# United News

NEWS of the UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

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# *The Work We Share*
## A Current View

I want to give you a fresh picture of the work of God today: what God is accomplishing through His Church, what we are striving to do better, and where we are stretched thin. We all partner in this work that God has called us to accomplish.

Jesus Christ pronounced a definite success, "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14). He also instructed His followers to "make disciples of all the nations . . . teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). These form the mission of the United Church of God: preaching the gospel and preparing a people.

Above all, this is God's work. Jesus Christ is the living head of His Church (Colossians 1:18), and God's Holy Spirit makes spiritual growth and transformation possible. We are responsible for faithfully preaching, teaching and caring for those whom God calls, while trusting Him to open doors and provide the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).

The Church is comprised by a people who are being prepared as a bride for Christ at His return. What we are growing into is articulated by our vision statement: "A Church led by God's Holy Spirit, joined and knit together by what every member supplies, with all doing their share and growing in love to fulfill God's great purpose for humanity to bring many children to glory" (Ephesians 4:16; Hebrews 2:10-11).

As we teach God's Word around the world, encouraging others and ourselves to develop Christ-like mindsets, we all bind closer together as one unit with many parts.

Using your talents to serve in your local congregation helps bind and strengthen us. Assisting your leaders, helping an employee or a fellow member, and communicating with others inside and outside of our organization promote oneness among all God calls in this age (John 17:20-21).

### Doing Our Part Together

God designed His Church to function as one body, "joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share" (Ephesians 4:16). Unified relationships among all members, wherever they find themselves currently, show respect for the Body that Jesus gave Himself for and still intercedes for. Our personal service to God and people using the spiritual gifts we've received moves us forward in our preparation for the first resurrection.

Your faithful tithes and offerings support the preaching of the gospel and the care of God's people. Our personal example, hospitality and fellowship with others also matter. Each of us can contribute to the work, both in person and through the opportunities available online. Thank you for being a special living stone in God's spiritual house, built on Jesus Christ, our chief cornerstone (1 Peter 2:5-6).

### A Work That Is Alive and Active

Every day, the work of God moves forward in over 150 countries and reaches out to multiple cultures and languages. Here at the home office about 50 employees are working diligently in Ministerial and Member Services, Media and Communications Services, Development and Engagement Services, Ambassador Bible College, Internet Systems, Facilities Management and Financial Services.

Reaching around the world, our international work is serving some 15,000 members with 405 elders helping to shepherd congregations, visit the sick, counsel families and teach God's way of life through sermons, Bible studies and a variety of local and regional initiatives.

Members are being served through Ambassador Bible College, United Youth Camps, young adult events, enrichment seminars and activities serving all demographics. God's festivals continue to bring members together across generations and continents. We are a godly community that is alive and growing (2 Peter 3:18).

### Striving to Reach Every Generation

The apostle Paul wrote, "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Corinthians 9:22). We strive to carry that same spirit into how we preach the gospel today. People receive information in many different ways, and those ways keep changing.

*Beyond Today* videos and *Beyond Today* digital and print magazines reach an expanding audience of viewers and readers. *Beyond Today Daily*, our YouTube channel, podcasts and social media platforms reach those who primarily use their phones and tablets. The UCG.org website is constantly being updated with articles, study aids, a Bible Study Course, video content and sermons with international websites and publications carrying the message in a variety of languages. *Compass Check* and *Magnified* speak to teens and young adults, while Jelly engages with many kids.

In all these things, our purpose remains unchanged: to proclaim God's truth, point people to the coming Kingdom of God and help those whom the Father calls grow in understanding and commitment to His way of life.

Maintaining and improving these resources is demanding. Websites need constant updates, platforms change their rules, software changes, and audiences expect more and better content every year. We are working to strengthen our messaging and improve every one of these channels, and we are making slow but real progress.

Managers and employees at the home office are working hard to strengthen our messaging and improve our websites, media platforms, digital content and print publications around the globe, while also enhancing services to members and ministers worldwide. God has blessed us with skilled and dedicated staff, yet the demands involved in enhancing our services and operations are greater than we can reasonably accomplish within current financial and staffing limits. That means some sacrifices are made to prioritize crucial projects, while others must wait for their turn. Our executive team and field ministry feel the weight each day. Christ described our reality with, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Matthew 9:37-38). This is a reality in our ongoing need for shepherds. There never seems to be enough upcoming elders who are available to be pastors, including international regions.

