

United News

NEWS of the UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

August 2026 | Vol. 32 No. 7

ucg.org/members

4 | Retirements

8 | Good News

13 | Light of Hope

14 | Member Announcements

A Time to *Honor*

What does it mean to show honor? Honor can include expressing respect, recognizing faithful service or celebrating an accomplishment. Scripture instructs us to honor our parents (Exodus 20:12), show respect to the elderly (Leviticus 19:32) and give proper recognition to elders who serve faithfully (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

This issue of *United News* gives us many opportunities to recognize and appreciate others. You will read about ministerial and home office staff changes, including retirements and relocations. A continuation of last issue's graduation feature celebrates young adults in the Church as they move into new opportunities and responsibilities. We also recognize two recently married couples and two couples celebrating decades of marriage. Five obituaries remember faithful members whose lives touched their families and congregations.

Above all, we seek to honor God through our worship, obedience and gratitude. In "Local Church News," you will read how brethren are serving others, growing in their understanding of God's Word and joining together in praise.

Three feature articles offer further encouragement. In "Ordinary Life, Extraordinary Impact," Joy Jones examines a biblical woman whose everyday faith left a lasting example. In "Don't Allow Your Love to Grow Cold," John LaBissoniere encourages us to prepare spiritually to remain faithful in difficult times. In the "Light of Hope" section, "Aging Gracefully" by Judy Markley offers encouragement and practical perspective for members facing the challenges and opportunities of later life.

May this issue of *United News* encourage us to recognize faithful service, care for one another and honor God in every season of life.

Heidi Braun, Managing Editor

Operation Manager's Updates

Ministerial and Member Services



Gary and Rhonda Beam



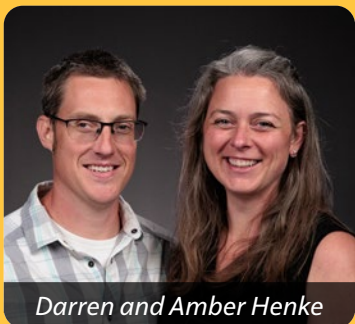
Ryan and Nissa Hall



Doug and Belinda Wendt



Bob and Sandy Orosz



Darren and Amber Henke



Chad and Katie Browning

Ministerial and Member Services is pleased to announce the following changes that will take place.

Mr. Gary Beam is concluding many years of faithful service in the full-time ministry. We are deeply grateful for his dedicated service to the Church with his wife, Rhonda.

Mr. Ryan Hall and his wife, Nissa, are relocating to serve the congregations in Birmingham and Huntsville, Alabama, and Tupelo, Mississippi, where Mr. Hall will pastor.

Mr. Doug Wendt and his wife, Belinda, are relocating to serve the congregations in Wheeling, West Virginia; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Youngstown, Ohio, where Mr. Wendt will pastor.

Mr. Bob Orosz has been hired to pastor the congregations in Tampa, St. Petersburg and Ocala, Florida, serving together with his wife, Sandy.

United News

Volume 32, Number 7

Circulation: 14,208

Publisher: United Church of God, *an International Association*

Council of Elders: Scott Ashley, Aaron Dean, Jorge de Campos, Peter Eddington, Andy Lee, Ben Light, Len Martin, Darris McNeely, Tim Pebworth (chairman), Gary Petty, Rex Sexton, Paul Wasilkoff

President: John Elliott

Media & Communications Services Manager: Scott Delamater

Senior Manager, Editorial: Clint Porter

Managing Editor: Heidi Braun

Copy Editors: Robert Curry, Lena VanAusdle

Doctrinal Reviewers: Robert Berendt, Ben Light, Dave Mills, Mario Seiglie, Rex Sexton, Anthony Wasilkoff

Design Production Manager: Mitchell Moss

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

United News (ISSN: 1088-8020) is published 10 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. © 2026 United Church of God, *an International Association*. Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited. Periodicals Postage paid at Milford, Ohio 45150, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post publications mail agreement number 40026236. Scriptural references are from the New King James Version (© 1988 Thomas Nelson, Inc., publishers) unless otherwise noted.

Subscriptions: *United News* is sent automatically to members of the United Church of God and is free to all who request it. Your subscription is provided by the generous, voluntary contributions of members of the United Church of God, *an International Association*, and their coworkers. Donations are gratefully accepted and are tax-deductible.



Joshua and Ariana Vazquez

Mr. Darren Henke has been hired as assistant pastor to Mr. Ben Light in Salem and Eugene, Oregon, serving together with his wife, Amber.

Mr. Chad Browning has been hired as a ministerial trainee and will begin

training under Mr. Nick Lamoureux, serving congregations in Bismarck, Fargo, and Minot, North Dakota; and in Rapid City, Sioux Falls, and Watertown, South Dakota, together with his wife, Katie.

Mr. Joshua Vazquez has been hired as a ministerial trainee and will begin training under Mr. Lewis VanAusdle, serving the congregations in Hartford, Connecticut; New Jersey and New York City, New York, together with his wife, Ariana.

We greatly appreciate your prayers for these men, their families and the congregations they serve.

Steve Myers

Ministerial and Member Services
Operation Manager



Honoring Deceased Elders and Wives

Susan Crow



Susan “Sue” Carol Crow of San Jose, California died on Sept. 27, 2025 from complications of heart failure. She was 74. Born in Santa Monica, California, Sue lived a life overflowing with love, faith and service to God, her family, her church and everyone around her.

Sue and her sister Sharon (Roybal) grew up as “church kids.” When they were preteens, their mother, Eileen Schofield, was introduced to the Church, was baptized, and set her daughters on a path of faith that would define their entire lives.

After earning an associate of arts degree in business from De Anza College in Cupertino, California, Sue moved to Pasadena and worked for the Worldwide Church of God. She later returned to the Bay Area, where she worked for Cisco Systems, before beginning a 20-year career with IBM.

In 1975, Sue met Fred Crow at a Spring Holy Day dance, beginning a five-decade relationship. Sue and Fred (a 1974 graduate of Ambassador College in Bricket Wood, England) were married on Jan. 11, 1976. Their twin daughters, Tamara and Tracy, were born two years later and blessed them with eight grandchildren. Sue’s boundless energy and joy were never more evident than when she was surrounded by her growing family. In 2015, they both retired from full-time employment (Fred from Lockheed, Sue from IBM). They would have celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in January 2026.

Sue’s dedication to her Church family was profound. Ordained a deaconess in 1995, she later served alongside her husband when he was ordained into the ministry in 2005. Together they pastored the San Jose and Eureka, California congregations. Known for her exceptional cooking and baking, Sue’s beautiful “oven treats” were a highlight of many fellowship hours after services.

Sue leaves a legacy of warmth, laughter, hugs, generosity and genuine care. She loved her family and friends deeply.

A passionate advocate for young people, Sue helped organize and coach YOU (Youth Opportunity United) girls’ cheerleading squads for more than a decade. She (and Fred) served at church youth camps for 27 years—Sue in the business office and Fred in various activity roles. Through these efforts, they built lifelong friendships and made a lasting impact on many young lives.

Music was one of Sue’s greatest passions. Blessed with a clear, confident alto voice, she sang in choirs and ensembles. She was also a soloist for Sabbath services, Holy Days and variety shows. She was never shy about sharing her gift.

Sue leaves a legacy of warmth, laughter, hugs, generosity and genuine care. She loved her family and friends deeply and took great joy in meeting new people. Sue didn’t know any strangers. They were just people she hadn’t met yet. To all who knew her, Sue lived her faith in God’s Word with excitement and conviction, serving as a shining example in both word and deed. Her absence will be felt for a long time. [UN](#)

Retirement: Aaron Dean

God's Truth Doesn't Change

Born on the Feast of Trumpets in 1952, my history with the Church began at age two with the Radio Church of God. Dad had a stroke, was anointed and healed, only to die two years later. Mom was told to move to Texas where Church widows were. I could "attend Imperial Schools." The leading people there became "aunts and uncles" to me.

