

UNITED NEWS



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Teamwork Literally Pays Off

by Steve Nutzman

How did a small congregation of 35 brethren donate over \$3,500 to the youth in their area? You guessed it—teamwork.

The Olympia, Washington, congregation accomplished this feat by sponsoring a yard sale and most importantly, working together. Several ads were placed in the local newspaper that announced the yard sale and then the donations began to flow in from brethren and neighbors. The yard sale funds came to just under \$105 per member. That is impressive.

The funds will be split between Northwest Camp and the Tacoma Family Weekend. But perhaps the most important byproduct of this effort was the unifying effect it had on the members themselves.

Have you heard about the United Youth Card project? This is an annual fundraiser for various projects in the United Church of God, which is organized by a group of young adults. This year the sales of greeting cards at the Feast of Tabernacles will be donated to equipment needs for United Youth Camps. Be looking for these displays at the Festival sites this fall.

The value of preteens and teen campers spending time with one another in a godly environment is virtually beyond words to



Campers at Camp Cotubic. Camp Cotubic was the first camp to finish this summer. Please consider donating for other camps this summer.

describe, but here is what one parent wrote about their son's experience at a past camp: "We are just so thrilled I don't know what to say! What a wonderful blessing! This has brought great joy to my heart and tears to my eyes! Thank you so much for helping us! I wasn't sure what to expect. My son asked to go to camp this year for the first time and I wasn't sure how we'd get him there. Thank you for all you do for the kids! It really does make a difference!"

There continues to be a need for additional donations for the camp program this summer. But most importantly, please ask God to bless all the remain-

ing preteen and teen camps this summer wherever they are being held.

We have a motto in UYC: "camp changes lives." Prayers, personal donations and congregations sponsoring fundraisers for camps and family weekends all have a positive impact on the campers who attend camp. When God's elect come together in a unified purpose, God does bless those efforts.

(If you care to donate to the UYC fund, make your check out to "United Youth Camps Fund" and mail to: United Youth Camps Fund, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027.)

Good Works and United Youth Corps



Volunteering or donating to Good Works and United Youth Corps projects helps bring people from around the globe—our spiritual family—together.

by Lewis and Lena VanAusdile

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7). This is a simple and yet very profound truth that the apostle Paul wrote to members of God's Church. He further elaborated on the principle in the verses that followed: "For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." This is a truth that each of God's people should remember as we go through life, knowing that there are good results that come from the good that we do. "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:7-10). In light of this verse, the Good Works program, since its inception in 2003, has sponsored projects that have benefited both United Church of God members, and communities around the world. Verse 10 has been our guiding principle as we've prioritized projects, but donating money (which we greatly appreciate) is only a part of what we do.

Jesus Christ addressed a multitude of people who followed Him, eagerly waiting to hear the wisdom that He came to bring. The words that He spoke to this particular multitude, as they sat in front of Him on the side of a hill, were not prophecies yet to be fulfilled; He brought them blessings.

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ABC Baccalaureate Weekend



The 2018 ABC graduating class.

by Aaron Dean

On Sunday, May 13, 2018, 23 students walked down the aisle to receive a diploma in biblical studies from Ambassador Bible College. On May 10, the students had their traditional graduation banquet at Norlyn Manor just outside Batavia, where each student was given individual recognition for their part in the ABC year.

Most family members came in on Friday and attended Cincinnati afternoon services for the graduation weekend sermon given by Victor Kubik. In his sermon, the president highlighted many of the accomplishments of past graduates and how much they add to the Church.

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BY THE NUMBERS

44.3 million

Good News and Beyond Today magazines have been printed since 1997.

Congratulations! Class of 2018

High School



Jenna Brackett



Samuel Brummett



Shayna Alexis Burnett



Kacy Clark

Jenna Brackett

2. Mike and Ann Brackett
3. Knoxville, Tennessee
4. Jenna was the valedictorian and was an AP scholar with distinction. She was on the all-county volleyball team, all-district basketball team and earned academic letters for four years in four subject areas.
5. Her interests are church service projects, basketball, volleyball, tennis, hiking, photography and travel.
6. She plans to attend the University of Tennessee Chattanooga to major in biology with a pre-med track.
7. Favorite Scripture: 1 Corinthians 16:14

Samuel Brummett

2. Sam is the youngest son of Scott and Renita Brummett.
3. Lewistown, Pennsylvania
4. During Sam's senior year he had dual enrollment in high school and Sun-Tech for HVAC and plumbing, and received several HVAC certifications. He played varsity basketball for three years and was captain and MVP his senior season.
5. Sam has enjoyed UYC Camp Cotubic and Northwest Camp. He loves hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, sports and traveling. Sam currently works for an HVAC and landscaping company.
7. Favorite Scripture: Psalm 43:18.
- Favorite Quote: "If the women don't find you handsome, they should at least find you handy."—Red Green
- Favorite memory: Hiking to Ross Lake, Wyoming, with family for the best fishing ever.

Shayna Alexis Burnett

2. Kathy Burnett
3. Eureka, California
4. Shayna graduated June 1 from Fortuna Union High School. She earned her pink tassel (a special award for being a four-year music student). She was in choir all four years with one year in advanced choir. She was involved in the teaching cadets program (she was a teacher's assistant and worked with children at an

Graduates Name

2. Parents' names
3. Congregation
4. School, work, internship, co-op or other accomplishments
5. Interests, interesting facts about him or her, Church activities involved in, hobbies, unusual skills, etc.
6. Plans after graduation
7. Additional comments (favorite scripture, favorite quote, motto, advice, poetry, wisdom, etc.

elementary school).

5. She has no family in the Church and has been attending for less than a year but has become a much loved addition to the congregation (now they have two teens!). She never misses a Sabbath services and is involved in Church activities including performing (singing) in the annual variety show, the game night, and she helps with snack set-up every Sabbath. Shayna is looking forward to attending summer camp for the first time. She will be going to Northwest teen camp. She will also be volunteering at Northwest preteen camp. Her interests include: singing, drawing/art, going on walks, her cats, video games with friends, and she enjoys learning new cooking skills.

6. She will be attending College of the Redwoods with a major in education, with the goal of becoming a history teacher.

7. Favorite scripture: Psalm 143:8.

Kacy Clark

2. Craig and Jana Clark
3. Freeland, Michigan
4. Some of Kacy's accomplishments include: National Honor Society Parliamentarian, Dean's Scholarship recipient at Saginaw Valley State University and a SVSU Opportunity Scholarship recipient.
5. She has been a part of the Michigan teen speech club and staffed every year at



Elly Conger

Camp Buckeye since 2013.

6. She will attend Saginaw Valley State University and major in communications.

7. Favorite quote: "You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose."—Dr. Seuss.

Elly Conger

3. Elly graduated from Neenah High School in Neenah, Wisconsin, in spring of 2018. Elly also graduated with honors and maintained a 3.9 GPA. She is graduated summa cum laude, and has been a National Honor Society member since her Sophomore year. She played tennis all four years and was on the girls varsity team her junior and senior year, helping her team get to state both years. She has kept very busy during high school working at a veterinary clinic and health club, volunteering at a local animal shelter, tutoring elementary and middle school students, running blood drives at her school for the Red Cross, and was the secretary of Key Club at her high school.

4. Elly has been actively involved with church summer camps and has been staff at the Preteen Camp Ironwood in Minnesota for the last three years.

5. She has played the piano since kindergarten and frequently performs special music in her congregation, and at



Josh Cook

combined Holy Day services. She loves the outdoors, hiking and her pets.

6. Elly has been accepted to Carroll University in Waukesha, Wisconsin, and will study nursing in the Fall.

7. Favorite Scripture: 1 John 3:2.

Josh Cook

2. Mike and Jan Cook
3. Cincinnati East
4. Josh will be graduating from Mariemont High School. He was a part of JV basketball, JV and varsity golf and JV and varsity tennis. He was a Poetry Madness winner. High school awards and recognitions received: Warrior Award, MVP for varsity tennis, student of the year for Mandarin class, merit roll, sportsmanship award for senior varsity tennis, and honors diploma. Hobbies, sports and other interests: varsity golf, varsity tennis, basketball and hanging out with friends.

5. He has volunteered as staff for several years at Camp Buckeye and staffed at Northwest preteen camp. Church camps attended: Camp Buckeye (eight years), Camp Cotubic (seven years), Northwest Camp (seven years), Hye Sierra (two years), Winter camp (two years). Favorite Feast sites: Mexico, Hawaii and Italy. Favorite church activities: All of the camps

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RICK SHABI
Treasurer and
Financial Services
Operation Manager

“Seek ye first” is an edict we all recognize and readily comprehend. God instructs us that our individual and collective priority is to “seek His Kingdom and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33). He will provide all we need, and our lives will be meaningful, purposeful, and full when we apply this principle.

“Seek first” is the beginning of another principle we should adapt if we are going to be successful and achieve desired results in a key element of *all* of our relationships, including our relationship with God.

God is a God of relationships. He wants a relationship with us, and His intent is that we will have good relationships with each other. After all, He called us to be “brothers and sisters” in the faith.

Communication—good, meaningful communication—is the most important part of any relationship, whether it be with God, our spouses, children, family, church family, and others. Communication is an absolute necessity if we are ever to develop the “one-ness” and brotherhood God

Seek First to Understand



“Seek first to understand, then to be understood.”

God understands us—our strengths, our weaknesses, our thoughts, our desires.

wants for us, so evident when He said “by this shall all men know you are My disciples” (John 13:35).

Years ago I read a book that opened my eyes to communication and my personal responsibility in it. Stephen Covey wrote a landmark book titled *The 7 Habits of*

Highly Effective People. All the “habits” were good, and can be traced to Biblical concepts, but there was one in particular that caught my attention and has stuck with me over the years.

Under the section of “Principles of Empathic Communication,” habit number five is “Seek first to understand, then to be understood.”

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From The COUNCIL



by **Rex Sexton**

“We have our story too,” said the speaker looking directly at all of the older men in the room during a Spokesman Club meeting. As a young man in his early 20s who had been recently baptized, he continued by recalling several accounts he had heard over the years of older members being called into God’s Church.

The stories included profound experiences of people coming into contact with a *Plain Truth* magazine as if by accident or of hearing a voice on the radio when the channel changed after a car struck a large pothole in the road. The speaker, Derrick Slocum, said he and others who had grown up in the Church enjoyed hear-

Saul, the Ethiopian or Timothy? Whose Calling Was Better?



No matter how a person begins to understand the truth, they must respond by recognizing it and wanting to learn more. They can only understand if their mind is open. Our calling is from the Father.

ing all of the near-miraculous accounts of people being called by God, but it often left them feeling a bit inferior since they did not have a similar experience.

The focus of the speech was about the experience of someone who had grown up knowing the truth and then coming to a point of a life-changing decision. The decision involves appreciation of the “pearl of great price” and deciding that “this is for me; this is what I want to live my life for.” Coming to repentance, baptism and per-

sonally owning the truth one has grown up with are the end result. The story might be different, but the result is the same.

This topic was discussed at our camp directors conference two years ago, and resulted in our overall theme for United Youth Camps for 2018—“God’s Vision For You.” The youth in God’s Church need to understand that their calling to be a part

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Why a Royal Scepter of Iron? Digging Deep for Iron

by Sherry Kenady

A scepter is an emblem of royal power and, accordingly, most look grand and luxurious, often with royal crown jewels. Scriptures mention an assortment of precious metals and gemstones. In the book of Esther, King Ahasuerus spared Queen Esther's life when he extended his golden scepter as she approached him in the courtyard (Esther 5:2). The following verse describes a scepter made of iron for the victors in the Church of Thyatira at the Messiah's return:

"But hold on to what you have until I come. The one who is victorious and keeps My works to the end: I will give him authority over the nations—and he will shepherd them with an iron scepter; he will shatter them like pottery—just as I have received this from My Father. I will also give him the morning star. Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 2:25-29, Holman Christian Standard Bible).

The Messiah's scepter, also made of iron, is described as follows:

"Your throne, God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of Your kingdom is a scepter of justice" (Hebrews 1:8, HCSB).

"The armies that were in heaven followed Him on white horses, wearing pure white linen. A sharp sword came from His mouth, so that He might strike the nations with it. He will shepherd them with an iron scepter. He will also trample the winepress of the fierce anger of God, the Almighty. And He has a name written on His robe and on His thigh: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (Revelation 19:14-16, HCSB).

According to Easton's Bible Dictionary, the "treading of the wine-press" illustrates divine judgment, as in Isaiah 63:2; Revelation 14:19, 20; Joel 3:9-13. This is not about forcing citizens into conversion by beating them into submission; it is about a time of shattering wickedness in all its forms. Evil is to be resisted, overcome and ultimately destroyed. During the Messiah's peaceful reign nations will never again train for war (Isaiah 2:3-5).

Why are these scepters made of iron and not something more magnificent? Why not wood? A shepherd's staff was likely made of wood (Smith's Bible Dictionary). Is iron simply figurative? Revelation 2 and 3 are addressed to churches of God, or the seven spirits of God (Revelation 3:1) with encouragement about overcoming evil and tribulation. Yet these

chapters have notable, repetitive counsel for anyone who has an ear to hear. Tribulation or trouble is associated with a fiery furnace, which is used to shape iron: "But the LORD selected you and brought you out of Egypt's iron furnace to be a people for His inheritance, as you are today" (Deuteronomy 4:20, HCSB).

Iron does seem common for a scepter, but perhaps there are good reasons. Iron was an everyday element to ancient people—they knew how to use it. Job was acquainted with the process of extracting iron from iron ore: "Iron is taken out of the earth" (Job 28:2). Isaiah described the smith's technique with iron (Isaiah 44:12, 54:16). It was used for all sorts of purposes anciently: chariots, tools, nails, gates, walls, weapons, armor. It is also used figuratively in scripture to represent affliction, fortitude, slavery, strength, destruction and great obstacles. Scientific aspects about iron convey relevant meaning as well.

Iron Science

Iron is the most common element in the earth by weight. It accounts for almost all the Earth's core. Its low cost, abundance and strength have since antiquity made it man's most-used metal. It even gives blood its crucial ability to snatch oxygen from the air and carry it to where it's needed in the body (Simon Quellen Field and Theodore Gray, *Elements Vault*, 2011, p.36).