## Funded by God's Tithes and Your Offerings

This is not a call for money, but an honest appreciation for your sacrifices. This work is supported by God's tithes and by the offerings from all our faithful members and donors. When you and I give, we are giving to God to fulfill the commission assigned to us. Candidly, the objectives we set each year exceed our financial resources and staffing capacity. Every gift to various funds makes a real difference. Like your household and mine, the Church feels the impact of this inflationary economic time. Costs keep rising across all operations including church halls, broadcasting, printing, postage, fuel, insurance and employee needs. We budget carefully and in turn work diligently to be faithful stewards of everything entrusted to us.

We are deeply grateful for your faithfulness and generous service with us as we all strive to do His work. Let's all continue to look up and lean forward in striving to accomplish what we have all been called to perform together.

With love and appreciation for all of you,

**John Elliott**
President, United Church of God




# United News

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GN
The Good News



Adam Rutkowski/Unsplash

# Can You *Hear Me* Now?

## Lessons on Communication From High-Risk Work

*by August Hunicke*

According to the 2024 occupational fatality statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, logging has one of the highest work-related fatality rates in the nation, and the tree care industry also involves significant occupational hazards. Having worked in logging and arboriculture for over 40 years, I have firsthand experience with the consequences of inadequate training and poor judgment. During the first five years of my career, I broke my arm, suffered a chainsaw injury and fell from a tree—three separate incidents that I attribute to a combination of overconfidence and insufficient instruction.

Psalm 68:20 states, "Our God is the God of salvation; and to GOD the Lord belong escapes from death." I give God the glory for my survival in those first years (and for humbling me), but the contrast between my rough start and the relatively smooth sailing of the subsequent 35 years is stark. If the work is really that dangerous, how have I stayed in it, day in and day out, drama-free? What is the primary key to safety? What did I lack in the beginning?

### The life-saving value of instruction

I'm going to go "out on a limb" here and say that the primary key to safety, productivity and longevity is communication, and the thing I lacked was instruction conveyed by a knowledgeable mentor—which is, again, communication.

God Himself illustrated the critical value of communication to job-site production when He brought the Tower of Babel project to a screeching halt

by confounding the workers' languages (Genesis 11:7-8). Without the ability to "hear" one another, the work stopped. Coordinated work requires knowledge and experience to be communicated from one generation to the next.

I was self-taught in the early years of my career. I wanted teachers, but the industry surrounding me was driven by immediate production, rather than discipleship. Therefore, my endeavors were made dangerous by a lack of instruction.

"Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14).

While climbing a fir tree in 1995, I learned the hard way that an arborist should have two points of attachment when using a chainsaw aloft. Due to a combination of boldness and inexperience, I accidentally cut my lifeline with my saw and immediately plunged 40 feet to the ground. Communication via mentorship would likely have helped me to avoid the suffering which followed. How do I know? I know because in the years since, I have trained many people who now have safe, successful careers in the trade. They all survived the novice years and beyond, virtually unscathed. They were privileged to have someone who knew the dangers and the tricks of the trade who was able to share this knowledge with them—they had a teacher.

In fact, we often hear Isaiah 30:21 quoted at the Feast of Tabernacles to express the tremendous value of communication via dedicated mentorship: "Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, 'This is the way, walk in it,' whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left."

## A voice above the noise

Several years ago I was asked to write an article for a major magazine in the tree care industry, and was asked to give my opinion on the single greatest modern innovation of the trade. I stated that helmet communication systems are the greatest advancement since the chainsaw. They allow detailed instructions to be given right when it matters most—during the dynamic tasks of our "dangerous job." Because of these benefits, all my crew members now wear helmet systems with tiny speakers hidden in their ear protection and mics behind their face screens.

Tree workers often put large objects in motion which create incredible momentum and chain reactions. Professionals who previously were only able to communicate these dynamics to apprentices in the classroom are now also able to provide instruction during the action.

The development of helmet communication allows those whom I mentor to hear "voice-behind-you," play-by-play instructions despite the loud, chaotic environment of chainsaws, woodchippers and falling debris. But does this really matter? Yes!