In 1960 Mom moved us to Pasadena, California where she soon married Jim Snook. I finished Imperial, with instructors who taught at Ambassador College (AC). Having Bible every day, and growing up with all the "evangelists' kids" would prove helpful throughout my career.

I went to AC in Texas and volunteered to work formal dinners with chefs from the school of Culinary Arts. I learned all formal dishes, wines and flaming desserts. Events had me transfer to Pasadena mid-semester during my sophomore year.

My ministerial trainee plans changed when Mr. Armstrong (HWA) asked me on graduation day to fly on the G-2 airplane. He wanted an AC graduate with a unique skill set. At 8 a.m., three days later, we left for Europe. I served Belgium's King Leopold and Jordan's crown prince Hassan and developed a

relationship with both. We covered Britain, Belgium, Jordan, Jerusalem, Spain and France. Six weeks later I had to fly back on a commercial flight from Paris to get married to Michelle in New Jersey.

Besides formal meals, I was basically "an embassy" doing visas, reservations, travel prep and some meeting setups during extensive travel (more than 300 days a year).

HWA's 1977 marriage and later heart attack resulted in less travel. I subbed into various departments on campus while shuttling instructions between Pasadena and Tucson and taking accounting and law classes at CSULA.

On Jan. 3, 1979, California took over the Church with a court appointed Receiver. With all pastors sent to Tucson for a conference, I was asked by our lawyers to organize local Church members for the infamous sit-ins in Pasadena. This was the beginning of the end for the Receivership, and other takeover attempts leading to HWA's ACE (Advisory Council of Elders) in 1980.

Travel began again in December 1979 and personnel changes led to my becoming HWA's assistant, the VP of Ambassador



Foundation and youngest member of the ACE in 1981. At this point, Michelle, who had worked in Financial Affairs and the Pastor General's office, began flying on the G-2 as secretary/stewardess.

We worked with all Church departments and helped set up multiple projects in many countries with royalty. I coordinated HWA's meetings with foreign heads of state and helped him with his final book "Mystery of the Ages."

HWA's illness led him to evaluate several successors instead of leaving it up to the ACE. His final choice just prior to his death on Jan. 16, 1986 was Joseph W. Tkach. HWA gave him all titles except Apostle, required him to make many soon-to-be-broken promises and made me his assistant. God was testing His Son's Bride.

After waiting 12 years for a family, our son was born in 1986 and a daughter three years later.

God began purifying the Bride, as WCG doctrinal upheaval began quickly, and with disagreement I was removed from all promised positions within six months. I was assigned to AC as food service director and business faculty.

Pursuing accreditation required advanced degrees. I finished an MBA with honors at CSULA after attending class four nights a week and finishing 52 units in five quarters. With an MBA in hand, I was asked to move to Texas with the consolidation of campuses in Big Sandy, Texas.

Decredentialed in 1995 for my firmly held beliefs, I held

services in my home for employees and students who faced retribution if they attended UCG services. I remained until closure in 1997, refusing to abandon students seeking truth.

Joining UCG, I was elected to the COE in 1998 and helped pastor during ministerial transitions in East Texas. I also spoke at local churches when traveling to agricultural trade shows at home and abroad for 10 years. I was the first U.S. elder to visit UCG Singapore and youth camps in the Philippines.

In July 2010 President Luker called and asked that I be UCG treasurer. Reluctantly giving up my home on Lake Gladewater, I moved to Cincinnati. As treasurer I navigated through the ministerial resignations that formed COGWA and subsequent financial trauma, adding a million-dollar faith line to the budget.

President Kubik asked that I serve as International Advisor, troubleshooting any region in need, and senior pastor for Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. I also became Dean of Students at ABC in 2014, where I taught for 12 years. I opened Myanmar with its first UCG Feast in 2017 and I became Senior Pastor for Italy in 2023, working with the remaining faithful brethren.

I remain on the UCG Council of Elders and serve on the Italian and French boards. God has led our lives through a unique and incredible maze. The journey has built our faith, with us aspiring to be an example to all. God's truth doesn't change. Hold on to it.



Retirement: Darris McNeely

Sharing God's Truth with the World

Darris McNeely retired from full-time work for UCG on May 23, 2026. A man of truth, integrity and high character, Darris has made a very positive impact through his service in the Church, and continues to serve even after his official “retirement.”

Darris and his wife Debbie came into God's Church in the early 1960s. They met at Ambassador College in Pasadena and were married in August 1973. Darris and Debbie have two grown sons, Chris and Ryan, and four grandchildren.

Darris is retiring from multiple roles and job positions for the Church. He has served as a Church pastor, youth camp director, *World News and Prophecy* managing editor, coordinator of international education and services, content coordinator for Church publications, publication writer and television presenter. Darris still serves as a festival coordinator, and as an instructor at Ambassador Bible College. Beginning in 2008 he has served more than 13 years on the Council of Elders.

Darris was chosen as a *Beyond Today* TV presenter more than 20 years ago. His first *BT* program aired nationwide on commercial television in December 2005. Since then, Darris has recorded over 175 television programs, plus numerous *BT* Dailies, Bible studies, shorts and reels.

Darris has been a prolific educator—especially during the last 20 years of his employment. He traveled the world, coordinating biblical travel experiences for other ministers and members,

including the Seven Churches tour of Turkey. He has taught Fundamental Beliefs, Acts and World News and Prophecy classes at ABC until recently, when he switched to teaching Gospels.

Darris' writing has also made a tremendous impact in the Church. Paul Kieffer spoke of how these articles have made a difference well beyond the English-speaking world. UCG-Germany has used 59 of Darris' articles in *Gute Nachrichten*, and Jesmina Allaoua has mentioned that if all Darris' articles were translated, they would have 10 years' worth of German *GN* issues with an article by him! Darris' work, both written and spoken, has been translated into many languages besides English and shared around the world.

“God has always, always taken care of us” Darris told the home office staff at his retirement luncheon. “With all the changes, splits and events of the past 53 years we were watched over and cared for by God and Christ, the living head of the Church. It has been a great career and I would do it all over again.”

In an interview conducted by Ben Light, Darris shared his reflections on his service to the Church during his full-time employment and his hopes for the next chapter of his continuing service. You can watch the video by scanning the QR code on this page.

Thank you, Darris, for your legacy of service and faith to God, the Church and our brethren and employees!



RETIREMENT: *Darris McNeely*

Watch this video interview in which new *Beyond Today* presenter, Ben Light, interviews retiring presenter, Darris McNeely.



GN

The Good News

Don't Allow Your Love to *Grow Cold*

Could your faith withstand the trials Jesus Christ said would come before His second coming? Discover how to prepare spiritually now.

by John LaBissoniere

In observing conditions in today's world, it is not a pretty picture. Hostilities within and among nations are increasing in frequency and intensity. According to World Population Review, nearly 40 countries are currently experiencing active armed conflict (WorldPopulationReview.com). Furthermore, the International Monetary Fund states that as global debt continues rising precipitously, economic stability is threatened in many nations.

Although we live in a dangerous and apprehensive age, circumstances could improve at least temporarily. Nevertheless, Jesus Christ revealed through His Olivet prophecy, (Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21) that an unprecedented time of turmoil and human suffering will transpire shortly before His second coming. Widespread religious deception,



wars, rumors of wars, famines and disease epidemics will be followed by even greater chaotic and violent conditions which will generate appalling sufferings and sorrows (Matthew 24:8).

