



# United Church of God

an International Association

## eNews from Ministerial and Member Services

Issue 341

September 6, 2018

### Personal From the President...

Dear fellow servants of God,

This past week has been dominated by the "Let This Mind Be In You" Leadership Workshop held August 31- September 3 at the home office. 36 people came from all over the United States, Canada and Sri Lanka for lectures and discussion. Our home office staff was thoroughly impressed by the spirit, dedication and commitment of these men and women--pillars who hold up and serve our congregations.



Darris McNeely discusses discipleship with the Leadership Workshop participants.

Over the past few years in our training of church leaders, we have focused on the meaning of *discipleship*. *Disciple* is mentioned 300 times in the Bible and identifies those who spend their lives apprenticed to Jesus Christ in a growing-learning relationship. It is the term most often used to describe those who follow Christ. A disciple is not only a learner in an academic setting of a schoolroom, but one who is at the work site of a craftsman, acquiring skills in faith. We are called upon to make disciples as part of our mission. But, in order to do that, we must first become disciples ourselves. Much of our workshop focused on this, as well as Philippians 2:5-7, which reads: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men."

I thank all those worked through this Labor Day with organization and presentations which featured Darris McNeely, Steve Myers, Chris Rowland, Peter Eddington, Greg Thomas and

Victor Kubik. A session for women was brought by Kathe Myers, Debbie McNeely, Lisa Fenchel and Beverly Kubik.



Victor Kubik discusses Christ-like service with the Leadership Workshop participants.

Here are a few comments from the exit survey written by the participants:

- "Our minister, who we respected, asked us to attend and we thought 'Why not? We'll learn something.' So we arrived with moderate expectations. We very quickly realized we were in for an incredibly inspirational and educational weekend. It honestly blew us away! We've accepted the challenge to go home and do good and serve effectively and figure out new ways to serve. I hope we can bring this energy home and ignite others as well. Thank you."
- "Very helpful presentations. Wish the workshop could go on for an entire week. Have learned many things that enable us to be better and more efficient servants when we get back to our local congregations. We are leaving here better equipped to help our spiritual family than we were when we arrived."
- "We are so thankful for this opportunity. Are very grateful for everything you have done. You have certainly made us feel very welcome. You have very much displayed a good example of humility."
- "I was humbled to be here among such a wonderful godly group. Thank you for taking the time to put on a well thought out workshop. We are grateful and pray that we can go out and put what we have learned and absorbed into our lives and our congregation. Thanks so much."
- "It has been an amazing opportunity to get to know others from various congregations all over. It is encouraging to see such humble people serving God's people all over."
- "We enjoyed all the presentations--they have given us a lot to apply in becoming better servants of God and His people."

### **Ambassador Bible College**

We really appreciate our ABC students with whom we mingle as much as we can. ABC is in its second week of classes and we've received good feedback about the content of the classes and overall spirit of the students.



Lisa Fenchel conducts a discussion about Career Education with the Ambassador Bible College students.

This week was highlighted by a Career Education module hosted by Andrew Lee, Lisa Fenchel, Michelle Hopkins, Nick Hollen and Troy Phelps.

### **Coworker and Donor Letter**

Keying off the start of the ABC academic year, I focused on studying and understanding the Bible in my letter to nearly 15,000 coworkers and donors this week. We're offering the booklet *How to Understand the Bible*.

### **Feast of Trumpets**

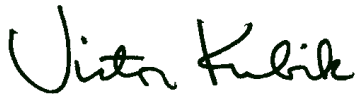
We wish you all a wonderful Feast of Trumpets that is suddenly here as the fall (autumn) Holy Days come earlier this year. Beverly and I will be driving to Windsor, Ontario, in Canada for the Feast of Trumpets. May we all rejoice and learn to fear our Eternal God always during this Festival season, starting with the Feast of Trumpets. I thank God for all the saints in the United Church of God and for what He is doing in their lives.

### **Media release outlines purpose of Feast**

To make available festival information to people who have little or no biblical background, the church prepares and makes available a general media release. Pew Research and other research organizations have found that a large percentage of the American and global populations are not familiar with traditional biblical phrases that church members would be intimately familiar with. Accordingly, this release is written in such a fashion that the content can be easily understood by a wide spectrum of the public, including members of the media who may not have a background in religious topics.

