

United News

NEWS of the UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

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ucg.org/members

United News: The Next 30 Years

Thirty. In the Bible, it often signals a coming of age. This number is often connected with maturity and new beginnings.

Last year, United Church of God turned 30 years old. We marked this occasion at the 2025 General Conference of Elders, and in the months that have followed, we've put time into continued introspection as we move into the next 30. Last year also marked the 30th anniversary of UCG's first print publication: *New Beginnings*. Today, it is known as *United News*.

As a publication, *United News* has chronicled the growth of UCG, both sharing important news and preserving a printed legacy. This publication is to serve you, our members, and to that end, we conducted a survey in late 2024 to see how we might enhance *United News* for your benefit.

A recurring theme among the comments was your love for photos, stories and updates from members around the world. Many of you have expressed how meaningful it would be to have more of these photographs in color and to change to a different printing process that will reduce ink smudges and result in more legible text. As the publication department at the home office went through the process of making quality upgrades to the *Beyond Today* magazine (beginning with the July-September issue), the *United News* team decided it was time to follow suit with the July *United News* you're holding right now!

We're moving from a hybrid color/black and white printing model to full-color pages. We're also opting for a higher-quality paper. Most noticeably, we're changing size from a newspaper format (11.5 × 14 inches) to a magazine format (8.5 × 10.75 inches). You will notice that

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WHERE ARE YOU GOING FOR THE FEAST?

That's right, in a few short months the next few Holy Days will be here! Feast of Tabernacles plans are coming together, but we're most excited to keep the Feast with you!

Visit feast.ucg.org to choose and register for a site.

See you there!

United News

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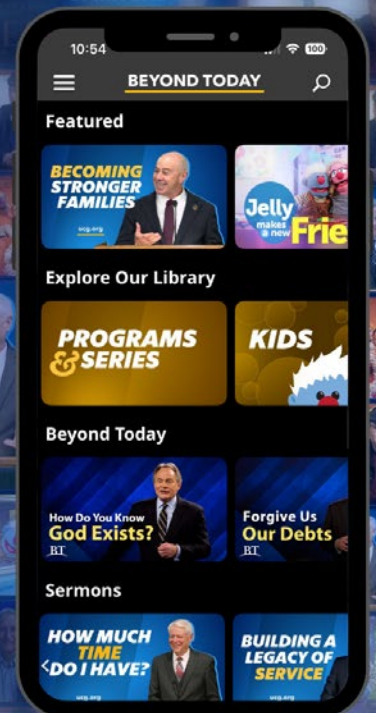
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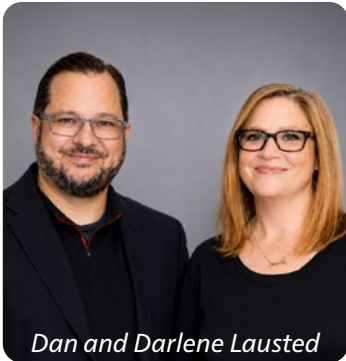


DOWNLOAD APP



Operation Managers' Updates

Ministerial and Member Services



On May 24, 2026, Dan Lausted was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Darlene, are the congregation in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

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

Steve Myers

Ministerial and Member Services Operation Manager



Financial Services

New Offering Envelopes for the Holy Days

The green Holy Day envelopes have been updated with a cleaner, more user-friendly layout that we believe is easier to read and complete. Below is a brief overview of the updates, along with instructions on how to complete the envelope.

1. Holy Day name—There is no need to write the date or the name of the Holy Day. Simply check the box that applies.
2. Index number field—If you know your index number, please enter it here so we can ensure your offering is applied to the correct individual.
3. Name and address field—Please include your name and address to help us accurately identify you in our system and ensure you receive proper credit for your offering.
4. Change of address—Check this box if your address has changed. This will notify us to update your information in our system.

5. Amount box—Indicate the amount of the offering enclosed in the envelope. If you have donated online, there is no need to enter an amount.
6. Donated online—If you have donated online, check this box to indicate that the envelope does not contain an offering. No additional sections of the envelope need to be completed unless you are providing an address change.
7. QR code—If you prefer to donate online, you may use the QR code, which will direct you to the UCG offering page to complete your donation.

Personalized Holy Day envelopes with the updated design will be printed and mailed prior to the Fall Holy Days. If you prefer to donate online and no longer wish to receive personalized Holy Day offering envelopes, please let us know by sending an email to mpc@ucg.org or calling (513) 576-7474.

If you have received the impression that we are encouraging online donations, that impression is correct. Donating online helps reduce the possibility of offerings being delayed or lost in the mail and allows donations to be recorded almost immediately. Increased use of online giving also reduces the amount of time members spend counting offerings on Holy Days and decreases the amount of processing time required at the home office.



HOLY DAY OFFERING

Do Not Mail

1 1st Day of Unleavened Bread Feast of Trumpets

7th Day of Unleavened Bread Day of Atonement

Feast of Pentecost Feast of Tabernacles

The Eighth Day

2 Index No. **U**

3 Name: _____

Address: _____

4 Change of Address

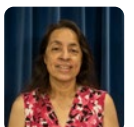
5 \$ _____

6 I donated online (nothing in envelope)

7  ucg.org/give/offerings

Linda Api

Financial Services Operation Manager



Home Office News

United News: The Next 30 Years

Continued from cover

the graphics and colors are more closely aligned with our *Beyond Today* magazine, allowing our newer members and coworkers to enjoy a continuous experience from initially receiving *Beyond Today* to receiving their first copy of *United News*. In the interest of legibility, we've also increased font sizes for most of our interior text and left more open space for the words to flow naturally. You'll also see more pictures going forward—because after all, that was one of the most frequent requests!

In this process, we've been blessed to keep costs at a very similar level. Printing at a magazine size and using the same printer we work with for *Compass Check* and the United Youth Camps magazine has allowed us to score savings that offset the additional cost of color

printing. We're also carrying forward the cost savings from going digital with our Festival Planning Brochure by bringing you this enhanced *United News* format.

As we reflect on 30 years of *United News* and begin our journey through the next 30 years, I'd like to recognize some fascinating pieces of *United News* history. The first issue of *New Beginnings* was published on June 16, 1995, and the publication was renamed *United News* beginning with the July 1998 issue. The first managing editor was Peter Eddington who has faithfully served the Church in the decades since, including now on the Council of Elders. Over its history, *United News* has had seven editors and many more writers. Prior to this current update, it has received three major redesigns over the years. This publication also has a global impact. Its current circulation is over 13,700, including 69

countries, plus UCG members from other countries who read the publication online. In fact, our Australian, Canadian and Caribbean versions of *United News* contributed inspiration for this new design. We're an international work, and it has been an honor to include our members around the world in this process.