Jesus warned His disciples about this future perilous age by stating that "lawlessness will abound, [and] the *love of many will grow cold*" (Matthew 24:12, emphasis added throughout). That shocking pronouncement should be a powerful impetus for us as God's people to make certain we are preparing spiritually without delay. The love Christ referenced is the spiritual attribute He provides to His called, repentant and obedient disciples through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5). Therefore, it is essential that we are highly cognizant of attitudes we have and actions we take now to ensure that our love will never grow cold.

Persecution and betrayal coming

To accomplish this, it would be wise to examine Jesus' reference to lawlessness which the Bible describes as sin—meaning the violation of God's commandments (1 John 3:4). During the period just prior to His return to earth a rebellious, defiant condition will define much of human conduct. People throughout the world will be severely impacted by the destructive and grievous situations Christ spoke about in His Olivet prophecy—which His disciples will also undergo. Added to this, Church members will be subjected to intense persecution for their beliefs and obedience to God (Matthew 24:9).

While none of this is pleasant to contemplate, it is vital that we boldly face the truth of Scripture so as to guard against any tendency to lessen our spiritual vigilance. While Christ deeply loves and appreciates His brethren who are completely dedicated and loyal to Him, it is sad to contemplate that when persecution and hardships are experienced in the period before His return to earth, many brethren will severely disappoint Him. Rather than relying on His mighty strength and aid to help them through the trials they encounter, they will abandon Him and allow their love for Him and His people to grow cold (Matthew 24:12).

But why? Could it be to save themselves from further persecution, distress or adversity? Whatever the reason, it doesn't have to be that way for you and me if our relationship with God is strong, resilient and robust through the power of God's Spirit. No matter how difficult the events we come up against as members of the body of Christ during that future period, abandoning Him and our fellow brethren must never be contemplated.

Considering the situation just described, what does scripture reveal will occur after many Church members allow highly arduous events to cause them to abdicate their faith? Jesus said in Matthew 24:10 that they will "betray one another, and will hate one another." Tragically, a spirit of virulent antipathy will grip individuals who were once caring, truth-loving, commandment-keeping brethren. Church members who had formerly shared meals, activities, Sabbath services and Holy Days will turn against fellow brethren. Also, as Luke 21:16 explains, faithful disciples "will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death."

What do we value above anything else?

Therefore, how can you and I contend with the terrible times that lie ahead and "endure to the end" (Matthew 24:13)? It comes down to one question: What do we value more than anything else? In this instance we can look at the apostle Paul's personal example. He explained that he had been offered many advantages in life—having been "a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee" (Philippians 3:5). He could have enjoyed a great physical life which would have

included wealth, prominence and comfort. However, he willingly gave it all up to follow Jesus Christ (verse 7). He stated, "Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ" (verse 8).

So, are you and I fully committed to do the same no matter what hardships or dilemmas we may encounter? In describing true Christians who strongly resist the devil's assaults, Jesus said "they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death" (Revelation 12:11). Those steadfast brethren trusted God unreservedly. Physical life was not their most important concern. Rather, it was loving God and carrying out His will in their lives. What about us? Will we be counted in the small group of devoted, courageous brethren? If so, what should we do to ensure that our love will not grow cold when the going gets really tough? The Bible gives us the answers.

How not to let our love grow cold

If we constantly and faithfully "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," God's love in us will not grow cold (Matthew 6:33). If we diligently obey God's commandments while remaining loyal to Him in every circumstance, His love in us will not grow cold (1 John 5:3). If we stay close to Him through fervent prayer and regular Bible study, His love in us will not grow cold (Luke 21:34-36). If we build our "most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit," God's love in us will not grow cold (Jude 20-21).

If we "esteem others better than [ourselves]" (Philippians 2:3), God's love in us will not grow cold. If we remain resolute in the midst of our current trials through God's aid and power while maintaining an optimistic attitude, His love in us will not grow cold (2 Timothy 2:3). And, when we suffer offenses and injustices and yet zealously follow the example of our Savior who said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do," God's love in us will not grow cold (Luke 23:34).

Finally, Jesus Christ prophesied that an unprecedented time of turmoil and human suffering will occur shortly before His second coming. People throughout the world will be affected by these conditions as will Christ's own disciples who will also endure intense persecution for their beliefs and obedience to God.

Sadly, many church members will allow their love for God to grow cold and will turn against their fellow brethren, but it will not happen to us if our relationship with our heavenly Father and Jesus Christ is strong, steady and resolute. Therefore, will you and I "endure to the end" through every trial, hardship and suffering while faithfully maintaining our love for God and our fellow brethren? The choice is ours and the time to choose and act is right now! **GN**

Ordinary Life, Extraordinary *Impact*

The ordinary moments of our day-to-day lives may not seem worth telling. Yet, examples like that of Tabitha continue to inspire us today.

by Joy Jones

The Bible is full of examples of men and women who, with God's help, accomplished miraculous things.

We have only to search through the pages of God's inspired Word to read the stories of those who, at various times, stood before kings with their lives hanging in the balance, led armies into battle, slew giants, were thrown into the lion's den, were cast into the fire for refusing to bow down, who said "yes" to God's calling, even though it would forever change their lives. Men and women stood through faith and belief in God's promises, even when all about them were falling.

"And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them..." (Hebrews 11:32-38, New International Version)

These were truly extraordinary people in remarkable circumstances serving an awesome God for His incredible purpose. Wow! Oh, to have the faith of a Daniel or an Esther; a David or a Deborah.

When we read through the stories of these "heroes of faith," it can be easy to wonder where our own stories fit. We might wonder how our daily lives can ever measure up and



find a place among the "cloud of witnesses" that Hebrews 12:1 says surrounds us. Amidst those who appear as spiritual giants, is there room for the life of an ordinary person with an everyday faith that could still have an extraordinary impact?

It is in the book of Acts that we find the story of just such a person: the story of Tabitha. Her story is sandwiched between Paul's conversion at the beginning of chapter 9 and Peter's vision in chapter 10. She was a woman who, on the surface, lived a very ordinary life and yet had an extraordinary impact. Let's take a closer look at what Scripture tells us.

"At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did" (Acts 9:36).

Luke, the author of the book of Acts, introduces us to Tabitha by first telling us that she was a disciple. Perhaps he did so because this one statement said more about her character than the rest that followed. Perhaps it gave the "why" for what followed.

A disciple has always been a student; a learner; a pupil. A disciple is a devoted follower, learner or adherent who actively studies and lives by the teachings of a master. By telling us that she was a disciple, Luke is telling us that Tabitha was a "follower" of Jesus Christ, a student of what many at the time referred to as "the Way." This is a term that the apostle Paul used to refer to himself when he stood before Governor Felix.

"But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men" (Acts 24:14-16).

Tabitha would have believed everything that was "in

accordance with the Law,” and that was, “written in the Prophets.” She would have had the “same hope” that Paul described. She would have striven to “keep her conscience clear before God and man.”

After Luke first shares with the reader that Tabitha’s core foundation and belief were in Christ, he then goes on to share that she lived out her belief through how she served others. He tells us that Tabitha “excelled in acts of kindness and charity” that she did on a regular basis. This information is important because it speaks to “how” Tabitha lived out her faith. Not only did she seek to gain knowledge, but she applied what she learned through how she served others. Tabitha, as a student of the Way, sought to emulate her teacher.

“A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40).

Tabitha did this through a pattern of good works.

“Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only” (James 2:22-24).

Let us continue with her story.

“But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper

room. And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them” (Acts 9:37-38).

Nick Lamoureux gave a message on Tabitha several years ago. In it, he drew attention to the distance between Joppa and Lydda, noting that they were anywhere from 10-12 miles apart. When the disciples in Joppa sent the two men to find Peter and “urge” him to return with them, they knew they were looking at a 20-24-mile trip there and back again on foot. They went willingly, not knowing for certain that Peter would be able to return with them, but determined to try. Once they found Peter and shared with him the circumstances at hand, and the urgency of the matter, Peter got ready and went with them. Peter saw that Tabitha was worth the walk.

“Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them” (Acts 9:39).

When Peter arrived in Joppa, he met with weeping widows. This, in itself, would have been a powerful image, but then the widows showed him the garments and tunics that Tabitha had made for them. They showed him the work of her hands. They showed him evidence of her faithfulness, of her good works. It must have been an incredibly powerful image to be met with.



It is easy to imagine that while Tabitha worked to make each garment by hand for a member of her community, she prayed for that individual, knowing their needs, hopes and struggles. The New Testament Church was in its infancy. The members would likely have been in close fellowship with one another on a regular basis. As they walked out this new “Way” together, they would have shared their joys and their sorrows with one another and sought to be an encouragement to one another.

With what we have been told about Tabitha thus far: that she was a disciple, that she did a pattern of good works regularly, that after she died men were sent to get Peter and bring him back, it is not much of a stretch to believe that Tabitha’s community was not only grieving the woman who made the garments, but also the woman who prayed with them and for them, the woman who encouraged them with words of comfort and exhortation, perhaps even loving correction when needed, the woman who lived out her faith and helped them live out theirs.

“But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, ‘Tabitha, arise.’ And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive” (Acts 9:40-41).

What must have gone through Tabitha’s mind when her eyes opened and she saw Peter’s face? Did she recognize him immediately, or did she wonder who this man praying over her was? Would she have understood what had just happened, or did Peter have to explain it to her? Did she know that she had had such an impact on those around her, or did she question herself on a daily basis and wonder if she was doing enough; if what she was doing mattered? Did she weep when she realized the depth of love that had been poured out for her and the lengths that her spiritual family had gone to bring back the woman they all cherished? It is likely that there were plenty of joyous tears shed when the door was opened and her family was allowed back in the room to see her, to rejoice that Tabitha, who had been dead, was alive again.

“And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many

believed on the Lord. So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner” (Acts 9:42-43).

We are not told much more about Tabitha except that her story became known all over Joppa and “many believed.” In the next chapter, Peter being in Joppa has the famous vision in which God makes clear to him that he should look at no man as common or unclean and subsequently the gospel is offered to the gentiles; a whole new day of preaching the gospel was beginning, and God placed Tabitha’s story right in the middle of it. As a result of her faithfulness to God and His people, Tabitha’s story intersects with the larger gospel story being shared with the gentiles. God wrote an ordinary woman’s story into the greater biblical story. Incredible!

So often in our day to day lives, we might look for those moments when we are able to stand center stage and do

something “important,” something “big.” The ordinary moments of our day-to-day lives may not seem worth telling. We might wonder where the “glory” is in going to church each Sabbath, of fellowshiping with the same people each week, who sometimes get on our nerves, of breaking bread together, of visiting those who are homebound, of praying for those on the prayer list, even the ones who have offended us, of doing all



the ordinary things day in and day out. Instead of ordinary, we long for extraordinary things.

We long for God to give us giants to slay, waters to cross, and battles to win. We want to be worthy to be put in the fray, face Pharaoh and boldly speak out, “Let My People Go.” But instead, we are given a life where Christ asks us, as He once asked Peter so long ago, if we love Him, and when we say that we do, He leaves us with the admonition to, “Feed My sheep” (John 21:17).

In the life of Tabitha, God draws attention to an ordinary woman’s life, full of ordinary days, in which she took care of her spiritual community well. Her life, like ours, was full of moments, of people and relationships, of places and opportunities, of serving and loving well. God wrote Tabitha’s story to tell of His glory, rather than her own.

Tabitha lived an ordinary life, but left an extraordinary impact. **GN**

Aging Gracefully

by Judy Markley

Every season of life brings both joys and challenges. Aging is no exception. As we grow older, we face more limitations than new abilities. Ecclesiastes 12 vividly describes the decline of the human body, yet Scripture also honors old age. “The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness” (Proverbs 16:31; see also Proverbs 20:29).

Aging is a time to focus more deeply on what truly matters and continue to gain wisdom from a lifetime of experience. Rather than a problem, aging is a wonderful opportunity to continue growing in our Christian character.

As someone who is older and dealing with health challenges, I try to accept reality. Living in the present instead of fretting about the future (Matthew 6:34) helps me appreciate each day as another opportunity to glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31). It’s normal to feel sad about what we lose over time, but those feelings don’t have to take over our lives.

Accept Help

Accepting help can be a big hurdle, especially for those who don’t want to burden others. If we’re used to being independent, asking for help can feel uncomfortable. But when we gracefully accept others’ assistance, we bless the givers who bless us. It’s natural to want to keep our dignity and competence, but as we slow down and can’t do everything we used to, it can be embarrassing and inconvenient. Losing the ability to drive is a good example. Choosing to accept these limitations helps us age gracefully, instead of becoming miserable or bitter or blaming life for our disappointments.

Keep Serving

After long careers, raising families and contributing to their communities, many seniors feel like they’re “put out to pasture.” This feeling of uselessness can lead to depression. Even as our roles change, our usefulness doesn’t. It’s important to maintain interests, hobbies and service to others. Storytelling is a way to serve as it helps preserve family legacies. Reliving life in the “old days” can be meaningful, especially with new listeners.

Even as our bodies slow down and we need more help, we still have much to offer. We can be that loving and playful grandparent without taking on more than we can handle (Proverbs 17:6).

We can be part of a community, sharing our humor and encouragement. By facing our own challenges with courage and faith, we can encourage others who are struggling. We can be a good “patient” and make it easier for our caregivers by showing appreciation and kindness.

Seek Peace

As we grow older, God calls us to focus on forgiveness and seeking peace (Ephesians 4:32). Healing old wounds, clearing up misunderstandings, and seeking reconciliation with those we have alienated can bring greater peace. Forgiveness helps free us from resentment, even when reconciliation or restored trust is not possible (Matthew 6:14-15).

Welcome Connection

Many older adults feel lonely as friends die and family members get busy with their own complicated lives. Isolation and ongoing pain can sometimes lead to depression. It’s time to open the door to a caring neighbor who simply wants to “check in” on you. It’s admirable to maintain independence, but it’s okay to accept this special attention. Allow others the opportunity to care for you.

Stay Active

Staying active is essential, even as our joints get stiff, our muscles lose tone and our balance isn’t what it used to be. Sometimes, I deliberately make things a little harder just to add more movement to my day. When I forget why I came downstairs, I go back up to retrace my steps—it gives me a little extra exercise!

Laughter can lift our spirits and help us feel connected. “A merry heart does good, like medicine” (Proverbs 17:22). Spending time with friends and sharing laughter can improve our outlook.

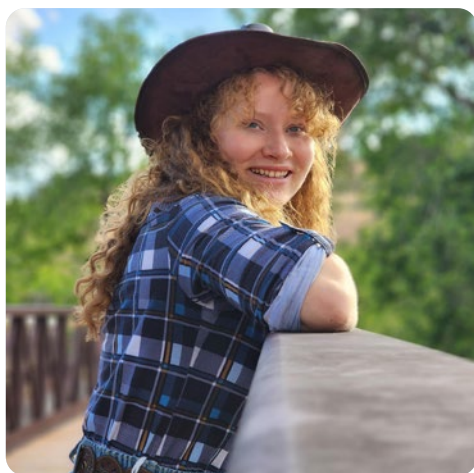
Not everyone’s experience with aging is easy. If you are facing serious illness, disability or constant pain, please do not feel guilty because you cannot do everything described here. God sees our suffering and invites us to seek His mercy, strength and help. We do not have to age perfectly or handle every difficulty without struggle. God promises, “Even to your old age, I am He, and even to gray hairs I will carry you!” (Isaiah 46:4).

