



## A Visit to UCG Europe

by Emma Cortelyou

December 2025 marked significant anniversaries for both UCG-Germany and Italy. Germany celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> year of being established as an international church office, and Italy reached its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. To mark these occasions, UCG President John Elliott and his wife Merrie traveled to Europe to visit with the brethren, learn about their operations and spend the spring Holy Days with them. From March 26-April 13, the Elliotts visited leaders and congregations in the Netherlands, Germany and Italy. The pastors and brethren were overjoyed to have them and supported them through their travels with transportation, meals and edifying discussion.

Mr. Elliott shared the importance of these kinds of visits: “I discovered how encouraging it has been to each area of the work that has received a presidential visit. The bulk of UCG’s proclamation work overseas seems to be accomplished by unpaid volunteer staff who are doing marvelously. They often shared their initiatives in great detail and felt more a part of UCG by receiving validation and support. These types of visits, whether with pastors, conferences or national councils, are vital.” A common theme throughout many of the international brethren’s comments was the feeling of unity that the visit inspired. It calls to mind David’s proclamation: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1). From the Netherlands to Germany and Italy,



The Dekkers (left) and Elliotts (right) during the Netherlands visit

it is clear that our international brethren greatly appreciated the Elliotts’ European visit.

### Visit to the Netherlands

The Elliotts began their trip in the Netherlands, flying into Amsterdam on March 27. They spent the Sabbath in Utrecht with 25 of our Dutch brethren, and Mr. Elliott was impressed by how much sound such a little group could make—they sang with such enthusiasm! Mr. Elliott gave the sermon “Prepare to Participate in the Passover,” which was much appreciated by the brethren. The Dutch brethren enjoyed fellowshiping and spending valuable Sabbath time together. On Monday, March 30, the Elliotts visited Keukenhof with Wim Dekker (regional pastor of the Netherlands and Germany) and his wife Anne Kristel. Mr. Elliott and Mr. Dekker talked about many things, including their work, the European region, leadership, speakers’ club, leadership club, congregations, media, challenges and responsibilities in UCG. Mr. Dekker shared that “Mr. Elliott was

very interested in the work of the Church in the Netherlands and Germany and asked many questions.” The evening of March 31, the Elliotts spent the Passover in Maarsbergen. The service was entirely in Dutch! This was the final day they spent in the Netherlands. Mr. Dekker shared that “the recent visit of Mr. Elliott to the Netherlands marked a meaningful moment for the local church, strengthening spiritual bonds, renewing shared purpose and offering practical guidance for the future. One of the most immediate benefits of the visit was the renewed sense of unity it fostered. The presence of Mr. and Mrs. Elliott reminded members that they are part of a global fellowship with shared beliefs, shared challenges and shared hopes.”

### Visit to Germany

Germany was the next stop for the Elliotts. They traveled to Dormagen on April 1. After settling into their hotel, editorial employee Jesmina Allaoua showed Mr. Elliott the



Leaders from the Milan, Italy congregation on a tour with the Elliotts

UCG-Germany office. Although small, he commented on the functionality of the Niederkassel office: “I came as a 17-year-old student to visit the old office with Mr. Schnee in Duesseldorf. I have wondered all these years what the office is like today in Germany. I am very pleased to see how the work has been done since the founding of UCG-Germany. This is a very functional office where the work has clearly been done!” That evening, the Elliotts spent the Night to Be Much Observed with 23 brethren and greatly enjoyed getting to know everyone. Jesmina Allaoua said it was “a very joyous special night.” The Elliotts observed the First Day of Unleavened Bread in Dormagen. Mr. Elliott gave a sermon describing God’s Church as an oasis and encouraged the brethren to protect it from encroaching desert sand. Mr. Elliott later honored Jesmina Allaoua for 25 years of employment and service to UCG-Germany, presenting her with a crystal clock from the home office. Allaoua noted the benefit of the Elliotts’ visit to Germany and their care and

attention toward the brethren: “The teenagers, young adults, families and seniors commented on how easily the Elliotts conversed with everyone and how genuinely interested they were to meet the brethren.” The fellowship with the brethren was a highlight for everyone, and the opportunity to connect with people of like mind is always a great blessing.

### Visit to Italy

The final portion of the trip began on April 3 with a flight to Milan, Italy. Mr. Enzo Alfieri, pastor in Italy, shared the following about their time in Italy: “The presence of Mr. and Mrs. Elliott was a source of great joy for all of us—both personally and spiritually. During these Days of Unleavened Bread, their presence added a special value to the work in Italy, strengthening that brotherly unity which helps us understand ever more deeply that we are part of the same fami-

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## 2 Honoring Deceased Elders and Wives

### Reg Wright



Reg Wright died on Dec. 17, 2025 at age 91. Baptized in 1963 after first hearing the Radio Church of God, Reg was employed by the Worldwide Church of God in 1967. Ordained as an elder in 1981, he served faithfully for nearly 30 years in a variety of roles, including mailing department manager, personal assistant to Australian

regional directors, and personal correspondent for Australia and Asia.

Reg and his wife Joan began the UCG national office from their spare bedroom in 1995, and he continued serving as UCG National Office Manager for 10 years before retiring in 2005. He remained actively involved well beyond retirement, coordinating the Australian Editorial Review Team and the Personal Correspondence Department for many years.

Reg and his beloved wife Joan, who died in July 2025, shared almost 69 years of marriage. Together they served brethren throughout Australia and Asia with dedication and humility. They pastored congregations across Southeast Queensland and Northern New South Wales, with Reg faithfully preaching the truth while both he and Joan supported and encouraged many through their warmth, care, love and steadfast example.

He is survived by his children Debbie, Kaylene and Paul; eleven grandchildren; and fourteen great-grandchildren. Reg's legacy of "faith in action" and humble service remains a guiding light for all who knew him.

*The Wright Family*

### Clive Demont



Clive Demont died on Feb. 18, 2026 after having surgery. This has been a great shock to all who knew him as the operation was expected to be "a minor procedure." Clive was a fourth generation South African as his great-grandfather settled in South Africa in 1850.

Born on July 1, 1942, Clive began read-

ing Mr. Armstrong's literature and the *Plain Truth* magazine in 1970. He was baptized in 1971.

Clive was ordained as an elder in the United Church of God in 2019 and served faithfully in Port Elizabeth, on the South African National Council and more recently as chairman of a subcommittee managing media and social advertising.

Clive is fondly remembered by many members as he conducted a regular Zoom Sabbath service which was a tremendous blessing to members in outlying areas, who were unable to attend services.

Clive and Marjory were married in 1964 and enjoyed a happy married life with four children, Kevin, Garry, Heather and Dean. He is survived by Kevin, Heather, Dean and five grandchildren.

Clive will be remembered by all who knew him for his friendly character, his sense of humor and his ability to cut to the core of any issue under discussion whether it related to business or the truth of God's Word to which he was dedicated. **UN**

### Pat Stewart



Blanchie Ruth "Pat" Stewart died peacefully on Oct. 27, 2025 at the age of 89. Pat was a loving wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and friend.