If an athlete is deficient in iron, this impairs the body's aerobic processes, brain and muscle metabolism and endurance, performance and normal immune response. That's because iron carries oxygen from your breath to your hard-working tissues. Iron-deficient anemia can be described as one big bad threat to success even for the fittest, most well prepared athlete (ironman.com). Endurance is positively a theme in our personal spiritual races.

Earth's solid inner core is composed primarily of iron. At 10,292°F this iron is as hot as the sun's surface, but the crushing pressure caused by gravity prevents it from becoming liquid. The outer core is a thick fluid layer of iron, nickel and small quantities of other metals. This flow of liquid iron generates electric currents, which produce magnetic fields (physics.org). Iron is a key part of earth's magnetic field.

A compass needle aligns itself and points toward the top of earth's magnetic field. Compasses give us a consistent sense of direction. Lodestone, an iron ore, is a nat-



Photo by Jonathan Bean/Unsplash

Time is needed to shape, sharpen and strengthen us that we may overcome just as Christ did (John 16:32-33).

ural, permanent magnet. The first use of lodestone as a compass is believed to have occurred in Europe around A.D. 1100. The word lodestone comes from the Anglo-Saxon meaning "leading stone," or literally, "the stone that leads" (madehow.com).

Of course, God's Holy Spirit is a guiding compass.

Modern Uses of Iron

This dictionary entry of iron conveys its scope of usefulness:

- A ductile, pliable, metallic element, scarcely known in a pure condition, but much used for making tools, machinery, etc.
- An instrument, utensil, weapon, such as a sword.
- A tool heated to smooth out wrinkles in fabric.
- A "9-iron" is used to get a golf ball out of a sand hazard or tall grass.
- The blade of a carpenter's plane.
- Used to treat anemia of the blood.

Iron can even be skillfully rendered into delicate art. It conducts electricity and heat very well. Cast iron skillets are loved because of how remarkably well they conduct and hold heat; maintaining one involves using oil and high heat, otherwise it will rust. Iron's major drawback as a construction material is that it reacts with moist air, corrodes into rust, decomposes and can crumble into pieces. These attributes can be compared to human beings, who are affected by their surroundings, yet likewise have the potential to be strengthened by adversity through God's Spirit. Relationships can help maintain and restore us, like a tool, as the phrase "iron sharpens iron" implies.

How does iron "break evil into pieces?"

Iron may have drawbacks, but its strength and malleability are the foundation of modern structural engineering for such man-made marvels as the iron lattice Eiffel Tower, railways, skyscrapers, dams and huge ships like the Titanic.

Scientific analysis of wrought iron rivets used in the sunken Titanic's hull seams suggested they were created by inexperienced tradesmen. Wrought iron was made by hand at the time, and brittle fracture was found as the rivets' failure. The Titanic needed over 3 million rivets that, due to the large number, had to be contracted out with many companies. This draws attention to the importance of iron's exact heating process to ensure its strength, which parallels resisting and shattering evil.

Shattering Evil

In conclusion, ironically, iron emerges as ordinary and extraordinary simultaneously, inside us and around us, perfectly fitting for a scepter. While Christ lived as a vulnerable human, being affected by His surroundings and adversities, He overcame evil through the power of God's Spirit. Appropriately, His iron scepter reflects pure strength, with which He will again face evil and dissolve it. Humans who use spiritual endurance to follow Christ's example and overcome evil will also be given an iron scepter.

Time is needed to shape, sharpen and strengthen us that we may overcome just as Christ did (John 16:32-33). There will be a time for war and a time for healing and peace when our Messiah returns. A royal scepter of iron not only shatters the wicked, its attributes embody the plight of humanity leading up to that moment. **UN**

Ten Commandment Series

The First Commandment

by Don Hooser

God's voice boomed from the top of Mt. Sinai: "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3). Moses repeated this 40 years later (Deuteronomy 5:7).

Some modern Bible versions are a little clearer. The International Standard Version says: "You are to have no other gods as a substitute for me."

Some paraphrases say, "God must be Number One!" That's true or not true, depending on what you mean. If you mean God is your number one god, that's no good. He must be your only God!

The word "god"—with a small g—refers to anything or anyone a person worships or which has the top priority, precedence or preference in one's life.

The word "God"—with a capital G—refers to the Creator, the only One worthy to be called "God." Only God and Jesus Christ are uncreated and have existed forever. Only God can provide for our needs, answer our prayers, heal us and grant us salvation. Only God deeply loves all people! Pagan gods don't love people.

The First Commandment tells us: Your god—your only god—must be God—and no other.

This commandment is unique! Most cultures have been proud of the fact that they practiced polytheism, the worship of many gods.

The First Commandment is the most important commandment because it means that only God has the sovereign authority to establish commandments for every human being plus judge them by those commandments. Only God can define right versus wrong, good versus evil, virtue versus vice, and moral versus immoral.

Confusion of the First and Second Commandments

We in United Church of God know that Exodus 20:3 states the First Commandment and verses 4-6 state the Second Commandment (about not using images in religious worship). Sadly, many Christian and Jewish people are confused and regard verses 3 through 6 as only one commandment.

The different meanings of the two first Commandments will be explained fully in the next article but we can briefly illustrate them now. If someone worships any image (like a statue or painting), that is breaking the First Commandment. But if someone is worshipping the true God but is trying to visually picture God with images, that is breaking the Second Commandment.

God is a jealous God (Exodus 20:5)

God says His "name is Jealous" (Exodus 34:14)! Godly jealousy simply means our Creator requires an exclusive relationship. He does not permit unfaithfulness. He will not share us with another god.

Significantly, the Bible sometimes refers to the worship of a false god as spiritual "adultery" (see Jeremiah 3:8-9; 5:7; Ezekiel 23:37).

Satan the devil, the great deceiver and "ruler of this world" until Christ returns (John 12:31) wants people to worship him or a demon directly. He even tried to tempt Jesus to worship him (Matthew 4:8-10). However, Satan is almost as satisfied if he can influence people to worship anything or anyone other than God! Therefore, the worship of idols is indirectly worshipping demons (1 Corinthians 10:19-22).

Pagan gods are not always called "gods." For example, when people ignore the Bible and the true God and instead pursue "spirituality," then "spirituality" is their god.

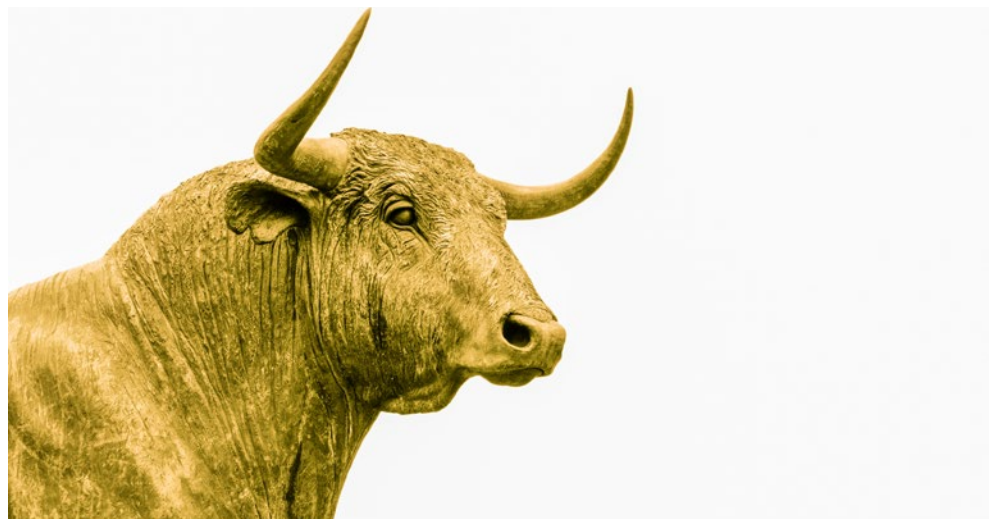
Some spiritual practices are clearly demonic and evil, including spiritism, mysticism, sorcery, astrology, counterfeit healings and consulting mediums (see Leviticus 19:26-31). But God regards all religious practices, no matter how nice-sounding, as evil when they "add to" or "take away from" God's Word (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:29-32).

People subconsciously crave to have some kind of religion. When people don't have a God-centered religion, their "religion" is often an "ideology." Popular ideologies include belief in evolution, humanism, secularism, environmentalism, socialism, feminism, and many other isms. Even many people who consider themselves to be "Christian" are more motivated by one of these isms than by the Bible.

Worship the Creator, not the creation

Many religions have the superstitious belief that the gods are part of nature—a god of the sun, of agriculture, of weather, of fertility, etc. But the true God is not part of nature—He is over nature! He is not in creation—He is the Creator of all creation!

Every bit of creation is proof of an awesome Creator (Psalm 19:1-3). Everywhere we look, we see God's flawless wisdom, love, design, planning, perfection, precision, engineering, art, humor and love of variety. And we see how God takes care of every creature (Psalm 104)! A beloved hymn by Isaac Watts says, "Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed, where-e'er I turn my eye!"



We must not have any other god before God the Father.

But, sadly, rebellious human beings don't want a God who tells them what to do and not do (Romans 7:14-19; 8:7). Therefore, they prefer to worship creation rather than the Creator! For a short commentary about this, see "The Most Egregious Ingratitude" at ucg.org/beyond-today/blogs/the-most-egregious-ingratitude. The results of glorifying creatures rather than the Creator have been terrible and tragic, as Romans 1:17-32 describes.

Knowing that God created us should profoundly affect our thinking and actions in many ways, as explained in "Crucial Lessons from Knowing God as Our Creator" at ucg.org/the-good-news/mini-bible-study-crucial-lessons-from-knowing-god-as-our-creator.

Beware of many temptations to "forget God"

God warns us: "Beware, lest you forget the LORD" (see Deuteronomy 6:5-25; 8:1-20). Hardly any readers of *United News* are likely to forget God completely or deliberately replace God with a false god. But most of us temporarily "forget" God by failing to include Him in our thoughts when we are thinking, worrying, talking and doing. We must make a constant effort to not forget about God and His will for our lives. It's valuable to keep asking ourselves, "What would Jesus do?"

In our busy lives, conscious awareness of God easily gets crowded out. In the parable of the sower, Jesus compared His followers to young fruit-bearing plants that can easily be "choked out" by the weeds of life's distractions (Mark 4:18-19).

Our environment attracts us and distracts us! Most people don't worship statues, but they adore their stuff and idolize media, music and sports celebrities. Since we are surrounded by a very materialistic, secular and sexualized society, we must constantly resist its influences.

Colossians 3:5 says: "Covetousness which is idolatry." That makes it clear that there is a close relationship between the First and Tenth Commandments. What

you covet or lust for is becoming your god. It seems the Ten Commandments form a circle, with the Tenth Commandment coming back to the First Commandment! See also 1 John 2:15-17.

What is the most common false god? I, me, myself! And that includes all the extensions of oneself—my family, my accomplishments, my belongings, my popularity, etc. Human nature is egoistical (self-centered) and egotistical (conceited). But God commands that we love others as much as ourselves and love God even more than ourselves.

How well are you obeying the First Commandment?

God wants you to use this life to prepare for the next life. To do that, God must take first place in your heart, mind and daily actions (Matthew 6:33-34). But, sadly, we human beings are inconsistent—how successful we are varies from day to day.

One day, you might do very well overall. You start out the day with prayer and some Bible study and ask God to guide you throughout the day. You pray silent prayers during the day, frequently thanking God. You manage to not commit any sins. You end the day thanking God for His help with your accomplishments.

Other days, you don't do that well. At the end of those days, reflect on what you did right and what you did wrong, confess to God your sins, mistakes and misuse of time (1 John 1:9), and ask God to help you to do better tomorrow. Be assured that God is very patient and merciful and He will forgive you (Hebrews 4:14-16). God loves you as a precious son or daughter.

Remember. God wants to be your Friend and Father. And your God. Your only God. **UN**

[For the United Church of God summary statement of belief regarding God and Jesus Christ, see "God the Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit" in Fundamental Beliefs of United Church of God at ucg.org/fundamental-beliefs-of-the-united-church-of-god.]

What Are We Advertising?

■ What we wear and how we carry ourselves advertises a lot more about us than we may be aware of.

by Kathy Sanny

When I was a teenager, I spent a few weeks away from home taking care of my nephews. My sister took me to the bus station to go back to Memphis once it was time for me to go home. I was not very conscious of my appearance, being something of a tomboy, and had put on a dress with part of the hem unstitched. I do not remember much else about my appearance that day, but noticed the hem once I was boarding the bus. Typical of me at that time, my hair would have been barely combed, with no make-up on, wearing shoes with no socks, and I seldom carried a purse. I probably was carrying my additional clothing and toiletries in a sack.

My mom was picking me up from the bus station but was delayed. No one I knew was around when I got off the bus.

I was fairly naïve, so I did not think much of it when a man approached me and asked if I needed a place to stay. (I noticed a woman standing by watching, who was wearing a mini-skirt and high-heeled boots that came up higher on her legs than I had ever seen before.) I told the man my mother was picking me up, and I was bewildered when he rather fiercely called me a liar and said it was obvious from my appearance that I was a runaway.

I heard my name called, turned to see my mom and left. It was years later that I realized the danger I was probably in.

My appearance advertised that I must have left in a hurry and did not take much with me. My unkempt state said I did not have anyone to care enough about me to be sure I was properly dressed. None of this was true.

What we wear and how we carry ourselves advertises a lot more about us than we may be aware of. I know that more than once I have unintentionally given the wrong impression about myself, or realized I was not dressed as modestly as I thought. It always makes me rethink what is in my heart, whether I am reflecting the mind of God.

In recent times I have seen women wearing skirts slit all the way up, with bows tying the sides together that exposed the skin all the way down. Do we wear such suggestive attire or revealing tops and then take on an air of offense when men look?

This could be unnecessary provocation for our male friends.

The legal definition for provocation is

a “set of events that might be adequate to cause a reasonable person to lose self-control” (Wikipedia).

I don’t think Christian men should look anyway, but we are not surrounded by just Christians, and even Christians may be influenced by our society. Males are not excused just because someone dresses in a provocative way. Church, of all places, should be a safe zone. I am sure church members grow weary of having to deal with seductive dress in their daily life.