God created physical life as temporary, and He understands the limitations and decline that come with age. There’s no shame in getting older; in fact, it’s a privilege because each day gives us another opportunity to grow spiritually. As the apostle Paul wrote, we want to reach the end of life able to say, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7). Our ultimate hope is the resurrection to eternal life in God’s Kingdom (1 Corinthians 15:42-54; Titus 1:2). **UN**



Congratulations 2026 Graduates!

H I G H S C H O O L



Heather Bacher

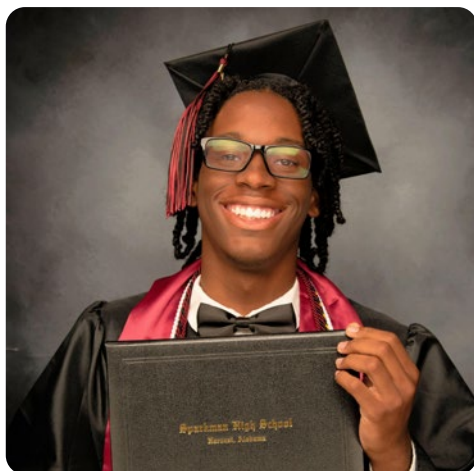
Heather Lynn Anne Bacher, daughter of Scott and Melody Bacher, is a 2026 high school graduate from CHEC Independent School (a homeschool umbrella organization). She and her family attend church in Grand Junction, Colorado.

She has attended three different UYC camps: Southwest, Northwest and Winter camp. She plans to attend camp as a camper again this year, and then as staff in 2027. In her local congregation, Heather fills in on the webcast crew as needed, and is beginning to accompany the congregational

hymn singing on the piano.

Graduating first in her class, Heather successfully juggled homeschool and work. She works at an equestrian center, and volunteers at another equine therapeutic center. Future plans include further schooling to pursue certification as a dental assistant, after which she will begin working in her chosen field.

Heather enjoys horses, any water activity (swimming, paddleboarding, kayaking), reading, various arts and crafts, and playing the piano.



Dillon Tate

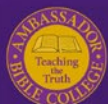
Dillon Tate, son of Jimilee Tate and Le'Quinton Tate, graduated from Sparkman High School on May 19, 2026. He attends church at the Huntsville, Alabama congregation. Dillon has been accepted

as a student at ABC for the 2026-2027 school year. His interests and hobbies include watching Dragon Ball, listening to Pi'erre Bourne, drawing and serving at UYC camps.

INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE AT

AMBASSADOR BIBLE COLLEGE

- ✓ Learn God's Word inside and out.
- ✓ Make friends and memories that will last a lifetime.
- ✓ Prove the truth of the Bible for yourself.
- ✓ Tuition is \$2,500; waivers are available based on need.



Apply today at

abc.ucg.org/applications

Congratulations 2026 Graduates!

COLLEGE

Jack Barnes

Jack Barnes graduated from Southwestern Illinois College in May, earning an associate in applied science, majoring in cybersecurity and networking. While in school, he attended the Metro East, Illinois and St. Louis, Missouri congregations. He was on the Dean's List and was recognized for "exceptional leadership and dedication" as a member

of the College Activities Board.

Jack volunteers as an assistant volleyball instructor at Camp Pinecrest and enjoys playing volleyball at Winter Family Weekend. In the fall, Jack will be transferring to Southern Illinois University, where he will be pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity Technology.



Uchindami Elia

Uchindami Elia graduated from Nalikul College of Education in Malawi with a bachelor's degree in education sciences on March 27, 2026.

Uchindami is a devoted member of the UCG Lilongwe, Malawi congregation. He is an avid reader with varied interests including science, literature (fiction), history and the Bible. He also enjoys writing poetry on topics such as the challenges of being human and how to be a better person. A self-taught violinist, Uchindami can play most of the songs in the UCG hymnal; playing and

appreciating music is one of his favorite pastimes.

A favorite verse of Uchindami's is Ecclesiastes 3:1, "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven."

Uchindami wishes to dedicate this achievement to his supportive father and mother Mr. and Mrs. Elia, his brothers Walt Elia and Dalitso Elia, his sister Patience Elia, his friend and his congregation. He would also like to thank LifeNets, which has been a blessing throughout his journey in college.



Erin Merritt

Erin Merritt, from the Phoenix, Arizona Northwest congregation, graduated magna cum laude with a bachelor of science in biological sciences, a minor in English literature and a certificate in evolutionary medicine.

Erin was accepted into the Barrett Mayo Clinic Premedical Scholars program, working with other physicians for a year at the Mayo Clinic. She has also worked at APEX summer camp in collaboration with the University of Washington working with neurodivergent

children. Erin worked in a research lab for two years, focusing on neurobiology. She wrote and defended her thesis based on her research. She has published two peer-reviewed journal articles with other ASU and Mayo Clinic doctors.

Erin enjoys creative writing, volunteering at Feed My Starving Children, and playing her violin for church services.

This fall, Erin will begin a master's program at ASU in Medical Nutrition with plans of continuing on to medical school.



Announcements

Births • Weddings • Anniversaries • Obituaries



David and Jesse Finneran

May 30, 2026



Matthew and Ayla Leiby

June 14, 2026



Gary and Sue Evans

60th anniversary



Gerald and Connie Seelig

50th anniversary

Weddings

David Finneran and Jesse Scrivner

David Finneran and Jesse Scrivner of the Phoenix Northwest congregation were married on May 30, 2026. David is the son of Sandy and Mike Messer (Fountain Hills, Arizona) and Jesse is the daughter of Jana and Jerry Scrivner (Harrodsburg, Kentucky). The couple was married at the classic early 1900s Bailey House in Harrodsburg, Kentucky on a beautiful sunny day.

David and Jesse met four or five years ago through mutual friends in the Church. After years of no communication, they rekindled their friendship at a church campout in Arizona. A year later, here they are! This summer, the Finnerans will be leaving Arizona and moving to their new home in Kentucky.

Matthew Leiby and Ayla Docken

Matthew Leiby and Ayla Docken were married on June 14, 2026. Matthew is the son of Lynn and Casie Leiby, and Ayla is the daughter of Will and Richelle Docken. The ceremony took place at Oak Ridge Lodge in Mount Airy Forest.

The couple met while attending Ambassador Bible College. After their wedding,

Matthew and Ayla moved to Wylie, Texas, just outside of Dallas. Matthew will finish up a degree in liberal arts while working full time at Amazon. Ayla started a job as a registered behavioral therapist working with kids who have autism. Congratulations to both for starting this new chapter of life together!

Anniversaries

Gary and Sue Evans

The Cincinnati East congregations honored Gary and Sue Evans for their 60th wedding anniversary on June 13, 2026. They have five married children, 13 grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren. Called into the Church early in their married life, they began attending in 1968. Gary was ordained as an elder in 1983, and has served in Chillicothe and Portsmouth, Ohio, Prestonsburg, Kentucky, and currently in Cincinnati East AM.

Gary served in the Army and after discharge worked for General Motors until its closing in the mid 1980s. He then operated his heating and air-conditioning business for 25 years before retiring in the Hillsboro area. Currently, Gary is actively involved in a prison ministry

visiting Sabbath and Holy Day keepers twice a month at the Chillicothe Correctional Institute.

Sue was a stay-at-home mom for 20 years. After three teens and twins, she attended college to obtain a degree at 41 and was hired at Southern State Community College. She received her bachelor's in organizational management 10 years later. She and her daughter created a six-credit-hour curriculum for single parents, divorced, widows and underemployed individuals starting college or wanting a job. They traveled to many state conferences promoting the curriculum.