The following press release about the upcoming Feast of Tabernacles will be posted online at UCG.org and distributed to public contacts through both a media distribution service and by surface mail. The URL address can be shared by members on social media such as Facebook and Twitter. It is intended to be informational, and the online posts through the distribution service are search engine optimized (SEO) through key words and links (like to the Beyond Today web page) so the press release is discoverable online. Typically, several media websites pick up the release and include it (or a link) in their online coverage, and we occasionally may see it in print (many festival sites no longer have local print media in their area). The headline also appears before the Feast on the Reuters screen with the Church's logo in New York City's Times Square.

In Christ's service,



Victor Kubik

## **14,000 Gather to Celebrate Life's Dynamic Spiritual Focus, Church Follows Example of First Century Disciples**

*United Church of God members to assemble at more than 65 festival sites September 24 to October 1 to celebrate the coming Kingdom of God.*

CINCINNATI--Reflecting a dynamic life journey as spiritual pilgrims, about 14,000 members and families of the United Church of God, *an International Association*, will follow the historic example of Jesus Christ and the first century Church in celebrating the biblically prophesied Kingdom of God. This annual festival, called the Feast of Tabernacles in the Bible, begins on the evening of September 23 and lasts through sunset on Monday, October 1. According to Victor Kubik, Church president, United Church of God members will assemble at more than 65 sites worldwide to take part in a contemporary Christian application of the biblical ancient Hebrew Holy Days.

The festival season reflects the goal of a life-long spiritual journey of Christians, who are taught by Jesus from the Bible to "seek first the Kingdom of God" in the book of Matthew, chapter 6, verse 33. "Followers of Jesus are generally described in the Bible as *disciples*--committed people who spend their life apprenticed to learning the ways of Jesus Christ--and *pilgrims*--people who regard their current life on earth as temporary and one that represents a journey toward eternal life," explained Mr. Kubik.

"We read in the book of Hebrews that many disciples over the years died in the faith, but died confident of their eternal reward, recognizing that they were but 'strangers and pilgrims' on the earth," he continued, citing Hebrews in the New Testament, chapter 11 in verse 13. "The annual observance of the Festival of Tabernacles is rich with spiritual parallels as members journey to distant festival sites to reside in hotel rooms or camps as temporary dwellings."

Daily worship services (typically in the morning) present powerful sermons and Bible studies that magnify and explain these spiritual principles. The eight-day period also features many family activities and opportunities for fellowship, Mr. Kubik noted.

In the United States, members will gather at 18 sites: Anchorage, Alaska; Bend-Richmond, Oregon; Big Sandy, Texas; Branson, Missouri; Cincinnati, Ohio; Galveston, Texas; Glacier Country, Montana; Jekyll Island, Georgia; Lake George, New York; Oceanside, California; Panama City Beach, Florida; Phoenix, Arizona; Snowshoe, West Virginia; St. Petersburg, Florida; Steamboat Springs, Colorado; Tampa, Florida; Tucson, Arizona; Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin. The Church will also conduct the festival at five Canadian sites (Blainville, Quebec; Drumheller, Alberta; Midland, Ontario; Spencerville, Ontario; and Osoyoos Lake, British Columbia) as well as sites in the Caribbean, China, India, Latin America (six sites), Europe and the British Isles (five sites), Africa (14 sites), Australia (four sites), Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka.

"Many scholars confirm that the early Christian church, whose members originally were mostly of a Jewish background, continued to observe the ancient Holy Days in a new spirit and with a new Christ-centered understanding of their meaning," said Mr. Kubik. "Today we have the marvelous understanding of how these ancient Holy Days include the important message brought by Jesus Christ which outlines God's incredible plan for all humanity--including a future time where humanity is freed from concerns and troubles like nuclear war and global conflict."

"We understand from many biblical references that the fall Holy Day seasons--basically outlined in the 23rd chapter of the book of Leviticus--actually prophetically picture forthcoming global events that will completely transform the world as we know it today," Mr. Kubik added.

Both Mr. Kubik and Donald Ward, chairman of the Church's 12-man Council of Elders, will address all church members through a special live webcast originating from the Panama City Beach festival site on Saturday, September 29.