On a personal note, *United News* is older than I am, by almost a full year. I have deep respect for the role it has played in Church history and am grateful for how it still serves to connect members around the world. Thank you, *United News* team past, present and future for your dedicated service to God's people through this publication. And thank you, God the Father and Jesus Christ, for Your guidance and blessings throughout *United News* history.

Here's to the next 30 years!

Heidi Braun



Local Church News

United Young Adults Holds Camp in Ghana



UCG-Ghana hosted its first United Young Adults Fellowship camp from May 27-30, 2026. The camp took place at Winneba—a coastal town in Ghana, which is about 39 miles from the capital city, Accra. This first-ever UYA camp provided spiritual enrichment and community-building experiences for the young adults of UCG Ghana’s congregations.

A total of 29 campers attended (16 male and 13 female) and two staff members. In addition, there were four volunteer kitchen staff from the Winneba congregation who stayed with the campers and provided our daily meal.

The theme for the camp was “Being Clearheaded and Watchful Against Satan’s Devices,” which was taken from 1 Peter 5:8. Lessons throughout the week were aligned with the theme to aid the young adults in understanding the importance of staying vigilant against the wiles of the devil so that they can guide themselves against it, and also, how to rely on the Word of God to navigate through this evil world.

Each day, activity began with low-intensity calisthenics before breakfast, followed by interactive Bible studies, a study of the UCG Fundamental Beliefs, and a Q&A session until lunch. After lunch, three other lessons were held before dinner. After dinner, we gathered again and practiced some “unfamiliar” UCG hymnal songs until 9:30 p.m., retiring to bed 15 minutes later.

Other topics discussed were the history of UCG, the organizational structure of UCG, health and relationships. On Friday, after the Q&A session, we organized an outdoor game for two hours to test our physical endurance.

On Saturday morning, we held a church service in our meeting hall. The sermonette was given by a UYA member from the Winneba congregation, followed by a special song by two UYA siblings from the Takoradi congregation and a sermon. Since we didn’t have a lectern and a sound system in our meeting hall, we used a short table as our lectern, and a portable Bluetooth speaker for the

hymns, which functioned satisfactorily. Despite these challenges, the Sabbath service was exhilarating and inspiring.

After the Sabbath service and lunch, we returned to the meeting hall and held three more lessons, including a Q&A session and hymn practice. At the end of the camp lessons, we organized a brief socializing session before all campers retired to bed.

On Sunday morning, we tidied up the camp facility, ate breakfast, and departed to our various destinations.

Enthusiasm and camaraderie were evident throughout this young adult activity. We are deeply thankful to God for this opportunity. We are also very grateful for the financial support offered to us by the coordinator and the UYA members in the United States for making this year’s fellowship camp in Ghana an unforgettable experience. The campers went home inspired and are already looking forward to the next year’s UYA camp when God permits.

Stephen Kusi



The New Sexual REVOLUTION

an interview with Dr. Roy Fouch by Victor Kubik

In recent years, cultural attitudes toward sexuality, marriage, gender and personal identity have shifted rapidly. Ideas that were once widely rejected or rarely discussed in public are now promoted through entertainment, education, social media and law. These changes can create serious challenges for Christians seeking to hold fast to God’s Word while also responding to people with compassion, patience and hope.

To help address these sensitive issues from both a biblical and counseling perspective, *United News* conducted an interview with Dr. Roy Fouch on issues related to sexual morality, pornography, homosexuality, same-sex attraction, transgender issues and the Church’s role in helping people seek God’s help and healing.

Dr. Fouch holds a PhD in Psychology and is a Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor (LPCC). He and his wife, Barb, serve as a deacon and deaconess in the Cincinnati congregation of the United Church of God. Dr. Fouch brings both professional counseling experience and a longstanding commitment to helping individuals and families address difficult personal and relational struggles.

In the following interview, he discusses what he describes as the “new sexual revolution,” how Christians should understand sexual sin and identity issues, and how the Church can help those seeking God’s help, healing and direction.

What do you mean by the new sexual revolution?

The phrase “sexual revolution” often refers to the major social and cultural changes that became especially prominent in Western societies in the 1960s and 1970s. In more recent years, that revolution has continued and expanded, reshaping cultural attitudes toward sexual behavior, marriage, gender roles, identity and the purpose of sex.

It drastically altered traditional moral codes and attitudes on these issues, resulting in an increased acceptance of pre-marital sex, cohabitation, and sex pursued apart from marriage and God’s intended purpose.

This shift has led to broad cultural acceptance of modern LGBTQ+ ideology, including the gay rights movement, same sex relationships and divergent sexual identities and practices that Scripture does not approve. Today’s culture would describe this as sexual liberation. God’s Word shows that rejecting His design for sex does not bring true freedom, but spiritual bondage.

The Bible categorizes sexual behavior outside of God’s design as sexual immorality. The world’s view of sex is contrary to what God defines as appropriate—and to violate what God has defined as appropriate sexual behavior is sin. Scripture addresses the danger of promised freedom that actually leads to spiritual slavery: “They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for ‘people are slaves to whatever has mastered them’” (2 Peter 2:19, New International Version).



Is viewing pornography a sexual sin?

The simple answer is yes, and this is why: Jesus instructed us that you don’t have to commit the physical act for something to be a sin. This is found in Matthew 5:28 where Christ said, “But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Another instructive scripture, spoken by Jesus, is found in Matthew 6:22-23: “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”

The eye is the lens through which we see the world. What we let in through that lens will affect our thoughts, desires and behavior. If we let light in through our eyes by reading the Bible, for example, we will make better choices in terms of our thoughts and actions. However, if we let darkness into our minds and hearts, we will become corrupted and more vulnerable to sinful thoughts, desires and choices.

In one of the oldest books of the Bible, Job acknowledged that our eyes can lead us into sexual sin. He said, “I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman” (Job 31:1, NIV).

Pornography is not harmless entertainment. It trains the mind to lust, objectify others and misuse the powerful gift of sexuality God created for marriage. A Christian must resist it, repent of it, and seek God's help to overcome it.