After high school in Gravett, Arkansas, Pat moved to Liberal, Kansas, where she met and married husband Ellis in 1953. They became coworkers of the Radio Church of God and were baptized at the spring festival in Big Sandy in 1956. They moved to Pasadena, California where Ellis worked for Monrovia Aviation Company and then the Church's printing department. Pat worked as a secretary at California Institute of Technology, then as secretary to Jack Elliot, Ambassador College Dean of Students.

In 1959, Pat became a stay-at-home mom to son Jonathan and then daughter Liz. In 1965, they moved to Big Sandy, where Ellis established and ran the Ambassador College Texas campus print shop. Their son Jim was born that fall. Later that year, Ellis was ordained a deacon, serving until 1975, when he was ordained an elder.

Pat served as an elder's wife (with her husband Ellis) for 50 years!

Pat returned to the workforce in 1973 and fulfilled a variety of positions including secretary to the Big Sandy Elementary School Principal, elementary PE teacher, hostess at Annie's Tea Room, manager of Annie's Gift Shop, and then customer service at SFG until her 30-year retirement in 2010.

Pat was a devoted follower of Christ and His teachings. She enjoyed people and serving, known for her special soups and sandwiches.

Pat is survived by her son Jim Stewart of Big Sandy; daughter Liz Russell and son-in-law Doug Russell of Arcadia, California; grandson Wesley Russell and granddaughter-in-law Stephanie (Martens) Russell of Powell, Ohio; and great-grandchildren Rose, Lachlan and Rebecca Russell. Pat was preceded in death by her husband of 70 years, Ellis in 2024, son Jonathan in 1972, her parents, three brothers and three sisters. **UN**

## A Visit to UCG Europe

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ly—children of God and members of one body in Christ: His Church." On the Sabbath, Mr. Elliott gave the sermon and shared an update on the work of UCG around the world. The following day, Mr. Elliott met with local leaders for a two-hour leadership conference. Mr. Elliott shared, "They updated me on the work in Italy, past and present. They appreciated having the recognition and validation of the president for the work that they are all striving to accomplish. They asked many questions, including how they could enhance doing the work

in Italy." Local deacon Giovanni Troisi said that the visit served as a vital bridge between the local leadership and the home office. It gave the leaders a chance to discuss their new initiatives and work through the challenges they're facing. He described the Italian brethren as a "virtual congregation," because around 70 percent of the members are scattered across the country. He noted that "Mr. Elliott's presence provided much-needed mentoring and a clear vision for our growth." In a card of appreciation presented to the Italian brethren

on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread, Mr. Elliott praised the great work being done in Italy: "From providing faithful church services and hosting an international Feast site, to dubbing *Beyond Today* videos, producing the *BT* magazine, brochures, and a Bible course—your commitment to teaching God's truth is remarkable. Your ongoing efforts in social media outreach, hosting webinars, maintaining personal correspondence, and stewarding the financial resources of the work reflect a board that serves with both excellence and integrity."

Mr. Troisi shared a sentiment that effectively captures the essence of President Elliott's visit to Europe: "It was a beautiful demonstration that within the Church, there are no language barriers, cultural differences or distances that cannot be bridged." Every international member who wrote a report was brimming with excitement and deep appreciation for Mr. Elliott's efforts and attention to the international work. It is a testament to God's mighty hand in bringing together many individuals with different backgrounds but a unity of purpose. **UN**



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May 2026 U.S. Circulation: 13,723 Vol. 32, No. 4  
*United News* (ISSN 1088-8020) is published ten times per year (in Jan., Feb, March/April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept./Oct., Nov. and Dec.) by the United Church of God, an *International Association*, 555 Technecenter Dr., Milford, OH 45150.

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

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## Ministerial and Member Services



Lynn and Cassie Leiby

On March 21, 2026, Lynn Leiby was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Cassie, serve the congregation in Dallas, Texas.

On Saturday, March 28, 2026, Randy McQuien was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Charlotte, serve the congregation in Tampa, Florida.



Randy and Charlotte McQuien

On Saturday, March 28, 2026, Glenn Radebaugh was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Annie, serve the congregation in Central, Illinois.

On April 8, 2026, Adamu Billey was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Grace, serve the congregation in Accra, Ghana.



Glenn and Annie Radebaugh

Thank you for your prayers, asking God, the “Lord of the harvest” to send out laborers into His harvest (Luke 10:2). Prayer for God’s Spirit and wisdom to guide them in their



Adamu and Grace Billey

new roles is certainly needed. Your petitions for these men, their families, and the congregations where they serve are greatly appreciated. **UN**



Steve Myers is the Ministerial and Member Services operation manager for UCG and an elder who serves in the Cincinnati, Ohio area. He can be reached at [steve\\_myers@ucg.org](mailto:steve_myers@ucg.org)

## New Faces at the Home Office



### Emma Cortelyou—Staff Writer

I lived in Western Illinois until I was seven, when my dad got hired into the ministry, and we moved to Indiana. In August 2021, I moved back to my hometown in Illinois for college. I live on the family farm surrounded by cornfields, and I wouldn't have it any other way!

From August 2021 to December 2026 I went to Western

Illinois University. Both my bachelor's and master's degrees are in English. I worked in my university's writing center all four years, helping students develop and hone their writing.

My favorite things to do are listen to music, cook and clean—often all at the same time!

As a staff writer, I work with multiple teams to help develop new content as well as proofread and refresh older content.

I've enjoyed the variety of content I get to work on—from United Young Adult articles to *Beyond Today* scripts, there's no shortage of content waiting to be written! **UN**



### Rebekah Williams —Executive Assistant

from Ambassador College. After college I resided in Charlotte, North Carolina for seven years before meeting and marrying my husband, Zach (a Cincinnati native) and have lived in Cincinnati for one and a half years.

In 2017, I earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Education from Clarke University with a major in voice and piano. In 2018, I completed my Associates in Theology degree from Living University. After school I worked as Assistant to the Director for Living Education and on Music Faculty for the same program (taught mu-

sic and theology classes). Since college, I own and manage my own business teaching private lessons for singing and piano.

I have a passion for teaching and mentoring (especially teens and young adults). Growing up, I loved going to church camp and have attended many camps over the years (served as staff and counselor over 10 years). I have great interest in the outdoors, history and traveling. Some of my favorite hobbies include backpacking, downhill skiing, drawing, painting, reading, writing, doing jigsaw puzzles, training my

dog, and composing music.

At UCG, my main role is to provide administrative support to the President with tasks such as scheduling, travel planning and communications, etc. I also am available to assist the Operation Managers with various initiatives as needed.

I am looking forward to getting better acquainted with everyone at the home office. I'm grateful to God for this unique opportunity and I look forward to growing in my role to better serve those who I support. **UN**

## Wamatochick Young Adult Weekend



Young adults from across the country gathered together in the pines of Northern Arizona for the fifth annual United Young Adults Wamatochick Weekend. This year's theme was derived from 2 Corinthians 5:17, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new." This verse served as the anchor for the sermons and the presentations

during the weekend. It was a joyful and spiritually rejuvenating experience at Camp Wamatochick, which means "a place of friends."