“But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:28).

Sorry, females, God will not hold us guiltless when we stand before His throne for not dressing carefully to not cause offense. Do we want to be the cause of wrong thoughts entering someone else’s mind? We should be mortified at the thought!

This lack of modesty leads to the breakdown of respect toward women. Do we think men we interact with are thinking about how intelligent we are when we draw their attention to our sexuality? We are not advertising intelligence!

“Like a gold ring in a pig’s snout is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion” (Proverbs 11:22).

As Christian women, we are called to be discrete. We must walk a narrower path and not the broad way that leads to destruction.

The definition of discrete: “apart or detached from others; separate; distinct.”

“Enter by the gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

Christ knew our way would be narrow and difficult. It gets narrower by the day as our society is losing touch with the morality taught in the past. Much of the diminishing of standards we see today also happened in Rome when Jesus lived. The ruins of Pompeii have frozen in time the depravity of Roman society in that city from that century. The Jewish society, while somewhat separated, was still influenced by the typical Roman ways of the time. Amid this picture of immorality, God found a pure, humble virgin to be the mother of Jesus.

We can go by the broad way and mimic



Photo by Sestrijevitschii-ina/Unsplash

Think about what you are wearing and what it might convey to others. Mothers need to be teaching their daughters proper attire, even from a young age.

society around us, or we can choose to be a light—separate and distinct in a darkening world.

Women don’t have to be covered from head to toe or to have someone measuring how long their skirts are. Our desire is to appear stylish rather than to try to show off too much of our anatomy. One takeaway I took from my college psychology class is that we do not see ourselves the way others see us. Maybe we should look in the mirror each day and ask if what we are wearing shows how we feel about ourselves inside.

Mothers need to be teaching their

daughters proper attire, and moms should not mimic society themselves! What is our long-term goal for our daughters? If learning to be a follower of Christ is not our aim, then we need to rethink our values. And the same mindset must go toward teaching our sons to be respectful of women no matter their appearance.

We do not have to give up fashion to advertise modesty. It just takes more planning and effort.

We should direct our whole life into respecting ourselves, our neighbors, and Christ our Lord in how we appear both inwardly and outwardly. [UN](#)

John Elliott and Mark Mickelson Recognized for Service



Victor Kubik and Aaron Dean give both Mark Mickelson and John Elliott a heartfelt thank you for their service.

After the annual meetings, Council meetings were held from May 8-10. During the meetings Mark Mickelson was thanked for his six years on the Council and given a gift. And John Elliott and Mark Mickelson were thanked for their many years of service as senior pastors in Africa and were given gifts.

They have both now passed the baton onto other senior pastors. Mark Mickelson passed on his duties to Paul Moody and John Elliott passed his duties on to Monte Knudson. [UN](#)

Building Bridges of Kindness

by Karen Edelbach

Kindness is listed among the fruit of God's Spirit. Webster and Dictionary.com defines being kind as being sympathetic, helpful, considerate, and forbearing, or showing tolerance, among other qualities. Showing kindness goes a long way to make life a better experience. And in my own mind its use is a most powerful way of building bridges among people, and should especially be seen among God's people.

Recently, the death of one of the brethren in the local church occurred who had endured several years of difficulty due to a stroke he suffered. Before he was a vibrant and gentle man, who spoke to God's people on a regular basis, and with kindness taught about qualities God wants us to develop in our hearts and minds. It is something I will always remember about him. Now, it is a time when we in turn can show the sympathy described as kindness to his wife and family, a gift to help lift them up.

Being generous is another way to show kindness. It lifts the receiver, and at the same time the giver. Have you ever received an unexpected gift from someone? A gift that makes you think of the giver every

time you think of it, see it or wear it? It might have been the gift of a kind word, or appreciation. What a warm feeling it brings to reminisce about the kindness of a person who thought of you in a special way by giving you something. Doesn't it endear you to that person with a new connection rekindled by their generosity? Doesn't it soften your spirit toward them, if, as sometimes happens, it may be a gift to bring reconciliation and peace between you. That is the time to accept it graciously, be glad to rekindle the relationship with the giver, and let go of grievances.

Another quality to emphasize in the definition of kindness is the ability of showing tolerance. Ah, tolerance. That quality, which when received, makes us thankful that someone has had the kindness to overlook a slight, or let a harsh word spoken in haste go by, rather than make a charge against us.

If we know the experience of receiving tolerance, then we should offer that gift to others as well. And the greatest expression of tolerance for us all was shown through Jesus Christ in the gift of His life for us. "He laid down His life for us, we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John

3:16-18). And when we have the chance to give it to someone who may have hurt us in some way, we can lighten our heart, and hopefully theirs by that gift, realizing a slight is often unintended during a time of fatigue or stress in our lives.

What happens in the outcome of the uses of kindness in our life and in the lives of others? Most likely we have been aware of times when a less than kind way of handling a situation has not turned out very well. It often ends with more angry words and animosity between people.

By practicing kindness, it builds the bridges that connect us to one another with fondness and affection. It brings peace and a solace to our spirit that comforts us. And, I believe, it brings satisfaction to God our Father, Who is judging our actions in this life. It can be a way which will prompt Him to say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. . ." (Matthew 25:21, KJV).

The Feast of Tabernacles is coming up soon and is a perfect opportunity to contemplate ways we can show kindness to others. We can share a tolerant spirit. We can be generous, often more than other times of year. We can include others who

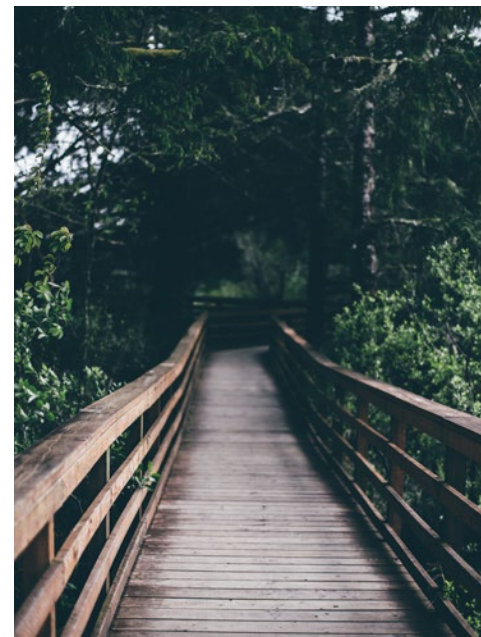


Photo by Katie Mourn/Unsplash

Kindness goes a long way to make life a better experience for the use of it.

may not have opportunities to fellowship at other times of the year. We can bring the joy of building bridges with our brethren by practicing kindness, both at home and at the various Feast sites we will be attending.

Let's build bridges of kindness to connect to one another during this feast season and beyond. [UN](#)

Rwanda and Burundi Pastoral Visit

by Antonio Ndung'u

Kevin Eboya and I left Kenya on June 7, 2018, to visit the six Bible study groups in Burundi and Rwanda in East Africa. On landing at the Bujumbura International Airport at 7:30 p.m., we were met by Remy Nsengiyumva and two gentlemen who had come with a taxi to take us to the Hotel in Buganda. On the way we picked up Fabien Semivumbi from Rwanda, who has been very helpful in translating our messages from English into the local language. On June 8, we held a Bible study, with a question-and-answer session following. I have been visiting with the group for four years now, and those whom had been counseling for baptism were eager to resume. A total of about 10 individuals were counseled for baptism, and the following morning before Sabbath services I was able to baptize Remy Nsengiyumva. It was a delight to welcome a new member into the Body of Christ. He is the local contact person in that group.

During services we sang from UCG hymnals that have been translated into the Kirundi language with the help of Charles Nizigiyimana, a musician. He lives in the capital city of Bujumbura.

The group overall is growing in knowledge, and, although there exists a challenge in that while most of the individuals can only understand the local language, most of them are progressing well in the faith. Only a few can understand either

some English or French.

After Sabbath services we traveled to Kirundo, Burundi, so that we could travel on to Rwanda the following morning and enter Rwanda on June 10. We have a Bible study group at Nzangwa, just 20 minutes from the border in Rwanda. We visited with this group for Bible study and a question-and-answer session. They were delighted because I was not able to visit with them during my last visit in February 2018. One need this group has is Bibles. Last year a donation was divided in two, for a total of 34 Bibles for use in Burundi and Rwanda. The number of Bibles were not enough as there are more requests.

From Nzangwa, our translator Fabien, Kevin and I traveled to Musanze town on the northern side of Rwanda, where we spent the night. On June 11, we rested until afternoon when we had a board meeting with the officials who are working in having the Church registered in Rwanda. At the board meeting we discussed the progress of the five Bible study groups in Rwanda, located at Musanze, Rubavu, Kabatwa, Nzangwa and Mukamira. I am happy to report that there has been much progress through the years. Registration of the Church is at advanced stages and is necessary so that those whom God is calling can worship without any legal issues. After the board meeting I conducted a seminar on leadership/mentoring from the notes on "Teach as You Have Taught"



The group meeting in Buganda-Cibitoke Province in Burundi.

by John Elliott. The Relevant verses are 2 Timothy 2:2-7; Ephesians 4:11-15; Titus 1:5-11; 1 Corinthians 14:26,33; Titus 3:10-11 and 2 Timothy 2:15, 24-25.

On June 12 we visited a Bible study group in Rubavu. On June 13 we visited a Bible study group in Mukamira. Not many were in attendance, as there were three burial ceremonies in the area, which most of the people in this group were attending. On June 14 we visited another group in Kabatwa. On June 15 we rested and prepared for the Sabbath. We met with the Musanze congregation on June 16. This congregation is dynamic and comprised of five committed families. Weekly Sabbath attendance is between 23 to 30 people. The Sabbath services are like those held at any other UCG congre-

gations around the world. Services were conducted in English with translation into Rwandese language by Fabien Semivumbi and Michael Zilimwabagabo.

Three booklets, Transforming Your Life, God's Holy Day Plan, and Fundamental Beliefs of the United Church of God, have been translated into the Rwandese language and are very helpful to those individuals being called to understand God's truth today. On June 17 Kevin and I traveled to Kigali where we caught a flight back home to Nairobi, Kenya. It was a delight to be accompanied by Kevin, a young adult serving in the Nairobi congregation, as we help mentor the next generation of servants in God's Church. [UN](#)

ABC Baccalaureate Weekend

continued from page 1



ABC students earlier in the year.

He hopes to give more opportunity for service to our graduates.

After the welcome and invocation, student body president David Rains delivered the student discourse recounting the many fun moments this year had brought, and how they came here as individuals, but were now “a family.” He told of his grandfather’s funeral with hundreds of people coming because of a lifelong legacy of good works. Even though David was only 3 years old when his grandfather died, he always tried to live up to his grandfather’s legacy. He spoke of the class’ service activities including the charity auction, their travel to the local churches to perform special music and their class trip to St. Louis, Missouri. He admonished the class of 2018 to expand on the legacy they have made at ABC and leave an even longer legacy into the future from what they had learned in God’s Word.

The graduation address was given by ABC coordinator Dr. Frank Dunkle. He recounted the many hours spent with the students and how they had advanced so

far in these nine months. He, as well as David Rains, recounted his using his son’s action figures and castles on stage to reenact the battle of captivity of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. Batman, Robin, Wonder Woman and other Marvel Comic characters played the parts of the story, and no one forgets such a lively and entertaining teaching lesson as the “war” that is relived on stage with their scriptural references. He acknowledged the various ways the faculty imparts knowledge, yet knowledge alone is not the purpose of ABC. Students must leave and put that knowledge to use; to be able to faithfully pass it on to others as Paul admonished Timothy in Scripture.

The address was followed by the presentation of the Council of Elders Service Award, given to Nathan Berg and Coleen Gintu, and the Ambassador Award of Excellence, given to David Rains and Kayla Weaner. They each received a crystal apple clock in recognition of their achievements. Then the graduate names were read and diplomas given as

Considering ABC?

by Aaron Dean

“Should I attend Ambassador Bible College?” If so, “When should I attend?” We believe that ABC would be great for anyone who can make this opportunity happen. It is a gold mine of wisdom and knowledge with great opportunity to develop a relationship with God and friendships with other students.

You will not find a better place to go directly through the entire Bible—the true source of knowledge. You become a detective in the discovery of all the hidden gems. It gives you a broad based education on how to make wise decisions and help others. God’s promises become real from history and a deeper faith that what He did for them He will do for you. You will understand the law given by God to Moses, learn the period of the judges, kings and prophets. You will explore the writings and go through Jesus Christ’s life in the Gospels, followed by Church history and the epistles. Prophecy will be proven with historical past events and those yet to happen in God’s future plan.

This knowledge gives you more insight into God and yourself to build your relationship with him. The opportunity will enlarge your circle of friends and enhance your Bible study and fellowship.

When to come is a more complex question for young people. Some have attended straight out of high school at 18, some during college years, some after graduation and some after retirement in their 60s to 80s. For mature adults, any time is great.

If you plan to attend another college, I would suggest coming to ABC sometime during your college career. If you come after a BA or BS degree, the year’s absence from the workforce might hinder your job application. Finishing that last year or semester after ABC will not create a time gap in your resume. This would not be a problem if you plan on continuing for an advanced degree.

It is a personal decision to take on this rigorous program, but be assured, it will make a difference in your life. **UN**

each student came to the stage. Student Danielle Britt (wife of ministerial trainee Steven Britt), instead of the traditional flowers, carried her baby across the stage. Little Lilaina was born during the second semester of class, but Danielle was able to attend via Skype and make up assignments to still receive her diploma.

After the recessional march to Pomp and Circumstance, the students did the traditional balloon release outside

the office and took pictures. They then returned to the dining area for refreshments and cake and fellowship with family, friends, faculty and alumni. It was a beautiful sunny day for the event. We ask that you encourage your young adults and others interested to consider being new applicants for the 2018/2019 year. As the graduates can attest, it is a challenging yet foundational opportunity to learn God’s Word to be a true success in life. **UN**

Updates From Ministerial and Member Services

In April, Roger Korthuis was named interim pastor of the congregation in Sedro-Woolley, Washington, following the death of pastor Warren Larson. Mr. Korthuis has served as an elder in the Sedro-Woolley congregation since September 2016, with his wife Diane.