What does the Bible say about homosexual conduct?

Homosexual behavior is not a new issue. The Bible is filled with scriptures both in the Old Testament and the New Testament where God defines homosexual conduct as sin. Leviticus 18:22 is one such scripture where God says, "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination."

Does the New Testament address both male and female homosexual behavior?

In Romans 1:26-27, where Paul is discussing a debased mind, he is inspired by God to say this: "For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due."

Is same sex attraction the same as homosexuality?

Homosexual conduct and same-sex attraction are not the same thing. Same-sex attraction means a person experiences attraction, temptation or unwanted thoughts toward someone of the same sex. Homosexual conduct involves acting on those desires sexually.

A person may experience same-sex attraction without choosing to act on it. That does not make the person less valuable to God, nor does it mean the person has chosen a sinful lifestyle. Like all temptations, those feelings must be brought under God's authority.

At the same time, the attraction is real and should not be ignored or treated lightly. A person who struggles in this area should seek God's help, resist sin, and pursue wise spiritual counsel and support.

What causes people to experience these feelings?

There is no single explanation that applies to everyone. Human sexuality, emotions, personal history and spiritual struggles can be complex. In my experience as a counselor, I have seen many different life experiences contribute to sexual confusion, temptation or unhealthy sexual patterns, including exposure to pornography, sexual abuse, family dysfunction, emotional wounds and boundary violations.

Repeated exposure to certain sexual images or behaviors can also shape desires over time. Yet in many cases, a person may not be able to identify one clear cause. That is why we

should be careful not to assume we know someone's full story.

Whatever the background, God calls each of us to seek His help and bring our thoughts, desires and conduct into harmony with His Word.

How should I, as a Christian, respond to someone who is gay, homosexual or has same sex attraction?

The principle of love must guide how we treat all people. Jesus taught us to love even our enemies—but people struggling with sexual sins or confusion are not our enemies. They are human beings made in the image of God, and they should be treated with compassion, kindness, patience and respect.

That does not mean approving sin or redefining God's Word. Love does not require us to call sin righteous. But neither does truth give us permission to be harsh, dismissive or cruel.

A Christian response should combine both truth and mercy. We can lovingly point people to the Scriptures and explain that God designed sexual intimacy for marriage between one man and one woman. We can also acknowledge that sexual struggles are often deeply personal and painful.

Many today claim that love requires accepting any sexual relationship or identity a person chooses. But the love of God begins with submitting to God's instruction. We do not rewrite God's Word under the guise of love. True love helps people move toward God, repentance, healing and obedience.

What are your thoughts about the transgender issues that are prevalent in the world today?

God created human beings male and female. Jesus reaffirmed that design when He said, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female?'" (Matthew 19:4).

God is not confused about how He made us. He designed human beings as male and female, and He calls us to honor the sex He has given us.

At the same time, we should recognize that some people experience deep distress, confusion or pain over their identity. Events that alter the course of a person's life can sometimes affect that person's perception of self-identity. Childhood experiences such as abuse, neglect, family dysfunction, emotional wounds or difficulties in emotional development can contribute to confusion about sexuality and identity. In addition, much of today's educational and media environment encourages people—especially young people—to view sexuality and gender in ways that are contrary to God's design.

Another contributing factor raised by some research involves environmental chemicals that may interfere with the body's natural hormone systems. These are often called endocrine-disrupting chemicals, or EDCs. They may be found in certain

plastics, food packaging, cosmetics, fragrances and other common products. Some of these substances can mimic, block or interfere with hormones such as estrogen and testosterone. For example, bisphenols such as BPA can mimic estrogen in the body, and these have been used in some food packaging, water bottles and cash register receipts. Phthalates, found in some plastics, cosmetics and fragrances, have also been studied for their potential effects on hormone function. More information about these chemicals is available from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the Endocrine Society.

We may not always be able to identify the specific causes in an individual case, since a person's struggle with sexual identity or gender dysphoria may involve more than one factor—emotional, psychological, physical, environmental or spiritual.

But these complexities do not change the biblical foundation. Scripture makes it clear that God created human beings male and female, and He expects us to honor His design. Therefore, Christians should not reject God's created design or adopt an identity, role or lifestyle contrary to the sex God gave them.

Attempting to change one's God-given sex through surgery, hormones or other medical procedures in order to live as the opposite sex is not consistent with God's will.

His Word warns against deliberately blurring the distinction between male and female: "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 22:5). This reinforces the broader biblical principle that God calls us to honor the sex He has given us, not reject or redefine it.

This is certainly one of the major cultural issues of our time, but it is more than cultural—it has deep spiritual implications. Satan has always sought to distort what God has created, including marriage, family, sexuality and human identity. For that reason, rejecting one's God-given sex and attempting to live as the opposite sex is contrary to God's will.

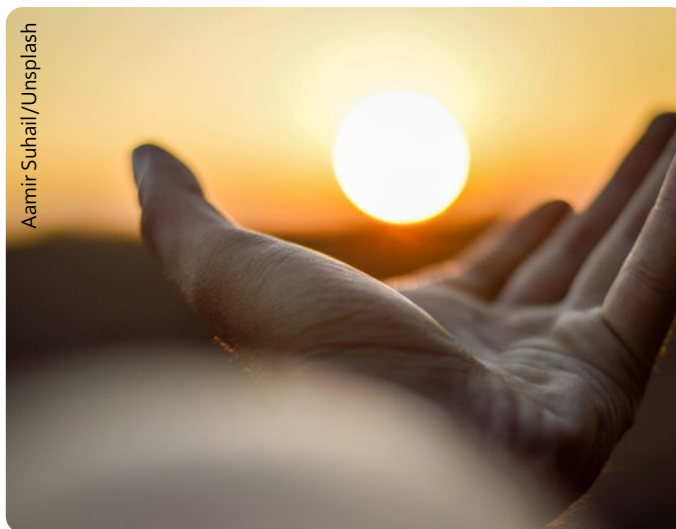
At the same time, there must be a compassionate path forward for those who have become caught up in this confusion or who are struggling deeply with these issues. God does not leave people without hope.

If someone has already made serious or even irreversible choices, that person should not be condemned or shunned.

The Church should seek to help him or her understand God's will and take faithful steps toward living a life pleasing to Him.

The answer is the same as it has always been: seek God's help, acknowledge the truth of His Word, repent where repentance is needed, ask for His forgiveness, and begin taking steps to bring one's life into harmony with His will.