The weekend began on Friday with an interactive M&M icebreaker that sparked laughter and connection, followed by a peaceful fireside chat that discussed how and when we make time for our relationship with our Heavenly Father.

Sabbath services included split sermons focused on the importance of becoming a new creation through the process of baptism, as well as evaluating what elements of our lives which should be eliminated as a disciple of Jesus Christ. The messages challenged attendees to reflect on who they wanted to become and what they need to start doing, keep doing, and stop doing in order to be made

in the image of Jesus Christ.

Following church services, a hymn sing gave young men the opportunity to practice song-leading while the assembly of people joined together in heartfelt praise to God!

That afternoon, a few young adults shared engaging and informative presentations centered on the theme "A New Creation." Topics explored how to be grafted into the Body as a new creation, how to appreciate our differences while remaining united as one body using a hybridity model, and how the Holy Spirit works with our cognitive processes. Each presentation included thoughtful discussion questions and encouraged meaningful participation.

That evening, everyone enjoyed a lively dance along with board games and card games.

Sunday morning featured additional young adult presentations, touching on the call to learn to praise God through music with a live exercise that culminated with a live presen-

tation of a new song with lyrics derived from the discussion. The next presentation focused on how to honor our parents through the different phases of life. Sunday afternoon offered a variety of outdoor activities such as horseback riding, mountain biking, hiking and a hay-ride! Sunday evening was very chill and cozy, with s'mores and delicious cobbler shared among friends around a fire. People played games and shared conversations through the night. Monday morning wrapped up with a Q&A, clean up, heartfelt final moments and warm good-byes before heading home.

The young adults loved the variety of activities and intentional pockets of time to truly relax. The weekend created space to build genuine friendships without pressure or hurry. This year's theme felt relatable, meaningful and deeply applicable to young adults. We already look forward to next year's Wamatochick Weekend!

*Katarina Fogelson*

## Game Show Night Brings Laughter

While the winter chill lingered outside, things were heating up inside our hall for this year's winter social. The theme? Game Show Night. On the evening of Feb. 14, 2026, the Central Oregon congregation held a game night. The room was divided, the stakes were high, and the team names were legendary. On one side stood the Fishers of Men; on the other, the Sons of Thunder. We kicked things off with a custom version of "Family Feud." Thanks to the input of over 100 anonymous COG members, we had "real" data to work with. Teams scrambled to guess the top answers to burning questions like: "What is the crowd-favorite snack during Unleavened Bread?" and "Which in-

struments were the biggest hits in biblical times?" After a high-pressure "fast money" round, it was anyone's game. The intensity shifted from brains to beats with the Whitney Houston Drum Challenge. This tested everyone's timing and musical expertise.

We rounded out the evening with a series of chaotic "Minute to Win It" challenges. Between the hilarious "Cookie Face" contortions and the sheer madness of "Dizzy Mummy," the room was filled with laughter and cheering. In the end, the Fishers of Men cast the widest net and took home the victory. However, with prizes for all and plenty of fellowship to go around, nobody truly left empty-handed.

*Amy Hunt*



## Scriptures, Soil, Food and Health



*Brethren from five states gathered in the Cape Girardeau, Missouri church hall for Neal Kinsey's seminar on February 22.*



*Neal Kinsey reads a scripture during his seminar.*

The Cape Girardeau, Missouri congregation hosted a free agricultural seminar by Neal Kinsey, titled "Scriptures, Soil, Food and Health" on Sunday, Feb. 22. Mr. Kinsey is an elder in the United Church of God, and he owns and operates Kinsey Agricultural Services, Inc., specializing in soil fertility management.

A total of 27 people attended from five states (Missouri, Illinois, Arkansas, Kentucky and South Dakota). Topics discussed included "The Bible & Our Existence," "Scriptures About Soil and Health," "Building Soil Health for Human Health" and "Some Tips Gardeners May Want to Utilize." A

free continental breakfast and catered lunch was provided by the local congregation.

The seminar was webcast live and was recorded on YouTube. More than 40 people have viewed the morning session and more than 60 have viewed the afternoon session. If you are interested in viewing the seminar, please scan the included QR codes. The seminars may also be found by searching YouTube for "2-22-26 Kinsey Ag Seminar."

As a follow-up from this seminar, Mr. Kinsey would like to extend a special money-saving offer for seminar attendees (including those online). If you wish to have your soil analyzed

by Kinsey Agricultural Services, Inc., please email Mr. Kinsey at [nealkinsey@gmail.com](mailto:nealkinsey@gmail.com), mention that you attended the seminar and say that you would like to participate in this offer. He will send information on how to have your soil samples analyzed for the cost that his company is charged by the lab. His company will not make any profit on these soil samples. If you wish to donate above and beyond the lab cost, he will donate those extra funds to the Cape Girardeau local congregation fund to defray seminar expenses.

We hope you will enjoy learning from these recorded seminars!

*Gregory Dullum*

# GN

## The Good News

### Which Animal Fat from “Clean Animals” Should Not Be Eaten?

Discover the biblical distinction between acceptable and forbidden animal fats and how understanding this difference can guide faithful choices in diet and health today.

by **United Church of God**

What does the Bible really say about fat in sacrificial offerings—and does it still matter today? By examining Leviticus and related scriptures, we uncover important distinctions between types of fat, their spiritual symbolism, and their relevance to our dietary choices as Christians.

#### Understanding the fat in the peace offering

In Leviticus 3:3-4, God gave instructions for the peace offering: “Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire to the Lord. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, the two kidneys and the fat that is on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove.”

When the Israelites brought a peace offering, certain parts of the animal had to be burned on the altar. This included the fat covering the internal organs, the fat above the organs, the two kidneys, the fat around them, and the fat covering the liver.

#### The biblically prohibited fat: *Heleb*

The fat surrounding the internal organs (*heleb* in Hebrew), is burned up in the sacrifice and is forbidden for people to eat. In verse 4, the fatty lobe attached to the liver above the kidneys is specifically described. In older translations of the Bible (like the King James Version), this part is referred to as the caul, but in more modern translations like the New King James Version, it is more commonly described as the fatty lobe attached to the liver or fatty tissue covering the liver.



What does the Bible say about the fats we should and shouldn't eat?

These organs and the fat surrounding them play a key role in filtering toxins and storing poisons in the body. God created these organs for this specific purpose, which is why He knew they were not fit for food. The *heleb* fat surrounding the kidneys and liver was never eaten by the Levitical priests, and they also did not eat the kidneys themselves. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that God does not want us to eat these parts of the animal either.

#### Not all fat is surrounding the internal organs

It's important to understand that *heleb* fat, which covers the entrails and is on the entrails, is the fat that is biblically prohibited. That is different from the regular fat found mixed inside meat of naturally-fed cattle, fattened the way God intended. This meat is generally called marbled meat.

Even when God's Kingdom is set up, there will be delicious, soft meat with fat in between that will be eaten, “And in this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice pieces, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things [*shemen* in Hebrew] full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees” (Isaiah 25:6). A modern version says, “The Lord All-Powerful will give a feast for all the people on this mountain. At the feast, there will be the best foods and wines. The meat will be good and tender, the wine pure and clear” (Easy-to-Read Version).