Gary's interests are hunting, maintaining nine acres, and watching deer and turkey come through the yard. Sue's interests are cooking for others, painting and spending time with family and friends. Their main goal is preparing for Christ's return. Keep the faith!

Gerald and Connie Seelig

The Cincinnati North congregation celebrated Gerald and Connie Seelig's 50th anniversary with a cake reception. The Seeligs share:

"Marriage and family are the greatest physical gifts we can experience. We are



Matthew Zechariah Jorgensen

Sept. 2, 2009-May 25, 2026



Helen Meek

Jan. 24, 1936-June 22, 2026



Mary Styer

Jan. 7, 1931-May 29, 2026



Guadalupe Sanchez Velazquez

March 9, 2026

the parents of three daughters, and we have become grandparents to five. Sadly, our first grandchild died when she was barely two years old. That, along with the very difficult pregnancy Connie had with our last child, were some of the most difficult trials we both faced together. However, we made it through by the mercy of God the Father and Jesus Christ, and with the wonderful support of family and great friends.

“To both of us, it seems like it was yesterday when we said, ‘I do.’ One of the things we both decided after marriage was that we would not argue. And that is one of the greatest pieces of advice we give: don’t argue—discuss, but don’t argue. But more importantly, never forget Who must be the real center of the marriage and the covenant you made with Him. Look to the Father always for that spiritual and moral support.”

Obituaries

Matthew Jorgensen

Matthew Zechariah Jorgensen died on May 25, 2026 from injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident in Payette, Idaho. He was 16.

Matthew was born Sept. 2, 2009, in La Grande, Oregon. The family moved to Meridian, Idaho in 2020 and attends the United Church of God congregation in Boise.

Having just completed his junior year as a homeschooler, Matthew was looking forward to completing his GED. He was naturally curious and enjoyed figuring out how things worked and learned best by doing.

Faith in God was a steady and meaningful part of Matt’s life. While he did not always speak about it openly, those who knew him could see it in the genuine way he lived—through his kindness, the way he treated others, and the values he quietly carried. In moments that revealed his heart most clearly, he expressed a simple but sincere hope in God’s Kingdom and the promise of being reunited with loved ones. His involvement in Church, youth camps and friendships within the Church community were important to him.

Matthew had a natural ability with people; he conversed easily with others, making them feel comfortable and included.

He was strong-willed, hands-on, and gifted in mechanical and problem-solving work, helping with car repairs, and

working on projects with his brother and a family friend. He was passionate about motorcycles and biking, spending a lot of time riding, working on and modifying bikes. He especially enjoyed converting regular bicycles into motorized bikes and even began making money helping friends with their own bike conversions.

Matt greatly enjoyed fishing and loved being outdoors, especially visiting nearby ponds, rivers and lakes. Throughout his life, trains were one of his greatest passions. He loved model trains, watching trains pass by, drawing trains and anything related to them.

Matt was also a big Star Wars fan and enjoyed building with LEGO and collecting Pokémon cards. He enjoyed spending time with friends and family, traveling, attending youth camps, and staying connected with people from Church and trips. He had a fun and creative side—enjoying music, cooking and joking around. At home, he was very protective of his sister, but also shared a playful bond with her, often teasing and wrestling with her in everyday sibling life.

He is preceded in death by his father, Dan; his grandparents, Robert and Susan Jorgensen, and Edwardo and Alicia

Announcements

Births • Weddings • Anniversaries • Obituaries

Binos; and his aunt, Wella.

Matthew is survived by his mother, Nancy; brother Samuel; sister Erika; aunts and uncles on his father's side, Sarah, Timothy, Jennifer, Laurie, and Benjamin; and on his mother's side, Walter, Minerva, Erlinda, Loret, and James; along with many loving cousins and dear friends.

Helen Meek

Helen Meek, of the Hickory, North Carolina congregation, finished her race on June 22, at the age of 90. Helen was a faithful servant of God since her calling in the late 1970s. She was baptized on Nov. 30, 1980, and over the years, lived an active and vibrant life, just like the butterflies she loved! She loved to travel internationally and was given the opportunity to do so many times for the Feast of Tabernacles. Some of the countries where she attended the Feast included the Netherlands, Belgium, Jordan and Canada.

Helen was true to the meaning of her last name: she possessed strength under control. She didn't like recognition, and instead, preferred to help others around her to shine. Yet her light shone brightly regardless. Her boldness and zeal made her a natural for helping to distribute copies of the *Good News* magazine to the public. She also frequently provided rides to church services for those who didn't have a way to get there.

When UCG started up a local congregation in Charlotte in 1996, a need arose for an accompanist, and Helen, who

had only taken about a year of piano in school, jumped right in and learned to play all of the hymns. She not only accompanied faithfully most Sabbaths, but as time went on, she recognized budding young musicians in the congregation and encouraged them to share their talents, too!

Heidi Braun writes, "Helen Meek was an inspiration to me as a musician in the Church. She encouraged me, while I was still quite young, to get involved with playing piano at Church services, and I know she encouraged my sister as well... She was always a joy to know."

Helen also headed up special music and started a choral group when she saw the need for special music in the local area. Though she was limited in what choir music she could play, she didn't let that hold her back, and she found many songs for the choral group to present. Known for going the extra mile, she kept faithful records of all the special music performed each year, and even the hymns that were played. If a hymn hadn't been chosen in a while, she would be sure to mention it to one of the songleaders!

Even when her eyesight was failing and she was in constant back pain, she connected to Sabbath services each week from her assisted living facility, and was always happy to hear from her brethren. Her favorite Bible verse was Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Helen is survived by her brother, Wayne Hullett, and niece, Judy Daniels. Helen

will be sorely missed, but we look forward to meeting her again in the resurrection. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Psalm 116:15).

Mary Styer

Mary Louise Styer was born in Menomonie, Wisconsin, the second of five children born to Arthur H. and Louise A. (Price) Barnhart. She graduated from Menomonie High School in 1948 and attended Milwaukee State Teachers College where she majored in music. Mary was an accomplished pianist and her children fondly remember her singing and harmonizing to music as she worked around their home. As a teen, she and her sister performed duets in public, where she sang harmony alto. As a young teen, she was stricken with rheumatic fever and her physicians told her she would never live to be 21, much less be strong enough to have children, but God had other plans for Mary.

She came from a family of readers and writers, and her home has always had floor-to-ceiling bookshelves in most rooms. She was delighted that all her children were strong readers, who enjoyed extensive research and writing. Her father, two children and a granddaughter have all written books. She spoke fondly of a Friday night tradition as a child, when her daddy would gather everyone around and read a chapter from each of his children's book selections. This custom exposed her and her siblings to a wide variety of writers and created within each of



them the strong desire to learn.

At age 16, she met her future husband, Gerald (Jerry) Styer, at the roller-skating rink, where they skated together every weekend. They married shortly after Jerry got out of the Navy at the end of WWII. After marriage, she and Jerry bought an Airstream camper and lived and traveled all over the country. They lived in Michigan, Florida and Wisconsin during that time, eventually settling in Cornell, Wisconsin, where Jerry opened his own bakery. Mary helped with bookkeeping and with raising their first three children, Mike, Tony and Wendy. In 1967, they moved back to their hometown of Menomonie, Wisconsin where their youngest child, Shari, was born.

Mary was active in her Church and was an avid Bible reader and researcher of truth. She and Jerry were baptized into the Church in 1971 and moved to Burns, Tennessee in 1974, where she often played the hymns on the piano for the Dickson, Tennessee congregation. During her 54 years attending God's Church, she had the opportunity to travel to many Feast sites, including Czechoslovakia, Thailand and Jordan. A highlight of one Feast was being able to meet the former Queen Noor of Jordan.