I spent decades working aloft without reliable communication. My coworkers and I couldn't hear each other above the noise. Cumulatively, I lost hours, days—perhaps years—waiting for my help on the ground to notice I needed something, or to notice that I was waiting for them to move to a safe position. I would often look for, and count, their hats before dropping logs. This was time-consuming because ground crew members are often in motion or blocked by foliage. With reliable communication, we are in constant contact, whether turning "to the right hand or the left." James 1:19 instructs us, "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."

## Making provision to listen

One unexpected benefit of modern communication tools is how they can change our listening habits. In the past, hearing protection typically meant isolation. People removed it to listen—and paid for that with hearing loss and shouting. Now, protection and clarity work together. You hear the "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:11-13) of your team because you've made provision to listen. Now, rather than blocking out all noise—both helpful and harmful—technological advancements in hearing protection dim the chaotic noise of the jobsite while preserving the potentially life-saving words from above. This principle extends far beyond the worksite.

## Hearing and following Christ's voice

Our United Youth Camps theme for 2026 was "Follow Me." Jesus said, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:27). His words are the source of instruction that leads to eternal safety.

Like my dangerous job, our children are growing up in a dangerous and distracting world. They need protection, and the best protection comes through hearing God clearly.

Ephesians 6:17 tells us to "take the helmet of salvation." An arborist's work helmet protects the head, while the hearing system within it dims the surrounding chaos and carries the teacher's voice directly to the worker. In a similar way, the promise of salvation guards our minds and quiets the world's noise, allowing us to more effectively listen to God's instruction. In this way, both safety and productivity are optimized. Clear communication helps us to move forward, make better decisions in the moment and accomplish the work before us.

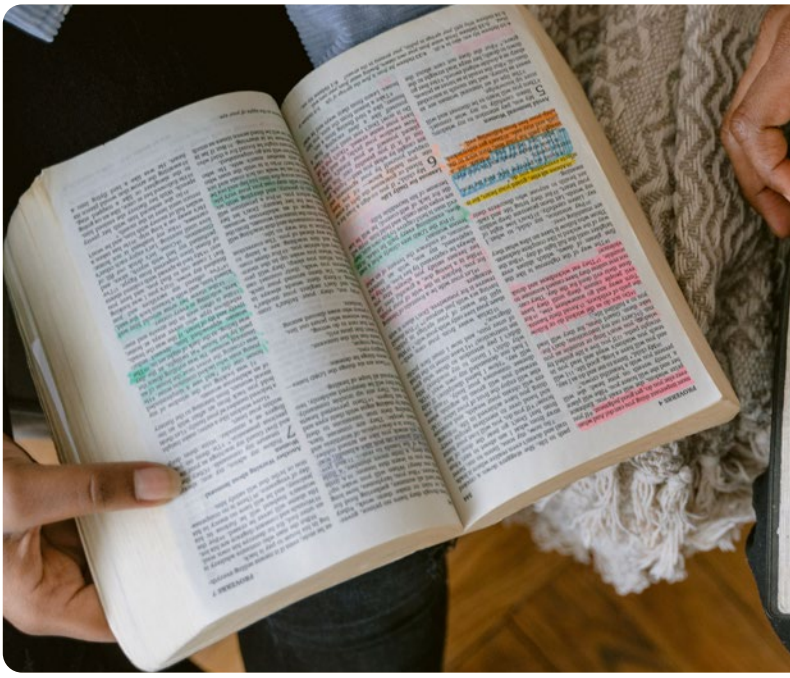
"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

God has not left us isolated in the noise of the world—He has equipped us. Through His Word, by His Spirit and with the wise counsel of faithful teachers, He continues to say, "This is the way, walk in it." The question, then, is not if God has communicated. Instead, the real question is: Can we hear Him now? **GN**

# Principles for *Honoring God*

## When the Bible Doesn't Give a Direct Answer

*by Ken Loucks*



How can we honor God in areas when

God has not left us to guess how to honor Him. Throughout the pages of Scripture, He reveals what He expects from His people. From the Ten Commandments to the observance of the Sabbath, the annual Holy Days and laws governing clean and unclean meats, we are shown what pleases God. Rather than vague spiritual ideas, they are commands that reflect His holiness and show us how to walk in obedience.

