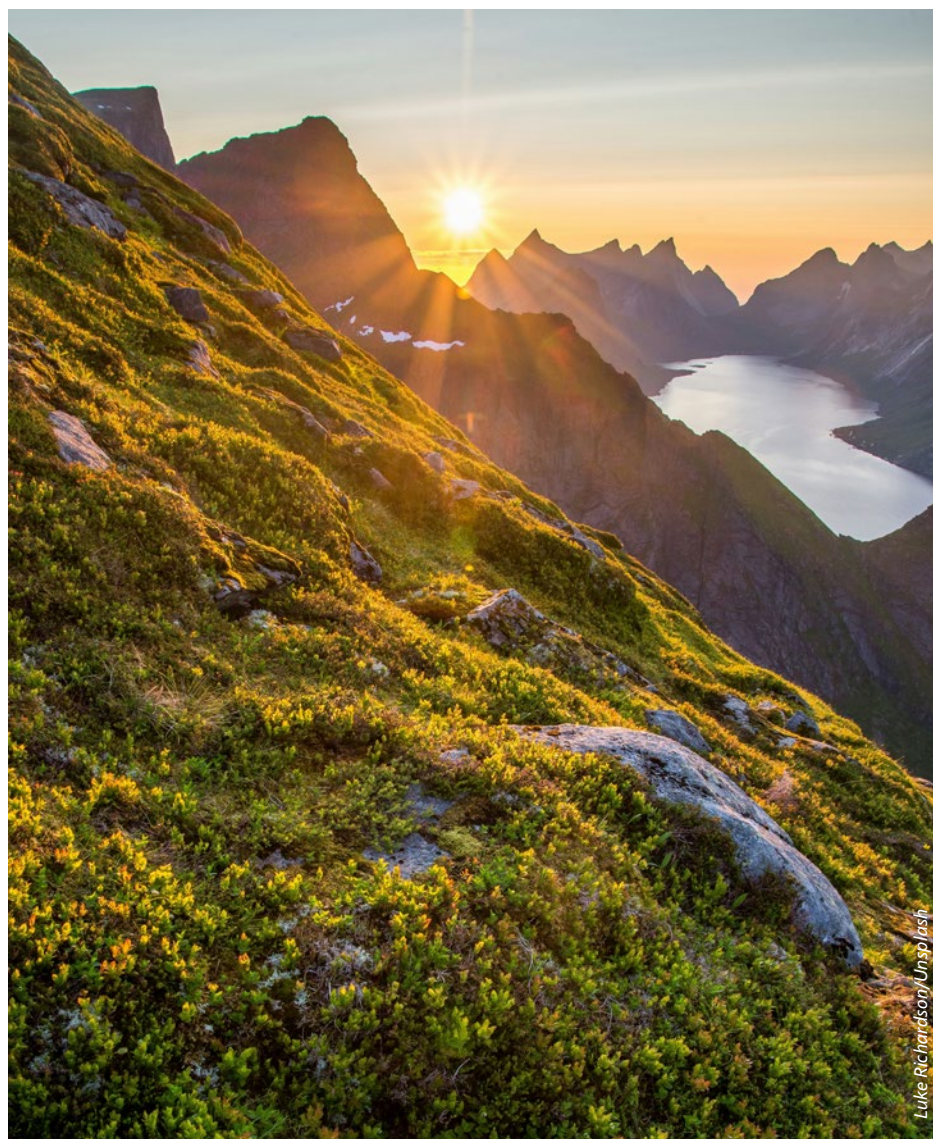
*by Mario Seiglie*

Of all the places in Scripture, I believe Romans 8-9 reveal God's plan of salvation the best. I don't think anyone can remain untouched by what is explained here and it is such great encouragement!

In these two chapters, Paul, under God's inspiration, unveils something truly mindboggling—the ultimate spiritual sonship awaiting us! He reveals: “The Spirit [itself, King James Version] bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:16-18).

(As a sidenote, first, notice a great error by scholars of the New King James version here, when they changed the KJV term in Romans 8:16 from “the Spirit itself” to “the Spirit Himself”—to back their idea of the Trinity. Yet, the term “Spirit” is *pneuma* in the Greek and has a neuter gender—it is an “it” and not a “him.” As A. T. Robertson, an expert in Greek, admits here, “The grammatical gender of *pneuma* is neuter.” So, these scholars deviously lied when they changed this word to the masculine form in the New King James!)

This section reveals our astounding eternal destiny—if we remain faithful. The process involves becoming God's spiritually “engendered” children at baptism. Then, our names are listed in heaven (Hebrews 12:23), giving the potential of being co-heirs with Christ—meaning divine sonship and the incredible inheritance of the entire Universe!



*The whole Universe will one day be our new home to beautify and enjoy.*

As Hebrews 1:2 says, “God created the universe by his Son, and everything will someday belong to the Son” (Contemporary English Version). Since Christ will inherit all of this, as co-heirs we will then share, as younger siblings, that inheritance! The whole universe will one day be our new home to beautify and enjoy with Them!

Therefore, Paul says the trials and sufferings in this life are truly not worthy to be compared with the glorious future in God's Kingdom and enjoying eternity with this great inheritance as His beloved children! Paul describes it best, “But as Scripture says: ‘No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined, the things that God has prepared for those who love him’” (1 Corinthians 2:9, God's Word Translation).

