
Home Office Weekly Update

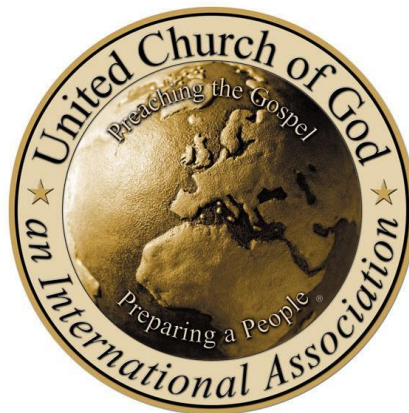
from the UNITED CHURCH of GOD

January 8, 2026

From the President...

What's in Our Name?

Our organization's name, United Church of God, *an International Association*, (UCGIA) was developed by those who assembled at Indianapolis, Indiana in May of 1995. The components of our Church's name have important aspects.



The seal of the United Church of God, *an International Association*

“Church of God” - This is the core of the name because it is the Bible's most frequent designation for the New Testament body of believers. An example is an instruction to the elders whom Jesus appointed as shepherds of His sheep: “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28). It conveys God's direction for unity in belief, mission and purpose for which Jesus prayed, “Holy Father, keep *through Your name* those whom You have given Me” (John 17:11, emphasis added).

“United” – “That they may be one as We are” (John 17:11). This word signifies that we are striving for oneness with God and each other in our commitment to faithfully follow the way of life established by God and His Son, Jesus Christ, in the Holy Scriptures. Adding

“United” to the “Church of God” also helps distinguish our organization’s name from many others and underscores our identity.

“an International Association” – was added to appropriately reflect the worldwide scope of the Church and its activities as Jesus instructed: “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20). The founding elders recognized it as an association of global, national councils working in unity with the Council of Elders with support from the U.S. home office. Paul’s writings reflect the broad work of God’s Church throughout the world: “Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God” (1 Corinthians 10:32).

The full name with *“an International Association”* italicized also serves the practical purpose of differentiating the U.S.-registered entity from our international entities registered as UGC-Canada, UCG-Australia, UCG-East Africa, etc.

So, the name United Church of God reflects both theological grounding (Church of God from Scripture), practical distinctiveness (United), and *an International Association (IA)* reflects the collaborative nature of the work around the world.

The recognition of God as supreme Head, His Spirit and Word as our catalysts of unity in doctrine and love, and His calling of saints from every nation, tribe and tongue all combine in our name. These elements He has provided to us at this time.

A good question for each of us is, “How closely am I aligned with the meanings of my church, the United Church of God, *an International Association*?” Now is a great time to consider how these elements are reflected in our personal lives. Only by truly aligning with what each term represents does the Church’s name genuinely reflect that I am a part of it. One tool I have found helpful is our booklet, “[This is the United Church of God](#).” Let’s take time to deeply understand our individual responsibility to live out these terms as true members in Christ’s body.

Memorial board for Rick Shabi

After the Shabi family announced their intention to create an online memorial for our late, past president, Rick Shabi, his son, Patrick, sent the following invitation to us all:

“It has been a season of reflection since we said goodbye to my father, Rick Shabi. I have spent much time since then reflecting on his life as a pastor, faithful servant of God, friend and a father. To honor his life, we’ve created a virtual memorial board for him—a global space where anyone can see and share how his life touched the lives of others from around the world. Please refer to this link: <https://www.kudoboard.com/boards/iMSH9Xyi/rickshabi>.”

Mr. Shabi served God and the Church with his whole heart and with the gifts that God provided him. Let us be prayerful for his wife, Deborah, and their family and thankful for each other as we progress in performing God's work.

With deep respect and appreciation for you in Christ's service,



John Elliott, President

From Ministerial and Member Services...

Ordination of Tim Sipes

We're happy to announce that on Jan. 3, 2026 Tim Sipes was ordained into the ministry. Tim and his wife, Connie, serve the Portsmouth, OH congregation.