On this past Feast of Pentecost, May 20, 2018, three new elders were ordained into the ministry. Les Babb and his wife Linda serve in the Medford, Oregon, congregation. Lacy Mayes and his wife Frances serve in the Hickory, North Carolina, congregation. Devin Schulz and his wife Tiffany serve in the Milwaukee, Oshkosh and Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin, congregations, where Mr. Schulz serves as an assistant pastor.

Also in May, Rob Slocum was named an assistant pastor for the congregation in

Portland, Oregon. Mr. Slocum has served as an elder in the Portland congregation with his wife, Tina, since September 2017.

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

Rick Beam has relocated, and now serves as pastor for the congregations in Rome (Georgia), Gadsden (Alabama) and Chattanooga (Tennessee). We thank Paul Burnes for his service over the past year as interim pastor for the Rome congregation.

The previous pastor for Huntsville, Gadsden and Chattanooga, David Dobson, has relocated to Alaska, where he is now pastor of the Anchorage and Soldotna congregations, which had been pastored by Earl Roemer. Mr. Roemer retired

from employment at the end of June, but will continue to serve as international senior pastor for Hong Kong.

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

In June, Ryan Hall was hired as a ministerial trainee in the Cincinnati East, Ohio, congregation. Ryan and his wife Nissa relocated from the Atlanta, Georgia, congregation.

Lewis VanAusdle now serves as pastor for the three congregations previously served by Howard Davis: New York City, Northern New Jersey, and Hartford, Connecticut. Mr. Davis retired from employment at the end of June.

Chris Rowland



Rob and Tina Slocum



Ryan and Nissa Hall



Trillion Sydney Cooper



Matthew Arnold Fahey



Mariah Barbara Ann Fitch



Luke Fogelson

along with other group activities such as Winter Family Weekend and speech club.

6. Josh plans to go to Trine University. He plans to do a bachelors degree in chemistry with plans to attend dental school after that.

7. Favorite song: “Spaceship” by Andy Grammar.

Favorite Quote: “You miss 100 percent of the shots you don’t take.” — Wayne Gretzky/Michael Scott.

Favorite Scripture: Philippians 4:13.

Trillion Sydney Cooper

2. Catalina Cooper
3. Portland, Oregon
4. Trillion graduated from Summit Learning Charter School and the early college program. She was a working student as well as accomplishing president’s list for every term in her senior year. She participated in the Trails Across Time history immersion program for two years. Trillion is a huge fan of artistic endeavors and writing. She has traveled every inch of the Oregon coast as well as a small bit of California and Washington. She is rather eccentric in her ways and wants everything to be fun and a little topsy-turvy.
5. Trillion is a baptized member of God’s Church. She is a member of the flower crew, the food-service crew and occasionally turns pages for the pianist and choir. She is a former summer camp attendee who plans to return this year as archery staff.

6. After graduation, she is planning to finish her associates of arts degree at Portland Community College, with hopes of transferring to a university to study foreign translation and linguistics or art restoration and curating.

7. Favorite quote: “Life moves pretty fast. If you don’t stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it.”—Ferris Bueller, *Ferris Bueller’s Day Off*.

Matthew Arnold Fahey

2. Jonathan and Shari Fahey
3. Dallas, Texas
4. Matthew is a homeschool graduate of Spinnaker High. Beginning at the age of 12, Matthew volunteered more than 450 hours at the Allen Public Library. He

enjoyed assisting in weekly preschool story times and special after-school events for elementary-age children and teens. He also enjoys traveling and has been to Washington D.C., Alaska, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Jordan, Israel, England, Switzerland and Germany. Matthew has always had an interest in music. He taught himself to play the ukulele and guitar and is working on learning keyboard.

5. Matthew serves on the audio visual crew at church. He has been a camper for four summers at Pinecrest. He also attended Northwest and Winter Camp.

6. Matthew plans to work part- or full-time over the summer and into the fall. He will take core classes locally at Collin College before either transferring to a four-year university or pursuing certification in his field of interest. He might like to live in London someday.

7. Favorite quote: “Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will spend its whole life believing it is stupid”—Unknown.

Mariah Barbara Ann Fitch

2. David and Sharon Fitch
3. Lansing, Michigan
4. Mariah has been homeschooled and joined PIONEERS homeschool co-op in seventh grade continuing through high school. She graduated with honors from the co-op on May 23. She worked at Turtle Tom’s Ice Cream Shoppe for three years before becoming a manager in early 2017. Mariah’s other jobs include: a babysitter, a deep cleaner and a paralegal for an elder’s law firm. She also has been a member in the Michigan teen speech club for seven years and will graduate in July. Mariah took piano lessons for 10 years and received superior rating for piano in the National Federation of Music Clubs Festival for five years.

5. Mariah has been a soprano in the Lansing church choir for the past five years. She enjoyed gymnastics during her pre-teen and early teen years. She loves traveling, music, sign language and socializing. She occasionally does special music in varying congregations through her ASL expressive song interpretation. Mariah loves attending Cotubic and Buckeye and



Marissa Sail Fooshe

enjoys church get-togethers.
6. Her plans after graduation include ABC in the fall and afterward becoming certified as a postpartum doula.
7. Favorite Scripture: Philippians 1:9-10.

Luke Fogelson

2. Brent and Tina Fogelson
3. Phoenix, Arizona
4. Luke graduated from Paradise Honors High School on May 24, 2018. Throughout his school years, Luke has enjoyed participating in band and challenging himself in courses such as AP English, anatomy and physiology.
5. Luke, representing the fourth generation in his family at church, is involved in various facets of service in his congregation, including assisting with audio visual and hall setup and take down. In 2017 he held the role of sergeant at arms in the congregation’s speaking mechanics club.
6. Luke plans to pursue a bachelor of science in nursing in Arizona this fall.
7. Favorite Scripture: Romans 5:3-4.

Marissa Sail Fooshe

2. Marissa is the youngest daughter of Michael and Shari Fooshe.
3. Nashville, Tennessee
4-6. She enjoys running her small business, Sail Away Soaps, where she hand-crafts, packages and sells all natural soap, bath salts, scrubs and other bath products in addition to candles and wax melts. She is passionate about the knowledge of natural medicine such as essential oils and

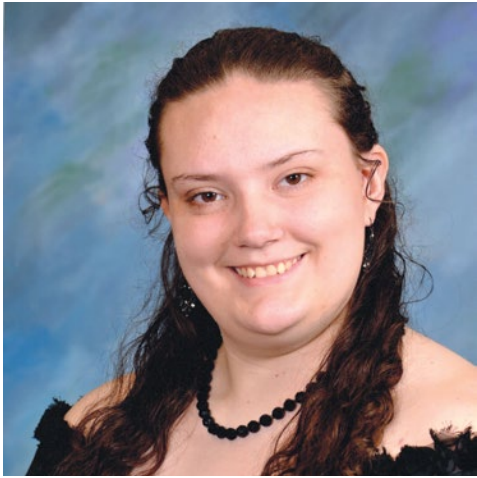


Courtney Franke

herbal teas and plans to get her certification in both aromatherapy and herbalism. She loves writing—especially fiction novels. She is a published poet and plans to become an author. She is pursuing a bachelors degree in education to teach English and creative writing classes. She is a recipient of the Tennessee Promise Scholarship and has been attending NSCC, where she has kept a 4.0 GPA since her junior year of high school. She enjoys reading, traveling, dancing, pottery, skating and gardening! She has volunteered 40 hours at National HealthCare Corporation and wrote for the Dickson Herald newspaper for three years, contributing her Q&A column “Ask Marissa,” where teens and young adults could have their questions answered from a biblical perspective. Marissa will be graduating with honors from Heritage Covenant Academy, with 18 college credits from dual enrollment.
7. Favorite Scriptures: Proverbs 31:25; Isaiah 64:8.

Courtney Franke

2. Timothy and Michele Franke
3. Nashville, Tennessee
4. Courtney graduated from Franklin Classical School. She was the class valedictorian, graduating with Summa Cum Laude honors. She was senior class president, played varsity volleyball and tennis. She was nominated by her teacher, and selected from among seniors in the middle Tennessee area as one of the top five students most likely to change the world.



Sarah Christina Goodrich



Natalie Greene



Reno Austin Haney



Meaghann Joseph



Shayli Kifer

She was a Girl Scout from Kindergarten through senior year. She was selected for her school's state math team, and to attend the Government Leadership Summit. Her freshmen year she raised baby chicks to maturity and started a business to sell eggs to offset the cost of college.

5. Courtney's interests include: travel, photography, volleyball, art and anything outdoors. She enjoys reading, talking with friends and attending UYC camps. She has attended preteen Camp Nacome for 13 years, as camper and now teen staff. Courtney has also attended several UYC teen camps. She has traveled to over 19 countries located on three continents. Her unusual skills include the ability to laugh like a zebra!

6. Courtney will attend Lipscomb University and plans to study law.

7. Favorite Scripture: Philippians 4:8

Favorite quotes: "There are only two ways to live your life: as though nothing is a miracle, or as though everything is a miracle"—Albert Einstein.

"Approach marriage as something to make you holy, not something to make you happy"—Sherri Clark.

Courtney's advice is to seek older people, especially your parents for guidance.

Sarah Christina Goodrich

2. David and Kandy Goodrich

3. Eureka, California

4. Sarah graduated from East High School early (two weeks before her 17th birthday). She is a three-year music stu-

dent and was in advanced choir for two years. She placed third place in advanced-audition. She played volleyball and varsity tennis (ranked third). She has been involved in 4-H for 10 years, earned a platinum star (top star rank) and super presenter awards this year. She is a teen leader in dog obedience and care, she likes to crochet, and is a part of digital photography groups. She has done many community service activities in 4-H. She received scholarships through 4-H and for writing an essay in eighth grade.

5. Sarah assists with snacks at church and food for potlucks. She also prepares get-well/prayer request cards each week and helps make the monthly calendar. She has been to Northwest preteen camp for seven years, then northwest teen camp since and will attend this year. She also has volunteered at Northwest preteen camp for four years and plans to continue. She has been part of Feast choirs (children's, teen, young adult and adult) for the past 12 years. Interests include: reading, singing, violin, crochet, video games, music, woodworking, time with friends, family, her dogs and guinea pig. Her middle name, Christina, is after her brother, Christopher, who died three years before she was born. She looks forward to meeting him in the second resurrection.

6. Sarah will be attending College of the Redwoods with a major in digital media and minor in foreign language. She hopes to attend ABC in the future.

7. Favorite Scripture: John 15:13

Favorite advice: "Be a good example. You never know who you will affect."

Natalie Greene

2. Wiley and Debra Greene

3. Kingsport, Tennessee

4. Natalie maintained a 4.0 GPA throughout high school while taking rigorous classes. She was part of the Math Honors Society, National Honors Society, Anchor Club and Health Occupations Students of America. She was the president of the Science Honors Society and treasurer of Beta Club. Natalie was also a part of the volleyball team for one year and a member of the tennis team all four years. She was the number-one seed on the tennis team her junior and senior years.

5. Natalie loves sports, family vacations, hanging out with friends, traveling and Taco Bell. She has gone to church camp since she was 12. Natalie has been to Camp Woodmen five times as well as Camp Hye Sierra and Camp Cotubic. Camp is something she looks forward to each year.

6. Natalie plans on attending college at East Tennessee State University and pursuing a degree in biology. She plans to become a physician's assistant.

7. Favorite Scripture: Romans 8:28.

Favorite quote: "The sweetest thing in all my life has been the longing [...] to find the place where all the beauty came from"—C.S. Lewis.

Reno Austin Haney

2. Reno is the son/stepson of Sherry Rickard-Martinez and Al Martinez, and E.B. and Christy Haney.

3. Chattanooga, Tennessee

4. Reno graduated with honors in May 2018, third in his class at Sequoyah High School, Soddy Daisy, Tennessee.

5. He has attended church youth camps. He also participated in a Chattanooga "Step-Up" program the summer before his senior year, which allows upcoming seniors to work internships with businesses throughout the Chattanooga community. Many valuable contacts are made, and the students are afforded a nice wage. Reno possesses a tremendous work ethic and puts in many hours each week at Publix supermarket. He takes this on despite a heavy load of schoolwork and a busy personal schedule. He has earned several scholarship funds, enabling him to enroll with Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, Tennessee, which is widely recognized for its engineering programs.

6. Reno plans to study for a career in chemical engineering.

7. Favorite Scripture: Philippians 4:13.

Meaghann Joseph

2. Daughter of Brian and Angela Joseph; Granddaughter of Bill and Patty Bratt and Larry and (the late) Bobbie Joseph.

3. Dayton, Ohio

4. Meaghann graduated from Troy High School. She is the youngest in her graduating class!

She was on the Principal's List every year and had a 4.32 GPA. She also graduated fifth out of 315 students. She took advantage of the College Credit Plus Program and attended Sinclair Community College full time the last three years of high school. She was on the Dean's List and achieved her associate's degree in liberal arts graduating with honors three weeks before her high school graduation.

5. Hobbies/interests include: Dance for 13 years, music warehouse for four years, local summer theater program for nine years, concert and symphonic choir for six years. She performed in the pajama game and was Pepper in the production of Annie at the Troy Civic Community Theater. She was one of five students from the Troy City school district chosen to go to Italy and Spain. She has volunteered at a local soup kitchen, Camp Outreach, Young Women of Distinction, Kids Read Now, the Future Begins Today, and the Troy Strawberry Festival. And she has worked at her sister's daycare for three years. She has attended Camp Cotubic, Woodman and Winter camp and enjoys singing special music at church.

6. She will be attending Cedarville University in Cedarville, Ohio, pursuing her bachelor's degree in Biology. She is the recipient of the Cedarville Chancellor's Scholarship, the Troy Dollars for Scholars Scholarship and the Mary and Leon Brown and Frank and Sarah Montross Scholarship.

Shayli Kifer

2. Lisa and Shawn Kifer

3. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

4. Shayli received a literature award, earned first place at the science fair and was a senior Girl Scout. She earned 12 college credits in her senior year of high school.

5. Shayli loves gardening, hiking, traveling, camping and playing the piano. She enjoys attending camps every summer and singing in the choir.

6. She is planning on continuing to attend community college to receive an associates degree in business management and then take horticultural classes.