He now goes to the outer reaches of spiritual knowledge, saying: “For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing [the resurrection] of the sons of God. For the creation [or Universe] was subjected to futility [decay], not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;

because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption [or uselessness] into the glorious liberty of the children of God [who will help renew it]” (Romans 8:19-21).

As far as we know about cosmology, our solar system and the 5,830 exoplanets so far found are in need of renovation, for none is ready to be inhabited. It appears that Lucifer's rebellion caused great havoc when he attempted to dethrone God in heaven and was cast back to the earth. As Jesus said, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18, see also Isaiah 14:12-15).

This destruction will be repaired once God's Kingdom arrives, which begins first by renewing the earth (Acts 3:21), and then the rest of the Universe. Romans 8:22-23 adds: “We know that everything in the universe is still in great pain now. Everything cries together in pain, like a woman who is ready to have a baby. It is the same for us who are believers. We have received God's Spirit as the first of his gifts to us, but we also cry inside ourselves. We are waiting for the time when God will finish his great work. Then we will belong to Him completely as his children. Our bodies will be free from the power of sin” (EASY version).

So, just as the creation needs to be renewed, so do we, as we are given spirit bodies and our human nature is changed into God's nature (2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:1-2). God's generosity is truly mind blowing!

Paul continues: “For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not

see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit [itself, KJV] makes intercession for us [inside of us] with groanings which cannot be uttered [“the Spirit puts our desires into words which are not in our power to say,” Bible in Basic English]. Now He [God] who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is [Christ], because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God” (Romans 8:24-27).

Paul then elaborates on whom he is talking about. In verse 34 he says, “It is Christ . . . who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” So, there is not another “person” in heaven interceding for us. As 1 Timothy 2:5 makes clear, “For there is one God and one Mediator [not two] between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.” Indeed, it is Christ liv-

*Continued on page 22*



*Co-Heirs With Christ in the Coming World Tomorrow!*  
Continued from page 21

ing in us (Galatians 2:20) that helps us communicate properly with God the Father, while Jesus is also being our Mediator before God.

Thus, just as a small child often doesn't know how to express his desires clearly to his parents, yet they still understand what he means and fulfill his needs—so is God with us. When we pray, we may not be very clear, but Christ is our Mediator and His spirit in us helps us before God the Father, who grants us His favor. God also prefers a simple prayer spoken from the heart to thousands of religious words constantly repeated (Matthew 6:7-8).

How can we pray according to God's will? John answers: "Whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight . . . Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions [in His mind] that we have asked of Him" (1 John 3:22; 5:14-15).

By following God's will, Paul mentions another great benefit, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). This means that in the long run, things will work out for good for those who love and obey God. The different colored threads of the great tapestry of life sometimes don't seem to make sense, but once that work is finished, a beautiful image will be seen in all its splendor (Philippians 1:6). Hence, sometimes things that don't seem to make sense in our lives will make sense in the end, when God explains them thoroughly to us (Revelation 21:3-7).

We see a classic example of this in the life of Joseph, who in the end, even though he was sold by his brothers and went through so many trials and sufferings, revealed to them, "But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive" (Genesis 50:20).

Paul now focuses on a facet of God's plan of salvation involving being "predestined"—those "called" to positions in His Kingdom. For instance, Christ told His disciples how they had qualified for certain positions in God's Kingdom, as well as other saints. He says: "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration [Gk. the rebirth] when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters . . . or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life" (Matthew 19:28-29).

Paul further explains, "For whom he foreknew, he also predestined [both mean planned ahead positions] to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29). So, we are to be part of God's family, with Jesus Christ as our Elder Brother, and we as His spiritual siblings. Paul says that with such a glorious future ahead, the trials, sufferings and even our eventual death are not worthy to be compared with what comes afterward.

He goes on to say: "Moreover whom He predestined [planned to be first offered salvation], these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also [will glorify, aorist tense]. What then shall we say to these

things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:30-32). Again, the emphasis is we will receive "all things" with Christ. Can we grasp the enormity of what this means and why it is so vital to persevere to the end? It is so worth enduring whatever happens!

He says, with God's help, nothing will break his relationship with God and Christ. He exults: "Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribu-



*"For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing [the resurrection] of the sons of God."*

lation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors [the Gk. is *hupernikao*, or super-conquerors] through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:33-39). This should be our goal too!

Paul now covers a related topic in chapter 9—the role of his Jewish brethren in God's plan of salvation. Although the majority of Jews in His day had rejected Christ and His invitation to be part of spiritual Israel and the First Resurrection, he says in the end, they too will be called and included. How can that be? This has perplexed traditional Christianity, which doesn't believe in the Second Resurrection for those not called now and who haven't disqualified themselves to be part of it.

"I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are [1] Israelites, [2] to whom pertain the adoption, [3] the glory, [4] the covenants, [5] the giving of the law, [6] the service of God, and [7] the promises; [8] of whom are the fathers and [9] from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen" (Romans 9:1-5). Here he gives nine great blessings the Jews

have over the gentiles, yet they rejected the Messiah and also their opportunity—for now.

Paul starts explaining God's Plan for them and why this is so. He gives three examples—Isaac, Jacob and Pharaoh—to show that only God knows when He will call a person and it is His sole responsibility.

Paul adds: "But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called.' That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. For this is the word of promise: 'At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.' And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, 'The older shall serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob I have loved but Esau I have hated [this term is a Hebraism and means 'loved less']. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.' So, then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy" (Romans 9:6-16).