The Bible is clear about sexual sin and about conduct that is contrary to God's will and purpose for men and women. But it is also clear that God is merciful, patient and willing to help those who sincerely turn to Him.



What is the Church's role in helping people overcome sexual sins?

If someone is struggling with one of the sexual sins or identity issues we've been discussing, he or she should be encouraged to seek help from their pastor. That conversation should be approached with humility, honesty and a sincere desire to receive biblical guidance and support. From there, a pastor can help develop an appropriate plan for spiritual counsel, accountability and practical steps forward.

There are articles and videos on the Church's website that address many of these issues. The Church also has a support group for men who struggle with pornography addiction. Counseling is available for women who may struggle with pornography themselves or who have a mate who struggles with it.

Light of Hope is also a helpful resource for finding additional support in your local community. You can call our toll-free helpline in the U.S. and Canada at (888) 241-6211. If you are outside the U.S. or Canada, or prefer to contact us by email, you can email us at hope@ucg.org.

When we encounter individuals who are struggling with, or even engaged in, some of the behaviors described in this article, we should always respond with love and compassion.

They are often in a lot of emotional pain and inner conflict. We should gently direct them to the Bible for God's instruction, while treating them with the patience, mercy and dignity Christ showed to those caught in sin and in need of repentance.

If you struggle with any of these issues, seek help. Go to God the Father and Jesus Christ, remembering that "with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). **UN**

GN

The Good News

The Other BEATITUDES

You've read the "blessed is/are" statements in Matthew 5. You've probably found some similarities in the blessings mentioned for "he who overcomes" in the book of Revelation. But did you know the Bible is full of "blessed is/are" statements?

by Robert Curry

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). You probably recognize this popular verse as being from the Beatitudes which Jesus gave at the start of His Sermon on the Mount. (See "Beatitudes to Be . . . So We Can Be in the Kingdom," *United News*, July-August 2024).

Another set of Beatitudes that draws much attention are the seven "blessed are/is" statements in the book of Revelation (1:3; 14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14.) A couple of these urge the reader to keep the words of prophecy in this closing end-time book because "the time is near" and Jesus "is coming quickly."

Both sets of "be in these attitudes" are obviously crucial for a Christian to study and heed. However, many of us don't notice how many "blessed are/is" verses there are in the rest of the Bible for us to learn from! In the King James Bible there are, according to e-Sword, 91 verses containing this phrase, counting the Beatitudes and Revelation.

A River of Blessings

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly . . . his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season" (Psalm 1:1-3).

My whole life I've dreamed of owning property by a river or creek. The best I could achieve is a house about a mile away from the Arkansas River. It reminds me of "a river . . . to water the garden" in Eden including the tree of life (Genesis 2:10). It also points me to the coming temple in Ezekiel 47 which flows so powerfully to the east that it gets deeper as it goes and has trees on both banks. Its water heals everything in its path. On the new earth in Revelation 22:1 will flow "a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb." On both banks was the tree of life, its leaves for the healing of the nations. The Bible ends the way it began—with a tree of life and a river! I can't wait to enjoy this river for eternity!

The Blessing of Your Calling

One of the most important meanings of God's Holy Day of Pentecost is that only a few people are called now for their chance of salvation as God's firstfruits to serve with Jesus Christ after He returns to earth to rule. God the Father has personally selected you! (John 6:44). Let that sink in: the most powerful Being in the universe has noticed you and offered you opportunity to serve with Christ! You must daily and continually choose to respond to God's calling with faith (Revelation 17:14). Jesus

“turned to His disciples and said privately, ‘Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; . . . many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it’” (Luke 10:23-24).

A Blessing for Keeping God’s Word

Luke 11:28 gives a basic foundation for being a Christian. “Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!” The book of James expresses the same good advice, urging with a glorious promise, “Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves . . . he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it . . . will be blessed in what he does” (James 1:22, 25).

We will be judged for how we live what we have been privileged to see and hear. Luke 12:37 warns us, “Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching.” This includes world events, but especially our own spiritual condition!

Verse 43 tells us to always be evaluating if Christ will find us “so doing” at His return—preaching the gospel to the world and preparing a people God calls to respond to it (Matthew 28:18-20). Receiving the Holy Spirit does not go along with an attitude of “Just You and me, Lord.” All of us know of brethren who have wrongly concluded that “God’s apostle said he finished the work, so there’s nothing left for us to do except prepare to marry Christ.” When we repent, are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit, we are placed into the one spiritual Body of Christ—the Church—to participate in its crucial mission.

The Blessing of Forgiveness

Psalms 32:1 defines one of the biggest blessings available to those God is working with now, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.” Christ made the perfect sacrifice, and when the Father looks at us, laden with sin but trying to overcome, He sees Christ having died in our place. As a result, “Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity” (verse 2). That gives us peace and a clear conscience!

Blessed for Believing

Jesus told Thomas: “because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29). We must keep walking by faith and not by sight until that glorious day we will be resurrected and see Jesus face to face.

Conclusion

We’ve seen a few of the many blessings Scripture speaks of. For a continued Bible study, consider looking up all the verses which mention the word “blessing.” We will need to be living the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 and Revelation. But let’s remember to “be in the attitudes” taught by the many other Beatitudes found in Scripture. **GN**

Tim Wildsmith/Unsplash



Luke 11:28 gives a basic foundation for being a Christian.
“Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

UNITED CHURCH OF GOD

Military Service

“We believe that Christians are forbidden from taking human life, directly or indirectly, contrary to this faith.”

“Therefore, we believe that Christians should not be engaged in military service. If they are in military service, we believe they should refuse to participate, to the extent possible, to refuse to serve.”

Exodus 20:13; Matthew 5:21-22



Conscience, Commitment and Military Service

Are you considering a career in the military? Here are a few important things to think about.

by Scott McKeon

The United States has recently implemented automatic military draft registration. The implications of this policy include the potential that, without actively signing up, one could be conscripted for service. In this case, it would be necessary to consider the options available. The Selective Service System website, sss.gov, indicates that all conscientious objectors are required to register. A conscientious objector (CO) is one who is opposed to serving in the armed forces and/or bearing arms on the grounds of moral or religious principles.

Conscientious objectors have options for service depending on their specific beliefs. Noncombatant roles are made available for those who are opposed to bearing arms yet allow them to serve in the Armed Forces. They will not be assigned training or duties that include using weapons. Alternative service is available for those opposed to serving in the military. Examples of jobs in this category include conservation, care for the elderly, education and health care. Length of service would be equal to the amount of time one would serve in the military.