But what about the areas where there are no explicit instructions? What happens when we face decisions the Bible doesn't directly address? In a world filled with cultural traditions, religious customs and moral gray areas, we often find ourselves asking: How do I know what honors God when He hasn't said "do this" or "don't do that"?

This question reaches into the heart of spiritual maturity. As the author of Hebrews wrote, "But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14). The Greek word translated "discern" (*diakrisis*) carries the sense of distinguishing, discerning or judging. It describes the ability to make careful distinctions—in this context, between good and evil.

This kind of discernment is not automatic. It is developed over time through the consistent application of God's Word. It is how mature Christians respond to situations where the Bible does not speak directly, and it is crucial in a world that increasingly blurs the line between what is holy and what is merely human.

### What Seems Good to Us Isn't Always Good to God

Having a heart that is right is an important part of worship, but it's not the whole picture. Sincerity alone does not sanctify error. In fact, Jesus directly challenged this very notion.

Speaking to the religious leaders of His day, He quoted the prophet Isaiah: "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Mark 7:6-7). These were people who believed they were worshiping God, but their worship was "in vain" because it was based on human tradition, not divine instruction.

Jesus continued, saying, "For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men" (verse 8). The issue was presumption. They allowed human tradition to take precedence over God's revealed instruction. That mindset is still alive today.

When people adopt religious customs such as Christmas or Easter—observances not commanded in Scripture and historically shaped by pre-Christian religious traditions—and use them to honor God, an important biblical principle comes into play. In Deuteronomy 12:30-32, God specifically warned His people not to inquire into how other nations worshiped their gods and then say, "I also will do likewise." He added, "You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way … you shall not add to it nor take away from it." On this question the Bible does give a direct answer.

The desire to worship is not enough. God must be worshiped in truth (John 4:24). That means aligning our practices with His Word, not just our intentions.

### Partial Obedience Is Still Disobedience

The life of King Saul provides a cautionary lesson in what happens when we do what seems right in our own eyes, while ignoring God's clear instruction.

In 1 Samuel 13, Saul was under pressure. His army was afraid and scattering. Rather than continuing to wait for Samuel as he had been instructed, Saul took matters into his own hands and offered the required sacrifice. He likely thought he was doing the right thing under the circumstances—taking initiative and trying to secure God's favor before battle.

But Samuel's rebuke was severe: "You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God …



Tima Miroshnichenko/Pexels

## re there are no explicit instructions?

But now your kingdom shall not continue" (1 Samuel 13:13-14). Saul's problem wasn't just that he was impatient, but that he had assumed God would accept his version of obedience.

A few chapters later, Saul again disobeyed God's command—this time by sparing King Agag and keeping the best of the livestock from the Amalekites. When confronted, Saul insisted he had obeyed—he even claimed the animals were for sacrifice to God! But Samuel's reply reveals the seriousness of Saul's error: ". . . to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22). Saul's religious justification did not excuse his disobedience. Obedience has very little to do with personal interpretation, but should instead be motivated by a humble desire to submit to God's will.

### Worship That Pleases God

True worship is about what is "acceptable to God," rather than what makes us feel spiritual. In Romans 12:1, Paul exhorted believers to present themselves as living sacrifices, "holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Paul's point? True worship is never about making us "feel spiritual." Instead, the Greek word translated "acceptable" (*euarestos*) implies that something is fully agreeable or well-pleasing to God—not merely to us.

In Colossians 2:20-23, Paul warned against man-made religious regulations that had an "appearance of wisdom" but were rooted in human commandments rather than God's truth. Religious practices can look disciplined or spiritual while still missing what God actually requires. This is especially important in matters where God hasn't given a direct command. We must be careful not to invent practices or adopt cultural norms that may appear religious but are disconnected from God's Word.

### Judging What Is Excellent

So, what do we do when faced with an issue the Bible doesn't directly address?

Paul offers guidance in Philippians 1:9-10, "And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent." The word "approve" carries the idea of testing or examining, while "the things that are excellent" points to recognizing what is genuinely valuable and pleasing to God. In other words, we are called to evaluate our choices—not just by asking "Is it wrong?" but by asking, "Is it excellent? Is it honoring to God?"