Mary held numerous interesting jobs in her lifetime. She was a live-in maid for a wealthy family, a secretary at the historical Tainter Memorial Theater in Menomonie, Wisconsin, and worked in the kitchen of a TB sanitarium. She also was passionately involved in causes for

the betterment of others. She took on the city political arena in the early 1970s to keep fluoride out of the public drinking water in Wisconsin, an unpopular position at that time, but one that has gained scientific recognition in recent years. She also spent many years volunteering at the Dickson County cancer auction. She was a strong advocate for natural and holistic healing, and could tell exactly what vitamins or nutrients one may need to conquer almost any ailment. At 95, she never took any regular ongoing pharmaceutical prescriptions and seldom would even touch an aspirin.

Mary had diverse and interesting hobbies and interests. She enjoyed playing the piano, crocheting, cooking, baking, gardening and roller skating. She loved reading her Bible, beautiful music, dark chocolate and the color pink. She adored her family. She was very happy that all her children attended Ambassador College and constantly mentioned this to anyone who visited her. She took tremendous pride in her children's and grandchildren's academic and professional accomplishments.

Mary is survived by her four children: Michael Styer, Tony Styer (Loni), Wendy Kovalchick (John), Shari Fooshe (Michael), 10 grandchildren: Ben Benayce, Kaitlin Styer, Jennifer (Styer) Green, David Styer (Hannah), Brian Styer, David Kovalchick (Prisca), Daniel Kovalchick (Kaitlyn), Megan (Fooshe) Langford (Rhys), Mariah (Fooshe) Stephens (Michael), and Marissa (Fooshe) Del Sol;

and eight great-grandchildren: Sage Phillips, Gavin Phillips, Eden Phillips, Sera Phillips, Leo Langford, Owen Kovalchick, Max Kovalchick and Amelia Joy Stephens.

She was preceded in death by her husband of nearly 65 years, Gerald Styer, her brothers, Herbert and David Barnhart and her daughter-in-law, Cathey Styer.

Guadalupe Sanchez Velazquez

Guadalupe Sanchez Velazquez from the Los Angeles congregation died March 9, 2026, two months shy of her 99th birthday.

Guadalupe was baptized in 1970. She was a founding member of the Spanish Church in Pasadena in Worldwide. She was a staple in the Los Angeles UCG congregation. She always greeted everyone with a smile.

Guadalupe had 10 children and was widowed twice. As the matriarch of her family, she instilled in her children a love for family, hard work and a love for God's truth. She is preceded in death by four of her children, Peter, Loly, Rudy and Marta. She is survived by four sons—Joseph, Richard, Robert and John—and two daughters, Margaret and Julie. Her legacy lives on through the generations she cherished so deeply: 22 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren, each a testament to her enduring love and influence. She was strong in her faith and looked forward to the resurrection. [UN](#)

Local Church News



Northwest Men's Weekend Seabeck, Washington

The 11th annual Northwest Men's Weekend was held June 12-14 in beautiful Seabeck, Washington, with 36 men attending from three countries and six states, representing 15 congregations. The theme for the weekend was "Being Lights in a Dark World." John Elliott, president of the United Church of God, served as the guest speaker.

Five interactive seminars were given throughout the weekend: "Choosing to Be a Light" by Ken Loucks, "Responsibilities and Blessings of Being Lights in the World" by Roc Corbett, "Being the Light of the World Requires Spiritual Integrity" by Rob Slocum, "Contrasting Light vs. Darkness" by Ben Light and "The Source of True Light is God and Christ" by John Elliott.

On the Sabbath, John Elliott gave a sermon, "Light in the Darkness," which stressed the benefits of living in the light now and the future promised to those who do.

Other highlights were the wine-and-cheese socials on Friday and Saturday evenings. Attendees brought and shared treats, enjoyed good conversation, and had time to strengthen bonds as brothers in Christ.

The weekend provided a peaceful setting, practical instruction and encouraging fellowship. Those attending left with a renewed reminder that being a light in a dark world is not just a subject to study, but a way of life men of God are called to live.

Ken Loucks



Women's Enrichment Weekend

Vero Beach, Florida

Men serving women in Vero Beach! Yes, you read it right! On February 14, 2026, Vero Beach congregation held its first Women's Enrichment Weekend. Women came from all over Florida and even further to attend. The Schreibers joined us and helped to present a great lineup of events for the weekend.

We started off with a sermon by Randy Schreiber on "God's View of Women." We were moved by the biblical scriptures he delivered in a unique and inspirational way. Following the sermon, a delicious catered meal was served by men from the Vero Beach congregation. I think they enjoyed being at the women's weekend too as they were very cheerful givers as they served. After lunch, the men went their separate ways, and we had a very heartfelt Bible study led by the Schreibers. Saturday afternoon and evening, we enjoyed food, fellowship, praise and worship and even dancing! Christine Therber, who

organized the dancing event, can really dance!

On Sunday we heard from the Bratnick sisters, Molly Shrauner, and Kay Schreiber as well. And the men served us lunch again! On Sunday, merchandise that was donated for a silent auction was sold to benefit the women in Jamaica. I was the auctioneer and we raised \$1,400 to help the Jamaican ladies have some growth time together as we have.

Thanks go out to all the women who supported this event. A special thank you goes out to Dianne Carter, Mary Smith and, of course, our pastor Chuck Smith. Without these three, the event would not have come together so nicely. Thank you to the Schreibers for their long travel day to come and present. So, my only question is...when is the next one? We will keep everyone posted. It will be even better next time. See you there!

Gail Wilson

Local Church News

Faith, Family and Firstfruits: Stories From Pentecost Mid-Atlantic Brethren Share a Special Pentecost Weekend



On Pentecost weekend, John and Merrie Elliott visited the congregations in the Mid-Atlantic area.

On the Sabbath, Mr. Elliott delivered a sermon to the congregation in Columbia, Maryland titled, “A Spiritual Oasis.” We took a look at water as an analogy for God’s Holy Spirit and as an essential component of our spiritual life and growth. We then looked at the contrast with places that lack water, such as deserts, which physically represent a world without God’s Holy Spirit. We, who are destined to be firstfruits, are growing in an oasis (the Church) surrounded by desert (the world).

On Sunday, brethren from the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Delmarva Peninsula; Columbia, Maryland; Northern Virginia;

and Richmond, Virginia, congregations gathered together in Annapolis, Maryland to observe the Day of Pentecost.

We heard from Mr. Elliott again, who explained how we are all part of harvesting the crop with every member doing their share. We need to pray the Lord sends out laborers (Luke 10:2).

We were reminded and encouraged by how God’s calling and Jesus’ sacrifice give us the opportunity to go on to repentance and baptism and develop into a harvestable fruit.

We enjoyed the Elliotts’ visit and appreciated them making the trip out to the Mid-Atlantic area for the Pentecost weekend.

Rhonda Diggins

A Memorable Pentecost With Church Family

Due to personal circumstances, some brethren from the Windsor, Ontario congregation were unable to travel to Ayr, Ontario, for the combined southeastern observance of the Day of Pentecost. They were grateful to be able to participate in the service from a member’s home in Kingsville, Ontario, via Zoom. Joining them was a family of four from the Ann Arbor, Michigan, congregation.

Together, they reflected on the remarkable blessing God had provided. Although only nine brethren were gathered in one home, they were able to connect online with brethren in Croatia, Ukraine, Peru, Italy, France, Scotland and England. It was a meaningful reminder that God is calling people from every nation into His Kingdom—a fitting reflection on the significance of Pentecost.

Following the service, everyone gathered around the dining room table to thank God for the generous meal that had been prepared by everyone.

Marilyn Anderson



United News

To request a subscription, email UN@ucg.org or write to **United News, United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027**, or to one of the international addresses below.