Paul will later show that God offers everyone salvation, but He chooses when He will call each person. He gives a third example with Pharaoh: "For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.' Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens" (Romans 9:17-18). As Paul will later explain, this same Pharaoh, who had his heart hardened, along with others, such as the disobedient Israelites, will have an opportunity for salvation, saying: "Even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all" (Romans 11:31-32).

***God offers everyone salvation, but He chooses when He will call each person.***

Indeed, God is not a respecter of persons, and in the Second Resurrection, Pharaoh, along with the rest of the disobedient world, will have their chance. In the Millennium, that calling will begin. As Isaiah said: "Then the Lord will be known to Egypt . . . they will return to the Lord . . . the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, 'Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance'" (Isaiah 19:21-22, 25).

Paul then reminds them God has always called only a few Israelites—a faithful remnant, while the majority of them usually apostatized. For example, of that first generation of Israelites, it was Joshua and Caleb who entered the Promised Land, "because [there was] a different spirit [another attitude] in him [Caleb], and [he] has followed [God] fully" (Numbers 14:24). Paul also says in his day there was also a faithful remnant, who had "another spirit" and decided to follow God. Many gentiles also chose to obey God from the heart and became like faithful Jews—with a circumcision "of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter" (Romans 2:29). How enlightening and encouraging this section of Scripture is! **GN**



# From Disaster to Destiny

God has a plan for all, even those who have lost their lives in a tragedy.

by Ailsa Braun

The Eighth Day (Leviticus 23:36) is full of personal meaning for all of us, and though most of the world doesn't understand its full significance yet, it will be full of meaning for the whole world! So many of us have lost loved ones who didn't have the opportunity to be converted in this life, or who were beginning to be called by God, but maybe never had the chance to follow through before their lives were cut short.

And so many more have perished over the centuries en masse, in disasters such as war, disease epidemics, earthquakes and shipwrecks. Just speaking of deaths at sea, 1,500 people drowned in 1912 when the Titanic sank. A few years later, in 1915, another British ship, the Lusitania, sank after being torpedoed by a German U-boat. About 1,195 people drowned in that disaster! And sadly, there was a far greater loss of life from a natural disaster, the deadliest hurricane in history . . . the 1900 Galveston hurricane and subsequent flooding. Around 8,000 people perished, mostly from drowning in the 16-foot storm surge! That was 20 percent of the island's population at the time!

## Looking beyond tragedy

We read in Revelation 20:13: "The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, *each one according to his works.*" (emphasis mine throughout).

This describes a time period of judging, after 1,000 years of the Millennium, rather than these individuals immediately facing final judgment as soon as they are resurrected. It's a second resurrection, not the resurrection of the firstfruits, which occurs at Jesus' return. For context, let's go back to verses 4 through 5 of this same chapter:

"And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection."

These people who are raised again to mortal life, because they have yet to learn their desperate need for God, receive His Holy Spirit and have time, maybe even up to 100 years, to learn to overcome sin and walk with God, building His godly character that He expects us to be developing now, in these end times. (See Isaiah 65:20, which seems to indicate 100 years). Notice, it's the small and great, and of course the very young and the very old, who will all be raised up together.

## Not forgotten

Some famous and wealthy people perished with the Titanic. One, according to businessinsider.com, June 20, 2023, was John Jacob Astor, a millionaire, and the wealthiest passenger on board. Another, ironically, was Thomas Andrews, architect of the ship . . . the ship that was supposedly built so solidly that, in the irreverent words of the ship's captain, "God Himself couldn't sink it."

Likewise, some famous personalities went down with the Lusitania. According to Time magazine, May 7, 2015, another victim was Elbert Hubbard, author of the classic essay, "A Message to Garcia," a brilliant man with supposedly the largest vocabulary of his time.



Around 8,000 people perished in the 1900 Galveston hurricane and subsequent flooding.

But then there were countless more ordinary people, many of whose names wouldn't mean much to us . . . real people, nonetheless . . . Karl and Katharine, who drowned in the Galveston flood, and likewise, Cora, pregnant wife of the Galveston weatherman who had downplayed the impending danger. Karl and Katharine had been teachers, and Cora, once a very accomplished organist, was expecting her fourth child.

**God cares about all these people. He doesn't favor the rich over the poor. He has a plan for all!**

Has God forgotten about these people? No, He cares about all of them! He doesn't favor the rich over the poor. He has a plan for all! We will turn our thoughts back to these personalities I mentioned, including Karl and Katharine, later on.

Death has been called the great equalizer. As the apostle Paul wrote long ago, in 1 Timothy 6:7, "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out." What is God's future for all of these victims?

In Ezekiel 37:3, God takes Ezekiel in vision to a valley of very dry bones. "And He [God] said to me, 'Son of man, can these bones live?'" Ezekiel's answer was wise, probably the sort of answer we should give if asked a hard question: "You know." Continuing on in verses 4-6, "Again He said to me, 'Prophecy to

these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God to these bones: 'Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord.' '"

Although most people drowned at sea have never been found, God knows exactly where they are, and they will be raised up too, as it says in Revelation! And then what?

Let's jump ahead to verses 10-12: "So I prophesied as He commanded me, and breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. Then He said to me, 'Son of man,

these bones are the whole house of Israel. They indeed say, 'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: 'Behold, O My people, I will open your graves . . . [yes, even the watery graves!] . . . and bring you into the land of Israel.' '"

Although this verse is about the Israelite nations who have been scattered around the earth, God's plan is to include all nations!