Discernment also requires us to consider how our choices affect others. Paul sometimes dealt with matters in which the practice itself was not sinful, but a Christian still needed to consider conscience and the possibility of causing another person to stumble (Romans 14:13-23; 1 Corinthians 8:9-13). Christian maturity therefore asks, "Will this choice show love? Will it build others up?"

This kind of thinking must be developed through consistent spiritual training. Hebrews 5:14 calls it having "senses exercised to discern both good and evil." The word "exercised" implies strenuous effort. This is part of growing in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18).

### The Real Goal: Pleasing God in All Things

Ultimately, our highest aim is to please God. Paul wrote, "Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him" (2 Corinthians 5:9). That should be the foundation of every decision we make—especially in the gray areas where the Bible doesn't give a direct answer.

God is not honored simply by our enthusiasm. He is honored when we seek His will with humility and respond with obedience—even when it's inconvenient, even when it challenges tradition and even when it sets us apart.

We are called to discern what is good, acceptable and perfect according to God's will (Romans 12:2).

### Maturity Means Asking a Better Question

As we grow in spiritual maturity, the right question is not, "What can I get away with?" or "Where does the Bible say I can't?" The right question is, "What would please God most in this situation?"

That is where spiritual maturity takes us. It's where deeper faith is forged. And it's how we honor God—not just with our lips, but with our lives. **GN**

# Be Angry, but Sin Not

*by Roy Fouch*



Anger is one of the strongest emotions we experience. It can arise when we are mistreated, misunderstood or confronted with something we believe is wrong. Everyone experiences anger, but how we handle it reveals much about our character. Does anger lead us toward understanding and what is right, or toward resentment, harsh words and damaged relationships?

God the Father and Jesus Christ demonstrate perfect righteousness, including in Their response to evil. We must be careful because our understanding is limited and our emotions can be swayed by pride or hurt. Even anger that seems justified can quickly lead us into sin.

The apostle Paul gives us a direct instruction in Ephesians 4:26-27, "Be angry, and do not sin." He then warns us not to allow anger to linger and develop into bitterness or resentment, giving the devil an opportunity to influence our attitudes and relationships. The lesson is not that every feeling of anger is sinful or that we must express whatever we feel. Rather, we must examine why we are angry and choose a response that honors God.

## Pause Before You Respond

Paul's instruction recalls Psalm 4:4, which urges us to meditate in our hearts and be still. When emotions rise, we need time to think rather than react. An angry word spoken in the heat of the moment can do lasting harm. A thoughtful pause gives us the opportunity to pray, examine our motives and consider the consequences of what we are about to say or do.

Our feelings are real but not always reliable guides. Jeremiah 17:9 warns us of the deceitfulness of the human heart. Instead of letting pride, assumptions or hurt feelings dictate our response, we should measure our attitudes against God's Word. James 1:19-20 reminds us to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger because human anger does not accomplish God's righteousness.

This is especially important when we have been genuinely wronged. Our concern may be legitimate, yet retaliation, bitterness and the desire to embarrass or injure another person are not godly responses. Unresolved resentment can give Satan an opportunity to deepen divisions. Asking God to help us see clearly is an important first step toward responding wisely.

## Learn From Christ's Example

Jesus Christ gave us an example of anger governed by righteousness and love. In Mark 3:1-5, He was grieved and angry at the hardness of heart shown by those who opposed healing on the Sabbath. Yet His anger did not lead Him to insult or retaliate. He acted to do good, restoring the man's hand. His response was directed toward helping someone in need.

Christ also showed that God's commandments extend beyond outward behavior. In Matthew 5:21-22, He explained the spiritual intent of the Sixth Commandment. Hatred, contempt, and demeaning attacks against others are serious matters before God. The problem is not merely becoming upset over something unimportant. Even when an offense is serious, we must guard our hearts so anger does not turn into hostility or hatred.

Our words often reveal what is happening within us. Jesus warned in Matthew 12:36 that we will give an account for our careless words. Insults, ridicule, name-calling, racial slurs and remarks that demean someone because of a disability or personal weakness have no place in Christian conduct. Such speech does not resolve disagreement; it damages another person's dignity and can deepen wounds that are already painful.

Proverbs 15:1 teaches that a gentle answer can turn away wrath, while harsh speech stirs it up. A calm response does not mean pretending wrongdoing is acceptable. It means addressing a concern truthfully and respectfully, seeking what is right instead of winning an argument. Ephesians 4:29



Willfotografia/Pexels

similarly directs us to speak in ways that build others up and provide what is needed for their benefit.