NORTH, SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

United States: United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027
Phone: (513) 576-9796 | Fax (513) 576-9795 | Website: ucg.org | info@ucg.org
Canada: United Church of God—Canada, Box 144, Station D, Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1
Phone: (905) 614-1234, (800) 338-7779 | Fax: (905) 614-1749 | Website: ucg.ca | info@ucg.org
Caribbean: United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027. info@ucg.org
Spanish-speaking areas: Iglesia de Dios Unida, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A.
Phone: (513) 576-9796 | Fax (513) 576-9795 | Website: ucg.org/espanol | info@ucg.org
French-speaking areas: Église de Dieu Unie—France, 7 chemin de Monfaucou - Lot 21, 33127 Martignas sur Jalle, France.

EUROPE

Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg: P.O. Box 93, 2800 AB Gouda, Netherlands
British Isles: United Church of God—British Isles, P.O. Box 705, Watford, Herts, WD19 6FZ, England
Phone: 020-8386-8467 | Fax: 020-8386-1999 | Website: goodnews.org.uk
Eastern Europe and Baltic states: Head Sõnumid, Pk. 62, 50002 Tartu Postkontor, Estonia
France: Église de Dieu Unie—France, 24 avenue Descartes, 33160 Saint-Médard-en-Jalles, France
Germany: Vereinte Kirche Gottes, Postfach 30 15 09, D-53195 Bonn, Germany | Phone: 0228-9454636
Fax: 0228-9454637 | Email: info@gutenachrichten.org
Italy: Via Faruffini, 20 - 20149 Milan, Italy | Phone/Fax: (+39) 335 8470591 | Email: info@ucgitaly.org
Website: ucgitaly.org
Scandinavia: Guds Enade Kyrka, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027 | norden@ucg.org
Switzerland: Phone: 49 228 945 4636 | Website: vkg.org

AFRICA

Cameroon: United Church of God Cameroon, BP 10322 Bessengue, Douala, Cameroon
East Africa, Madagascar and Mauritius: United Church of God—East Africa
P.O. Box 75261, Nairobi 00200, Kenya | kenya@ucg.org | Website: ucgeastafrica.org
Ghana: P.O. Box AF 75, Adenta, Accra, Ghana | ghana@ucg.org
Malawi: P.O. Box 32257, Chichiri, Blantyre 3, Malawi | Phone: +265 999 823 523 | Email: malawi@ucg.org
Nigeria: United Church of God—Nigeria, P.O. Box 2265 Somolu, Lagos, Nigeria | Phone: 803-323-3193
Website: ucgnigeria.org | nigeria@ucg.org
South Africa (and Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland only):
United Church of God, Southern Africa, PostNet Suite #28 Private Bag X025 Lynnwood Ridge 0040
Phone: (+27) 079725945 | Website: south-africa.ucg.org | Email: RSA@ucg.org
Zambia: P.O. Box 23076, Kitwe, Zambia | Phone: (0026)0966925840 | zambia@ucg.org
Zimbabwe: United Church of God—Zimbabwe, c/o M. Chichaya, No 15 Mukwa Street, Eiffel Flats, Kadoma, Zimbabwe | Phone: +263 772 922 362 | zimbabwe@ucg.org

PACIFIC REGION

Australia and all other South Pacific regions not listed: United Church of God—Australia
GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Qld. 4001, Australia | Phone: 07 5630 3774 | International Calls: +617 5580 8477
Website: ucg.org.au | Email: info@ucg.org.au
New Zealand: United Church of God, P.O. Box 10468, Te Rapa, Hamilton 3241, New Zealand
Phone: Toll-free 0508-463-763 | Website: ucg.org.nz | info@ucg.org.nz
Tonga: United Church of God—Tonga, P.O. Box 518, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

ASIA

All except Philippines and Singapore: United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A.
Phone: (513) 576-9796 | Fax (513) 576-9795 | info@ucg.org
Philippines: P.O. Box 1474, MCPO, 1254 Makati City, Philippines | Cell/text: +63 918-904-4444
Website: ucg.org.ph | Email: info@ucg.org.ph
Singapore: United Church of God, GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Qld. 4001, Australia
Website: ucg-singapore.org | info@ucg.org.au

ALL AREAS AND NATIONS NOT LISTED

United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027
Phone: (513) 576-9796 | Fax (513) 576-9795 | Website: ucg.org | info@ucg.org

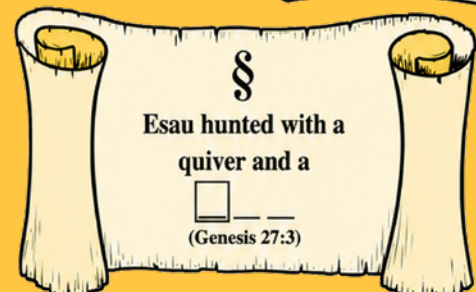
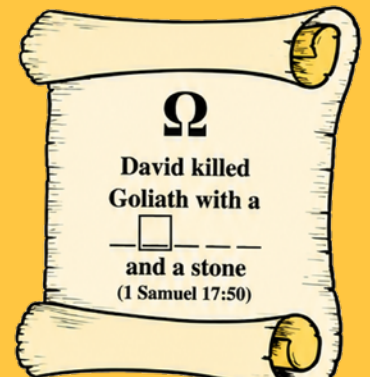
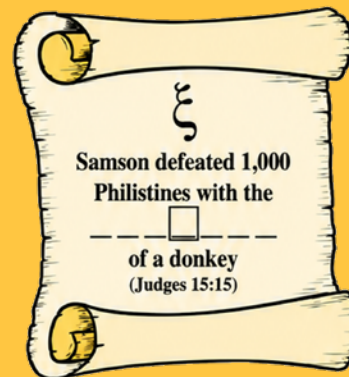
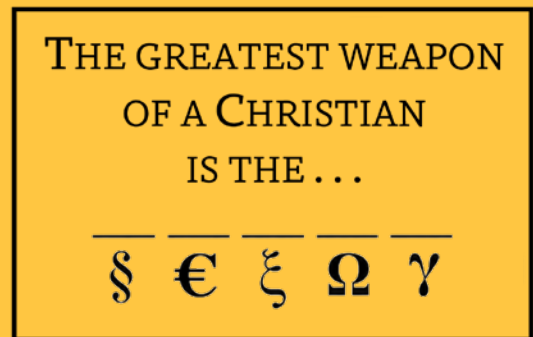
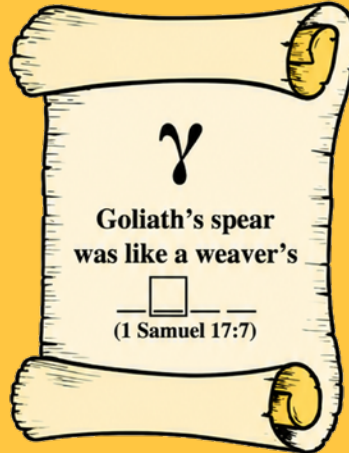


United Church of God
an International Association

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Crack the Code!

To crack the code below, complete the five clues on this page—each boxed-in letter reveals the meaning of the symbol above it.



Stay connected through *member announcements!*

A *United News* announcement is the perfect way to honor a loved one or commemorate a special occasion. We feature announcements for births, weddings, anniversaries and obituaries. We also highlight graduations and periodically share impactful stories from our members' lives.

If you have an announcement or story to share, you can send it as an email to un@ucg.org. Please include a photo with a resolution of at least 300 dpi. Announcements should not exceed 500 words, and may be lightly edited for length and clarity by *United News* staff. Member stories may be longer and will be reviewed by our team before a publication decision is made.

You can also submit announcements online at the following QR code (please remember to email accompanying photos separately). We look forward to hearing from you!

Submit Your Announcement Today!



- Births
- Graduations
- Weddings
- Anniversaries
- Obituaries

Don't forget to email us your picture!

un@ucg.org