



United Church of God

an International Association

eNews from Ministerial and Member Services

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Personal From the President...

Dear fellow servants of God,

The death of a child is one of the most painful experiences for a family to endure. The pain stabs friends and community as well. We all hurt as our faith is challenged and even temporarily paralyzed as we sort through the tragedy of a loved one who is now gone from this life.

Today, we all as family and friends of various fellowships came together for the memorial of two-year-old Chloe Aschenbrenner of the Cincinnati, Ohio, area. At the home office we all work closely daily with her grandparents, Gerald and Connie Seelig, whom we love dearly.

It is hard to know what to say when an untimely death occurs. The Apostle Paul did, however, offer these words about this uncomfortable subject to the fledgling church in Thessalonica: "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

Paul acknowledged sorrow and grief. But we are not to sorrow like those who have no hope--those who do not have a relationship with our Lifegiver God. He went on to speak about the resurrection of the dead.

Our bedrock faith is defined by our daily prayer of "Thy Kingdom Come." This frames our existence on this earth and life to come. This is our hope.

At this time of coming together for the family, we will remember Chloe. We are with the family in spirit. We grieve. But we also have hope in the teaching of the glorious Kingdom that gives life and we hold on tight to our relationship with our Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

We do need to pray for one another and hope that God will use us in His way to offer love and support to those who suffer in their time of need.

In our prayers, let us pray for God's grace and His comfort upon the many in our midst who are dealing with the impact of unexpected trials. There are other families who have children with serious health trials. Some of the names are Olivia Greider, Samara Brock, Faith Hoselton. Let us remember these, and the many others who

need our prayers and support. We "have the same care for one another... if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it" (1 Corinthians 1:25-26).

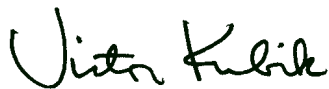
Pray for God's grace, comfort and healing. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God" (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

Paul wrote these encouraging words of faith to help us understand the purpose of our trials. "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance" (Romans 8:18-25).

We are firstfruits to God and to the Lamb. Those who endure to the end will have been tested and tried. God promises to make us sons in His image and co-heirs with Christ in eternity. It is the awesome mind-bending reality promised to us.

Let us take heart and courage from these words and let us remember each other in prayer.

In Christ's service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victor Kubik". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Victor Kubik

From Ministerial and Member Services...

Death of Warren Larson



Warren Larson

We are saddened to inform you of the death of a loving pastor, Warren Larson, who served the congregation in Sedro-Woolley, Washington. He died from heart complications last Saturday morning.

Warren was a loving husband to his wife, Hazel, who served at his right hand. He was a loving son to his mother, who survives him, and father to their three children. Warren was a friendly businessman and was pastor of the Sedro-Woolley, Washington, congregation for the past three years. He was loved by all and will be greatly missed.

All are invited to join the Larson family, the Sedro-Woolley congregation and friends for a memorial service at 11 a.m. on Sunday, April 22, at the Masonic Lodge, [106 Warner St., Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284](#). A reception with finger-foods will follow.

Cards of condolence may be sent to Hazel Larson and Family, [8105 181st Place NW, Stanwood, WA 98292](#).

Retirement Ceremony for Lee and Laura Cole



Lee and Laura Cole

About 125 members from the Lewistown, York and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, congregations honored Lee and Laura Cole with a retirement ceremony between services on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. Leroy Cole retired from full-time employment with the church at the end of December. Gerald and Connie Seelig visited from the home office to present the Coles with a crystal globe and a gift card commemorating over 50 years of service and love to God's people.



Lee and Laura Cole are presented a crystal globe by Gerald Seelig and pastor Aaron Creech.

The Coles have served the Pennsylvania brethren for the past 7 years. The members of the Pennsylvania congregations had given the Coles a photo book with pictures and notes expressing their appreciation and love for them.

Lee and Laura plan to move back to Tennessee to be closer to two of their daughters and their families, where they hope to build a small home on their 40-acre farm.

Ambassador Bible College Accepting Applications

Pastors, please remind members of you congregation that now is the best time to apply to attend Ambassador Bible College as part of next year's class! We traditionally do not set a cut-off date for applying unless the class grows larger than can be managed. However, there are advantages to applying now, rather than in the summer. One of the biggest is that area members who rent housing to students usually do so on a first come, first served basis.

While ABC may not be for everybody, we hope that all teens and young adults (as well as some older adults) will seriously consider making ABC a part of their education. A variety of instructors lead students through a thorough study of the entire Bible, with an emphasis on helping students not only understand what it teaches, but learn to explain it to others.

Information about the program is available at abc.ucg.org, and we encourage anyone who has questions or would like to talk about ABC to e-mail frank_dunkle@ucg.org or call Frank Dunkle at (513) 576-9794.

Inside United Podcast



Victor Kubik visits Filius Jere a year later to discuss the growth of the church in Zambia and the origin of his popular and innovative *Beyond Today* radio show. <http://www.ucg.org/members/united-news/inside-united/inside-united-podcast-episode-079>

Listen to past episodes or read the transcripts:
<http://www.ucg.org/members/united-news/inside-united>

Branson Feast Housing Reservation Correction

There is a correction to the phone number published in the Festival Planning Brochure for reservations at the Thousand Hills Resort in Branson. The Branson feast website has been updated with the correct phone information. The valid numbers are 877-262-0430, 855-353-0886 or 417-336-5873.