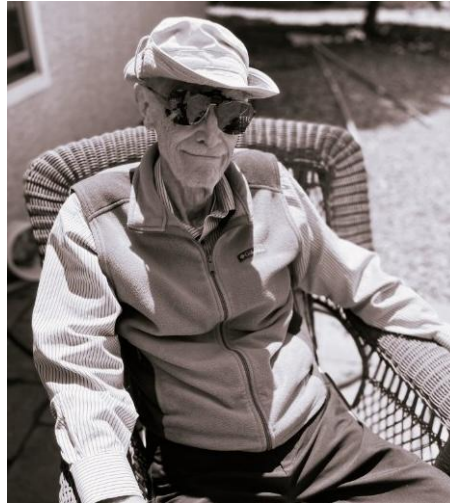
Tim and Connie Sipes

Death of Gerald Hoyer

Kathryn Hoyer and the families of Kurt Hoyer, Lori Anderson and Craig Hoyer are sad to announce that Gerald (Jerry) Hoyer, devoted husband, father, grandfather, longtime church elder, silviculturist and banjo player, died quietly in his sleep on Oct. 19, 2025 at the age of 94. Jerry had been in declining health for a number of months but his condition was never painful. For that the family is grateful to our loving God.

Jerry was known for many things. He served his country in the U.S. Army, and was honorably discharged ranking as sergeant in the fall of 1955. He met his loving wife Kathryn while climbing mountains in Washington, they were married in 1959. In 1966 they devoted their lives to Christ and His Kingdom and were for many years pillars in the Church of God in the Pacific Northwest where they touched many lives through their

devoted service, patience, counsel, hospitality and unwavering commitment to the body of Christ. Their home in Tumwater, Washington became a gathering place for many at all hours and seasons. Jerry had a PhD in forestry science and worked over 40 years for the state of Washington.



Gerald Hoyer

After retirement, their service and dedication to the church membership and their affinity for hospitality continued after he and Kathryn relocated to the Prescott Valley, Arizona area for more than 20 years. He was a great lover of nature and instilled that love in his children and grandchildren through many outdoor adventures and activities over the years. He loved music, writing several hymns, gardening, wine making, and had an extensive collection of bonsai trees he crafted over the years.

His greatest love however was for God and His truth and when asked what he would advise people desirous of a long-lasting relationship with God he replied, "Get humble and stay humble." Jerry is survived by his wife of 66 years Kathryn, three children and eight grandchildren. The family is planning a small memorial or celebration of life service in the coming month. Details will be forthcoming.

Death of Carl Anderson

Carl Anderson died peacefully at home on Dec. 30, 2025. Carl Allen Anderson was born in Petersburg, Alaska on May 20, 1932. His childhood was spent in Alaska and in the Seattle, Washington area. At age 17, Carl went back to Alaska to fish commercially, but ended up working on a Federal Geological Survey ship until September, 1950.

At that time, the Korean War had begun. Carl enlisted in the Army in September, 1950. After basic training in Georgia, he was shipped to Korea, where he served for 14 months in combat and as an MP.

At the end of that tour of duty, Carl was shipped back to Seattle. His cousin had been working with a lovely young lady named Joanne Edith Golliet and introduced Carl to her. He had a 40-day leave and a whirlwind romance! He finished his tour of duty with the Army in Georgia and was discharged in September, 1953.



Carl and Joanne Anderson

He returned to Seattle and married Jo on Oct. 10, 1953. They were married for 54 years, until her death on July 8, 2007. They had two children, Lynn and Bruce.

Shortly after they were married, Jo's mother, Ethel West, began sending them literature she was receiving from the Radio Church of God and Herbert W. Armstrong. In the beginning, Carl was definitely not happy about that! But, by early 1961, both Carl and Jo began attending services in Seattle and were baptized together on Aug. 12, 1961.

In July, 1971, Carl was asked to move to Pasadena, California and be in charge of the maintenance of all off-campus properties of Ambassador College. He returned to the Seattle area in July, 1974.

In October, 1977, Carl became active in 12 Step Recovery, which he considered a major milestone in his life and a turning point in his spiritual growth. He was ordained a deacon in 1982 and then ordained an elder on April 4, 1987. Carl was a strong support for years for those struggling with recovery from addiction and helped many in gaining and maintaining sobriety.

