
Home Office Weekly Update

from the **UNITED CHURCH of GOD**

October 23, 2025

From the President...

God's Festivals and His "Rest"

One distinctive benefit of living God's way and obeying His tithing command is the generous provision He makes for attending His festivals at the various (and sometimes distant) locations He chooses. Festival tithing has catapulted members throughout time into exploring new environments and cultures far from home.

Imagine the mixture of festival travelers on that first Day of Pentecost, of "Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs (Acts 2:9-11).

While most of humanity typically busies themselves near home, God's people must travel to a Feast of Tabernacles location (Deuteronomy 12:5-21). In obeying His directive, we may experience other cultures, see new elements of His creation, and develop a broadening appreciation for God, His creation and for all of His children.

In our half-century of travels in over 70 countries, Merrie and I continue to marvel at the beautiful mix of peoples on every continent and many remote islands. God created His planet Earth with an amazing variety of environments, and filled it with complex cultures formed by His children created in His image and likeness. In natural areas across this planet, we can all appreciate the Genesis conclusion: "And God saw everything that He had made and indeed it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). Time spent in unique environments and interaction with the people living there inspires awe and wonder for our Holy and loving God and His Son.

We also recognize that humanity around the world is mentally and physically descendent of the "first Adam," currently mired in unholy traditions, prejudices and religions. Human beings are in many ways "children" with highly impressionable minds receptive to outside

influences (Romans 5:12-14). Humanity readily adapts to the mindset of a deceptive “father” who promotes hatred and deception (John 8:44).

Wouldn't it be nice for everyone to have a “do-over?” A fresh chance to receive pure information from a truthful “Father” and live life right for once? During the recent fall festivals, we sampled a future environment where humans will embrace a real “Father” and were shown how they should live. “But I said: “How can I put you among the children and give you a pleasant land, a beautiful heritage of the hosts of nations?”” ‘And I said: “You shall call Me, ‘My Father,’ And not turn away from Me”” (Jeremiah 3:19).



The Sabbath begins at sunset

This Friday evening begins another celebration of God's reign over His children as we observe the weekly Sabbath. As we prepare to celebrate the current rule of Jesus Christ over His Church, along with its roll-out coming soon to the world, we might ask: Who will He welcome into it? Jesus said, “Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it” (Mark 10:15).

In this one verse Jesus covers two aspects of the Kingdom of God. First, we must realize that the Greek word translated *kingdom* has two applications. Its primary definition is: “royal power, kingship, dominion, rule – 1a) not to be confused with an actual kingdom but rather the right or authority to rule over a kingdom” (Thayer Lexicon). Here Jesus speaks first to our need to accept God's rulership, just as a little child submits to its parents. Then, Jesus references the secondary meaning of the word *kingdom* i.e., “2) a kingdom, the territory subject to the rule of a king” (ibid), when He states, “will by no means *enter* it.” The territory of the Kingdom is Heaven, which no flesh can enter without being changed to spirit (1 Corinthians 15:50-51).

Then Jesus proceeded to take up and bless little children, a custom that we traditionally observe at this time of year. His teaching here admonishes us to be like little obedient children who will soon be blessed by Him with spirit composed bodies in the Kingdom of Heaven.

From observing children regularly during my 36 visits to Africa, I have learned more about Jesus' statement above. An early trait of a very young child is his or her response to things that are new.

A unique example is the first time a "mzungu" (white man) abruptly appears before a child. The toddler's eyes will widen in shock, panic ensues as he tries to hide in his parents' arms. (One father told me that his toddler was afraid that I might eat him!) Later, a child at the talking stage develops more understanding as they assess that this pale thing before them is a human. Eyes open wide, mouths drop open, and squeals of excitement occur with jumping legs, waving hands and big smiles. Little hands reach up touch and stroke the curious flesh, followed by an innocent check to see if any pink rubbed off on their finger. Often, they will grip your hand and try to take you with them.

A boy who once feared that I might eat him, by age four informed Merrie and me that he was going home with us to live. The mind of a child is not merely open to new concepts, it is responsive, trusting and exuberant in its embrace of them.

The apostle John wrote to us as "little children" in a relationship with our new "Father." Our reaction upon discovering God should be like that of little children; responsive, trusting and exuberant in embracing the mindset of our loving God. And we should treat each other as little children often do among themselves: be together, embrace, forgive and easily forget.

