

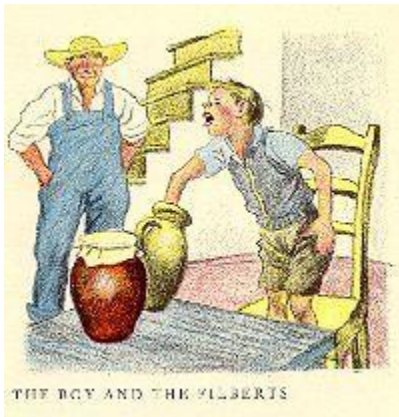
May 25, 2018

It has been over a year since we've updated the complete member files for Nashville, Murfreesboro and Jackson. We need to update everyone's home address, telephone number and email address for the local church files. If there has been any change in your information over the past year, or if you are new to the congregation, please either email me your information (gcpetty@yahoo.com) or fill out a 3x5 card at the information table and give it to me or my wife. We thank you for your help.

Life Lessons: Self-Control

By Gary Petty

In Aesop's Fables there is the story that has appeared in many cultures in various ways of a boy who plunges his hand into a nut jar and grabs as many nuts as possible. When he tries to pull his hand out he can't get it through the narrow neck of the jar. The boy bursts into tears and bitterly complains about his predicament. Finally, an adult tell him to let go of half the nuts and he will be able to free his hand. The boy had grasped more nuts than he could remove from the jar. Yet, he stubbornly held onto the excess nuts. His lack of self-control led to a needless personal crisis.



Points to build on

Proverbs 25:15: "Have you found honey? Eat only as much as you need, Lest you be filled with it and vomit."

Proverbs 25:28: "Whoever has no rule over his own spirit, It is like a city broken

down, without walls."

Application

It is a common human belief that if we could fulfill all of our desires and wants then we would be extremely happy. The truth is that whenever we allow our immediate desires and emotions to control our thoughts and actions we will become unhappy. One of the most important traits to success and happiness is self-control.

Good Works Project Proposals

The deadline is quickly approaching to submit proposals for Good Works projects for the 2018 calendar year! If you have a great idea, please run it by your local pastor, and with his approval please contact Lena VanAusdle at Lena_VanAusdle@ucg.org for more information. Deadline for September-December project proposals is May 31, 2018.

From Ministerial and Member Services...

New Ministerial Trainees

In this issue of the *eNews*, we are introducing two couples who will be hired this summer as ministerial trainees for the church. Both of these couples will be working in the Cincinnati East, Ohio congregation. These couples will be among those attending our Pastoral Development Program at the home office in Cincinnati for 10 days during the month of November. Your prayers for them are appreciated as they begin this new chapter in their lives.



Andy and Amber Duran

Andy and Amber Duran are members of the Springfield, Missouri, congregation. For the past 5 years Andy has worked for a local manufacturing company as a software engineer. Andy earned a bachelor's degree in Computer Science from the University of Illinois. Amber, who has a bachelor's degree in journalism, is a freelance writer and a stay-at-home mom to their one son, Ezra.



Ryan and Nissa Hall

Ryan and Nissa Hall are members of the Atlanta, Georgia, congregation, and consider the Macon, Georgia congregation to be home, as well. Ryan studied Telecommunications and has worked 18 years for Comcast Universal. Both Ryan and Nissa own and operate The League of Protectors, a small organization that coordinates beach, park, and marsh cleanups

as well as educating about the importance of environmental stewardship. In addition, Nissa is a stay-at-home mom and home school teacher for their three children.

Recent Ordinations



Les and Linda Babb

On May 20, 2018, **Les Babb** was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Linda, serve in the Medford, Oregon, congregation.



Lacy and Frances Mayes

On May 20, 2018, **Lacy Mayes** was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Frances, serve in the Hickory, North Carolina, congregation.



Devin and Tiffany Schulz

On May 20, 2018, **Devin Schulz** was ordained into the ministry. He serves as an assistant pastor for the congregations in Milwaukee, Oshkosh and Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, with his wife, Tiffany.