## Practical Steps for Handling Anger

What can we do when our emotions are stirred and we struggle to respond in a godly way?

First, pray before speaking. Ask God for wisdom, self-control and a willingness to acknowledge any part we played in the disagreement. Sometimes the most important question is not, "How can I show that I am right?" but instead, "How can I respond in a way that pleases God?"

Second, make an effort to understand the other person's perspective. We may have misunderstood a remark, assumed a motive, or lacked important facts. Thoughtful questions and attentive listening can prevent many conflicts. Even if we still disagree, listening demonstrates respect and may help us recognize needs or concerns we have overlooked.

Third, express concerns honestly and kindly when appropriate. Explain what happened and how it affected you without attacking the other person's character. Be open to feedback, acknowledge mistakes and seek reconciliation where possible. Responding with kindness does not require tolerating abuse or staying in an unsafe situation. Healthy boundaries and appropriate help may be necessary.

Fourth, when emotions run high, take time to regain perspective. A brief break from a difficult conversation can prevent us from saying words we later regret. We should not bury resentment or avoid dealing with a genuine problem, but neither should we assume every feeling must be expressed immediately. There is wisdom in choosing the right time and manner to address a concern (Proverbs 15:23).

One approach that has helped me over the years is to step away from a tense situation, take a walk and pray as I walk. By the time I return, I am often calmer and able to view the matter with fresh perspective. Just as importantly, I have avoided saying something hurtful I would later regret. Taking time to seek God's help can change both our outlook and our words.

Some people hold anger inside until resentment builds; others respond immediately with sharp words or destructive behavior. Neither allowing resentment to build nor responding with uncontrolled anger is the godly approach. The answer is not to deny our feelings or release them without restraint, but to handle them constructively. When anger becomes persistent or harmful, seeking wise pastoral counsel or qualified professional help can be appropriate.

## Let God Change the Heart

Ultimately, our goal as Christians is more than keeping our temper under control. God wants to change the attitudes behind our responses. Through His Holy Spirit, He helps us grow in love, patience, gentleness and self-control—the fruit described in Galatians 5:22-23. Paul warns in Ephesians 4:30 not to grieve God's Holy Spirit. How we respond to anger is more than controlling our emotions. It is part of our daily responsibility to yield to God's Spirit. These qualities do not appear automatically. They develop as we pray, repent when we are wrong, practice His instruction and willingly yield to His guidance.

Consider what our families and congregations can become when we put these principles into practice. Disagreements will still happen and feelings may still be hurt. But when we are willing to listen, apologize, forgive and speak kindly, we help preserve the unity and peace that God desires among His people. Our response to anger can actually become an opportunity to strengthen a relationship rather than tear it down.

Paul does not end his instruction with a warning about anger. In Ephesians 4:31-32, he points us toward a better way: putting away bitterness and wrath and becoming kind, tenderhearted and forgiving, following God's example of forgiveness through Christ. That is the direction in which God wants us to grow.

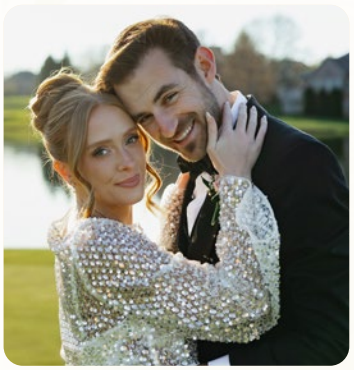
We cannot always control what others say or do, but with God's help we can learn to govern our responses. When we pause to pray, examine our motives, listen carefully and choose words that heal rather than hurt, we reflect more of the character of Jesus Christ. Moments of anger can become opportunities to grow in patience, forgiveness and love. As we yield to God's Holy Spirit and strive to follow Jesus Christ's example, we learn not merely to control our anger but to reflect more of His character. That is how we learn to be angry and yet not sin. **UN**

# Announcements

## Births • Weddings • Anniversaries • Obituaries



**Liam Everett Anderson**
Sept. 24, 2026



**Josh Cook and Chelsea Hill**
March 8, 2026



**Carrie Lippincott**
Dec. 15, 1959-Aug. 13, 2026



**Janice Ann Surratt**
Oct. 16, 1942-Sept. 26, 2026

## Births

### Liam Everett Anderson

With hearts full of joy, Mark and Allison Anderson are thrilled to announce the arrival of their son, Liam Everett Anderson, born Sept. 24, 2026! Liam weighed 8 pounds, 2 ounces and measured 19 inches long.