Psalm 82:8 tells us that all the nations are God's inheritance, and Psalm 86:9 reveals that all the nations which He has made will come and worship before Him, and glorify His Name.

What a wonderful hope! So not only will God raise these people back to physical life, but He will also

give them His Spirit, which will open their minds to His ways, and enable them to learn and keep His laws for their own good. Eventually they, too, will have the opportunity for eternal life, "each one in his own order," as Paul wrote of God's calling and resurrections in 1 Corinthians 15:23.

## An unopened letter

I'd love to meet John Jacob Astor when he's raised up again and wonders how his millions affected others after he died. I'd like to meet the Titanic's architect, Thomas Andrews, and the ship's captain, who practically dared God to sink the vessel, but I'd have to be very kind when they are still filled with emotion and embarrassment, and someone, maybe one of us, gently tells them, "Don't worry! All of these people are being raised up again with you!" And most of all, I can't wait to meet Karl and Katharine, some of the less famous victims of drowning.

You see, Karl and Katherine were a great aunt and great uncle of my husband! Yes, Katherine was the older sister of his great-grandmother Pauline! They were only middle aged when they perished. Katherine had been a schoolteacher before she married Karl, a music professor. They'd moved to Galveston a few years before the devastating flood.

Continued on page 24



*From Disaster to Destiny*  
Continued from page 23

My husband's great-grandparents, Christian and Pauline Braun, who lived in Michigan, kept in touch with them regularly by mail.

Some years before my father-in-law died, he gave us some photos and memorabilia which included the last correspondence between Christian and Pauline Braun and her sister and brother-in-law. The final surviving letter from Karl was sent to Christian and Pauline about a month before the flood. Most poignant of all is a letter we have that was mailed to Galveston several weeks later. Between the two letters, the Brauns hadn't heard from them and were wondering how they were doing after news of the hurricane devastation had reached them. They waited some time, and sadly, about five weeks after the flood, their letter came back with notes on the envelope marked, "return to sender," "uncalled for," "house destroyed" and "unclaimed." The bodies of Karl and Katherine were never found, but they had a young son who survived by clinging to some debris, and was subsequently raised by an uncle on the mainland. According to my husband's uncle, the "return to sender" letter lay unopened for about 70 years, as it was too hard to come to terms with the family tragedy. It was eventually opened in order to help fill in additional details of a family biography.

***We have the hope of the resurrection that we will see our loved ones come back to life under much better circumstances.***

We can't wait to meet Karl and Katherine and comfort them, as their last moments of life were likely filled with terror and not knowing whether any of their family would survive. My husband and I can't wait to meet his great-grandparents and see the joy of reunion between them and the other family members . . . including the reunion of the surviving son with the parents he lost while enduring the horror himself of trying to stay afloat in the midst of all that death and destruction.

### **A special hope**

God's Word tells us that there are times yet ahead of us that are filled with suffering and massive loss of life . . . on a scale never before seen. But for the many who don't survive the destruction, we have the hope of the resurrection for them too . . . and the special hope that we will see our relatives, our ancestors, come back to life under much better circumstances, to be healed physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

1 Corinthians 15:21-26: "For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death."

Let's be preparing now, to not only be saved ourselves, but to be there to welcome all the disaster victims and others down through the centuries, to comfort them and help them to learn God's way! **GN**

# Family Caregivers, Please Take Good Care of Yourselves!

***The previous article, "Care About the Caregivers," explained how family caregivers fulfill many kinds of critical needs, and how we can recognize, appreciate and pray for them. This article offers advice and encouragement to the caregivers.***

*by Don Hooser*

A family caregiver is a person who willingly helps take care of a loved one in time of need. The needs of the loved one can be minor or major and often become greater as time goes by. Assistance might be needed for a short time or a long time. Quite often, the loved one needs assistance for the remainder of their life.

Family caregivers are generally motivated by heartfelt love and compassion as well as a conscientious sense of duty. They usually hope that the loved one will not need to live in a nursing home. A caregiver for a parent is usually motivated by deep gratitude because of the many years the parent was caring for his or her needs.

However, whether the person is the sole caregiver, the primary caregiver or a part-time helper, a caregiver must take care of his or herself as well if he or she is to endure for long. Often, the role of a caregiver includes multiple daily (and often nightly) responsibilities that are in addition to all of their normal responsibilities with family, health, job, home, etc. And the needs, duties and sacrifices often become increasingly complex and difficult as time goes by.

Hence, self-sacrificing caregiving often becomes very stressful, even overwhelming, physically and mentally.

Professional caregivers such as home-health nurses can also experience major stress but the limited hours plus the financial compensation help to limit the stress. Not so with family caregivers.

This subject applies directly to countless people! Many of you readers are serving as a family caregiver, have been a family caregiver, or will be a family caregiver! One reliable estimate says that one in four adult children will be a caregiver for a parent!

### **Who takes care of a family caregiver?**

Who takes care of the caregiver? Often no one except God and the caregiver himself or herself! It's a blessing when other family members help out, but usually most of the work falls on the shoulders of one person.

Long-term daily caregiving often becomes exhausting and highly stressful—to the point that the caregiver needs a caregiver!

This article is a plea to each caregiver: Please learn how to take good care of yourself—physically, mentally and spiritually—so you can survive and thrive and not wreck your own health or burn out!

### **Should you love yourself?**

True Christians know the Bible well enough to know that they should not be self-centered "lovers of themselves" in the sense meant in 2 Timothy 3:2. However, many Christians are confused, thinking that any kind of love for oneself is wrong.