Orthodox Jews use a variation of the biblical Hebrew term *shemen* [*shuman*] to refer to the meat with fat inside it. *Shuman* fat is acceptable to eat, while *heleb* fat is strictly prohibited from being consumed by anyone—whether priests or others.

In fact, once the Israelites settled in the Promised Land, the prohibition of *heleb* fat was made even clearer: *Heleb* fat could not be eaten in any situation, even if

the animal was not being sacrificed.

As God said to Moses, “Speak to the children of Israel, saying: ‘You shall not eat any fat [*heleb*], of ox or sheep or goat. And the fat [*heleb*] of an animal that dies naturally, and the fat [*heleb*] of what is torn by wild beasts, may be used in any other way; but you shall by no means eat it. For whoever eats the fat [*heleb*] of the animal of which men offer an offering made by fire to the Lord, the person who eats it shall be cut off from his people” (Leviticus 7:23-25).

#### A balanced view

In Leviticus 3:17, God gives an important instruction: “This shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall eat neither fat [*heleb*] nor blood.” The law about eating fat and blood is not just for the sacrifices but is a permanent rule. So, we find:

1. *Heleb* (the fat surrounding the organs) must not be eaten by people, but it must be burned in the sacrifice.
2. *Shuman* (the regular fat found mixed within the meat and not separate from it) can be eaten by people.

The Bible offers a balanced view. While it forbids the consumption of certain fats in the context of sacrifices, it also acknowledges the enjoyment of rich foods during special occasions and feasts, where eating “fat portions” which can include such things as marbled meat, is allowed as an expression of thanksgiving to God (Nehemiah 8:10).

As Christians, we are reminded in the New Testament to honor God with our bodies, making wise choices about food and health, and ensuring that our lifestyle reflects our commitment to Him. In all, the underlying principle is clear: our choices, whether related to food or any other area of life, should honor God and align with His holiness, showing respect for His will in every aspect of our lives (Colossians 3:17).

#### What fat is normally made into beef tallow?

While most restaurants still use vegetable oil for cooking and frying, some few have reportedly switched over to using beef tallow for cooking or frying some foods. Most beef tallow is primarily made from *heleb* fat (the prohibited fat surrounding the internal organs), particularly the suet, which is known for its higher melting point and purity when rendered.

*Shuman* fat (the fat found mixed within the meat) can also be rendered into tallow, but it's generally not as common or as desirable for making tallow compared to *heleb* fat.

*Heleb* fat tends to produce a richer, flavorful beef tallow for cooking, frying and other uses. Beef tallow is typically made from *heleb* fat, particularly the suet (hard fat around the loins and kidneys) though it can also be rendered from *shuman* fat, but that is less common.

Vegetable oils, coconut oil and avocado oil have lately become widespread for cooking, frying, roasting or sautéing. These are biblical guidelines to consider about animal fat and beef tallow. **GN**

## Repentance and Faith

Repentance goes beyond being sorry or showing remorse for one's past actions

*from Fundamental Beliefs of the United Church of God*

Repentance from dead works and faith toward God are listed in Hebrews 6:1 as part of the foundation that ultimately leads to perfection and eternal life. Jesus Christ set an important pattern in His preaching when He regularly called on hearers to “repent, and believe” (Mark 1:15). The apostle Paul also preached “repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).

Jesus pointed out the importance of repentance when He twice stated that “unless you repent you will all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5). God requires that everyone repent (Acts 17:30; 2 Peter 3:9). In the first recorded sermon in the New Testament Church, Peter told the people to “repent” (Acts 2:38).

We are to repent of sin, which is the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4, King James Version). Repentance goes beyond being sorry or showing remorse for one's past actions (2 Corinthians 7:8-11). True repentance involves recognition of our nature and its opposition to God (Romans 8:7). It requires a change, a complete and thorough turnaround in one's life, a change from sinning to ceasing from sin—from disobeying God's law to obeying it.

We are to stop going the way of the world and turn to God's way instead (Isaiah 55:7-9; Acts 26:20; Romans 12:2). Repentance is full surrender and willing obedience, based on the knowledge of how God wants us to live.

Repentance begins with our crying out to God for forgiveness of our sins and our accepting Jesus Christ as personal Savior. It is not a decision based on emotion only, though emotion is certainly an important part (Acts 2:37-38), but a decision to sincerely obey God through faith in Jesus Christ. Christ's righteousness becomes ours through faith in and from Him (Philippians 3:8-9; Romans 8:1-4).

This faith is a deep belief and trusting confidence (Hebrews 11:1). And we can't come to God without it: “But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (Hebrews 11:6). Such faith will lead to obeying God. It not only trusts in initial forgiveness of sin, but it recognizes that God will help the faithful to remain faithful.

Repentance through faith is not simply compliance with a system of religion or a set of rules. Confidence in God and His ways will lead one to act in accordance with His will and to manifest works of righteousness (James 2:17-26). True godly repentance is not something that a person can work up by himself. It is a gift from God (2 Timothy 2:25; Acts 11:18). It is one of the many good things our Heavenly Father gives us (James 1:17). He leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4).



Seplak/Pexels

We believe that all who truly repent of their sins in full surrender and willing obedience to God, and who by faith accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, have their sins forgiven by an act of divine grace. Such individuals are justified, pardoned from the penalty of sin and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, which literally abides within them and supplies the divine love that alone can fulfill the law and produce righteousness. They are baptized by the Spirit into the Body of Christ, which is the true Church of God. We believe in a true change in life and attitude. Only those who have the indwelling presence of, and are being led by, the Holy Spirit are Christ's (Acts 2:38, 3:19, 5:29-32; 2 Corinthians 7:10; John 3:16; Ephesians 1:7, 2:7-9; Romans 3:21-26, 5:5, 6:6, 8:4, 8:9-10, 8:14, 13:10; Jeremiah 33:8; John 14:16-17; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Philippians 2:3-5).

Repentance is a major part of the conversion process. As Peter continued in that first sermon, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). So repentance precedes baptism—the latter being an outward sign of our commitment to leave our old ways behind and embark on a new life, cleansed through Christ.

Then, after repentance and baptism, God's Spirit is given to a person through the laying on of hands by a duly ordained servant of God (Acts 8:14-18; 2 Timothy 1:6; Hebrews 6:1-2). The Holy Spirit thereafter helps us to honor our commitment of repentance, leading us to actually live God's way (Romans 8:14). We then have the love of God motivating us to keep God's laws (1 John 5:3). True Christians have the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9) and strive to live as Christ lived (1 John 2:6).

Repentance involves both sorrow and joy. Repentance leads to a joyful and eternal relationship with our loving God, our Creator and giver of life. Repentance focuses our vision on the love and mercy of God and the forgiveness of sin made possible by the sacrifice of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Repentance is necessary for putting off the “old man,” our former character, and becoming a part of the family of God (Ephesians 4:20-24).

And again, this is a response of faith. In Mark 1:15, quoted in part earlier, Jesus specifically called for people to “repent, and believe in the gospel”—referring to the good news of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14). The expectation of being a part of God's Kingdom is certainly reason to rejoice—and it motivates those who take it to heart to do God's will.