Carl was a solid, faithful man whose wisdom, steadiness and solid relationship with Christ was an example and a help to the congregation. He remained an active elder in Seattle until he moved to the Sedro-Woolley/Burlington church area in 2019, where he also served faithfully until his health began to decline.

Carl is survived by his daughter, Lynn and son, Bruce, who were both loving and devoted caregivers. He was able to die peacefully at home, as he wanted, because of their care.

Death of Maureen DeLong

One Dec. 28, 2025 Maureen DeLong, wife of elder Larry DeLong, fell 12 feet onto a concrete pad and sustained life-threatening injuries. On Tuesday, Dec. 30, 2025 surrounded by family she breathed her last.

She ran her race with a deep love for her "Papa" God, her Elder Brother and Savior Jesus Christ, her family and her church family.



Maureen DeLong

She served her God, her family and the church with every ounce of her being, stepping in where others feared to tread, standing for the truth, encouraging, guiding and holding up the arms of those weaker than herself.

She will be greatly missed by not only her family but by all those that were touched by her loving service and dedication to the Word of God.

Well done good and faithful servant.

—Steve Myers, Operation Manager, Ministerial and Member Services

From Media and Communications Services...

Cincinnati Winter Family Weekend Seminars – Online!

The Cincinnati Winter Family Weekend featured nine seminars covering a wide range of topics designed to provide spiritual fuel for our Christian walk. These messages are now available on YouTube:

- When Prayer Feels Like a Monologue (Stephen Bouchette) <https://youtu.be/Ny4dyW-BT w>
- Beyond the Basics: Igniting Your Personal Bible Study (Scott Delamater) <https://youtu.be/mdeNv0aQktU>
- Building a Lasting Family Legacy (Phil Aust) <https://youtu.be/3gp7Tg-Vlsc>
- Too Busy for God? (Eric Mohr) <https://youtu.be/gqXNYLDh9Ms>
- The “I AM” Statements (Steve Myers) <https://youtu.be/EpaTbE8Lnme\>
- Building a Resilient Mind (Roy Fouch) <https://youtu.be/s70G2pLoXrU>
- The Perfect Sacrifice (Frank Dunkle) <https://youtu.be/2prHk2p2V10>
- The Art of Godly Communication (Lena VanAusdle) <https://youtu.be/7qTPL0Ajt-Q>
- After the Apostles (Andy Lee) <https://youtu.be/IJmC79u1hBE>

These messages—and past Winter Family Weekend seminars—are also available together as part of [this playlist](#). And, the WFW sermon by President John Elliott, “[Why God Is Expecting You to Be in His Kingdom](#)” is also available in the sermon section of our website.

—Scott Delamater, Operation Manager, Media and Communications Services

ABC Continuing Education

The Ambassador Bible College (ABC) Continuing Education program will be held at the home office in Milford, Ohio from May 18-22, 2026. Faculty members will teach excerpts of classes from the ABC curriculum. Continental breakfast and lunch will be served each day.

The cost to attend the program is \$85 per person, or \$100 for married couples. Enrollment is limited; registration opens Jan. 19.

Registration is online this year. To register, go to <https://ucg.regfox.com/abc-continuing-education>. If you have questions or need help, you can email Katherine Rowland at katherine_rowland@ucg.org or call (513) 576-9796.

2026 Southeast Regional Formal Weekend

Registration is now open for the 2026 UCG Southeast Teen Prom! We are planning to have it Saturday evening, Feb. 28, at the beautiful [Del'avant Event Center](#) in LaGrange, Georgia.

The weekend includes a pizza social Friday evening, a special Sabbath, followed by a formal prom that evening. Seniors will have a special recognition right before the dance that parents can join.

We are also planning to have a skating/arcade/laser tag family activity on Sunday, March 1 prior to departure, so we hope you'll plan to stay a bit longer on Sunday to allow the teens this extra social time.

Cost for the Prom is \$30 per person (ages 12-19).