How do New Testament disciples observe these days? Church members typically save about a tenth of their income for use at the festival (also called the Feast of Booths in various English translations). These personal funds allow members to fully celebrate the eight-day biblical event, as the Bible specifically directs members to "rejoice before the Lord your God" during this season (see Leviticus 23:40 for details). This helps spiritually foreshadow the coming abundance inherent in the future Kingdom of God.

Church members attend the festival with their families, and the Church provides many opportunities for family time together. The worldwide nature of the festival also gives rise to global fellowship and travel, and many friendships are made or renewed each season.

Visitors who would like to observe these days are welcome to attend. "As spiritual pilgrims, we are striving to become better disciples of Jesus Christ, and we welcome the opportunity to share our understanding and experiences with others," Kubik noted. A daily webcast of morning worship services from the Panama City Beach site is available at this link: <https://www.ucg.org/members/feast/sites/2018/panama-city-beach-florida/webcast>

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**About the United Church of God, an *International Association*** -- More information about the United Church of God is available at [www.ucg.org](http://www.ucg.org). The Church publishes a Bible study guide titled "*God's Holy Day Plan--The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*," which describes the biblical foundation for the ancient Hebrew Holy Days in detail. It is also available online at <https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/gods-holy-day-plan-the-promise-of-hope-for-all-mankind>. The Church publishes the *Beyond Today* magazine and sponsors the weekly television program (now airing on WGN America on Saturdays and Sundays) of the same name: *Beyond Today*.

## **From Ministerial and Member Services...**

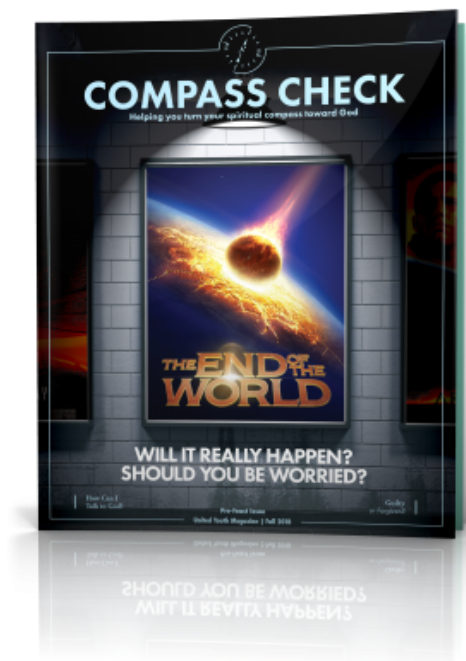
### **Update After Tropical Storm Gordon**

I have received a lot of messages and calls inquiring how our members were affected by Tropical Storm Gordon. I've been able to get in touch with most of our members in the Mobile, AL; DeFuniak Springs, FL; New Orleans, LA; and Laurel, MS congregations.

Other than a few shingles off roofs, some limbs down, and quite a bit of rain and flooding, we are all fine. The main part of the storm has passed through the area. Thanks for your prayers, we do not take those for granted.

-- Scott Hoefker, pastor

## **Compass Check--Fall Issue Now Available**



The staff of *Compass Check* magazine is pleased to announce that the pre-Feast fall issue of *Compass Check* is now available online at: [ucg.org/members/compass-check](http://ucg.org/members/compass-check). Teens (ages 12-18) living in the U.S. will be receiving their issue in the mail shortly.

-- Steve Nutzman, editor

## **Winter Family Weekend 2018**

*(Pastors, please share this information)*

This year, Winter Family Weekend will again be held at the Great Wolf Lodge in Mason, Ohio, (just north of Cincinnati) starting on Friday, December 21, with sports running through Tuesday, December 25. The hotel is ready to make reservations, so members who are certain they will attend can reserve rooms at Great Wolf Lodge using the code "1812UCGW" to access

our block of rooms. Please only reserve a room if you are certain you will attend, because the block usually fills up and if you reserve a room but then later cancel it, the room will be lost from our reservation block. Based on years of previous trends, the block does not include as many rooms for Friday, December 21, as for other nights, but we are endeavoring to learn if more rooms can be added for that night.

We have not negotiated group rates at other nearby hotels because members have been able to find economical rates on their own. A Comfort Inn and Suites is located about a third of a mile from the Great Wolf Lodge and other hotels are within a few minutes' drive. All of these offer significantly lower room rates--but without the benefit of an indoor waterpark.

We hope to have you join us for an exciting Winter Family Weekend this year.

-- Frank Dunkle, coordinator

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