The second great commandment says, "you shall love your neighbor *as yourself*" (Leviticus 19:18, emphasis added throughout). This proves that God designed us and expects us to love ourselves! In the Bible, "love" is usually a verb and usually refers to actions rather than feelings. Hence, God holds us responsible for taking care of ourselves! Then when needs of others arise, we will have the health and stamina to help our "neighbors."

Sometimes we sacrifice our own desires to care for the needs of someone else. Jesus said: "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:12-13). However, a caregiver must think long-term. It's a serious mistake for them to sacrifice their own health and then be unable to endure as a caregiver.

On plane flights, a flight attendant addresses the passengers about safety. The attendant says that in the case of an emergency, a parent of a young child should put their own oxygen mask on before putting one on their child. This might sound surprising and selfish at first, but realize that the parent and child could both die if the parent is immediately struggling to get an oxygen mask on the child. The lesson? If a caregiver doesn't take sufficient care of his or herself, he or she eventually won't be able to take good care of anyone else.

### **Keys to enduring long-term!**

For a caregiver to survive and thrive, the number one key is to stay close to God. One's physical, mental and emotional strength needs the foundation of spiritual strength. Try to live each day by Philippians 4:4-9—make your requests to God, don't be anxious, seek peace, rejoice, think on these things.

A caregiver needs a workable schedule. It's ideal if the caregiver can spend time in Bible study, prayer and meditation the first thing in the morning before the patient gets up. He can pray for God to help him with his many challenges and for God to fill him with the fruits of the Holy Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23. It's also valuable to be specific in prayers throughout the day—asking God for His help with each new task.

Many caregivers worry a lot. We need to be reminded of the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:25-34 in which He admonished us to not worry, but, instead, to trust in God to provide our needs. Verse 34 is especially significant. It says: "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." The healthy kind of "worry" is your decision-making and problem-solving, but try to stay focused on the present needs and challenges. Avoid having fear, apprehension and anxiety about the future.

Secondly, a person new to caregiving should quickly educate themselves about that complex role. The book of Proverbs repeatedly urges us to seek knowledge, understanding and wisdom! Thankfully, there are many books and websites that offer thorough understanding and advice about caregiving.

*Continued on page 25*



## South Africans Visit Northwest Camp

We recently concluded the Northwest Camp United Youth Camp program, and the Northwest Preteen Camp Ochoco programs, in which Viv Botha, Nigel and Charlene Schuller, and their children Ryan and Sarah participated.

The crew arrived on July 9-10 and were able to acclimate a bit before we had the Sabbath. We visited the Eugene congregation, in which Mr. Botha spoke—which was well received by the brethren in the area, and they appreciated having the chance to get to know and visit with the South Africans. After services, we spent a little time visiting some old areas where Mr. Armstrong did the work in Eugene, going by the area of KORE from which

the radio program had been broadcast, and then the area near the Fisher Farm where he walked to get to Fir Butte, Alvadore and Jeans Schools. After that, we dropped by the Salem congregation and visited with the members there, some of which Viv and the Schullers knew from prior trips to South Africa.

That following Sunday, they departed with my wife and children for Preteen Camp Ochoco, where they spent the next three days immersed in and observing our preteen camp program here in the NW in action. My son Aiden was returning from Southwest Camp the evening of the 13th, so I remained back to get him, and finish last minute camp prep before Northwest

Camp began on the 19th. The South Africans reported that their time at preteen camp was valuable; they got to observe much and consider the possibility of implementing a preteen program in their area.

At Northwest Camp, our guests did not have specific assignments so they would be free to observe all aspects of the program. They participated in staff training on the Sabbath and on Sunday; then they sat in on counselor training on the Sunday before campers arrived. They expressed a desire to use the same training materials for their upcoming program.

Once campers were in place—they embedded with specific dorms throughout the day, essentially experiencing

camp from the camper perspective to get a feel for what the UYC program looks like.

They described a significant value in the process—as it gave them a chance to circle back with one another and describe what they saw, talk about their camp program, and how it could be implemented. One positive from all of this was a description of the mindset that they saw while present—that the Christian living is wound throughout the day, that there is a focus on helping kids with this information—it’s not just scriptural instruction—it weaves its way through the camp in every way, and comments were made that it is transformative—not just for campers, but for staff as

well. It’s hard to go and experience these things, and then come away from camp without in their lives. This is something that they specifically identified as wanting to bring into their camp, and work toward building that culture.

From our discussions with Viv, and with Nigel and Charlene—we believe that this final component in the training process of the UYC Camp in South Africa was valuable. It enabled our guests to evaluate their program and compare it with another UYC model in action. This experience will prove helpful as the South African program continues to develop teens, leaders and servants of God in the future.

*Ben Light*

## Trip to Colombia, Peru and Bolivia

I am pleased to report the profitable trip my wife Caty and I made to visit the brethren in Colombia, Peru and Bolivia.

On July 10, we arrived in Bogotá, Colombia, and we met with several members at the hotel the following day. On Saturday, after having lunch together, we gathered for Sabbath afternoon services with 45 brethren. Jaime Salek, the pastor in Colombia, delivered an interesting sermonette on aspects of the Christian life. I delivered a sermon on the life and lessons of Ahithophel, King David’s advisor, who ultimately betrayed him. After a snack, we had a Bible study on the meaning of the statement, “the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy” in Revelation 19:10. On Sunday, we met for a leader-

ship workshop titled “24 Principles of Biblical Leadership,” followed by questions and answers. We were able to eat together several times during our stay, benefiting not only from biblical instruction but also from fine Christian fellowship.