Explaining and Defending Your Convictions

A registrant making a claim for CO status must appear before a board to explain his beliefs. This could include written documentation or personal appearances by people who know him and can attest to his claims. The objective of the board is to understand how he or she arrived at their beliefs and the influence of their beliefs on how they live their life.

It is essential that each person determine their own beliefs and be able to explain them. 1 Peter 3:15 encourages believers to think through our positions prior to the time when we are asked to give an answer: “always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you.” The answers should be personal and true. If in the opinion of the board, the answers are not genuine, or are based on politics, expediency or self-interest, they risk being denied.

Foundation for being a Christian.
the word of God and keep it!”

TO FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF:

Service and War

bidden by the commandments of God
r indirectly, and that bearing arms is
fundamental belief.

Christians should not voluntarily become
are involuntarily engaged in military
use conscientiously to bear arms and,
to come under military authority.”

2; 1 Corinthians 7:21-23; Acts 5:29

Considering Military Service

What if you are considering pursuing a career in the military? What if you are not sure if you do conscientiously object? Here are a few important things to consider.

When a person enlists in the military, they take a formal oath to obey the orders of the President and the officers appointed over them — an oath that places them under the binding authority of a chain of command. In most countries, the military has its own rules and regulations, and a person in the military is not free to decide what he or she can do, but is under the authority of superiors and must do what they say or risk severe consequences. Those orders can span a wide range of actions — from routine duties to direct participation in combat — and critically, a person in the military is subject to its authority and may be called upon to take human life or violate other areas or principles of God’s law.

This is precisely why the United Church of God takes a clear doctrinal stand on the matter. UCG believes that Christians are forbidden by the commandments of God from taking human life directly or indirectly, and that bearing arms is contrary to this fundamental belief; therefore, Christians should not voluntarily become engaged in military service. The wisest course of action is to refrain from putting oneself in such a position, and accordingly, the United Church of God, an International Association, supports the conscientious objection of its members to military service and war.

The Challenge of Conflicting Allegiances

Swearing an oath of this nature creates several problems for followers of Christ. Jesus Christ taught that a follower should be sure to perform their oaths and keep their word. Making a commitment as a follower is binding before God. A disciple should carefully consider what an oath like this could entail. First, if a follower of God has committed his or her life to God, then the individual has already committed to serving God above men, even if it requires giving his or her life. Peter and other apostles had been jailed for preaching the gospel, and the chief priests were considering how to dissuade them, and capital punishment was mentioned as an option. When asked why they did not comply with the demands to stop preaching, Peter replied, “We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). This becomes a rallying cry to those who commit their lives to obedience in a covenant relationship with God.

Lessons From the Apostles’ Arrest

This passage in Acts 5 is interesting from another perspective as well. In verse 22, we read of captains and guards who are tasked with securing Peter and the other apostles. When God opens the prison, it is the officer’s job to follow the directions of the high priest and find and capture them, regardless



Simon Infanger/Unsplash

of whether they are believers or disagree with the charges. In verse 26 we read, “Then the captain went with the officers and brought them [Peter and the other apostles] without violence, for they feared the people, lest they be stoned.” This example illustrates how uncomfortable it can be to be caught up in highly charged political situations and be tasked with executing the will of those in power with contrary belief systems.

Our Covenant Loyalty to God

When one is baptized, there is a personal affirmation that he or she accepts Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Master from that point forward. The acceptance of this mandate is necessary for Christ’s blood to redeem one from the punishment of sin and death. This affirmation now subordinates any other loyalty. The first commandment speaks directly to this element of the covenant relationship made at baptism, “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3). This commandment can be violated by anything that takes loyalty, trust or priority over God, including obedience to another authority.

Choosing Whom We Will Serve

To make a commitment to submit to two authorities sets one up for conflict (Matthew 6:24). What would happen if the will of the President or the assigned superiors were not in alignment with the holy, righteous laws of God? What if there were a direct contradiction between an order from a superior and God’s will? It would necessarily need to be disobeyed to keep one’s commitment to God, yet an oath has been sworn to obey the orders that must also be performed, according to a solemn promise. In Matthew 6:24, Christ speaks to the difficulty of serving two different authorities at the same time, especially when those priorities conflict. This verse illustrates the necessity of choosing a primary allegiance, as divided loyalties can lead to spiritual and moral conflicts. Where do you stand on this important issue? The time may come for you to answer this question. The time to prepare your answer is now. **GN**

Congratulations 2026 Graduates!

H I G H S C H O O L



Gabriel Anguiano



Henry Boise



William Bradford



Josiah Brunick



Brooklyn Compton



Braden Delamater



Logan Diamond



Jaeden Drury



Brody Foster

Congratulations 2026 Graduates!

H I G H S C H O O L



Katie Kalliman



Aaron Lackey



Ethan McCoy



Lindsey McPheeters



Tori Talbott

Congratulations 2026 Graduates!

H I G H S C H O O L

Gabriel Anguiano

Gabriel Anguiano, son of Omar and Natalia Anguiano, graduated summa cum laude from Renaissance High School on May 18. That same month, he also graduated summa cum laude from Idaho State University with an Associate of Arts in University Studies degree. In addition, he completed Idaho's STEM diploma and a Career Technical Education diploma in engineering.

Gabriel has been playing the piano since he was seven years old and has been blessed with opportunities to serve at church by playing hymns and special music. He enjoys running, working out at the gym, camping and traveling with his family, and playing video games with friends. He currently works at Jersey Mike's. This will be his fifth year attending NW UYC, and has served on staff at preteen camp. He also regularly serves with the set-up crew of his congregation.

This fall he will be starting as a junior at Boise State University, which awarded him its Presidential Scholarship, to pursue a degree in Mechanical Engineering. His ultimate career goal is to work in the aerospace industry.

Henry Boise

Henry Boise, son of Reuben and Andrea Boise, graduated from high school. He attends the Cincinnati East congregation.

Henry has received a Scholar-Athlete award for holding a high GPA while doing sports. He is in the National Honors Society and participates in both cross country and track.

This fall, Henry plans to attend ABC. After ABC, he intends to go into engineering.