Pastoral Updates

Mr. Rob Slocum has been named an assistant pastor for the United Church of God congregation in Portland, Oregon, working with pastor Rex Sexton. Mr. Slocum has served as an elder in the Portland congregation with his wife, Tina, since September 2017.

Mr. Gary Beam is now serving as pastor for the congregation in Huntsville, Alabama, in addition to his previous assignments of Tupelo (Mississippi) and Birmingham (Alabama).

Mr. Rick Beam has relocated, and is now serving as pastor for the congregations in Rome (Georgia), Gadsden (Alabama) and Chattanooga (Tennessee).

The previous pastor for Huntsville, Gadsden and Chattanooga, **Mr. David Dobson**, is currently in the process of relocating to his new pastoral assignment in Alaska.

Mr. Doug Collison is now serving as pastor for the four congregations previously served by Rick Beam: Paducah and Henderson (Kentucky), Cape Girardeau and Poplar Bluff (Missouri).

We thank **Mr. Paul Burnes** for his service over the past year as interim pastor for the Rome congregation.

Later this fall, **Mr. Steven Britt** and his wife, Danielle, will be transferred from the Cincinnati area to Columbia, Maryland. Mr. Britt will continue his ministerial training alongside pastor Don McCoy. Mr. Britt will help to serve the congregations in Columbia (Maryland), Richmond and Northern Virginia, Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), and Delmarva.

Later this fall, **Mr. Joshua Creech** and his wife, Lizzy, will be transferred from the Cincinnati area to Nashville, Tennessee. Mr. Creech will continue his ministerial training alongside pastor Gary Petty. Mr. Creech will help to serve the congregations in Nashville, Murfreesboro and Jackson, Tennessee.

eNews from Ministerial and Member Services

Issue 326
May 24, 2018

Personal From the President...

Dear fellow servants of God,

Who Will Remember You?

The photo of a tall and handsome young man, proudly attired in a World War I army uniform, once hung at my wife Bev's parents' home in Frost, Minnesota. The photo was of her uncle Edwin Benjamin Skogen. A century ago, he was sent to France to fight in the "The Great War." Shortly before all went quiet on the Western Front in that terrible war, the dreams and hopes of Bev's uncle were cut short. He made the ultimate sacrifice. He was killed at age 25 in service to his country.

Why might that be important to you?

I have long held an interest in World War I history. Some seven million civilians and 10 million military personnel died--and generally died badly--in that terrible conflict that lasted four long years until 1918.

World War I represented the first true technology war, where painful chemical warfare and the first widespread use of weapons of mass destruction indiscriminately slaughtered soldiers *en masse*. Thousands of enlisted men and officers had to pitifully live and fight from muddy trenches crisscrossing battlefields all over Europe.

Bev's uncle Edwin was buried in France, thousands of miles from his Minnesota home. Fast forward to 1985. As part of a trip through eastern France, Bev and I visited some World War I battlefields.

We did not know where Edwin Skogen was buried. As we drove towards Paris, we chanced upon an American military cemetery. We stopped and asked the cemetery caretaker about Edwin. His answer was not hopeful. He told us that this cemetery was one of about 40 American cemeteries in France where he could have been buried.



But thankfully, he did kindly oblige us and looked up the name. We were all astonished. Would you believe that Private Edwin Skogen was buried right there?

We quickly walked the short distance from the administration building to Edwin's grave. He had been laid to rest on a gentle sloping knoll. Mature trees gently shaded the graves of the hundreds of American servicemen killed and buried at this cemetery.

We breathlessly approached Edwin's grave. Alongside him were the markers of his comrades, all killed within days of one another. There was Edwin's marker. Bev and I walked over to the stone and gently stroked the rough stone with our fingers.

This was a sobering moment of remembrance. The caretaker showed how only *one* other family member had visited Uncle Edwin's grave during the near-century after his death. For the most part, he had quietly been forgotten.

What is poignant about this today? We no longer have the photo of Edwin. It has disappeared. And, what's worse, I cannot now find the slides I took of our visit to the cemetery. All we have are memories.