Soon after godly repentance, one should, as we've seen, be baptized so that all past sins are blotted out (Romans 3:25), thereupon receiving the gift of the

Holy Spirit (Acts 2:37-38). Afterward comes a life led by God's Spirit, growing in grace and knowledge, bearing fruit and being perfected in holiness and righteousness (2 Peter 3:18; Matthew 13:23; 2 Corinthians 7:1).

One important result of having the Holy Spirit within us is the development of faith (Galatians 5:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12:4, 9). “The faith of the Son of God” is what we now live by (Galatians 2:20, KJV). Indeed, the just (those who are justified or made right with God) live by faith (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38).

Repentance, we need to realize, must be ongoing. It is not a one-time action in the life of the believer. A converted person must continue to battle sin in his or her life (1 John 1:8-10; 1 John 2:1). Vestiges of human nature remain for the rest of our lives, warring against our minds and leading to sin (Romans 7:17, 20-21).

A spiritually converted person ultimately desires to please and obey God. The love of God poured into that person's heart by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5) seeks to follow the perfect way of God, but the weakness of the flesh often impedes this inward desire (Romans 7:12-25).

God does not condemn the believer (Romans 8:1) as long as he or she continues with God in the ongoing process of repenting and overcoming sin (Revelation 2:7; Romans 2:11, 17, 26, 3:5, 12, 21). Only if repentance permanently ceases is there no longer forgiveness.

The converted person continues through repentance and faith to rely on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to cover his or her sins in this lifelong process of overcoming. And through the miraculous help of Christ living in him or her through the Holy Spirit, the Christian is able to grow in God's way of life, increasingly walking by faith in obedience to God's law of love (Galatians 2:20; Philippians 4:13; Colossians 1:29). **GN**

## The Healing Power of Forgiveness

by Steve Myers and Dr. Roy Fouch

Few experiences affect the human heart more deeply than being hurt by another person. A harsh word, a betrayal of trust or a broken relationship can leave wounds that linger for years. Even after the situation has passed, the emotional pain may remain.

The Bible addresses this universal human experience and reveals that forgiveness—though often difficult—is essential not only for our emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing, but most importantly for our relationship with God.

Consider a common situation. Two friends who once shared a close bond experience a misunderstanding that grows into resentment. Each begins to replay the offense in their mind, and over time the distance between them grows. What began as a single moment of hurt slowly becomes a burden that affects their peace of mind and relationships with others. Situations like this remind us how powerful unresolved offenses can become if they are not addressed.

Forgiveness is one of the most powerful and transformative processes in human experience. From a biblical perspective, it lies at the heart of God's plan of salvation and the development of godly character.

Without God's forgiveness through Jesus Christ, the ultimate result of sin would be death and the loss of the opportunity for eternal life (Romans 6:23). Thankfully, God has made a way for human beings to be forgiven and to receive the gift of eternal life through the sacrifice of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

### The Need for Forgiveness

This process begins with repentance, as Acts 2:38 explains, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Through repentance, baptism and receiving the Holy Spirit, we are reconciled to God and given the power to grow spiritually. God's Spirit helps us understand His truth and empowers us to develop the character of Jesus Christ.

One essential aspect of that character is the willingness to forgive others. Colossians 3:12-13 instructs us: "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another . . . even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do."

Forgiveness is not optional for Christians—it is a fundamental part of living God's way of life.

Jesus Christ emphasized this in the model prayer. In Matthew 6:12 He taught us to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

Immediately after giving this prayer, Jesus underscored how seriously God views this responsibility: "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15).

Forgiveness is therefore both a gift we receive from God and a responsibility we must extend to others. Jesus reinforced this principle in the parable of the un-

forgiving servant (Matthew 18:21-35). In this parable, a servant who had been forgiven an enormous debt refused to forgive a much smaller debt owed to him. Christ's lesson is clear: those who receive great mercy from God must show mercy to others.

Spiritually, forgiveness restores our relationship with God and allows His Spirit to continue working in our lives. As 1 John 1:9 reminds us, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to

both mind and body, damage relationships and hinder spiritual growth.

Scripture warns that bitterness is like a poison that harms the one who carries it. When resentment is allowed to grow, it can cloud judgment, hinder reconciliation and rob a person of peace of mind.

Prolonged bitterness affects the mind and body. It can increase stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline, contribute to high blood pressure, weaken the immune system and impair cardiovascular health. Over time, this ongoing stress may contribute to chronic inflammation and accelerate the aging process.

### Learning to Forgive as Christ Forgave

But forgiveness is not always easy. When we have been deeply hurt or wronged, forgiving someone may feel nearly impossible.

At such times we must remember the example of Jesus Christ.

While suffering on the stake—after betrayal, injustice and intense physical pain—Jesus prayed for those responsible for His suffering: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).

His example reminds us that forgiveness is not based merely on human emotion—it flows from a heart that desires to follow God's way.

Through Christ's sacrifice, God promises complete forgiveness for those who repent. Hebrews 8:12 records God's promise: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."

Recognizing the mercy we have received from God helps us extend mercy to others.

A powerful real-life example of forgiveness comes from Corrie ten Boom, who risked her life to shelter Jews during World War II and later survived imprisonment in a Nazi concentration camp. She later described a remarkable experience after the war in her book, *The Hiding Place* (1971 and 1984, page 215):

"It was in a church service in Munich that I saw him, the former S.S. man who had stood guard at the shower-room door in the processing center at Ravensbrück. He was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time. And suddenly it was all there—the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, Betsie's pain-blanching face.

"He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. 'How grateful I am for your message, Fraulein,' he said. 'To think that, as you say, He has washed my sins away!'

"His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people in Bloemendaal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

"Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ died for this man; was I going to ask for more? Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him. I tried to smile; I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me Your forgiveness.

"As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened...into my heart sprang a love for this stranger

*Continued on page 8*



*Forgiveness promotes emotional healing and can also contribute to improved physical well-being.*

cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Forgiveness can also bring important emotional and physical benefits. It promotes emotional healing and can also contribute to improved physical well-being, as both research and biblical principles indicate. When a person forgives another, they release emotional burdens that can otherwise weigh heavily on the mind and body.

Researchers Toussaint, Worthington and Williams, in their work *Forgiveness and Health*, identified several benefits of forgiveness, including healthier relationships, improved emotional well-being, reduced anxiety and hostility, and improved overall health. While the Bible is not a medical textbook, its teachings consistently promote attitudes and behaviors that lead to healthier lives.

### The Danger of Bitterness

In contrast, unforgiveness fosters destructive emotional and spiritual states. Anger, resentment, grudges and bitterness can gradually take root in the heart. Scripture strongly warns against allowing such attitudes to grow.

Ephesians 4:31-32 instructs us: "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."

Bitterness can affect a person deeply—emotionally, spiritually and even physically. Long-term resentment often produces chronic stress that can affect

that almost overwhelmed me. And so, I discovered that . . . when He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself.”

Her experience reminds us that true forgiveness often requires help beyond our own strength.

Forgiveness is not always something we can generate through human effort alone. God provides the help we need through the power of His Spirit.

As we ask God for help and actively choose to follow His instruction to forgive, He can gradually transform bitterness into compassion and love.