Then, Caty and I departed for Lima, Peru, on Monday, July 14. On Tuesday, we met with 22 members of the congregation for lunch and then had a Bible study in an elegant church hall. On Wednesday, we departed with Luis Mora, the coordinator in Peru, and his wife Nora to see the new youth camp a 30-minute drive from Lima. It’s a beautiful setting, next to a river, with several sport fields, a meeting hall and a large swimming pool. This camp took place in early August. Then, half an hour

away, we visited the new site of the Feast in Peru, Las Gambusinas Recreation Center. It’s a large recreational resort with beautiful facilities and housing. It has several swimming pools, playgrounds, parks and even domesticated llamas roaming the grounds. We have an excellent meeting hall, and some 42 people are planning to visit this beautiful Feast site from Peru, Bolivia, Chile and the United States.

On Thursday, July 17, we traveled to La Paz, Bolivia. We stayed with the group of 12 until Monday, July 21, with three of them coming from the city of Cochabamba. We had numerous meetings with them. On Saturday, we met in the hall of the hotel where we were staying. After a snack, we held ser-



*Sabbath services in Bogotá, Colombia*

vices and then had a Bible study about Noah’s Ark. On Sunday, we took a ride on the five different cable car skyways that crisscross the city of La Paz. Built by an Austrian company, they are a

true technological marvel.

In short, it was a very fruitful trip, allowing us to meet, fellowship and instruct some 80 brethren in South America.

*Mario Seiglie*

## Family Caretakers

*Continued from page 24*

Very sadly, many elderly people develop dementia. A caregiver for someone with increasing dementia must gain a lot of additional knowledge in order to properly deal with that major challenge.

Thirdly, caregivers often push themselves too hard. They must be realistic about what they can and cannot do long-term. Furthermore, if the patient’s health continues to deteriorate, the patient needs more and more help with basic needs. Additionally, a patient who doesn’t feel well often becomes increasingly critical, complaining and demanding. This certainly puts additional stress and discouragement on the caregiver.

Hence, caregivers need to take breaks! “He who rests cares best.” They need to observe a restful Sabbath each week as best they can. Note that Jesus

Christ took breaks! (Luke 5:15-16). One type of break is discovering ways that you and the patient can enjoy some amusement together!

If a caregiver becomes exhausted or his health breaks down, he or she can no longer provide the care that is essential for the patient. Many caregivers eventually give up and abandon that role. They have experienced burn-out.

Fourthly, seek helpers! Besides asking God for help, ask people to help! If the patient has round-the-clock needs, please avoid being a sole caregiver!

Even being a primary caregiver, with others to help fill in, is often a heavy responsibility. If a caregiver is “on duty” every day and night, how can the caregiver get enough rest and sleep—some R and R (rest and recharging)?

Please don’t feel embarrassed or ashamed about asking for help! When challenges start becoming overwhelming, ask God to help you to find people, services or agencies that can give you relief and help so you are not stretched too thin. Your helper can be a family member or friend or a professional like a visiting nurse. Besides needing physical help, you’ll need a shoulder to cry on.

Lastly, let’s keep in mind that God is our great Caregiver who urges us to regularly ask Him for His help. Also keep in mind that God will richly reward you and bless you for your loving sacrifices for others. Many scriptures tell us that God never forgets our labors of love and how those labors will be richly rewarded when Jesus Christ returns and establishes His Kingdom here on earth! **GN**



## Preparing for the Feast

Our preparations for God’s festivals should start well before we get to them. How can we prepare both physically and spiritually?



## First-time Feastgoers

Why do we keep the Feast of Tabernacles and the other Holy Days? A first-time Feast attendee shares her experiences in this article.



## Long-time Feastgoers

As members who have attended the Feast many times, how can we set a positive example for others who may still be learning about God’s Holy Days?



## Family at the Feast

There is a family element to the Feast of Tabernacles. Yet, it differs from a mere family vacation. What sets this special time apart?