William Bradford

William Robert Todd Bradford, son of Bill and Joanna Bradford, graduated from Hinsdale Central High School. During his high school years, Bill distinguished himself academically, musically and as a student leader. He served as president of the philosophy club and president of the speakers' league, was a member of the Philharmonic Orchestra and earned Illinois State ISMTA piano honors. He completed four years of French language study and participated in the YC2 Young Community Changemakers Leadership Program. Bill's academic achievements include recognition as a National Merit Scholarship Finalist, Illinois State Scholar and AP Scholar with Distinction.

Bill has been an active contributor to his community and church (he attends the Chicago congregation). An 11-year competitive swimmer, he has demonstrated dedication and perseverance both in and out of the pool. He regularly serves through music, accompanying hymns on the piano and playing violin in a church ensemble. Bill has also served

on staff at a United Church of God teen camp in French-speaking Benin, Africa, where he taught swimming and worked with local youth. Motivated by a desire to help others, he founded Scholarships for Africa to support educational opportunities and created an online philosophy blog to encourage thoughtful discussion of ideas and principles.

Bill plans to attend the University of Chicago, where he will study economics and physics.

Josiah Brunick

Josiah Brunick, son of Joel and Kristin Brunick, graduated on May 22 from Mapleview Academy (our homeschool). He took some classes through our local homeschool co-op, Living Legacy Academy, as well as dual enrollment classes through a local college. He loves to work and has been working since he was 14, mostly in manufacturing and manual labor jobs.

Josiah played baseball and soccer, and he enjoyed the 4-H rifle club. He has a strong interest in shooting sports and found a love for hunting this past fall.

Josiah helps the Sioux Falls, South Dakota congregation with sound and web-casting. He has volunteered at preteen camps for as long as he was able.

Favorite Scripture: "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7).

Congratulations 2026 Graduates!

H I G H S C H O O L

After graduation, Josiah plans to complete an electrician program in Rapid City, South Dakota and work towards being a journeyman electrician.

Brooklyn Compton

Brooklyn Nicole Compton, daughter of Harold and Tonya Compton, is a homeschool graduate from the Flint, Michigan congregation. She has completed her eighth year in 4-H working on her dog project. With dedication and training her dogs she has earned Grand Champion each year with hopes of adding this year to the list.

Brooklyn's passion is animals! She breeds and raises rabbits and has started her own rabbit business. Her love of horses started when she was two with a goal of owning a horse one day. With planning and determination, she is now the proud owner of a horse named "Koda."

Brooklyn enjoys animal and nature photography. She will stop whatever she's doing when she sees a beautiful sunset. She enjoys painting and crafting in her free time. She has attended Buckeye, Coticub, Pincrest and Winter Camp.

Brooklyn plans to continue working. Her work will always revolve around animals if she has her way. She has been given the opportunity to train a young Mustang this summer. She will be training and working with her horse as well. She hopes to take her horse camping and trail riding.

Braden Delamater

Braden Delamater, son of Scott and Michelle Delamater, is from the Cincinnati East congregation. He graduated magna cum laude from Milford High School with a 4.42 GPA. He has already completed 43 credit hours of college courses.

Braden has played piano for 13 years. He enjoys snowboarding and writing short stories. He has also played on an Ultimate Frisbee team and is an all-star.

A favorite verse of Braden's is 1 Corinthians 2:9, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

Following graduation, Braden is pursuing a master's degree in engineering management and a bachelor's in mechanical engineering at the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology.

Logan Diamond

Logan Diamond of the Roanoke, Virginia congregation graduated from high school this spring. His parents are Joe and Kelly Diamond.

Logan is a member of FFA (Future Farmers of America). He currently works in the deli at a local supermarket. He plans to pursue an education in HVAC technology.

Hiking, biking and video games are some of Logan's hobbies. He also enjoys spending time outdoors.

Jaeden Drury

Jaeden Drury, eldest daughter of Gregg and Rebekah Drury, attends the Cincinnati East, Ohio congregation. She just graduated from Fairfield Local High School with an honors diploma, as well as from Southern State Community College with an associate of sciences degree.

Jaeden has earned membership in NHS, NHSS, NSHSS, the Academy of Scholars, and Phi Theta Kappa. She was treasurer of NHS, as well as secretary for class officers.

Jaeden currently interns at a local gym as a personal trainer while working part-time as a manager at Shoe Sensation. In her spare time, she competes in volleyball, basketball and track. She always enjoys a boating day, skiing and tubing with her family.

After graduation, Jaeden will attend Miami University to pursue her bachelor's in kinesiology and master's in athletic training while practicing as a personal trainer. Following this, she plans on obtaining a doctorate in osteopathic medicine.

Brody Foster

Brody Foster, son of Christopher and Holly Foster, graduated from high school at The Grove Christian Academy. He attends the Phoenix Northwest congregation.

Brody is interested in photography,

Congratulations 2026 Graduates!

H I G H S C H O O L

film and digital music production. For several years he has volunteered at Christian Youth Theater helping with sound, mics or moving set pieces during performances. His favorite show was Anastasia. Brody enjoys geography, cars and F1 (his favorite sport). An interesting fact about Brody is that he has perfect pitch.

Brody will be attending Grand Canyon University to study film with an emphasis in production.

Katie Kalliman

Katie Kalliman, daughter of Samuel and Caroline Kalliman of the Flint, Michigan congregation, graduated from high school. Katie was homeschooled and attended Excel for His Glory homeschool co-op.

Katie sings in the choir at church. Her hobbies include reading, listening to music, playing the piano, rollerblading, exercising and singing. Her favorite scripture is Philippians 4:13.

After graduation, Katie plans on working at various local jobs and/or training for a job involving one of her interests.

Aaron Lackey

Aaron Joseph Lackey, son of Misty and Ryan Lackey, graduated from high school this spring. He attends the Bowling Green, Kentucky congregation.

Aaron's hobbies include building

Legos, walking, coloring, drawing and making YouTube videos.

Following his graduation, Aaron plans to attend Ambassador Bible College.

Ethan McCoy

Ethan Beck McCoy, son of Kevin and April McCoy, graduated from high school this year. He is from the Delmarva (Georgetown, Delaware) congregation.

Ethan graduated magna cum laude with a 4.2 GPA. He is the recipient of the Star of Excellence pin, the Lamp of Knowledge pin and the President's Award for Academic Excellence.

Ethan works as a farm hand at Chesterfield Heirlooms (from April 18, 2025 to the present). He is CTE certified in welding.