7. Favorite Scripture: Romans 13:12.



Brooke Allison Lovrien



Bryan A. McClain



Kailee McKeon



Kyleigh Moody

Brooke Allison Lovrien

2. George and Laura Lovrien
3. Medford, Oregon
4. After being homeschooled until 10th grade she attended Rogue Community College. Brooke graduated with honors from Baker Early College with her associate of arts degree.
5. Brooke enjoys snowboarding, playing guitar and reading. She attended Northwest, Hye Sierra, Winter and Northwest preteen camp both as a camper and as staff.
6. Brooke plans to attend Southern Oregon University this fall to pursue a bachelors in finance, after which she plans to attend Ambassador Bible College.

7. Favorite scripture: Revelation 21:4.
Favorite quotes: “The future doesn’t belong to the faint-hearted; it belongs to the brave”—Ronald Reagan.
“You can’t skip and be unhappy at the same time”—Pillow at Hobby Lobby.

Bryan A. McClain

2. Andy and Cynthia McClain
3. Indianapolis, Indiana
4. Bryan was part of the top 30 in the class. Member of several honor societies, including National Honor Society, National Technical Honor Society, and Sociedad Honoraria Hispánica. He won first place in visual basic programming and Java programming competitions for Business Professionals of America (BPA) State Leadership Conference. Bryan was a member of Pike High School’s tech support team (called Red Devil Reboot). He was also lead programmer for the Pike High School official GPA calculator. He is currently working as a software developer for Time Compression Strategies and is part of Cisco Certified Entry Network Technician (CCENT).
5. He is interested in computer programming, mathematics (especially calculus), chemistry and electrical and computer engineering. His hobbies include swimming, hiking, spending time outdoors, playing board games with family (especially Monopoly), designing and building machines out of Legos and collecting playing cards. His unusual skills include: cross-stitch, playing piano and violin, and he can solve a Rubik’s Cube



Arianna Payne

(and several other types of twisty puzzles). Church activities include: setup and takedown crew, door greeting—people in his congregation expect their hugs every week—and the church choir.
6. His plans after graduation are to attend Purdue College of Science at IUPUI for a dual major in computer science and mathematics.
7. Favorite Scripture: Ecclesiastes 12:1.

Kailee McKeon

2. Scott and Carrie McKeon
3. Phoenix, Arizona
4. Kailee is graduating from Cactus Shadows High School with a 4.24 GPA while completing 32 college credit hours in the early college program. Kailee lettered in swim all four years and was co-swim-captain her senior year. She also played tennis freshman and senior year. Kailee enjoyed working with special needs students in adaptive dance class, and participated in speaking mechanics club at church. She will be a lifeguard and teach swim lessons this summer.
5. Kailee loves to travel and enjoys the friendships she has made at Hye Sierra and the Northwest camps. She will be working on kayaking staff at Hye Sierra this year and enjoying her final year as a camper at Northwest. Kailee enjoys cooking and keeps the family fed with her unique, healthy creations.
6. In the fall Kailee will start a nursing program at Grand Canyon University, where she was awarded President’s and Honors scholarships.



Jesse Jane Scrivner

7. Favorite Scripture: Proverbs 31:25.
Kyleigh Moody
2. Jim Moody
3. East Texas (Big Sandy)
4. Kyleigh is graduating fourth in her class with a 3.9 GPA from Big Sandy High School. She is currently employed as an office cashier at Brookshires Grocery Company.
5. She loves serving at the preteen camp Piney Woods every year and serving the youth of the congregation. She also loves traveling.
6. Kyleigh will be attending Tyler Junior College with a Presidential Honors Scholarship and earning an associates of business with a minor in foreign language. She then plans to earn her bachelor’s in international business from UT Austin.
7. Favorite chapter: Ecclesiastes 3.

Arianna Payne

2. Angela Payne (grandmother)
3. Queens, New York
4. Arianna attended S.T.A.R. Early College High School.
5. An interesting fact about Arianna is that she is left handed. Church activities she is involved in: she participates in monthly youth days with singing, scripture readings and Compass Check commentaries.
6. Arianna plans to attend college to study English. She would like to become an English teacher in the near future.
7. Favorite Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:3-4.



Shelby Scrivner

Jesse Jane Scrivner
2. Jerry and Jana Scrivner
3. London, Kentucky
4. Jesse graduated from Lexington Christian Academy.
5. Jesse has participated in women’s choir and chamber choir during all of high school and has played guitar for over six years. She recently went on a choir tour to New York City and sang at Carnegie Hall. She was also admitted into the Kentucky All-State Choir in February of this year. In May, she received the Outstanding High School Choral Student Award from the Lexington Singers. She also loves to write poetry.
6. She will be attending Asbury University and majoring in English education. She hopes to become a high school English teacher. She also wishes to travel the world and become more knowledgeable of different cultures.
7. Favorite Scripture: Proverbs 4:23

Shelby Scrivner

2. Jerry and Jana Scrivner
3. London, Kentucky
4. Shelby graduated from Lexington Christian Academy.
She loves horseback riding (her horse’s name is Mia) and she has played violin for six years. She also participated in choir and orchestra in high school.
6. She plans to attend Asbury University to major in equine studies. Her job goal is to become an equine physical therapist.



Katie Spain



Brian Christopher Styer



Jacob Samuel Sutherland



Abigail Thouvenin



Daniel Tulbure



Jared Weingartz

Katie Spain
2. Bob and Sheila Spain
3. Southern Minnesota
4. Katie graduated from Alden Conger High School.
5. She works at Gopher Stop in Clarks Grove, Minnesota.
6. Her plans are to keep working for some time, then attend a vocational school.

Brian Christopher Styer
2. Brian is the youngest son of Tony and Loni Styer.
3. Nashville, Tennessee
4. Brian is graduating from Heritage Covenant School with honors. Through his high school years, he’s been active in Boy Scouts, the Knights Chess Club, Spanish Club, Creative Writing Group, speech, Drama Club, homeschool teen social group, and has been a member of the Dickson Homeschool Co-op Group since he was 1. He played on the Homeschool Bowling League for two years, receiving first place in 2014 and second place in 2015. He also played on the West Academy tennis team for two years where he was awarded first place in boys doubles in 2016. He worked full time through his junior year and has dual enrolled his senior year at Nashville State Community College while working part-time.
5. Brian traveled to all 50 states by the time he was 13 years old and has been to 21 different countries. A few high-

lights in his high school years has been his week-long backcountry backpacking trip in Yosemite National Park in California with his dad; church camps in Ohio, California, Wisconsin; traveling to Athens, Greece, for his senior trip and buying his first car!
6. His plans are to attend two years at NSCC then transfer to Tennessee Tech in Cookeville to study chemical engineering.
7. Favorite Scripture: Ecclesiastes 9:10
Favorite quote: “Even the smallest person can change the course of the future”—J.R.R. Tolkien.

Jacob Samuel Sutherland
2. Jacob and Sandra Sutherland
3. Worcester, Massachusetts
4. Samuel graduated from Bancroft School.
5. Sam is an artist, be it through painting, sculpture or his approach to everyday life, and has won his school’s art award. He has been on the honor roll all four years of high school. Additionally, he enjoys singing in the local church choir. In his spare time, he obsesses a little too much over the latest Star Wars news, plays games, watches movies and all the rest of the basics. His favorite church memories come from his experiences over the years at Camp Cotubic.
6. He will attend Amherst College in the fall.
7. Favorite quote: “I wish none of this had happened.” ‘So do all who live to see

such times, but that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us.”—J.R.R. Tolkien.

Abigail Thouvenin
2. Scott and Sherry Thouvenin
3. Cambridge, Ohio
4. Throughout her homeschooling years Abigail has contributed to various community activities including Voices of Hope Youth Choir, leading tours as a costumed demonstrator at Ohio Historical Society’s Schoenbrunn Village, and playing piano at a local assisted living center. She has been part of the Columbus Teen Speech Club for six years. Abigail has danced ballet, pointe, lyrical and tap with various studios as well as Dance Days at the University of Akron. She also trained to teach ballet to beginning students. Other hobbies Abigail enjoys are spray paint art and various sports, especially tether ball. During her junior and senior years, Abigail participated in Ohio’s dual credit CCP program graduating high school with 28 college credit hours from Kent State University Stark with a 4.0 GPA.
5. Abigail’s favorite church activities and memories include the Feast of Tabernacles, UYC and her congregation’s game night socials.
6. Abigail has been awarded the Stark Honors Scholarship at Kent State University Stark. She currently plans to major in mathematics and finance.
7. Favorite Quote: “Be a fountain, not a drain.”
Favorite Scripture: Romans 8:18.

Daniel Tulbure
2. Cristina Tulbure
3. Knoxville, Tennessee
4. He went to Knox Central High School, played French horn throughout high school and managed to perform in the top ESTBOA band in 9th and 10th grade; and top symphonic orchestra in the 11th and 12th grade years. He was on the robotics team his senior year. He likes physical exercise that involves lifting heavy weights like Daniel Klett and

workout in general.
5. He is fully Romanian but can hardly speak the romance language.
6. He plans to attend Pellissippi State for two years, then continue his education at the University of Tennessee (Knoxville) and get a bachelor’s degree in computer science.
7. Favorite Scripture: Matthew 5:3-12

Jared Weingartz
2. Ken and Cheri Weingartz (parents), Jacob (brother)
3. Flint, Michigan
4. Attended Marysville High School and also St. Clair County Technical Center for IT (information technology). Member of the National Honor Society and National Technical Honor Society. Received the Marysville Scholar Award four years for 3.5 GPA or higher. Macomb Area Conference All-Academic Team 2015. Marysville High School Freshman Award in Boys Baseball 2015. Certificate of academic excellence from SCC Tec Center. Certificates and trophy for piano (played eight years). Achieved CompTia A+ Certification, Testout PC Pro Certification, Microsoft Office specialist in Word and Excel.
5. Jared worked on an Alpaca Farm during high school. He played baseball his whole life and still plays on a softball league with his dad. Jared is also a coach on the Challenger Division Baseball League for kids with special needs. His brother, Jacob, has Down Syndrome, and Jared is very involved in many activities that promote inclusion of kids with special needs. He also loves computer games and snowboarding. Jared is a member of the UCG teen speech club and enjoys going to Camp Cotubic every year. His favorite Feast site is Panama City Beach, Florida.
6. Jared will be attending Kettering University in Flint, Michigan, for computer engineering. He has also accepted a co-op at Bosch Corp in Plymouth, Michigan.
7. Favorite Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:7.

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Announcements



Bill and Donna Cagle

50th Wedding Anniversary



Martha Florine Criswell

June 10, 1923-April 29, 2018



Sue A. Keenan

Nov. 27, 1949-Sept. 14, 2017



Samuel Ezra Morden

Jan. 5, 1939-Dec. 22, 2017



Sarah Hofer

Aug. 21, 1938-June 5, 2018



Warren "Bud" Leland Larson

Sept. 16, 1948-April 14, 2018

Anniversaries

Bill and Donna Cagle

Bill and Donna Cagle's 50th wedding anniversary was celebrated by the Tulsa congregation at a reception following Sabbath services on April 14, 2018. Mr. and Mrs. Cagle, along with friends, family and brethren, celebrated 50 years of marriage with cake, punch, snacks and coffee. They were later presented with a photo book commemorating the reception.

Bill and Donna met in Sunday school in 1966 shortly after he accepted a job with Pan America Oil Company (AMOCO). They were married at Asbury Methodist Church in Lafayette, Louisiana, on April 13, 1968. They moved to Tulsa for one year in 1969, and their daughter Amy was born. Bill was baptized in January 1969 and Donna was baptized in November 1969. They then moved to Lake Charles, Louisiana, for four years and had their son, David. They moved back to Tulsa in 1974 and later had their third child, Mark. Amy is married to Bill Babcock, and they have two children, Olivia and Joshua. David married Kristin

and they have two children, Will and Gracie. Mark married Jill, and they have two children, Conner and Morgan. Bill was ordained a deacon in 1985 and an elder on Pentecost in 1990.

Congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Cagle for their wonderful example to all of us.

Obitaries

Martha Florine Criswell

Martha Florine Criswell, 94, passed away on Sunday, April 29, 2018. She was born in Rising Fawn, Georgia, on June 10, 1923.

She was named Martha after her father's sister and Florine after her mother's best friend. Florine was the youngest of three siblings.

When she was 18, she met Kenneth Lee Criswell, who was a soldier at the time, while on a boat ride with her cousins. He then asked for her address, and she received a letter from him a few days later, asking if he could come visit her and her family in his time off from the army. Her parents said that it was fine, so he stayed with them for three days and continued to visit on his breaks, until they were married on Dec. 20, 1942, when Florine was just 19.

She was a member of the Munster, Indiana, United Church of God congregation. She was very active in her congregation and a deaconess. After listening to Herbert Armstrong on the radio and subscribing to the *Plain Truth* magazine for several years, Florine and her husband called a local minister who came to visit them. They both came into the church around 1958,

and were both baptized soon after.

Florine was blessed with four children, 11 grandchildren, and 30 great-grandchildren. She has sewn at least one quilt for each of them and, in all her years of generously giving her handmade quilts to friends and family, she has only kept a single quilt for herself.

Preceded in death by her loving husband, Ken; son, Kenny (Margie); daughter, Sue (Conrad) Keenan; grandsons Lucas Wagman and Jeremy Criswell; granddaughters, Angel Criswell and Carly Wagman. Florine is survived by her loving son, Frank (Kathy); daughter, Linda Wagman (James); many beloved grandchildren, great-grandchildren, other loving family members and precious friends.

She will always be remembered as Grandma Pie for her award-winning pies at the Lake County Fair.

Grandma Pie will be dearly missed by her loving family and precious friends.

Sarah Hofer

Sarah Hofer was born Aug. 21, 1938, and died June 5, 2018, at the age of 79. She was a member of the Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada congregation. She is survived by her husband, David Z. Hofer of Winnipeg, and her children, David Jr., William, Isaac, Mark and Sharyn; and grandchildren Matthew, Riley, Carly, Quin and Colten. Funeral services were held in Winnipeg on June 9, 2018, conducted by her pastor, Herb Teitgen.