Cost for the family activity is \$25 per person.

Schedule of Events: For out-of-town guests staying at the hotel **Friday** evening, we will arrange a casual get together with pizza. Let us know if you are interested.

Friday night pizza drop-in social in the lobby of the La Quinta Inn & Suites 6:30-10:30 - Pizza delivered at 7:00.

Saturday morning:

7:00-10:00 complimentary breakfast served at the hotel.

Saturday afternoon and evening:

1:30 ~ Sabbath services at Del'avant Event Center – all are welcome

4:00 ~ Clear room to set up for dance

6:30 ~ Senior Recognition – all are welcome

7:30-11:00 ~ Dance – age 12-19

Sunday Morning:

7:00 ~ Complimentary Breakfast served at the hotel

10:00 - 12:00 ~ [Starlite Family Fun Center](#) in Sharpsburg, Georgia

Link to Register: [Register for Southeast Formal Weekend](#)

Link for hotel: [Reservations LaQuinta](#)

Rooms must be booked by 01/27/2026 to receive the discounted rate of \$103.70 per room per night + tax.

Dress for the evening is Formal, Semi-Formal or Sabbath attire.

Registration is open until Feb. 14, 2024.

If you have any questions, please contact: Matthew Blackwood at (706) 668-0714 or matthew@unlockmath.com

2026 Atlanta Ski Trip: Jan. 31 – Feb. 1

The UCG Atlanta Ski Trip is scheduled this year for Jan. 31 to Feb. 1, 2026. We will be in Knoxville, Tennessee for Sabbath services on Jan. 31 and in Gatlinburg, Tennessee for skiing and snowboarding on Feb. 1 with *Ober Mountain* ([Ober Mountain Ski Area in Gatlinburg / Smokies](#)).

Details for this year's trip are available here: [2026 Atlanta Ski Trip: 1/31-2/1 | United Church of God](#)

Payment Deadline - The deadline for payment is Thursday, Jan. 22.

If you have additional questions about the Reservation Form or PayPal payments, you may email Bob McCurdy at ram19@bellsouth.net.

Block off the first weekend in February on your calendar, reserve a hotel room (see recommended options via the link above), and get ready for another year of fun, fellowship and enjoyable activities in the Great Smoky Mountains of Tennessee.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

—Philip Aust, Pastor, Atlanta and Buford, Georgia

Cleveland: Themed Dance / Movie Night / Sleepover on Feb. 7 and 8

We are just one month away from our themed dance / movie night / sleepover. This event is open to all teens and their families, and we'd love to see you there. Here are the details.

Event Schedule & Details

- Sabbath services will begin at 2:30 p.m. at our Cleveland congregation building *Location: 12981 Grafton Rd, Grafton, OH 44044*
- Following services, we will have a taco bar and ice cream bar for dinner around 4:30 p.m. A separate table will be available with food for those with gluten or other food sensitivities.
- We will be hosting a cake/dessert decorating contest. If you'd like to participate, please plan to bring your dessert already decorated as much as possible. Awards will be announced during dinner.
- The costumed dance will begin around 6:15 p.m. Prizes will be awarded for various costume categories. *Theme: Movie or book characters (all ages can dress up).*
- After the dance, we will have karaoke, followed by a showing of *How to Train Your Dragon* (live-action version).
- Board games will also be available throughout the evening.
- Lights out will be around 1 a.m.
- On Sunday morning, we will provide a light breakfast, and then wrap up the event.

Overnight Accommodations We have several private rooms available for parents/guardians who plan to stay overnight. **Please bring a cot, air mattress, or sleeping bag and bedding.**

- Boys will sleep in the sanctuary.
- Girls will sleep in the conference room on the other side of the building.

For Teens

- We are also looking for input on dance music and karaoke songs. [Please click this link to add your song choices, along with YouTube links for karaoke songs](#) you'd like to sing (this helps karaoke run much more smoothly!).

Please contact Kelly Mango at kellythomasmango@gmail.com or (330) 416.2910 if you plan on coming and let her know how many people from your family will be attending. Also, feel free to reach out with any questions.