Forgiveness does not mean ignoring wrongdoing, nor does it guarantee that every damaged relationship will be fully restored. In some situations, trust must be rebuilt over time, and wisdom may require appropriate boundaries. Yet forgiveness frees the heart from the destructive grip of resentment and allows healing to begin.

### Steps Toward Practicing Forgiveness

Forgiveness is not always easy, especially when the hurt runs deep. Yet the Bible provides practical guidance that can help us develop a forgiving heart.

First, remember the forgiveness God has extended to us. Reflecting on the mercy God has shown through Jesus Christ helps us develop humility and compassion toward others. As Ephesians 4:32 reminds us, we are to forgive “even as God in Christ forgave you.”

Second, ask God for help. Forgiveness often requires God’s Spirit working within us. When resentment lingers, we can pray for the strength to release bitterness and develop a heart that reflects God’s mercy (Luke 6:28).

Third, make the decision to let go of resentment. Forgiveness often begins with a deliberate choice. While emotions may take time to heal, choosing to release bitterness allows God to begin transforming our thoughts and attitudes.

Fourth, pursue peace whenever possible. Romans 12:18 instructs us, “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.” While not every relationship can be fully restored, forgiveness keeps our hearts free from hostility.

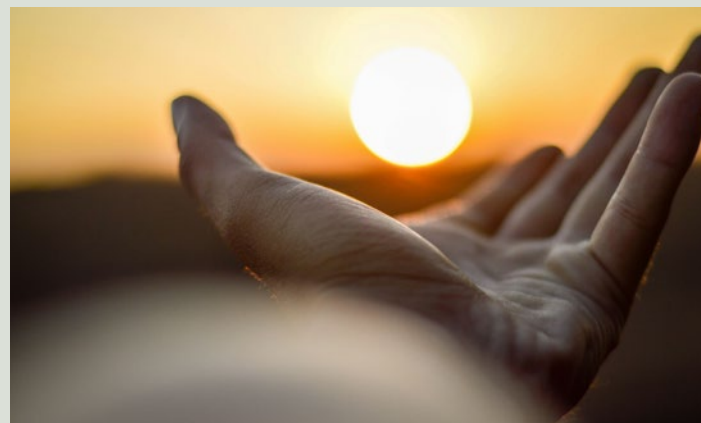
As we apply these principles, forgiveness becomes more than an obligation—it becomes part of the character God is forming in us.

### Reflecting the Character of God

Most importantly, forgiveness reflects the very character of God. When we remember the mercy God has shown us—through forgiving our sins that made Christ’s sacrifice necessary—we are reminded that we too must extend mercy to others.

Through the power of God’s Spirit, forgiveness becomes more than an instruction—it becomes a pathway to freedom from bitterness, greater peace of mind and deeper relationships with both God and others. As we practice forgiveness, we increasingly reflect the love, mercy and character of the God who first forgave us. **UN**

## Light of Hope Helpline



If you feel like you’re facing challenges alone, please know that we’re here to help. We’d like to offer guidance and encouragement. 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.

## Cancer—My Adventure

by Laura Peabody

In my previous article, “Becoming a Widow—My Journey” in the February issue of *United News*, I shared my husband’s experience with cancer. Little did I know, I was about to begin my own journey with cancer.

A few months ago, I went to Urgent Care after not feeling well for several months. They found a UTI, which by itself can be miserable, but because of my age and the pain I was feeling, they wanted to do a CT scan. In that scan they found cancer in my omentum (a fatty tissue that covers the internal organs). My cancer turned out to be a type of metastatic cancer that starts in the ovaries.

Although hospital admission was offered, I found I wasn’t ready for that. The doctors could be wrong, I thought. They let me go home with instructions to follow up with an oncologist. Oncologist? Me? The next morning, though, I realized it was worth at least trying to rule this speculation out. So, I called the oncologist. They set up an appointment for early the following week. I notified my family. After losing their dad to cancer just a year and a half ago, they wanted to come and be with me.

The morning of the appointment came. My family and a very dear friend came with me. I saw this big blue bag that most were carrying with this cancer center’s logo on it. I immediately thought, I don’t want one of those! But they gave me one anyway. They called my name. They took me back, weighed me, took my stats, and then led the five of us back into the exam room.

When the oncologist entered, he looked at me and said, “I’m sorry.” I thought, “I’m dying!” He went on to explain, very compassionately, that what they told me in the ER was correct and “the way we treat this cancer is . . .” He had treated it before! I wasn’t the only one. I

felt comfortable with his plan. My dear friend was impressed with him as well and that meant a lot to me.

I had always wondered if I would ever take chemo. You don’t know until that day comes. First, this man was very compassionate. He proved that in the continued conversation that day. Second, he had treated this cancer before. I felt that he knew what he was talking about and was prepared to help me.

As my entourage and I left the exam room to the area where you made further appointments, my family all stood with me and kept telling me, “We’re right here with you, mom. You aren’t and will never be alone. We’re going to walk through this with you.” I stood and looked at them and asked them, “Okay, when are you going to have *your* port put in?” We all laughed. What else could we do at this point?

That was the first day of this adventure that I have begun. Since then, I have had my first chemo treatment. It came with a few side effects which differ with each person. I’ve managed them, but not without the most attentive care of my family and close friends. My dear daughter-in-law came the day before my first treatment and stayed five days. She and my eldest son intend to come with each treatment so that I am not alone. My family has purchased various items to make me comfortable and to ensure that they can give me the best care that they can. I couldn’t possibly ask for a better family at this time in my life!

But more importantly, I couldn’t possibly have a better, more attentive Father holding my hand and seeing me through this. He has always been with me and is with me still. I can’t tire of saying this.

Six or so months ago, still grieving over the loss of my beloved husband, I started asking God what He wanted me to do now. A widow kind of goes through this “my life is over” stage. But I wanted God’s direction in my life. What did He want me to do now? I kept at-

tending church, serving where I could with lots of help from my local pastor and congregation. But I still wasn’t sure what God wanted me to do. I needed direction. And then I was diagnosed with cancer.

I thought, “Okay, there is a purpose for this and I’m going to walk through this searching for that purpose.” God never does anything without a purpose. So, I am holding the hands of my Big Brother, Savior, and soon coming King, and our heavenly Father and walking down this path with Them. The one thing I know is that God isn’t finished with me yet! I am still a work in progress. My race may be run tomorrow or in 10 years, but not yet! So, I will walk through this adventure, holding Their hands, and allowing Them to show me the way. I want God to fulfill His purpose in me and I don’t want to get in the way.

I will continue. I have chemo treatments scheduled, and if my numbers are going in the right direction, there will be surgery, a complete hysterectomy and omentectomy. After recovery from the surgery, there will be another three rounds of chemo, to ensure that the surgery got it all. Then, as one of the PA’s told me, they hope I’ll be “cured.” I’d rather think, “healed.” This is what I’m hoping for, God willing. I will hold His hand throughout.