Sue A. Keenan

Sue A. Keenan, 67, of Merrillville, Indiana, passed away Sept. 14, 2017. She was born on Nov. 27, 1949.

She is survived by her husband of 45 years, Conrad, and five daughters. Rebecca Keenan, Carey (Nic) Rowell, Melanie (Rod) MacKenzie, Emily (Derek) Sander-son and Molly Keenan. She was a loving grandmother of nine.

Sue was active in the Munster, Indiana, congregation. She loved playing buncos with some of the ladies from church. She also made it a point to volunteer with the youth as she was able. She volunteered at basketball games back in Worldwide and

volunteered at UYC Winter Camp for several years when her younger daughters attended as campers.

Sue worked for the school in the city of Hammond, Indiana, for many years. She had an award-winning smile that brought joy to coworkers early in the morning. Throughout the years she dealt with many health issues but continued to keep her positive attitude regardless of her trials.

Warren "Bud" Leland Larson

Warren "Bud" Leland Larson passed away suddenly on April 14, 2018, from a heart attack. Warren was raised on a dairy farm in Lakewood, Washington, where he attended Lakewood school and then Arlington High School, graduating in 1966.

He attended the University of Washington, graduating with a B.A. in 1970. He married his high school sweetheart Hazel Valliant on March 21, 1970. After graduation, he joined the Air Force and served for four years before returning to the Pacific Northwest. He operated his own business, Brite-way Window Service, for 42 years. He was long time member and elder of the United Church of God, where he served as pastor in Sedro-Woolley, Washington, for three years.

Warren and his wife loved to travel and spend time with their children and grandchildren and dear friends. He was preceded in death by his father, Leland Larson, brother Daryl Lee Larson and niece Jessica Larson. He is survived by his mother, Shirley Larson, brother Curt Larson (Kathy), daughter Rachel Hamilton (Vic), sons Kelly Larson (Ashley), Craig Larson (Patti), and three grandchildren: Kiersten, Briana and Tristan, as well as many cousins, nieces, nephews and extended Church family, whom he loved very much.

Samuel Ezra Morden

Sam Morden, beloved husband, father and faithful servant, fell asleep in the comfort of his home with his wife, Gladys Morden, by his side Dec. 22, of cancer.

He is survived by his daughters, Lori (Vaughn Woodfield, four boys); Wendi

Please see page 14

Announcements: Send us announcements from your local congregation! Have your pastor review what you write, and send it in to UN@ucg.org. We're looking for 100- to 300-word articles and photos with captions. Please double-check the spelling of names, and include the author's and photographer's names. **E-mail is preferred**, but we will also take physical mail as well! Please include a self-addressed envelope if you'd like photos returned.

Announcements



John Robert Ragland

Jan. 21, 1951-March 29, 2018

continued from previous page

Sanchez (two girls); Sami (Robert Gibbs, two children); Christi Herd (two children); step-children Patti, Don, Ed, Dick, (Bill preceded in death 2004); Cody Gustin (Jennifer, four children).

Sam was born in Spearfish, South Dakota, and grew up in Wenatchee, Washington. He was sixth of nine children and the only one called into the Church. One of Sam's memorable moments was when his older brother, who was estranged from him for most of his adult life, called Sam and asked Sam to be by his side as he was dying. He asked Sam to tell him about God, and they reconciled. Sam's faith in God deepened from this experience. Sam would then be by the side of more siblings and friends in their last days, sharing the hope and plan of God's resurrection for all mankind. Another memorable moment for Sam was assisting Dennis Luker in the baptism of his daughter, Christi Morden (Herd).

Sam was baptized in the Church in 1969 in Seattle, Washington. There he served the members in various ways. He enjoyed giving the elderly brethren rides to church and to the Feast. Transferring up to Sedro-Woolley, Washington, in 1974. He was ordained a deacon, and over the years he was involved in a variety of church duties and activities.

The Church was Sam's family. He loved the brethren, and deep bonds of friendship were created. His walk with God showed in his loving nature, his unconditional service to anyone, anytime, for anything. His profession was a master electrician. He would donate his time and labor for the members, never complaining in all his 45-plus years of service, showing his girls a positive attitude, hard work and loving care for fellow members. Sam would take his four girls to church each week and afterwards visit the shut-ins and the elderly. Sam was a kid at heart and loved serving the youth, coaching the teens in basketball and volleyball. He loved participating in fundraisers, being a driver for the road trips, shuttling the teens to activities, being a friend and mentor to them. Even now all grown up, they share their stories and appreciation for Sam's support and service.

In May 2010 Sam and Gladys moved to



Joseph Semancik

April 19, 2018

Kendrick, Idaho, attending services in the Lewiston, Idaho, church area. God's country is what he called it. He bought 10 acres with a new house already built on it. He lived out his life in the most rewarding way, renewing his walk with God, basking in the sun as he looked over the valley and listening daily to multiple sermons, preparing for the Kingdom of God. His quote: "God's got this from the beginning to the end, God's got this." He has finished his race.

Gladys was caring on their walk, living in the home with God by her side, and is looking forward to winning her race!

John Robert Ragland

John Robert Ragland, 67, of Miamisburg, Ohio, passed March 29, 2018, at a Tifton, Georgia, hospital, succumbing to complications after emergency surgery while traveling back to Ohio after wintering in Florida.

John was preceded in death by his parents, Ray and Virginia (Emory) Ragland and son Josh Ragland.

He is survived by his wife of over 30 years, Mary Ann; two daughters, Penny (Philip) Butler, of Miamisburg, Ohio; Kathy (Bryan) Buhrts of Grove City, Ohio; son James (Susie) Ragland, of Loveland, Ohio; grandchildren; great-grandchildren; brother Tom (Karen) Ragland, of Crossville, Tennessee; and sister Rosemary (Peter) Rosenberg, of Wooster, Ohio.

John was a tool maker and a 37-year retiree of Honeywell-Grimes. His favorite activities included hunting, the Cincinnati Reds and spending time with his grandchildren and great grandchildren.

He started attending church with his parents at the age of 13. He was a active member of the United Church of God of Dayton for over 50 years.

John will be remembered for his friendly, warm personality to everyone he met.

Joseph Semancik

Joseph Semancik, age 65, died on Thursday, April 19, 2018, from the relentless effects of ALS. Joseph was born in New Jersey, the only child of older parents. He was called at an early age and began attending Ambassador College in Pasadena, Califor-



Catherine Sue (Berendt) Ward

Jan. 14, 1964-March 6, 2018

nia, in 1970, graduating in 1974. Joe was a computer programmer and was employed by the Church for a number of years in Pasadena before moving to the Seattle area in 1980, where he worked for several large corporations, programing IBM mainframe computers.

Joe loved to explore the world, and he traveled extensively in the U.S., and to many international Feast sites. Along his journeys he met many acquaintances among Church members over the years. Behind the scenes, Joe was quietly generous, helping many people and volunteering in many worthy causes. He was especially passionate about volunteering to help wounded birds of prey to be restored to health, volunteering in facilities in Arizona, Washington and Alaska.

On a personal note, from Roc Corbett, Joe's closest friend and last pastor: "Joe had no remaining living relatives, but God placed him in our family as a friend and brother for 48 years. It was a blessing to live close to him these last, nearly three, years to help see him through this trial. Accepting God's will in his life, Joe never complained about having ALS."

For 32 months Joe was blessed with some of the best care available in the Puget Sound area for ALS patients. The example he set resulted in several of his doctors and nurses becoming his friends, and some of his medical team made personal visits from Seattle to see him in Tacoma months after he was no longer in their care. Joe remained faithful over the years, enduring many difficult trials, but continuing to explore and travel as long as he was able. It seemed that as his body grew weaker toward the end, his faith grew stronger. It was inspiring to see how God was with him during the concluding part of his journey in this life.

Joe's ashes were scattered in a private ceremony in the beautiful waters of the San Juan Islands in Puget Sound. An informal "celebration of life" was planned at 1 p.m. on Sunday, May 27, 2018, at the Owen Beach Pavilion in Point Defiance Park in Tacoma, Washington.

Catherine Sue (nee Berendt) Ward

Wayne Ward, the Berendt family, and the

entire Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, congregation, are mourning the loss of a loved one. Beloved wife of Wayne, daughter of Robert (Val) Berendt, sister of Rick, Dan and Carrie, and a deaconess in the Edmonton church, Cathy Ward died peacefully at home on March 6, 2018, surrounded by love after a brave battle with cancer.

Cathy's childhood was a ministerial family adventure, traveling much of North America. When Cathy's father Robert Berendt was called to Ambassador College and entered the ministry soon after Cathy's birth, the family was on the move. This meant fun and also personal sacrifice for Cathy—moving schools and even giving up her bedroom for ministerial trainees!

Cathy exemplified grace, humility, goodness and service to us all. With degrees in both education and drama, Cathy was a teacher with a passion for theater, stagecraft and lighting. Our congregation and Feast sites witnessed an amazing transformation when Cathy regularly contributed amazing and evolving festival stage designs for us in large venues like the community theater in Kelowna and the Canmore Theater. We witnessed Cathy's amazing Sabbath school play productions! The entire Esther story reenacted! An ingenious recreation of the parting of the Red Sea! Each Sabbath she chose a special new Scripture to print along with flowers for the speaker's area. The verse often reflected the message.

As a teenager, Cathy had lost her mother to cancer. Therefore being struck down by this disease was doubly disappointing for Cathy and all of us who wanted so badly to see her cured and healthy. We have all witnessed Cathy's amazing strength and courage during her fight. Quiet and uncomplaining, consciously choosing to remain active, working and hopeful to the very end, she refused to succumb to despair. Cathy's doctors marveled, seeing Cathy remain so dignified in dealing with what became an impossible situation. One observed that Cathy had a great faith, she obviously cared for us all very deeply, and it was clear from watching Wayne and the family around her that Cathy was incredibly loved. Cathy firmly and deliberately rejected false hope, doing whatever was humanly possible within medical scientific knowledge, while patiently, faithfully and persistently requesting God's miraculous intervention according to His perfect will. Without complaining, Cathy remained active, working and hopeful to the very end, a woman of great courage and faith.

Cathy's choice to live in hope set a magnificent example for us all, knowing in the depths of our sadness that ultimately we all cling to the same brilliant hope of the resurrection. Cathy has been buried beside her mother Joan, where they both share the same epitaph: "Resting in hope."

Cincinnati Women's Retreat

The Cincinnati East and Cincinnati North congregations combined forces to create a Women's Retreat for the members of the two church areas. The theme of the weekend was "Closely Knit Together."

The weekend started with a wine and cheese welcome social on Friday evening. Connie Sipes led a seminar focused on building relationships through hospitality. Mrs. Sipes shared tips for an elegant, no-fuss, budget-friendly evening that still gives you time to build bonds with guests. She demonstrated by cutting small bell peppers into flowers in just a few seconds and showed how to make a delicious dip to place on top of sliced cucumber. After the seminar, the women enjoyed dessert and fellowship.

Sabbath morning began with two seminars by Kathe Myers. The first session was an important discussion on the meaning of modesty. She explained that modesty is more than hemlines and necklines—it's about having a humble estimate of one's importance and consideration for others. Everyone enjoyed a lighthearted video, which highlighted some modesty challenges. The second workshop tackled the tough question of how to help a fellow church member who has strayed from God's way. Various scenarios were discussed in small groups to explore biblical strategies to "turn a sinner from the error

of his way..." (James 5:19-20). After a delicious lunch, Sabbath services included two sermonettes given by ministerial trainees Steven Britt and Joshua Creech. Mr. Britt spoke about joy and how we can find joy together and be unified as one body. Mr. Creech encouraged the attendees to properly love others by loving themselves and allowing God's love to pour out to others. The pastor of both congregations, Steve Myers, gave the sermon. Mr. Myers focused on how we can build each other up through encouragement. By submitting ourselves to God through His Spirit, we can be knit together in love and allow biblical encouragement to lead to unity.

After services, the ladies enjoyed a popcorn bar and a guided Sabbath walk. Each group was led through the beautiful grounds of the community center. The groups had questions to consider and discuss about how to become more unified and hospitable. There were also fun activities to help us get to know each other and learn how to recognize and stop gossip. After the walk, the ladies enjoyed a meal and fellowship.

Finally, there were two seminars focused on friendship. Katie-Jo Dacey and Katie Gatlin gave the first seminar discussing the difficulties of rooming with your best friend as well as tips to be a better friend. Then Debbie Kieviet spoke on the quali-



Some of the ladies who attended the weekend.

ties of a true and loyal friend with practical ways to encourage lifelong friendships.

After the Sabbath the ladies enjoyed cheesecake dessert, fellowship and games of Pictionary and trivia.

On Sunday morning Debbie McNeely spoke about building relationships through community service. She gave us examples of how to include young people to help build relationships across generations in our service. Next, the ladies took part in a profitable and enjoyable service

project making homemade lap blankets. The blankets were presented as gifts to local widows and shut-ins.

After lunch, the weekend's coordinator, Lizzy Creech, gave a wrap-up talk summarizing the outcomes of the retreat. Many individuals volunteered their time and effort to create this successful event. It was a wonderful opportunity for the ladies to learn many ways to become more closely knit together.

Linda Merrick and Kathe Myers

Troyer's Hollow Campout



The North Canton and Cambridge congregations once again hosted the Troyer's Hollow Campout the weekend of June 22-24.

The weekend was slightly altered due to a severe deluge of rainfall on Friday, so only one person camped the first night. We were blessed to still be able to hold Sabbath services in the beautiful and peaceful hollow with a creek running through it, along with having a potluck, seminars and popcorn by the fire in the afternoon. Despite occasional downpours, the theme of "How True Christians Relate to Authority—in the World and in the Church" was a great learning opportu-

nity, along with fellowship. We were able move across the creek Sabbath evening for more people to camp and fellowship around the fire.

The next morning, we enjoyed the provided breakfast and additional messages related to the theme. The messages were well presented and covered many aspects of both being under and in authority now and in the future. Despite the rain and smaller numbers, it was a blessing to be part of the weekend, and we hope to see some of you next year—the schedule is set for June 21-23, 2019.

Mary Miller

Journey of a Dancer

Alexander Schweitzer lives with his grandparents, Jim and Shirley Buckmaster and attends the Wisconsin Dells congregation.