We look forward to seeing you there!

—Stephen Bouchette, Pastor, Cleveland, Ohio

REPORT: Cincinnati Winter Family Weekend 2025: A Weekend “Fueled by Faith”

Winter Family Weekend was held at the Champion Mill Conference Center in Hamilton, Ohio where 1,237 registered attendees, more than 1,200 on-site for Sabbath services, and an estimated 7,000–8,000 participants joining via webcast from around the world.

Centered on the theme “Fueled by Faith,” the week began with a Tuesday night Music Jam and continued with rich spiritual instruction, fellowship and family-centered activities. While sports tournaments remained a major draw, several enhancements elevated the overall experience:

- **Expanded Fellowship:** Two inclusive meals (Friday evening and Sabbath morning) and morning “Kickstart Stations” provided convenient options for families to keep them physically fueled.
- **Spiritual Fuel:** Beyond Sabbath services, Bible talks and a wide range of seminars throughout the days helped keep attendees spiritually fueled.
- **Youth Activities:** Jelly’s Dance Party was enhanced with refreshments for children, while the Teen Dance featured a new premium Ice Cream Bar, which was a huge hit.
- **Adults and Families:** A reimagined Young Adult Social encouraged meaningful conversation, the Nail and Dress Boutiques were expanded, and the weekend concluded with a enormous Family Carnival, “Prize Mountain,” and Family Dance.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with many families noting a strong sense of unity. Daily videos and more intentional communication helped participants feel connected as one body throughout the weekend.

We are grateful for the many volunteers who served tirelessly, and especially for the attendees whose spirit of service and fellowship defined the event. Warmth and enthusiasm truly made this a weekend “Fueled by Faith,” and put the “Family” in Winter Family Weekend.

—Dave PerMar, Coordinator, Winter Family Weekend

REMINDER: ABC Fundraiser – Magnetic Calendar/Planner

The new year has begun, but it is *not too late* to order a magnetic calendar/planner that serves as the main fundraiser for Ambassador Bible College (ABC) students to have a class trip at the end of the year. During this trip the ABC chorale performs on the Sabbath for a congregation they normally cannot visit.

The calendar is an 11" by 8.5" glossy full-year calendar printed on a dry-erase surface. It has the Holy Days and U.S. federal holidays marked.



2026 magnetic, dry-erase ABC calendar.

The calendars are \$10 each, and that includes shipping. Order and payment can be made online by visiting: <https://www.ucg.org/members/abc/annual-fundraiser>. You can also email a message to ABCfundraiser@ucg.org. Just tell us how many calendars you want and to what address to send them, and we'll take care of the rest.

—Kyle McKenzie, ABC Student Body President

Upcoming Events

Jan. 23–25	Women's Enrichment Weekend	Brea, CA
Jan. 31–Feb. 1	UCG Atlanta Ski Trip	Gatlinburg, TN
Feb. 7–8	Cleveland Dance and Sleepover	Grafton, OH
Feb. 13–15	East Texas Regional Family Weekend	Big Sandy, TX
Feb. 13–16	Wamatochick Young Adult Weekend	Prescott, AZ
Feb. 27–	Women's Enrichment Weekend	La Conner, WA
Mar. 1		
Feb. 28	Southeast Regional Formal Weekend	LaGrange, GA
Mar. 13–15	Women's Enrichment Weekend	Franklin, TN
Mar. 13–15	Women's Enrichment Weekend	Canby, OR
Mar. 14–15	Midwest Team Prom	Berlin, OH
Mar. 14–15	Southwest Missouri Women's Enrichment Weekend	Ozark, MO
Mar. 20–22	DFW Regional Family and Prom Weekend	Dallas, TX
Apr. 17–19	Women's Enrichment Weekend	Fairmont Hot Springs, BC
Apr. 23–26	Mammoth Cave Camping Weekend	Mammoth Cave National Park, KY
May 15–17	Women's Enrichment Weekend	Deer Lake, WA
May 18–22	ABC Continuing Education Week	Milford, OH

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

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