Liam is the first grandchild of Tricia and Bert Merring, who are overjoyed to welcome this precious little blessing into their family.

## Weddings

### Josh Cook and Chelsea Hill

On March 8, 2026 Chelsea Hill (daughter of Sean Hill and Cathy Hill of Melbourne, Australia) and Josh Cook (son of Mike and Jan Cook of Cincinnati, Ohio) were married in Australia in the heart of the Yarra Valley surrounded by their closest family and friends. Set among the vineyards at Levantine Hill Estate, the day was a celebration, not only of their marriage, but of the journey that brought them there.

After meeting by chance on a ferry in the Mediterranean on the way to the Feast in Crete in 2024, their relationship became one defined by long-distance flights, late-night calls across time zones and unwavering faith that they had found the right person on the other side of the world. Their wedding marked the beginning of finally building a life together in the same place.

Shortly after the Australian wedding, they were blessed to celebrate all over again with a second reception in the United States, surrounded by Josh's family and friends. More than anything, both celebrations were a reflection of gratitude—for the people who stood beside them and for God who brought them together and guided them throughout their journey.

The couple has since moved to the Phoenix area to begin building their life together in the United States.

## Obituaries

### Carrie Lippincott

After a four-year battle with cancer, Carrie (Hensel) Lippincott died on Aug. 13, 2026, in the ICU at St. Vincent's Hospital in Portland, Oregon, surrounded by her family. Right up until the very end she remained her loving and cheerful self, impressing the hospital staff with her gratitude and kindness.

Carrie was born on Dec. 15, 1959, in Missoula, Montana, and had many fond memories of growing up in the country—reading books while lying on the belly of her cow while it chewed cud, waking up to the song of the western meadowlark and hiking through the hills. Carrie went on to attend Ambassador College in 1980 and 1981, before returning home to care for her mother who had suffered a stroke. This experience exposed her to the field of physical therapy and rehabilitative medicine. As a result, Carrie pursued a degree in occupational therapy at the University of Washington. It was there that she got to know, and ultimately married her husband, George. She was a wonderful wife and loved George deeply through their 37 years of marriage.

Carrie went on to lead a meaningful career as a pediatric occupational therapist helping children overcome a wide variety of challenges, such as autism, sensory issues and handwriting difficulty. She had a love for learning and used her knowledge of therapy

constantly, even outside of work. She always tried to help anyone who was in pain or struggling. Carrie faithfully volunteered with UYC's Northwest preteen camp from 2003 to 2025 where she was famously known for being able to calm any kid dealing with homesickness or just needing some extra support. With such a love for children, she naturally became an incredible mother and raised her children with love, patience and compassion.

Carrie was a loving wife, mother and sister. She leaves behind her husband, George Lippincott; her two children, Keith Lippincott and Stephanie Wallace; and her siblings, Lindie Hayes and Albert Hensel II. She touched the lives of so many people and will be greatly missed.

### Janice Ann Surratt

Janice Ann Surratt, 83, died peacefully on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, Sept. 26, 2026, in Naples, Florida. She was a longtime, faithful and beloved member of the Fort Myers, Florida congregation. Jan had fully intended to attend the Feast of Tabernacles. Just two days prior, she wrote to her pastor, "I am weak, but getting ready to go. My son is taking me tomorrow afternoon. Have a wonderful Feast! – Jan." It is fitting that she died on the first day of the Feast, which pictures the reign of Jesus Christ and His saints in the Kingdom of God, a time Jan looked forward to.

Jan was born on Oct. 16, 1942, in Springfield, Illinois, to Harold E. Price and Dorothy Cleo Harvill. At the time of her birth, her father, Harold, was overseas serving in the military during World War II. On July 29, 1960, at just 17, Janice married the love of her life, Robert Leroy Surratt, in Jacksonville, Illinois. Jan and Bob came into the Church of God together, and Jan was baptized in 1967. Bob and Jan shared 63 years of marriage before Bob died in the faith on Oct. 20, 2023.