Seven years ago no one knew what would result from the innocent question posed by eight-year-old Alexander when he asked his grandmother, "Can I do that?" Alex was observing a PBS television program featuring ballroom dancing by a group of 12 and 13 year olds when he formed that significant question.

His grandmother, Shirley, researched the area for local schools that taught ballroom dancing. She finally located Fusion Dance Academy in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, whose owner, Tina Freitag, had a passion for teaching ballroom dancing to kids.

Alexander, now a sophomore at Waunakee High School, has progressed steadily through the years, winning numerous blue ribbons, trophies and medals at the annual Wisconsin DanceSport Championships, held at the historic Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee.

On Sunday, April 29, Alexander fought through the residual effects of a concussion suffered a few weeks earlier (that has severely limited his physical activities) to compete in the highest amateur class of ballroom dancing: Open Gold. Alex and his partner, Tina, performed the Waltz, Tango, Foxtrot and Viennese Waltz. This was followed immediately



Photos by Linda Merrick

a "Smooth Multi-Dance Event Pro/Am Open Smooth DanceSport Series", which combined all four of those dances into one long dance. This gave the judges the opportunity to view the dance skills of all the competitors over a prolonged period.

When the dust settled on this year's marathon dance competition, Alexander and Tina emerged as the first place winners in the four separate dance categories as well earning the Gold Medal in the Multi Dance Pro/Am event. Alexander's comment when asked about his interest in ballroom dancing was, "I'm happy when I'm dancing!"

He enjoys history, camping, shooting, bicycling and attending the UCG teen camps. Alex has also served as an assistant counselor at Ironwood and Seven Mountains pre-teen camps. He is looking forward to attending Pinecrest and Camp Northwest this summer.

Jim Buckmaster

2018 General Conference of Elders Annual Meetings

by Linda Merrick

The evening of May 5 started off the weekend of the 2018 meeting of the General Conference of Elders, with international meetings in the morning and afternoon. Later in the evening a reception was held to welcome all elders.

The Sabbath started off with a Bible study by Rex Sexton titled “The Greek Manuscripts of the New Testament.” Following the Bible study were three tours of the home office. Many were interested in seeing the progress of the new Beyond Today recording studio. In the afternoon Sabbath services started at 2 p.m., with split sermons given by president Victor Kubik first and chairman Donald Ward second.

Mr. Kubik’s sermon focused on the theme of the weekend, “Iron That Sharpens Iron,” while Dr. Ward’s sermon was titled “Pillars and Anchors of Life.” He posed the question we must ask ourselves, “Am I a pillar?” We must remember we are personally accountable to Jesus Christ.

After services there was plenty of time to fellowship and then have a group dinner with more fellowship. During dinner there were welcome comments by Dr. Ward, with a ceremony recognizing ministers and employees who have worked for mile-marker years, such as 10, 25, 50 years, etc. as well as those retiring. Later in the evening a question-and-answer session was held by the Council of Elders and administration.

Annual Meeting Held on Sunday

On Sunday morning Dr. Ward called the main meeting to order at 9 a.m. Last year’s minutes were approved with balloting for new Council members, and other business was led by Gerald Seelig, GCE secretary. Then the meeting went to the president’s address by Victor Kubik. He once again focused on the theme of the GCE: “Iron That Sharpens Iron.” Mr. Kubik touched on the Strategic Plan, Operation Plan and Budget document for this upcoming year. In reference to the the lower Beyond Today magazine numbers, he focused on that we need to sow the seed and then hopefully reap the harvest.

Another important topic is the member-to-pastor ratio. There has been a lot of work going into pastoral development for those who are new in the ministry. We pray that God’s will be done and that the direction we are headed in the Church is the direction He desires for us. Mr. Kubik has put ministerial training as the top of his goals because he believes this is the direction God is leading us as a Church.

Dr. Donald Ward, chairman, then gave his address. He addressed Christian orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is the main concern of theologians, scholars and clergy. The problem here is that those who profess orthodoxy always return to trinitar-

ian theology and the idea that today is the only day of salvation. These are the main aspects of traditional Christian theology. We know that God is not calling everyone to salvation at this time. The Church is maintaining this hope of the resurrection.

Dr. Ward presented the questions: Is the Holy Spirit teaching you? What does that question mean? He said that Jesus tried to help his disciples to think first in spiritual terms, not physical. The Holy Spirit reveals truths about God and what God wants us to know as we accomplish His will. One important way on how the Spirit leads us is through reading and studying of the Scripture.

Rick Shabi shared his report next. He went through the yearly audit. Another point mentioned was the fund for the video recording studio. It stands at \$870,000, with projected construction and outfitting costs at \$950,000. As a church we’re in a good financial position overall as we are heavy on assets and short on liabilities. We must keep in mind that we are in a vibrant but uncertain economy. Things can change rapidly. We also have an aging ministry and membership which can affect the future revenue streams. We also face constant rising expenses. Mr. Shabi then thanked the Financial Services staff before providing salary ranges and other technical aspects of Financial Services information.

Next report was from Peter Eddington, Media and Communication Services Operation Manager. He talked about the new studio and how it is nearing completion and will be done this summer. He also talked about what the new studio could be used for, such as dailies, four-minute short films, the 20-30 minute main program and how they are experimenting with 50-minute religious documentaries. The main focus is also on streaming video platforms such as YouTube. Mr. Eddington touched on the conclusion of the Beyond Today Live campaign in Southern California.

Next, Greg Thomas, pastor of Cleveland, Ohio, would take the stage to lead the GCE in a tribute to the past year’s deceased elders and wives.

After lunch there were International reports presented by Marcos Rosales of the Netherlands, David Dobson, senior pastor for the Philippines, Carmelo Anastasi, pastor and administrator of the Church in Italy, Roy Demont, senior pastor in South Africa, and Doug Gray of Australia.

Monday Seminars

Monday started off with a Women’s session that was preceded by a breakfast for the women to spend some time together. The roundtable discussions were moderated by Bev Kubik and Lisa Fenchel. There were two presenters, Dr. Kayleen Schreiber and Pam Kuver who focused on the topic “Connecting Across the Generations.”



Top: Victor Kubik and Dr. Donald Ward recognize Earl Roemer for 50 years of service in the ministry.

Right: Tim Pebworth gives a seminar on “Engaging Our Youth to Build Effective Relationships” with Ben Light.

Dr. Schreiber discussed how technology has crept into our lives and we have to be able to use it properly. We need to use discernment when it comes to our online presence on social media and how we can seek out a different viewpoint from our own. Pam Kuver discussed how we as humans have a need and desire to connect with others. We need to have a balance with connecting with others in both a digital and non-digital way.

Three different seminars were presented throughout the day. One was presented by Gary Petty titled “Dissatisfied With the Church.” He listed three negative elements that will cause or be hindered by dissatisfaction. He went into details on each and gave details on what to do if you become dissatisfied. Lastly he gave some positive dissatisfactions and how to use this in a good way to edify the Church.

Another seminar was given by Andy Lee titled “Living Spiritual Lives in a Material World.” He touched on topics of economic inequality supported by the parable of the talents in Matthew. He also talked about God-given talents that go beyond funds and how ministers can help encourage members to assess and utilize these talents. He also talked about encouraging others with money and helping them to prosper. His last point focused in on the use of gleaning and the godly use of money.

The last seminar was a roundtable discussion moderated by Brian Shaw. Topics were based around the theme “Iron That Sharpens Iron.” He talked about how iron is never metallic in its raw form and that it needs to be changed into the metal through a specific process. The questions in the first half were focused on this process of change. Change is never easy, but it doesn’t have to be painful. The second half of the session focused on the various techniques and methods of smelting and sharpening iron. The discussion at tables was focused on various ways elders can help sharpen each other and their congregations with a



Photos by Mitchell Moss

focus on growing and building character through spiritual guidance.

After the seminars the GCE ended with a hymn and a prayer. Overall, the conference was edifying and helped build each of these members in the Church through sharpening each other for the benefits of others.

Council of Elders seats:

Anthony Wasilkoff, international
Scott Ashley
Robert Dick
Len Martin

Voting

Approve the 2018-2019 Strategic Plan — Approved, 238 for; 12 against
Approve the 2018-2019 Operation Plan — Approved, 231 for; 19 against
Approve the 2018-2019 Budget — Approved, 228 for; 23 against
Approve adding Rule 5 Asset Protection to the Rules of Association — Approved, 224 for; 19 against

(This amendment assures that building and land assets are held in the name of UCG IA or an equivalent international associated body.)

Approve Procedure for Amending the Fundamental Beliefs — Approved, 192 for; 42 against

Approve amendment to Bylaw 8.4.1 Number of Council Members — Approved, 226 for; 14 against

(This amendment assures that, when a Council member is elected they retain their domestic or international status through the duration of their term, regardless of relocation or adjustment of duties.) **UN**

Our Need for Spiritual Oil

■ Sometimes we go along in life thinking we have a full lamp of oil when really, we are running dry.

by Lorelei Nettles

Sometimes we receive unexpected gifts. I received an oil lamp after a women's weekend and I was excited about it because it had multiple functions. It looked nice and made for a nice decorative item in my home. It reminded me of the event and the people I shared that time with. It also reminded me of the theme and the décor of the event. It was also a useful item I could fill with oil and easily light it if the power ever went out.

God's Holy Spirit is quite the same. When a Christian is called by God and baptized, he or she is excited to receive it as a gift from God. It is His helper working within us, and the Spirit does multiple things for us. It is a helper to us. It can help us learn, help us in decision making, focusing on what is good. It brings us joy, peace and so much more! It can also be easily "ignited" if we use it properly. We read about this kind of ignition in a big way. When the apostles were given the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost they suddenly began speaking in many different languages or tongues. It says tongues like flames of fire appeared over their heads (Acts 2:3). A very great visual of how the Spirit worked with them.

After filling my gifted lamp with oil, I set it on a shelf, ready to be used when

ever needed. I sometimes looked at it and was reminded of how people once lit their homes and how having such things in today's world can still be useful to us. We must sometimes fall back to what was once done when troublesome times come upon us, or when we choose to use them for some other reason, such as a lamp while camping.

The Holy Spirit is also something we can overlook. We enjoy knowing it is there in case we need it in times of trouble but do not always use it in our day-to-day lives. We save it, we admire it, we love knowing it is there to be used, but we ignore its usefulness in our daily lives. Occasionally we may "pull it out" and use it because we find it helpful or something is happening in our lives that reminds us we have it at all.

One day I thought about lighting my lamp to be sure it would work. Maybe I should make sure the wick was in good enough shape to light. Maybe the oil had not saturated the wick and I would need to do something else in an emergency. I had to be sure it would work in a pinch. But when I walked over to the lamp and lifted it from its place I noticed the oil had all evaporated. Not being an expert with oil lamps I was unaware this could happen. I assumed the oil would always be there when I needed it, but it was gone.



Photo by Erica Nilsson/Unsplash

We cannot overlook the Holy Spirit and let the flame go out. We must not let it dry up.

God gave us the gift of the Holy Spirit to help us. We grow in our Christianity by using it as God intended. We are lights to the world through its use, and we are strengthened by it as it helps light the narrow path we are to follow. It—like the lamp—is only useful when we use it, engage with it. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7, King James Version.)

The biblical parable of the 10 virgins is a good example. They all had lamps of oil. They all awaited the bridegroom. They all thought they were ready. Then at the last

moment, five found themselves unprepared. They had not taken care to fill their lamps. Their oil was low and they panicked (Matthew 25:1-13). We do not want to find ourselves in such a state when Christ returns. We need to keep the Spirit strong so we can overcome all the evil that faces us. The Holy Spirit helps us to stay positive, wise, and on the lighted path when everything around us is dark. In a letter to the Roman church, Paul wrote, "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13, emphasis added). [UN](#)

Seek First

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How many times have we been embroiled in conversations that disintegrated into conflict, confusion, and hurt feelings because our spouse, child, friend, or brother just didn't see things the same way we did? I'm not talking about straightforward biblical principles, but just everyday areas of life that include opinions, feelings, and ideas.

How many wives have said, "my husband just doesn't get it," and how many husbands have scratched their heads, saying, "I just don't understand what she is so upset about?" There's something missing in the communication between two parties when this happens, and it doesn't occur just between spouses, but can drive wedges between brothers, friends, coworkers, neighbors, nations, and kingdoms—and even between us and God.

1 John 4:19 tells us, "We love Him [God] because He first loved us" (emphasis added). Did you know that God also seeks first to "understand" us and to know us well?

Notice Psalm 139:1-3, "O LORD, You have searched me and known me. You

God and Jesus Christ love us, and they expect us to love each other as They love us. . . The key to that understanding is communication.

know my sitting down and my rising up; you understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways." God understands us—our strengths, our weaknesses, our thoughts, our desires. God and Jesus Christ love us, and they expect us to love each other as They love us. They understand us, too, and expect that we will get to know each other, and come to understand each other. The key to that understanding is communication.

Paul understood and applied the principle of "seek first to understand, then to be understood." As the apostle to the Gentiles, he eloquently stated his approach in working with people, "For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as

without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Corinthians 9:19-22).

In order to effectively work with the Gentile converts, Paul had to first understand them. That took time; that took effort; that took sacrifice on Paul's part; and that took *agape* love.

Over the years, I have had to remind myself of the concept of "seeking first to understand." When things go roughly at home or on the job, I am reminded to step back and try to understand what is going on. Often, I realize that I haven't been "seeking first to understand;" rather, I've been trying to be understood first.

How about you? Are things rough between you and your spouse, or you and your children? Are there conflicts between you and coworkers or your boss? Are there strained relationships with people in church? Do you just not "get" someone and it frustrates you every time you have to speak with them?

Then you might consider taking the time and giving the time, as a service, to sit down, communicate, listen and get to

know and understand the other party. We all have different backgrounds and experiences that frame our point of reference. We need to take the time to get to know each other. When we take the time, we can more fully come to the point of understanding and loving one another, as Christ's will is for us.

When we communicate, get to know, understand, and appreciate each other, we will see how God provides for His Church, "from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:16).

God knows us and has put us where He wants us to be. He has provided, and will continue to provide what we need. Take the time to get to know each other fully, and appreciate who God has called to His table. Remember, God is getting to know us, too, by how well we learn to work with, appreciate, come to understand—and love one another.