Ethan is interested in agriculture and outdoor activities, including farming and raising chickens and quail. He also enjoys welding and playing the guitar.

A State of Maryland Senatorial Scholarship recipient, Ethan plans to attend Wor-Wic Community College to obtain a business degree before transferring to a four-year university.

Lindsey McPheeters

Lindsey McPheeters, daughter of Glen and Ana McPheeters of the Sacramento, California congregation, graduated from Vision in Education Charter School.

Throughout high school, Lindsey

received a certificate of achievement with highest honors, maintained a 3.8 GPA, completed a dual enrollment course, and volunteered at a local farm. While studying, she works part-time at a local daycare called The Makers Place. Some of Lindsey's hobbies are crocheting, sketching, cooking and playing the ukulele, which she has been playing since she was seven years old.

Lindsey has attended Northwest Camp for several years and has helped out with youth class at the Feast. Her favorite Bible verses are 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 and 2 Corinthians 5:7.

After graduation, Lindsey plans to attend Cosumnes River Community College, where she will major in biology and then transfer to UC Davis to major in animal science, with plans to pursue a career as a veterinarian.

Tori Talbott

Tori Talbott, recent graduate and daughter of Kirk & Kristine Talbott, is from the Atlanta, Georgia congregation. One of her accomplishments is that she knows where all the countries are on a globe.

Tori's interests include drawing original characters, gaming, entomology (bugs), paleontology (dinosaurs), geology (rocks) and zoology (animals).

After graduation, Tori's plans remain open, but she will likely take a gap year to travel.

Congratulations 2026 Graduates!

AMBASSADOR BIBLE COLLEGE

On Sunday, May 17, 2026, the Ambassador Bible College class of 2026 graduated. This 27th commencement ceremony included 15 students from all over the United States, two from Canada and one from Trinidad.

After the graduation processional, the ceremony opened with prayer. This was followed by the student discourse, given by the student body president, Kyle McKenzie.

The ABC choir performed “No Greater Gift” by Ruth Elaine Schram, which was directed by Ken Shoemaker. They followed this with a farewell song, “Count On Me” by Philip Lawrence, Ari Levine and Bruno Mars, which was directed by Chad Browning. Following the music, Aaron Dean gave an inspiring message addressed to the graduating class.

For the award presentations, John Elliott, President, presented the Ambassador Award for Excellence to Jesse O’Hare and Rebecca Anderson. Darris McNeely, a Council of Elders member, presented the Council of Elders Service Award to Austin Furman and Melody Porter.

Aaron Dean called the graduates to the stage to receive their diplomas from Steve Myers, Dean of Faculty, and John Elliott. The ceremony closed with prayer.

The ABC staff and alumni honored the newly graduated class with a celebration, including a balloon sendoff, delicious cake and photo opportunities with their families.

If you are interested in attending ABC, you can learn more at abc.ucg.org or email: abc_admissions@ucg.org.





Matthew Allison



Rebecca Anderson



Ayla Docken



Flower Duyck



Katerina Fitch



Katie French



Austin Furman



Andrey Halvorsen



Teresa Havens



Matthew Leiby



Junia Marin



Kyle McKenzie



Adam Miller



Jesse O'Hare



Melody Porter

Congratulations 2026 Graduates!

COLLEGE



Breanna Potts

Breanna Potts graduated from Georgia Highlands College, with an associate of arts in criminal justice.

Breanna currently works at F and P Manufacturing. She enjoys the outdoors, participating in activities like hiking, kayaking, fishing and riding horses.

After graduation, Breanna plans to begin an internship with her local probation office because she wants to be a probation officer.



Rayne Stewart

Rayne Monique Stewart, from the Columbia, Maryland congregation, graduated from Spelman College, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in elementary education. She graduated magna cum laude.

Rayne loves to sing special music at church in her local congregation.

After graduation, her goal is to pursue graduate studies in education leadership.



Lilly Whitehead

Lilly Whitehead, from the Omaha, Nebraska congregation, graduated from college. She has earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Deaf Studies from Utah Valley University (UVU).

Following graduation, Lilly will work part-time for Metropolitan Community College in their ASL program and intern with Purple Deaf Relay Communications.

Lilly's favorite scripture is Romans 8:28.

GRADUATING LATER THIS YEAR?

No problem! Work schedules, summer classes and other factors may mean your diploma day has yet to come. We still want to honor you in an upcoming issue of *United News*!

Please send your graduation announcement for inclusion in a future month's printing. Email us at un@ucg.org and include a photo to print with your announcement. Congratulations on your accomplishment!



Honoring Deceased Elders and Wives



Bruce Dean

It is with deep sadness that we share the news of Bruce Dean's death in the afternoon of Tuesday, May 19. While his pain and suffering have come to an end, we take comfort in the hope of resurrection to eternal life at Christ's return. Bruce will be warmly remembered as a devoted husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, pastor and dear friend.

At 76 years of age, this year marked his 50th year of dedicated service as an elder of God's Church. Throughout his ministry, Bruce faithfully cared for congregations both in Australia and across the Asia-Pacific region, leaving a lasting impact on many lives.

We kindly ask that you keep the Dean family in your thoughts and prayers as they mourn, especially Bruce's children, Renee and Graham, and his four grandchildren, Charlie, Samantha, Oliver and Isabel. [UN](#)

Randy Stiver

Randy Stiver, who devoted 50 years to serving God and His people in the ministry, died May 10, 2026, after a short hospitalization. Over the decades, Randy pastored congregations across the United States, taught at Ambassador Bible College, edited Church publications, worked with youth, wrote extensively and gave countless presentations.

Randy attended Ambassador College in Bricket Wood, England. In 1973, while working with other Ambassador students on the Temple Mount Excavation Project in Jerusalem, he met Linda Dundon. They were married in 1974 during the Feast of Tabernacles in Squaw Valley, California. Linda remained the love of his life throughout more than five decades of marriage and ministry.

Randy and Linda's daughter, Amanda, was born in 1980 and became the apple of her father's eye. Together, Randy and Amanda shared a lasting love of history.

Randy was especially known for his love of preaching and teaching God's plan of salvation, the return of Jesus Christ and the coming world tomorrow. His ministry reflected a deep conviction in God's purpose for humanity and in the hope of the resurrection.

Randy had a lifelong love of the outdoors. Raised on a farm, he became an avid hunter and fisherman with a remarkable knowledge of wildlife, firearms history, biblical history and world history. He was also skilled in building hand-hewn English-style longbows.