With that as a backdrop, consider these facts: The United States celebrates Memorial Day this coming Monday on May 28, a day of remembrance for those whose lives were cut short in foreign wars. Many other nations have their own days to honor military dead during the year: Canada observes Remembrance Day on November 11; Anzac Day for Australia and New Zealand on April 25. And in November, the United Kingdom observes Remembrance Sunday. Many Britons wear or display "Remembrance poppies" per a tradition inspired by the Canadian poet John McCrae's "In Flanders Fields."

Why might this be meaningful to you? What is God's perspective?

In today's society, it seems that what was once sacred and important is becoming trivial, meaningless and pointless. Many movies and video games trivialize death as a moment of worthless twisted glory in a pathos of human history and empty experience.

Despite this, most of us still want to remember and memorialize those who precede us. We ourselves want to be remembered. I have officiated at many funerals. There, phrases of "never to be forgotten" are liberally voiced. We name buildings, highways, parks and other monuments of note after people who are important to us.

Despite all of this, the memory is still only for so long. Tragically, people forget one another. History fades and is lost.

With that in mind, who will remember *you*?

There is good news. *God* does not forget.

As we read in the Psalms, "The Lord cares *deeply* when his loved ones die" (Psalm 116:15, New Living Translation, emphasis added throughout). As the Bible shows in many places, God records important details about each of our lives. Some things, like our sins, are completely blotted out and cast from remembrance when we repent and seek forgiveness. Other things are recorded forever in a very important book: the Book of Life.

Want to have your name in that Book? Note this: "Then those who feared the Lord spoke with each other, and the Lord listened to what they said. In his presence, *a scroll of remembrance was written to record the names of those who feared him* and always thought about the honor of his name" (Malachi 3:16, NLT).

We will see that Book reappear--together with *an incredible hope for all of humanity*--at the very end of the Bible story. At that time, "the books were opened, including the Book of Life" (Revelation 20:12, NLT).

What happens then? For military men and women who died alone or badly in the wreckage of ships, on battlefields, in trenches, in hot jungles, in deep darkness--all-but-forgotten people like Bev's Uncle Edwin, whose last memory may be of pain and anguish--a *marvelous* miracle occurs. "The sea gave up its dead, and death and the grave gave up their dead" (Revelation 20:13, NLT)--a global resurrection of any and all come back to life! And to a life this time of incomprehensible meaning, where Jesus Christ is King of Kings!

Think on this! As Paul instructed Timothy, God "wants *everyone* to be saved and to understand the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4, NLT).

When the critical time comes, who will remember you? God will!

But what if we have "trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?" (Romans 8:35, NLT). Does that mean that God and Jesus have abandoned you?

Here's an unbreakable promise for you, for your family, for your friends, for those important to you: "*nothing* can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, *neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow*--not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. *No power* in the sky above or in the earth below--indeed, *nothing in all creation* will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38-39).

And how is that love of God expressed? "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to *give you the kingdom*" (Luke 12:32) and with it, eternal life!

During this coming Memorial Day in the United States, we can all meditate on and be filled with hope about the coming *global* Memorial Day, when God orders the Book of Life to be opened, for *all* people to be remembered--including Bev's long-dead Uncle Edwin and your relatives who have died--and with it the opening of the gateway to incomprehensible, wondrous eternal life.

On that day, God "will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. *All* these things will be gone *forever*" (Revelation 21:4, NLT).

May God speed that great Memorial Day!

In Christ's service,



Victor Kubik

UCG West Michigan Camping and Tubing Trip - July 13-15

You are invited to join the West Michigan UCG for a weekend of fellowship, camping and fun-filled outdoor adventure! There is a special outdoor Sabbath service on July 14 at Sandy Beach County Park in White Cloud, Michigan, and an organized tubing trip on the Muskegon River for Sunday morning, July 15. If you would like further details or a copy of the flyer advertising the event, contact Zach Morris at 574-850-4866 or zsm2520@hotmail.com. A copy of the flyer may be downloaded here: [West Michigan Weekend Flyer 2018](#)