If we actively "seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," and "seek first to understand, *then* to be understood" we will be going a long way in doing God's will for us. [UN](#)

Saul, the Ethiopian or Timothy?

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of God’s family is valid and real. It might not be as dramatic as some accounts they have heard, but the same purpose is being carried out.

The Calling of Saul

When he was about age 30 and very zealous for the religion of the Pharisees, a man named Saul left Jerusalem for Damascus with authority to arrest members of a new religion who were following the teachings of a man named Jesus, who had been crucified by the Romans a few years earlier. The book of Acts gives us the account:

“Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, “‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?’ And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ So he, trembling and astonished, said, ‘Lord, what do You want me to do?’ Then the Lord said to him, ‘Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do’” (Acts 9: 1-6).

Many of us are familiar with the rest of the story. Saul’s name was changed to Paul and he was used by God to write 14 books of the New Testament. He also established churches in the Greek-speaking part of the Roman Empire and carried God’s message about the Kingdom of God to the Roman rulers of his day.

Although “struck down” in a different way during the 1920s and early 1930s, Herbert Armstrong felt that he had been called by God in a similar fashion as Saul, and then brought into contact with a remnant of people clinging to truth.

In his autobiography, Mr. Armstrong recounts: “The opening of my eyes to the truth brought me to the crossroads of my life. To accept it meant to throw in my lot with a class of humble and unpretentious people . . . It meant the final crushing of vanity. It meant a total change of life . . . I had been beaten down. God had brought that about—though I didn’t realize it then” (Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong, Vol. 1, p. 311).

The Calling of the Ethiopian

Often when God is calling a person, he brings him into contact with a minister of the true Church. This was the case of the Ethiopian in Acts 8.

“So he arose and went. And behold,

a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go near and overtake this chariot.’ So Philip ran to him and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, ‘Do you understand what you are reading?’ And he said, ‘How can I, unless someone guides me?’ And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him” (Acts 8: 27-31). After Philip explained the scriptures to him, the Ethiopian was baptized.

A majority of those called between 1950 and 1990 were called as a result of coming into contact with the gospel message, whether in print, radio or television. Their stories are often fascinating to hear. (I met a man in England years ago who said he was sitting on a bench waiting for a train when another train went by. The wind blew a *Plain Truth* magazine onto the sidewalk right in front of him. He picked it up and later became a member of the Church.) Others first heard about the truth by contact with Church members. While there are still those being called in this way today, the numbers are smaller than what was experienced several decades ago.

The Response Is Key

No matter how a person begins to understand the truth, they must respond by recognizing it and wanting to learn more. They can only understand if their mind is open. Our calling is from the Father, as Jesus taught in John 6:44: “No man can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up the last day.” We cannot convince anyone to understand truth if their mind is closed (2 Corinthians 3:15).

When exposed to the message about the Kingdom of God, people today respond as they did when Paul was preaching in Athens: “And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, ‘We will hear you again on this matter.’ So Paul departed from among them. However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them” (Acts 17: 32-34).

The four types of soil mentioned in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3-9) are still with us. The most common is the “stony places” where the word is rejected. Our society is becoming more godless and immoral with each day, and knowledge of and interest in the Bible is in decline in the general population.

Secondly is the “shallow soil” where there is some interest but no real commitment or depth of understanding. Jesus described this as “having no root” or foundation. Perhaps this is partly the result of the “gospel message” being commonly taught today. Often it has been

watered down to a self-focused message of health and wealth or one of “experience” in place of obedience and repentance. People often show up at church to “evaluate” and see if we believe what they do, or they express enthusiasm and then disappear.

Thirdly, and most tragically, is the soil with choking weeds. These people are called by God and begin living the life of Christians. There is a time of growth and good progress, but then they become sidetracked and gradually fall away. Paul warned us about “neglecting salvation” and not “drifting away” (Hebrews 2:1-3). Jesus described the choking weeds as, “the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.” This serves as a constant warning to all who have responded to God’s calling and are striving to grow in grace and knowledge. We cannot forget that, in order to be with Jesus Christ on the Mount of Olives we must be “called, chosen, and faithful.”

Finally, there is fertile soil producing fruit. This requires a life of prayer, Bible study, using the Spirit of God to overcome and enduring to the end. We all want to follow the example of Paul as he told Timothy: “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing” (2 Timothy 4:7-8). What an incredible experience it will be to hear the words, “Well done you good and faithful servant” (Matthew 25:21).

The Calling of Timothy

The majority of those coming to repentance today are following the example of Timothy. The opening lines of the apostle Paul’s second letter to Timothy apply to so many young adults today. Paul is very

thankful for Timothy and the Bible teaching Timothy received from his mother and grandmother. Paul encourages Timothy to be a strong courageous leader, not in any way feeling inferior to others.

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, a beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God” (2 Timothy 1: 1-8).

These words should ring loud and clear to the youth of God’s Church today. Your calling from God the Father is every bit as valid and true as the calling of Saul, the Ethiopian, your parents, grandparents, or any pillar members of your congregation. You have the great advantage of learning the truth from an early age. If you follow and apply these words you have been taught then you can avoid many mistakes and scars in life. What a great blessing to be taught God’s truth by your parents and grandparents!

God has a vision for your life. He is calling you to be in His family forever and continue to build His Kingdom, which will never stop growing. As the speaker said, you have your story too. **UN**

Good Works

continued from page 1

And in those blessings were instructions for life: “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:14-16).

Since 2000, United Youth Corps has sent hundreds of volunteers all around the world to fulfill this admonition from Jesus Christ—to let our light shine before men. After collaborating on multiple projects it became evident that United Youth Corps and Good Works were fulfilling similar roles; they provided a means to serve our members and reach out in communities. So these two service arms have officially

joined forces: Good Works provides the funding that makes these projects possible, while United Youth Corps functions as the service arm, providing volunteers for various projects.

Both components are necessary for us to successfully serve God’s people and our communities. Money is needed to provide the necessary materials, and the volunteers are needed to complete the projects. We’re always looking for new projects (we have two deadlines for projects proposals—November 30 for our summer projects and May 31 for our winter projects), and we’re always looking for volunteers to staff our projects. You can keep up with the work we’re doing on our website (ucg.org/members/outreach/good-works) and on our Facebook page. If you have any questions or great ideas for a project contact Lena VanAusdle at Lena_VanAusdle@ucg.org. **UN**

Congratulations! Class of 2018

College/University



Monica Call

Monica Call

3. Portsmouth, Ohio

4. Monica graduated with a master's degree in criminal justice/legal studies from Grand Canyon University. She currently works as an adoption recruiter for the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, working with kids who are ready to be adopted.

5. She loves to travel and go on adventures to new places! She helps with Sabbath school in the local congregation and participates in the United Youth Corps program.

7. Favorite scripture: "But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered awhile, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you" (1 Peter 5:10).

Favorite motto: "Always keep hustling and never pass up."

Ariana Del Signore

3. While in school, she attended the Cambridge, Ohio, congregation.

4. Graduated from Muskingum University with a bachelors degree in English and minors in theater and history.

5. Ariana graduated Summa Cum Laude, with awards for excellence in literary pursuits and theater. Last summer, she was awarded a Muskie Research Fellowship to study trends and editorial methods of college literary publications and apply her findings to her position of senior editor of First Circle (Muskingum University's literary magazine) the following fall. In spring of 2018, Ariana was chosen to collaborate with a professor and deliver a speech to dean's list students and winners of academic achievement awards at a recognition ceremony. While in college, Ariana enjoyed tutoring English and writing, working at the registrar's office, involvement in various theater productions, running and hanging out with friends.

6. After graduation, Ariana plans to work for a year before going to grad



Ariana Del Signore

school to pursue a business degree.

7. Favorite Scripture: Jeremiah 29:11

Ben Emehiser

2. Jeff and Berenice Emehiser

3. Spokane, Washington

4. Ben is graduating from Eastern Washington University with a bachelor of science degree in mathematics.

5. Ben enjoys donating blood and recently became a gallon donor.

6. He has been accepted into the graduate program at the University of Idaho and will begin attending there later this year.

7. One of his favorite scriptures is Hebrews 1:1-2, and his favorite quote is "Facts don't care about your feelings."—Ben Shapiro.

Morgan Greene

3. Kingsport, Tennessee

4. Morgan graduated summa cum laude with a major in biology and minors in chemistry and mathematics from King University in Bristol, Tennessee. He was also a member of the cross country and track teams for four years and worked for the chemistry department for two years.

5. His interests are spending time with friends and family, serving as a counselor at camp, reading, traveling and running.

6. Plans after graduation: attending Ambassador Bible College and then attending DeBusk College of Medicine at Lincoln Memorial University.

7. Favorite Scripture: John 11:25-26

Favorite quote: "You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."—Augustine.

Katrina Hansen

2. Bruce and Linda Hansen

3. Salem, Oregon

4. Katrina graduated magna cum laude from Oregon State University on Dec. 8, 2017, with a B.S. in accountancy and a B.S. in business information systems.

6. Katrina is currently studying for cer-



Ben Emehiser



Katrina Hansen

tified public accountant exams and will begin working as a technology risk consultant for Deloitte this summer.

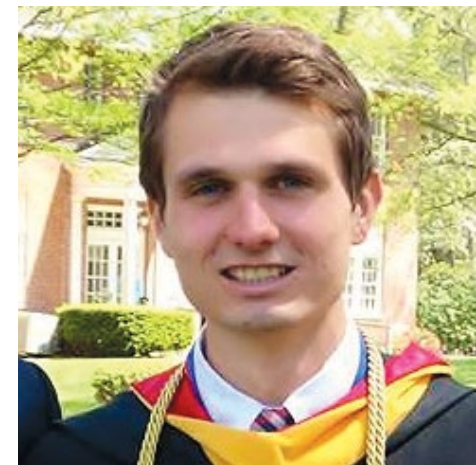
Caroline Irene Roybal

2. Hector and Sharon Roybal

3. Los Angeles, California

4. Caroline graduated from University of California, Irvine with a bachelor of arts in psychology and social behavior. She plans to work as a behavioral therapist at the Center for Autism and Related Disorders.

5. Her interests are: hiking; running; playing piano; journaling; all things lla-



Morgan Greene



Caroline Irene Roybal

mas; playing with her sister's dog, Mamba; traveling and hanging out with friends and family.

6. Pursue a career in social work for experience before attending grad school for a masters degree in marriage and family therapy and licensure for case management.

7. Favorite Scripture: "Look at the nations and watch—and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told" (Habakkuk 1:5 New International Version).

Favorite quote: Carpe Diem!



Paul and Dana Burnes

Paul and Dana Burnes Honored for Service

After services on the Sabbath of May 26, 2018, the Rome, Georgia, congregation recognized and honored Paul and Dana Burnes for serving as their interim pastor this past year.

On behalf of Mr. Kubik and the Church, the Burnes were presented with a card and gift card, along with a lovely hydrangea plant. Rick and Angela Beam now serve as pastor and wife in the area.



What's New In MEDIA?

BEYOND TODAY

Television Airing Schedule

Title	Host	Literature	Airing Period
<i>Dissatisfied with Church</i>	Gary Petty	<i>The Church Jesus Built</i>	July 1-7
<i>Remembering the Sabbath</i>	Darris McNeely	<i>Sunset to Sunset: God's Sabbath Rest</i>	July 8-14
<i>Shocking Teachings of Jesus: The Sabbath</i>	Steve Myers	<i>Jesus Christ: The Real Story</i>	July 15-21
<i>What Is the Abomination of Desolation?</i>	Gary Petty	<i>The Middle east in Bible Prophecy</i>	July 22-28
<i>When Nations Rise and Fall</i>	Darris McNeely	<i>You Can Understand Bible Prphecy</i>	July 29-Aug. 4

Job Opening - Media and Communications Services

Proofreader and Copy Editor

The United Church of God has announced an opening for a proofreader and copy editor.

This position entails the proofreading and editing of the Church's magazines, newspapers, newsletters, letters, blogs and other documents to detect and mark for correction any grammatical, typographical or compositional errors, and to ensure a consistency in the editorial style of the Church publications.

Essential duties and responsibilities include the following. Other duties may be assigned:

- Review magazine and newsletter articles and other publications as required, examining for grammar, spelling and clarity and modifying as needed.
- Review magazine and newsletter articles and other publications for compliance with Church policies, doctrine, orientations and sensitivities and recommend appropriate changes.
- Verify accuracy of quotations and scriptures, making changes as required.
- Verify facts and figures, including mathematical calculations included in charts, lists and reports.
- Suggest updates to the editorial stylebook utilized by editorial employees.

A bachelor's degree (B.A.) from a four-year college or university is required, plus one to two years related experience and/or training, or equivalent combination of education and experience. Expert familiarity with the Microsoft Office Suite is required, and familiarity with the Adobe Creative Suite (InDesign, Photoshop, Acrobat and Illustrator) is a plus.

Strong language, logic and communication skills, and algebra/geometry level math skills are required. Those applying for consideration and invited for an interview must supply a portfolio of their work.

Potential employees must be baptized members (in good standing) of the United Church of God. Applicants must be biblically literate and possess a thorough working knowledge of the doctrines, beliefs and practices of the United Church of God. This position requires the candidate to work at the Church's Cincinnati office.

For more information about the position, please contact human_resources@ucg.org.



UNITED NEWS

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 1-8: *Camp Pinecrest, Missouri*

July 1-8: *Camp Hye Sierra, California*

July 15-18: *Preteen Camp Ironwood, Minnesota*

July 15-18: *Northwest Preteen Camp, Oregon*

July18- 22: *Preteen Camp Ironwood, Canada*

July 22-29: *Northwest Camp, Oregon*

July 22-29: *Mexico Camp, Mexico*

July 29-Aug. 1: *Preteen Camp Buckeye, Ohio*

July 29-Aug. 1: *Preteen Camp Sevene Mountains, Pennsylvania*

July 29-Aug. 1: *Preteen Camp Germany, Germany*

July 29-Aug. 7: *Challenger West, Wyoming*

Aug. 5: *Leadership Workshop, Big Sandy, Texas*



FEAST OF Tabernacles

2018

FEAST REGISTRATION

www.ucg.org/members/feast