"You are of God, little children...Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of [engendered by] God and knows God" (1 John 4:4, 7).

Sadly, the minds of little children change as they grow up, as evidenced by the maturing reactions to mzungus. By school age, the innocence fades into indifference. Then, by adolescence there is typically no response at all, just empty stares. If not careful, God's little children can also "grow up" and away from someone who can enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Jesus' statement warns us about becoming un-childlike and resisting His governance and its mindset. Consider again His words to us, "Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom [rulership] of God as a little child will by no means enter it" (Mark 10:15).

Hopefully, the above example of how various ages of children react to a newcomer provides a little insight as to how we also might react to God's appearance in our lives. God's rulership appears to many (Matthew 22:4), but few respond appropriately (Matthew 22:5, 14). He wants our response to be welcoming and submissive to Him as our Father, like little children are to be to their parents (Ephesians 6:1-4).

When the sun sets on Friday evening, we again celebrate the “Rest” of God and His rulership—now, at Christ’s return, in the Millennium, during the White Throne Judgment and forever in the Kingdom of Heaven. Whether or not we enter the eternal “Rest” it depicts (Hebrews 4:9) depends on how we receive it. “Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (Hebrews 4:11-13).

In anticipation of entering that eternal Rest, let’s endeavor to truly be “little children” in the eyes of God our Father and Jesus Christ.

With love and appreciation for each of you,



John Elliott, President

From Ministerial and Member Services...

Ordinations

We’re happy to announce that on October 2, 2025 Wilson Cinco was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Cecile, serve the congregations in Manila, Philippines.



Wilson and Cecile Cinco

Also ordained on October 2, 2025 was Jason Musgrove. He and his wife, Tonya, serve the congregations in Cincinnati, Ohio.



Jason and Tonya Musgrove

And, we're happy to announce that on September 27, 2025 Steve Parker was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Angela, serve the congregation in Houston, Texas.



Steve and Angela Parker

—Steve Myers, Operation Manager, Ministerial and Member Services

From Media and Communications Services...

The heart of the work of Media and Communication Services is one of teamwork in proclaiming God's truth with clarity and compassion to those whom He is calling.

In these first weeks of seeing the department up close, I've been struck by how deeply that purpose is reflected in the people who carry it out. This is a team that functions as a family—every part doing its share and willing to step in wherever needs arise to ensure the gospel is proclaimed as effectively as possible. There is energy here and a genuine love for the work and for one another. It's truly inspiring.

As we look toward the future and the opportunities God is opening, I'm grateful for the many years of steady leadership Peter Eddington has provided. His guidance has helped shape this department into what it is today. With God's blessing and the dedication of this remarkable team, we look ahead with energy and excitement for the work God is doing to bring many sons and daughters to glory.

I look forward to updating everyone on our ongoing projects and future planning in the coming weeks.

—Scott Delamater, Operation Manager, Media and Communications Services

Save the Date! Houston Regional Family Weekend

Date: December 13-14, 2025

Location: Camp Lonestar, 2610 Tuwa Rd., Tomball, TX 77375

The Houston brethren are excited to host a joyful weekend of worship and fellowship together in a beautiful nature setting. Special guests Peter and Terri Eddington will be joining us for the weekend.

Sabbath Events 9 a.m. – 8 p.m.

- Group meals: breakfast, lunch and dinner
 - Nature walk
 - Bible studies focused on deepening our faith
 - Sabbath church service
 - Campfire fellowship and inspirational stories
 - Relaxing canoeing on the lake
 - Kids Sabbath activities
 - Evening music, games, s'mores and more!
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Sunday Events 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

- Annual cornhole tournament
- Kids inflatables
- Gaga ball, basketball, volleyball, frisbee golf, hiking, canoeing and more
- Group breakfast and lunch

Registration: Details to come soon.

We hope you can join us for spiritual renewal, encouragement, family bonding and fun. This will be a weekend to remember!

—Jay and Jennifer Ledbetter

Upcoming Events

Nov. 14–16	Tulsa Regional Family Weekend	Sand Springs, OK
Dec. 13–14	Houston Regional Family Weekend	Tomball, TX
Dec. 23–28	Winter Family Weekend	Hamilton, OH
Dec. 26–28	Northwest Family Weekend	Portland, OR
Dec. 29–Jan. 4	Winter Camp	Lake Geneva, WI
March 20–22	DFW Regional Family and Prom Weekend	Dallas, TX

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

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