So, it will be a long summer. I don’t know what each treatment will bring, but my family and brethren are a wonderful support group. My dear friend, you know who you are, has accompanied me to nearly every visit. I’m so very thankful for her. She takes wonderful notes, sometimes even recording my whole appointment to pass on to my family when they can’t be there. It’s been great having her as I am somewhat brain-dead at these appointments. And I now have sisters in Christ stopping

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**Ralph and Cheryl Jedamski**

50<sup>th</sup> anniversary



**David and Nancy Martin**

50<sup>th</sup> anniversary



**Manuel and Sandra Medina**

50<sup>th</sup> anniversary



**Dale Carter**

Aug. 16, 1946-June 26, 2025



**William (Bill) Quentin Reynolds**

June 22, 1949-Feb. 17, 2026

## Anniversaries

### Ralph and Cheryl Jedamski

Ralph and Cheryl (Reynolds) Jedamski celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary on April 26, 2025. They serve as a deacon and deaconess in the Paducah, Kentucky congregation, and they were pleasantly surprised on the Sabbath of April 26, 2025, when the brethren treated them to a little celebration with cake and refreshments following services.

Ralph and Cheryl were married by Mr. Frank McCrady, a minister in God's Church, at the home of Mr. Cliff Stevens, the mayor of Effingham, Illinois, on the Sabbath evening of April 26, 1975.

The Jedamskis are now both retired. They have resided in Goreville, Illinois, for the last 34 years. They have four grown children, Anthony, Judy, Penny and Cindi; and 10 grandchildren.

Ralph and Cheryl give credit for their successful 50 years of marriage to their faith in God's way of life.

### David and Nancy Martin

On Jan. 31, 2026, we celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary in Sault Sainte Marie, Ontario, Canada at the Mill Restaurant.

We were both baptized in God's Church in 1974 and attended our very first Feast of Tabernacles the same year at the Wisconsin Dells. However, since there were over 10,000 festival attendees, we did not meet until November at the Hunters Ball (Square Dance Social), hosted by the Gaylord, Michigan Church of God. Although we sat at the same table, David assumed Nancy was married. Then, in the spring of 1975, a mutual church friend invited us to go on a "blind" date to Mackinac Island, Michigan. In addition to having a wonderful time on the Island, President Gerald Ford was visiting Mackinac Island, which added to a very memorable first date.

We were married at the beautiful Grace Dow Memorial Gardens Complex in Midland, Michigan on Jan. 31, 1976. Our

wedding ceremony was officiated by Mr. Gerald Weston (WCG).

Nancy delivered our first child, Joshua, in 1980, followed by five more children, Nathan, Benjamin, Jordan, Aaron and Virginia (Ginny). Prior to our first child, Nancy worked for the circuit judge. She chose to give up career life to be a "stay-at-home mother." While rearing our six children, Nancy, with David's assistance, built a sizeable home business that required her to balance child-rearing and business, while still carving out Bible study and prayer time. We have four grandchildren, Noah, Callie, Eli and Luke, plus one great-granddaughter, Corina. Our home church location is Gaylord, Michigan. David was ordained a deacon at the Feast of Tabernacles in 1998.

We have lived in Sault Sainte Marie, where David was born, for over 50 years. David retired several years ago from the Chippewa County Health Department as the health officer. We hope to take an anniversary trip in the near future to celebrate our 50-year milestone of marriage.

### Manuel and Sandra Medina

Manuel and Sandra Medina met in the Worldwide Church of God back in 1974, and got married on July 7, 1975.

Manuel and Sandra live in the Medford, Oregon area and attend the local UCG congregation there.

### William (Bill) Quentin Reynolds

William (Bill) Quentin Reynolds, age 76, of Albuquerque, New Mexico, died peacefully on Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2026 at his residence, surrounded by love.

A natural extrovert, Bill made many valued friends throughout his life and even "adopted" a few families along the way. He will be greatly missed.

Bill was born on June 22, 1949 in Coral Gables, Florida to the late John C. and Audrey C. Reynolds. He spent his first six years in Miami, before moving to Kentucky. He was a 1968 graduate of Lafayette High School in Lexington, Kentucky. Over the course of his life, he lived in various places across the country including Westwood, New Jersey; Cincinnati, Ohio; Lexington, Kentucky; and El Paso, Texas, before settling in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Before retiring, Bill spent his career in sales and business ownership. It was a natural direction for him given his love of people and outgoing nature.

Bill is survived by his beloved wife of 34 years, Edith Angelica Reynolds; one brother, Gregory; and one sister, Diane (Ken). He was a longtime active member of the United Church of God in Albuquerque and a lineal descendant of seven American patriots. He will be remembered for his unwavering love and faith for God, family, friends and neighbors; for his generous, kind and loving nature; his ability to look on the positive side in life; and the difference he has made in other people's lives. **UN**

## Obituaries

### Dale Carter

The Vero Beach UCG lost a tremendous family member last June. Dale Carter was a dedicated member who served whenever there arose a need. He was a retired land developer who was a gifted pilot and sailboat captain who could fix or repair anything that moved or didn't.

Dale was always learning about life and the Word of God. He was most active in our interactive Bible studies. He could recall hundreds of scriptures off the top of his head. Even with his failing health the last few years, Dale was always up for discussing the fine points of the Bible.

Dale was blessed with his wife Diane in 1997. Diane continues to serve in Dale's absence as she carries on the Carter tradition in Vero Beach. Dale is survived by Diane and his son Bryon. Dale's sense of humor and laughter was always contagious. He awaits his resurrection by his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## Cancer—My Adventure

*Continued from page 8*

by to visit and offer to do odd things that I can't currently keep up with. It all means so much to me.

If you know of someone who is going through a similar journey, call them. See if you can accompany them to an appointment. Offer to do some light housework for them. Take them a meal—if they're up to eating. Know your brethren living close to you and just offer help. If we get to know our brethren, we know what they like, etc., and can help without being asked. That's the best way and it means so much!

My support group includes all of you who have so graciously sent cards, letters, texts and phone calls my way. Thank you. They mean so very much. It's hard to explain how you can feel the love of brethren when you're sitting all alone and facing this difficult path. I will try not to del-

ude you all with prayer request updates unless something changes.

Just know that once we announce that we have cancer, our adventure is just beginning. For me, it will be a very long spring and summer. My goal is to be able to attend the Feast of Tabernacles this fall. Please keep those of us with cancer in your prayers.

God has your back, even through cancer! He will never leave you nor forsake you (Hebrews 13:5). Put your life in His hands and walk with Him. We are learning from the inside out all about a disease that wrecks the lives of many. We're learning and we have a hope that many do not have. I encourage you read some of the scriptures that have helped me: Psalm 31:24, Psalm 18:1-2 and Psalm 16:1. Hugs to you all! **UN**

Announcements for *United News* can be sent by email (preferred) to [un@ucg.org](mailto:un@ucg.org), or by mail to *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027. Please include a color photo; if mailing in, please indicate if you would like the photo returned. Announcements should not exceed 500 words, and may be lightly edited for length and/or clarity by *United News* staff.

## Cruising Through Faith: A Winter Social to Remember



MEDFORD, Oregon—This year's church winter social set sail Jan. 31, 2026 on a joyful adventure inspired by the biblical account of Noah's Ark. The church meeting hall was transformed into a lively cruise experience, where costumes were encouraged as the fellowship hall welcomed "passengers" aboard with a stunning eight-foot cardboard ark filled with stuffed animals, a vibrant balloon rainbow arch, and painted cardboard clouds drifting overhead.