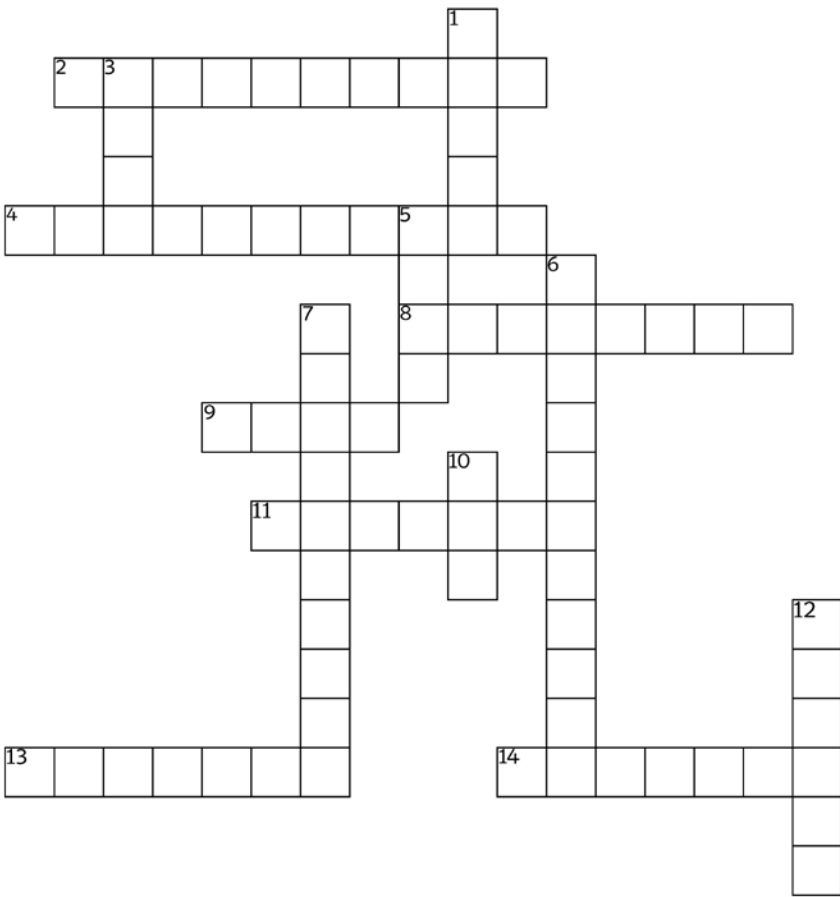
## Unable to Attend the Feast

If you’re unable to attend the Feast in person due to health or other concerns, how can you feel more connected to your Church family?



## CHILDREN’S CORNER

Feast of Tabernacles



### Across

- 2. “They shall beat their swords into \_\_\_\_\_” (Isaiah 2:4).
- 4. “Observe the Feast of \_\_\_\_\_ seven days” (Deuteronomy 16:13).
- 8. “Bring an \_\_\_\_\_” (Psalm 96:8).
- 9. “The feasts of the LORD [are] \_\_\_\_\_ convocations” (Leviticus 23:2).
- 11. “The \_\_\_\_\_ shall lie down with the young goat” (Isaiah 11:6).
- 13. “But seek first the \_\_\_\_\_ of God” (Matthew 6:33).
- 14. “You shall \_\_\_\_\_ in your feast” (Deuteronomy 16:14).

### Down

- 1. “For you shall . . . be led out with \_\_\_\_\_” (Isaiah 55:12).
- 3. “The wolf also shall dwell with the \_\_\_\_\_,” (Isaiah 11:6).
- 5. “The calf and the young \_\_\_\_\_ . . .” (Isaiah 11:6).
- 6. Ten percent of your earnings, intended to save for the Feast.
- 7. A word that means 1,000 years.
- 10. “Neither shall they learn \_\_\_\_\_ anymore” (Isaiah 2:4).
- 12. “Out of his heart will flow \_\_\_\_\_ of living water” (John 7:38).

## Calling All Creatives!

Do you enjoy creating artwork or writing puzzles?

*United News* welcomes submissions for Children’s Corner from members of all ages! The following are just a few of the kinds of activities we are looking for:

- Word games (crosswords, word scrambles, word finds, etc.)
- Coloring activities (coloring pages, color-by-number, etc.)
- Critical thinking (Bible trivia, logic puzzles, Bible math, etc.)

Puzzles and activities must have a biblical theme. Submissions are subject to review and may be lightly edited before the final version is printed.

If you have an activity or idea for one that you would like to submit, please contact us by emailing [un@ucg.org](mailto:un@ucg.org).

We look forward to featuring your creativity!



Holy Day Offering Procedure for U.S. Members Traveling to International Sites

The question arises each year from U.S. members traveling to international Feast sites (including Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean) whether they should mail in their Holy Day offerings to the home office or contribute directly at the Feast site they are attending.

United States law states that contributions to the Church in the United States are tax-deductible. Contributions to foreign church organizations cannot be taken as tax deductions, and we cannot issue donation receipts on offerings made abroad. In other words, those donations must be banked in a U.S. bank account to receive a receipt that the IRS will acknowledge for tax purposes.

So if U.S. members traveling

abroad want their Holy Day offerings to be included in their end-of-year donation receipt, they are encouraged to mail their offerings directly to the home office in Cincinnati, before or after the Feast. Your contributions will be appropriately receipted for tax purposes.

So as not to “appear before the Lord empty-handed” (Deuteronomy 16:16) and out of courtesy to the nation hosting the Feast where you attend, please consider giving some of your offering (preferably in the local currency) on the Holy Days at the international site you attend.

If you have any questions on this long-standing Church policy, please be sure to contact us through your pastor. **UN**

2025 Festival Fund

Please send this form along with your check to:  
United Church of God, PO Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254.

- Please indicate the amount you are sending in the space below.
- Include your personal identification number (PIN) from your latest *United News* or *Beyond Today* label.
- Make your check payable to United Church of God and label it “Festival Fund.”
- Clip out and enclose the completed form, along with your check, in one of the labeled reply envelopes mailed to you from the home office.
- Affix postage and mail.

Your PIN: **U** \_\_\_\_\_

Donation Amount Enclosed: **\$** \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

State/Province: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Feast Plans Changed?

If you need to switch to a new site but have not changed your online registration to reflect your current Feast plans, please do so immediately. It is important for coordinators to know how many people to expect at services and activities. Here is how you can change locations:

1. Go to **feast.ucg.org**.
2. Press the button that reads “click here to find a site and register.”
3. Click the link for the site you are switching to or the current site you are registered for.
4. Click “cancel my registrations.” Fill out and submit the form to complete cancellation.
5. You will need to register for a new site. Go to **www.ucg.org/members/feast-of-tabernacles/sites** to select a new site.