Randy's life of faith, service and teaching leaves a lasting example of hope in God's promises and faithful dedication to His people. [UN](#)



Honoring Deceased Elders and Wives



Art Morris

Arthur Samuel Morris of Perrysville, Ohio, died on Monday, May 26, 2026, in Mt. Vernon, Ohio, surrounded by his loving family. He was born in Wheeling, West Virginia on September 17, 1933, to the late Arthur B. and Estella C. (Heil) Morris.

Art graduated from Woodsfield High School in 1951, then studied engineering at The Ohio State University in Columbus. He graduated from the United States Air Force Aviation Cadet Training and became a flight navigator and aircraft performance engineer in the Strategic Air Command until 1959, achieving the rank of Captain. He remained in the Air Force Reserves until his honorable discharge in April of 1970. He served out of Mather Air Force Base in Sacramento, California, and later at Carswell Air Force Base in Ft. Worth, Texas. His unit's service flying the B-36 Peacemaker bombers was considered a significant factor in maintaining peace during the Cold War.

Upon leaving active duty in the military, Art joined Barnes Pumps, Inc. (which later became Crane Pumps and System), where he worked for 57 years as quality assurance supervisor, applications engineer, as well as in several other management positions. During that time, he also studied Business Administration at Ashland University.

Fueled by his intense interest in gardening and farming, Art actively researched and implemented various organic and sustainable gardening and farming practices on their farm near Perrysville (Pleasant Hill), where they raised beef cattle and a variety of crops and garden vegetables.

A man of deep personal faith, Art served as deacon and later as an elder in UCG and was actively involved in the Church's services and many events.

Art is survived by his wife of 70 years, Rilla (Maxwell), whom he married on March 24, 1956. He adored her, calling her the most beautiful woman he'd ever met, his "Sweet Peach." Together, they shared many travels and adventures, including raising three children: Jeffrey Morris, of Perrysville, Loretta (Lori) (Michael) Barr, of Mt. Vernon, and Linda (Roger) Daniels, of Big Sandy, Texas, who survive.

Family was everything to Art and he loved being surrounded by his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Art and Rilla have seven grandchildren: Kara Miller (Rob Miller), Brady (Jacqueline Getson) Hardiman, Trent

(Mandy) Hardiman, Jessica (Michael) Towle, Nathaniel Morris, Wyatt (Olivia) Morris, and Cody (Yumi) Daniels, and two step-grandchildren, Matthew (Nikki) Barr, and Jennifer Peacock. They are also blessed with 14 great-grandchildren: Zacharie, Landon, Alexsia, Lauklin, Elliana, Killian, Bellamy, Audrey, Oliver, Declan, Teagan, Riordan, Estella and Solon, and six step-great-grandchildren, Keiyah, Nathan, Aiden, Mason, Sydney and Layla, along with numerous nieces and nephews, all of whom survive.

In addition to his parents, Art was preceded in death by his siblings and their spouses, brothers William (Aurora), James, and Thomas (Darlene), and sisters, Emily (John) Griffith and Sarah Eileen (Floyd) Briggs, a grandson, Monte Rian Daniels, and several nephews.

The family held a graveside service with full military honors on Sunday, May 31, 2026 at the Bunker Hill Baptist Church Cemetery, with Pastor Aaron Creech officiating. The family wishes to thank Ohio Eastern Star Home, Capital City Hospice, Knox County Veterans Services and Richland County Veterans Services for their caring and compassionate services.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests that memorial contributions be made to LifeNets, 5834 Crestwell Lane, Whitestown, IN 46075-4561, which provides life-saving medicine, equipment, and services to the needy or to Capital City Hospice, 2800 Corporate Exchange Dr., Columbus, OH 43231. [UN](#)

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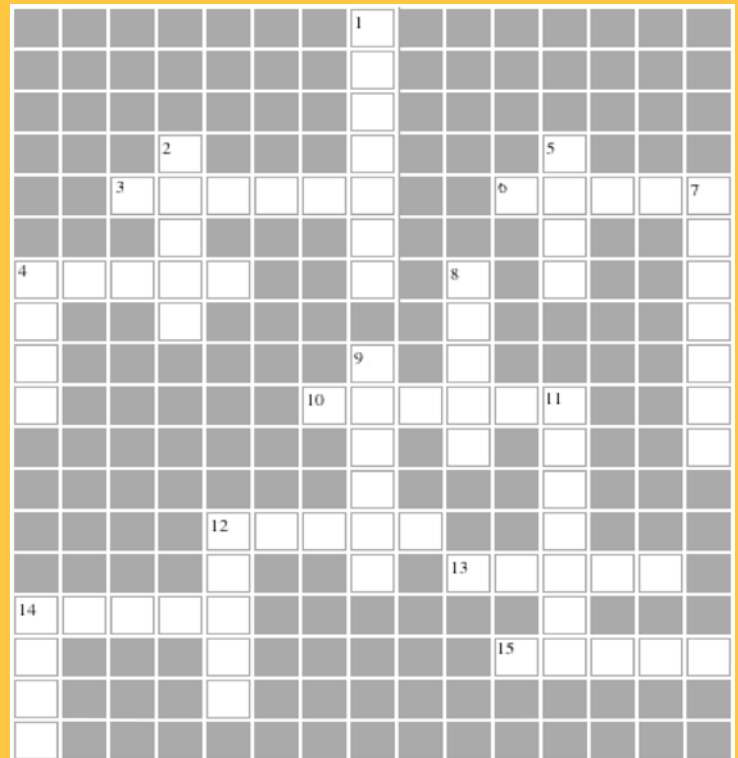
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Children's Corner

Name that Bible Character!



Down

1. Father of the faithful
2. Parted the Red Sea
4. Blinded on the way to Damascus
5. First king of Israel
7. Famous New Testament martyr
8. King of Israel and man after God's own heart
9. Had long hair and incredible strength
11. Friend of Jesus who was raised from the dead
12. Walked on water and healed the sick
14. Son of thunder who became the apostle of love; wrote the book of Revelation

Across

3. Had a coat of many colors
4. Denied Christ three times before the rooster crowed
6. Half-brother of Jesus; wrote a book of the Bible
10. Thrown into a den of lions and was protected by God
12. God renamed him "Israel"
13. First high priest of Israel
14. Betrayed Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane
15. Nearly sacrificed by his father

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