Activities for all ages kept the excitement afloat. Guests

teamed up for an ark-building contest using a variety of random supplies, testing both ingenuity and teamwork. A Noah's Ark-themed trivia game challenged biblical knowledge, while children and adults alike enjoyed floor puzzles and a lively search to find matching pairs of animals.

A highlight of the evening was a spirited "Not-So-Newlywed Game" show, where five couples took the stage to answer humorous and heartwarming questions about one another. Their playful banter and surprising answers filled the room

with laughter and showcased the joy of strong, faith-filled marriages.

The evening also featured delightful performances, including piano selections and entertaining impersonations of Elvis and other artists that had the audience clapping along. Friendly competition continued with relay races, shuffleboard, and cornhole.

No cruise would be complete without a feast, and the potluck delivered in abundance. A chocolate fountain dessert bar provided a sweet ending to an already memorable event.



More than just a social gathering, the winter "cruise" celebrated creativity, fellowship

and the joy of coming together as a church family.

*Rebekah Edwards*

## Matters of the Heart: Where Love, Faith and Purpose Begin

The Puget Sound Women's Enrichment Weekend was held the first weekend of March at the La Conner Inn in La Conner, Washington. The weekend was sponsored by the UCG Seattle, Washington congregation. On the Sabbath, seventy-one women of various ages enjoyed hearing guest speaker Mr. Ben Light, pastor of the Salem and Eugene, Oregon congregations. His sermon supported the weekend's theme, "Matters of the Heart: Where Love, Faith and Purpose Begin," and reinforced how God is reproducing Himself in each person He calls as He works from the inside out.

Later that day, Mrs. Shannon Light served as the main presenter. Her message offered practical encouragement and timely reminders that the heart is where faithful decisions are formed, and where steady spiritual growth is developed over time. The day ended with four panel presentations which highlighted multi-generational connections to the theme and encouraged shared perspectives across life's stages. Sunday morning concluded



with a group activity focused on how the five senses interact with the heart.

Live musical contributions from a variety of our talented ladies enriched the weekend. Along with meals, laughter, meaningful fellowship, and warm conversation, the atmosphere encouraged the strengthening of bonds as sisters in Christ. Our team is grateful to God for His blessing on the weekend, and we look forward to next year.

*Rob and Tina Slocum*



## Teens

If you've had a challenging relationship with your parents, read these three actions that can help you honor them when they might not be the most honorable.



## Young Adults

Being a counselor at camp is a challenging experience but the benefits far outweigh the temporary end-of-week fatigue. Read this article to find out how.



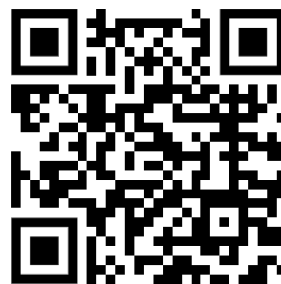
## Seniors

Are you making a difference in someone else's life? Never underestimate how an act of kindness can change someone's life. Read how you can be a hero!



## Singles

God gave us the gift of friendship. But not everybody uses friendship the way God intended it to be used. This sermon offers a closer look at godly friendship.



## Married Couples

The relationship between husband and wife can be one of the most rewarding relationships of life. This sermon shares how you can navigate challenges together.



## Parents

Although making mistakes is part of life, certain parenting blunders are especially common today. This article describes five big ones to avoid.



## Grandparents

How can you make a difference in your grandchildren's lives? Read one grandmother's experience and how she chose to step up and make an impact.



## CHILDREN'S CORNER

### Proverbs About Our Speech

Use this code to decipher the messages below.

A=1 B=2 C=3 D=4 E=5 F=6 G=7 H=8 I=9 J=10 K=11 L=12 M=13 N=14  
O=15 P=16 Q=17 R=18 S=19 T=20 U=21 V=22 W=23 X=24 Y=25 Z=26

Proverbs 15:1

1 19 15 6 20 1 14 19 23 5 18 20 21 18 14 19

1 23 1 25 23 18 1 20 8

Proverbs 11:13

1 20 1 12 5 2 5 1 18 5 18 18 5 22 5 1 12 19

19 5 3 18 5 20 19

Proverbs 12:22

12 25 9 14 7 12 9 16 19 1 18 5 1 14

1 2 15 13 9 14 1 20 9 15 14 20 15 20 8 5 12 15 18 4

Proverbs 13:3

8 5 20 8 1 20 11 5 5 16 19 8 9 19

13 15 21 20 8 11 5 5 16 19 8 9 19 12 9 6 5

Proverbs 16:24

16 12 5 1 19 1 14 20 23 15 18 4 19 1 18 5

1 19 1 8 15 14 5 25 3 15 13 2

Proverbs 16:28

1 23 8 9 19 16 5 18 5 18

19 5 16 1 18 1 20 5 19 6 18 9 5 14 4 19

Proverbs 18:8

20 8 5 23 15 18 4 19 15 6 1

20 1 12 5 2 5 1 18 5 18 1 18 5 1 19 23 15 21 14 4 19

Proverbs 27:2

12 5 20 1 14 15 20 8 5 18 16 18 1 9 19 5

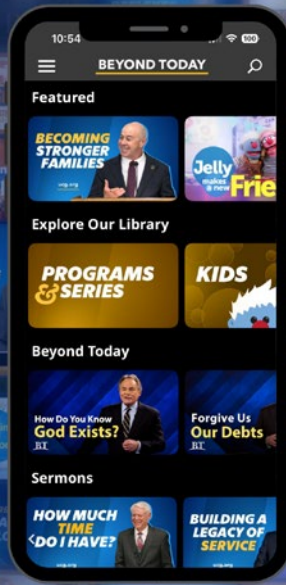
25 15 21 1 14 4 14 15 20 25 15 21 18 15 23 14 13 15 21 20 8

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### BY THE NUMBERS

# 26

Number of baptisms in March 2026

# CALLING ALL GRADUATES!



**Congratulations!**

We plan to feature the high school and university graduates of 2026 in the July issue of *United News*! Please take a few minutes to answer the questions below and send a photograph.

Please include your phone number or email address in case we need to confirm spellings, etc. (they will not be printed). Send with a recent, appropriate photo of the graduate by June 5. Digital photos should be at least 800 pixels in their smallest dimension to print sharply.

Send by email to [un@ucg.org](mailto:un@ucg.org), or send by mail to *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027 (post-marked by June 5). We may edit for clarity and/or length to meet the 250-word maximum length.

#### New this year:

You can also submit your announcement online using the included QR code. You will still need to submit your photo by email to [un@ucg.org](mailto:un@ucg.org).



#### Here's what to include:

1. Graduate's name
2. Parents' names (if high school grad)
3. Congregation
4. School, work, internship, co-op, other accomplishments
5. Interests, interesting facts about yourself, Church activities you're involved in, hobbies, unusual skills, favorite scripture, etc.
6. Plans after graduation

Congratulations!