To make changes to an existing registration:

1. Click “edit my registrations.”
2. Sign in to your RegFox account if you have one. Otherwise, click the button that reads “claim my account.”
3. Click on the Registrations tab, then “view details.” You can make updates from this page.

Please Support the Festival Fund

The Feast of Tabernacles is the highlight of the year for many. It is a great blessing to be able to gather together at Feast sites around the world to picture the coming millennial reign of Jesus Christ.

A lot of planning goes into preparing the Feast every year. Those involved are happy to dedicate their time, effort and expertise, and the ministry looks to God as they prepare messages that focus on this future time.

But the Feast costs a lot of money. Hall rentals, equipment rentals, second tithe assistance for those who don’t have adequate funds, printing expenses, activity expenses and more add up and you can help us provide for the Feast venues and support that enhance our celebration.

Please consider sending a portion of your second tithe to help support the Feast. To donate, you can go to **donate.ucg.org** and click on Festival Fund. Or cut out the form on this page and send it with your check to the home office. If you have any questions, please contact your pastor at any time. **UN**

Festival Webcast

Webcast options for those who are unable to attend in-person services at the Feast of Tabernacles will be available on **feast.ucg.org**.

Updates will be posted as further details are available.

Need Help?

Email: **feast\_support@ucg.org**

Youth Festival Activity Booklets



Youth activity booklets are available again this year! There are three different booklets available for grades K-1, 2-3 and 4-6. You can download and print PDFs at: **ucg.org/news/youth-festival-activity-booklets-available**.

Hard copies will be available at your Feast site for families who have registered.

Still Not Registered?

If you haven’t registered for the Feast of Tabernacles, please go to **ucg.org/members/feast/sites** to select a site and register.

When you register, please consider volunteering to serve your fellow members. We have many opportunities available, including choir, greeting and parking. Thank you, and we look forward to seeing you at the Feast!



# BEYOND TODAY

- Sept. 7-13 | **Does Israel Have a Right to Exist? / Looking for Christ's Return in the Headlines**  
Presented by Darris McNeely  
Literature offered: *The Middle East In Bible Prophecy / Tools for Spiritual Growth*
- Sept. 14-20 | **Worship War—The Search for Truth / Worship War—Praise and Worship**  
Presented by Gary Petty  
Literature offered: *Transforming Your Life: The Process of Conversion*
- Sept. 21-27 | **How to Discover Your Purpose / Why Did God Put Me Here?**  
Presented by Steve Myers  
Literature offered: *Why Were You Born?*
- Sept. 28-  
Oct. 4 | **Discerning the Time of Jesus' Return**  
Presented by Steve Myers  
Literature offered: *Seven Prophetic Signs Before Jesus Returns*
- Oct. 5-11 | **Why the Hatred for America and Israel? / When Religion Doesn't Work**  
Presented by Darris McNeely  
Literature offered: *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy/ The Church Jesus Built*
- Oct. 12-18 | **The Foundation of Christian Politics / The Return of the King**  
Presented by Gary Petty  
Literature offered: *The Gospel of the Kingdom/ Christ's Reign on Earth: What It Will Be Like*
- Oct. 19-25 | **Death Isn't What You Think / He Faced Death with a Smile**  
Presented by Steve Myers  
Literature offered: *What Happens After Death?/ Heaven and Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?*
- Oct. 26-  
Nov. 1 | **The Sure Cure for Anxiety and Fear**  
Presented by Gary Petty  
Literature offered: *Why Am I Suffering?*



## United News

NEWS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, AN INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

Periodicals Postage Paid  
at Milford, Ohio, and at  
additional mailing offices

### BY THE NUMBERS

# 920

Total camper attendance at UYC teen camps this year in the United States. Some campers attended multiple camps.

## Winter Family Weekend



Join us from Dec. 23-28, 2025 at Spooky Nook in Hamilton, Ohio. The planning team is hard at work, and this year's theme is "Fueled by Faith!" We're building on the amazing foundation of past years to create our most exciting and well-rounded Winter Family Weekend yet. We've listened to your feedback and are designing a weekend packed with opportunities for faith, fellowship and fun!

### For the Athletes

Multiple days of action-packed basketball, volleyball and pickleball tournaments in the state-of-the-art Mill 1 gymnasium.

### For the Family

The can't-miss Jelly Live! show, a family carnival with games for all ages, and a full slate of kid's activities including both a children's drop-in play area and the structured preteen P.E. activity.

### For the Social Connectors

The return of the high-energy teen dance (with a full ice cream sundae bar!) and an exclusive YA social and speak-easy featuring a hosted mocktail bar and a 21+ cash bar with a professional bartender.

### For Fellowship and Growth

A full schedule of inspiring, theme-based seminars, a premier Friday night family banquet, a Friday night hymn sing and a warm Sabbath fellowship breakfast to bring us all together.

Official registration and the full, detailed schedule will launch soon! Keep an eye on **wfw.ucg.org** for more updates. We can't wait to see you there!

## Upcoming Events

- Salem, Oregon 70th Anniversary—Saturday, Sept. 13  
Feast of Trumpets—Tuesday, Sept. 23  
Day of Atonement—Thursday, Oct. 2  
Feast of Tabernacles—Oct. 7-13  
Eighth Day—Tuesday, Oct. 14  
Dance Weekend (Massachusetts)—Nov. 8-9  
Winter Family Weekend—Dec. 23-28  
Winter Camp—Dec. 29, 2025-Jan. 4, 2026

Visit **[ucg.org/members/calendar](https://ucg.org/members/calendar)** to see more events.