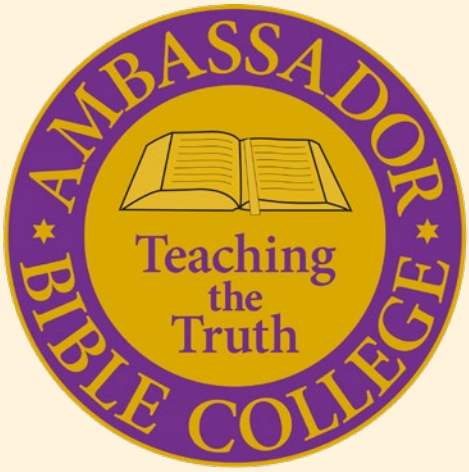
After getting married, Bob and Jan made their first home in Chapin, Illinois, where they lived until 1970. The family then moved to Peoria, Illinois, and after many years there, to Fort Myers, Florida, in 1988. In Florida, Jan found meaningful work in hospital and nursing home jobs that let her serve and care for others. In her final years, Janice was an active and beloved resident of the assisted living home where she lived. Her daughter, Tamara, wrote that she "loved people, laughter, friendship and being part of a community."

Jan was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Robert; her parents, Harold E. Price and Dorothy Cleo Harvill; and her grandson, Domenick Surratt. She is survived by her daughter, Tamara Surratt; her son, Rick H. Surratt, and daughter-in-law Marla Surratt; her grandsons, Noah Surratt, Tristan Surratt, Adrian Surratt and Brandon Medford; nine great-grandchildren; and her beloved aunt, Jean Spiegel. **UN**

## Send Us Your Announcements!

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# Local Church News

## Class of 2027 ABC Student Council Chosen

This year's Ambassador Bible College student council officers have been chosen.

Dallin Delamater will serve as the ABC student body president, assisted by secretary Hannah Wubben and treasurer Aiden Light. Logan Wolfe will lead the social committee and Owen Bussey will lead the service committee. This year's music coordinator will be David McNally, assisted by Abigail Mihalec and Andrew Fitch.

Allena Johnson will edit the ABC Times, assisted by Jake Perkins. Kaylin Hartzel will serve as the class yearbook editor. Lincoln Wolfe will prepare cards that will be sent to those who are sick, assisted by Abigail Corbett. Dillon Tate will serve as monitor for this year's ABC class, ensuring the room and materials are prepared for class each day. Abigail Mihalec will keep the class updated on upcoming events and maintain the message board. Technical support will be provided by Sam Jorgensen, including class audio recordings.

*Heidi Braun*



*L-R: Dallin Delamater, Lincoln Wolfe, Sam Jorgensen, Abigail Corbett, Aiden Light, Hannah Wubben, Dillon Tate, Allena Johnson, Jake Perkins, Abigail Mihalec, Kaylin Hartzel, David McNally, Logan Wolfe and Owen Bussey*



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# CHILDREN'S CORNER

## Numbers in the Bible

This special Sudoku puzzle incorporates clues you can find in the Bible! Use the first number mentioned in each verse or passage.

Fill out the puzzle in order, starting with the first row, and filling out the shaded boxes, in order left to right. Continue with the next row, and so on.

Solve the rest of the numbers on your own. Use numbers 1-9. A number can only appear once in each three-by-three box, and only once in each line either across or down.

- Revelation 7:1
- Acts 9:33
- Ephesians 4:4-5
- Hebrews 11:30
- Acts 11:10
- 2 Corinthians 12:8
- Luke 17:4
- Luke 15:11
- Matthew 25:2
- 1 Timothy 2:5
- Numbers 29:35
- Revelation 8:6
- Matthew 12:40
- Matthew 22:40



| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | 3 | | | 7 | | | | |
| 6 | | | 1 | 9 | 5 | | | |
| | 9 | 8 | | | | | 6 | |
| 8 | | | | 6 | | | | 3 |
| 4 | | | 8 | | 3 | | | 1 |
| 7 | | | | 2 | | | | 6 |
| | 6 | | | | | 2 | 8 | |
| | | | 4 | 1 | 9 | | | 5 |
| | | | | 8 | | | 7 | 9 |

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