Elder or Deacons Needed at the Feast of Tabernacles in India

We are in need of an elder and deacon who are able to give sermon messages for the Feast of Tabernacles in India.

The Feast this year will be held in Agra, India, home of the world-famous Taj Mahal. If you enjoy international travel, you will greatly enjoy the opportunity to see a culture and world that will change your life. You will also be warmly welcomed and appreciated by our local Indian brethren who look forward to hosting our brethren and ministry. For more information, contact David Schreiber 507-377-8151 or david.schreiber70@gmail.com. See feast information at: <http://ucg-india.org/feast/2018/>

International Meetings at GCE Annual Meeting - May 4

For those elders attending the international meetings on Friday, May 4, preceding the annual meeting of the GCE, we are planning an open discussion and ask you to bring to the table your thoughts in a more informal setting.

We would like to hear your plans for the future and strategies to meet the needs and opportunities you have specific to your country or region. We would like to know what has worked for you, what has not worked, and your thoughts about why. What would you do differently? What has caused you concern or brought you elation? How many men do you see in the near future who will grow into responsible positions to help? How has the home office been, or could be of better help to you?

This will be your meeting, without any planned formal presentations. It will be a forum to exchange thoughts and ideas and updates for your areas. Please gather your thoughts for the next couple of weeks. We look forward to meeting with you.

-- Aaron Dean, International Advisor

Report from France and French-speaking Africa

After observing the Sabbath on March 17 and preaching in our congregation in Bordeaux, France, I flew to Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, where I helped our regional pastor based in Cameroon, Moïse Mabout, kick off our annual West African youth camp. We had 22 campers in attendance.



Cote d'Ivoire Youth Camp - March 21, 2018

During this trip, we also began construction to enlarge and add plumbing and electricity to our church building in La Mé (about one hour north of Abidjan).



Church Hall in La Mé, Cote d'Ivoire - repairs in progress

Also during this trip, we visited our congregation near Man, Cote d'Ivoire, which is 550 kilometers north of Abidjan. We have a basic mud-brick church hall in Blolé where our 20-person congregation meets. We have a deacon, Mamadou Tokpa, who oversees the congregation. His home and the church building are the most beautifully-maintained structures in the mostly Muslim village. I conducted a Bible study, and we walked through the village meeting friends and neighbors and visited the main farming areas where our members work.



Blolé, Cote d'Ivoire, brethren in front of entrance gate to church.

We returned to Abidjan, where I preached on the Sabbath of March 24 and spent time with the campers and then caught the overnight flight back to Paris that evening. I went on to Bordeaux early Sunday morning where I joined my wife, Maryse, who had arrived from the U.S. a few days earlier.

For the Passover, Night to Be Much Observed, and the First Day of Unleavened Bread, we rented a five-bedroom house outside of Bordeaux and French brethren drove in from around the country to spend the days together. We had 19 people for Passover. It was a very special weekend celebrating God's Holy Days together. We also took advantage of the Sunday after the First Day of Unleavened Bread for interactive discussions of core Biblical prophetic teachings where I presented three two-hour interactive seminars.



Night to Be Much Observed 2018 - Sainte Hélène, France

After returning to Bordeaux, Maryse, Jessica Hendrickson and I left for Cotonou, Benin, where we visited our congregation and where I preached on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread and the Sabbath. Our Lomé, Togo, pastor, Kossi Fiaboé, made the 100-mile journey to Cotonou and Moïse Mabout and his wife, Berthe, joined us.

Because we are not able to have an ordained elder present for the Feast of Tabernacles, we took this opportunity to conduct a special blessing of little children ceremony and we enjoyed fellowship together at our rented open-air room and visited at the home of a deacon who suffered a stroke last year and is unable to attend services. Maryse and I also held meetings with Mr. Fiaboé and Mr. Mabout on pastoral matters and feast and youth camp planning.

On Sunday evening, April 9, we took a return overnight flight to Paris and Bordeaux and left the following Tuesday morning for Evian-les-Bains, the location of our Feast site for 2018. This year's feast in France will be the largest in United's history and we held meetings with the site director and staff to work through details of planned events. We observed the Sabbath with a Sabbath-keeping group in Lyon led by Jérémy and Elodie Féro who have observed the Feast with us for the past couple of years. They hosted us in their home, which provided a nice chance for fellowship.

Maryse and I wrapped up our trip with a visit to the German office in Bonn where we met with Jesmina Allaoua and Paul Kieffer. We appreciated learning from Mr. Kieffer's many years of experience and information sharing will be very important as we work to establish a French office.

Overall, we are grateful for God's protection over a very productive trip and for being able to support our French-speaking brethren in France and West Africa during these Spring Holy Days.

-- Tim Pebworth, Senior Pastor for France and French-speaking Africa

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United Church of God, PO Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027