

UNITED NEWS



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UCG.ORG/MEMBERS

JULY-AUGUST 2019

2019 General Conference of Elders



Photo by Mitchell Moss

Bill Bradford gives the keynote address at the GCE.

by Ariana Del Signore

Cincinnati, Ohio—The annual meeting of the General Conference of Elders convened May 3-6. Present at the Conference were 144 elders and 125 wives, with many more who watched or listened in remotely. The ministry approved the Council's Strategic Plan, Operation Plan

and Budget for 2019-2020. Four council seats were also chosen.

The Sabbath on May 4 began with two seminars presented by Darris McNeely and Randy Stiver titled "God's Unfinished Business With Israel" and "The Tribes of Israel: Always Hidden in Plain Sight." Both focused on the role of the scattered tribes of Israel throughout

history and into modern day events. Ministerial and Member Services operations manager Mark Welch gave the first split sermon titled, "The Pearl of Great Price." Len Martin, pastor in Cambridge, Columbus and Mansfield, Ohio and member of the Council of Elders, gave the second called "Do You Have What It Takes?" During a special dinner, Council Chairman Donald Ward welcomed all guests and a ceremony was held recognizing ministers and employees for their years of service. The day ended with a Question and Answer session with the Council of Elders.

Sunday, May 5

Jerold Aust opened the proceedings with prayer. Council secretary Gerald Seelig announced the ballots for the Council, international nominees, Strategic Plan, Operation Plan and Budget.

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Visit to Portuguese-Speaking Brethren

by Jorge de Campos

On Wednesday, March 27, 2019, Kraig Bledsoe and I left Cincinnati on a 33-day pastoral trip to visit prospective members, baptize two new disciples of Jesus Christ and visit congregations in Brazil and Angola. Throughout the trip we can only thank God our loving Father and His beloved Son for all the protection and blessings that occurred.

Our first stop was Três Rios in the state of Rio de Janeiro where we visited a prospective member. This young man has been in contact with me with many questions and I have been counseling him for baptism using video conferencing capabilities. I hope and pray that he may be ready to be baptized soon. After that, on the Sabbath, we met with 18 people in a neighboring town of Rio de Janeiro. There we held the first Sabbath service in Rio. Seven of those in attendance showed interest to meet more regularly on the Sabbath. We had a follow-up Sabbath gathering with these brethren just before Pentecost. We sincerely pray this development may bear more fruit so that we may be able to open up a Feast site near Rio for 2020. Please pray for this positive outcome.

After that, we visited Emerson Menezes and his son Kevim in Canoas, a city in south Brazil. Kevim is very interested in attending ABC. Kraig, who is an alumnus, had long chats with him about ABC. Subsequently we went to Brasília where we met, among others, a young couple who has decided to commit to keep the Sabbath and with whom I am having baptism counseling sessions over video conferencing. They are excited to learn the truth and have been listening to sermons in Portu-

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ABC Class of 2019 Graduation



Photo by Matt Hernandez

The class of 2019 smiles for a group photo with faculty after the graduation ceremony.

The Ambassador Bible College class of 2019 graduated on the afternoon of May 19. ABC coordinator Frank Dunkle welcomed the audience, followed by class president Morgan Greene's student discourse in which he recounted highlights

from the past nine months and reflected on the impact of ABC. Following this, the chorale performed two songs—one was written and arranged for graduation by students Micah Gunn and Chad Browning.

In honor of this year marking the 20th anniversary of ABC, Gary Antion, the first coordinator of ABC, delivered the graduation address. He noted the impact that ABC has made over 20 years and shared a few notable facts about ABC: 16 students have become elders, 91 marriages have occurred between ABC students, 34 students have become employees and 21 are still employed. The largest class had 54 students in 2006 and the smallest had 20 students in 2009. The oldest student was 86 and the youngest was 17. The class of 2019 had 34 students.

Dean of students Aaron Dean, president Victor Kubik and registrar Steve Myers handed out diplomas and awards. After the ceremony, students, faculty, friends and family celebrated and socialized on the lawn.

Students completed a school year devoted to laboring in the Word of God

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BY THE NUMBERS

13th

UCG.org's global ranking among religious denomination websites

Congratulations! Class of 2019

High School



Gabrielle Breanne Adkins



Benjamin Api



Beverly Madison Bishop



Chloe Alexandria Brice

Gabrielle Breanne Adkins

2. James and Beverly Adkins
3. Chattanooga, Tennessee
4. Gabby graduated from Sequoyah High School in May.

5. Her interests include travel, history, art and theater. She began attending the Chattanooga, Tennessee congregation in 2017.

6. She plans to attend Volunteer State in Cookeville, Tennessee in August to pursue a degree in criminal justice.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* “For His anger endures but a moment; in His favor is life: weeping may endure for a night but joy comes in the morning” (Psalm 30:5).

Benjamin Api

2. Jesse and Linda Api
3. Garden Grove, California
4. Benjamin graduated from Los Altos High School and worked in construction with his dad during his high school years.

5. He enjoys music, reading, sports and hanging out with friends. He also likes to dance. He did pole vaulting for three years. He is an usher at church and can also operate cameras and broadcasting equipment for services.

6. Benjamin will be moving to Tennessee for college to study film, photography and acting. He also plans to attend ABC.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* Romans 8:12-14
Favorite quote: “Sin is like a crumb encrusted toaster, no matter how well

you clean it, you’ll never get all the crumbs. But that’s why God is so great, He forgives us because He knows we are only human.”

Favorite motto: “Do not pray for easy lives, my friends, pray to be stronger men.”

Beverly Madison Bishop

2. Daughter of Graham and Maria Bishop; granddaughter of Robert and Mary Carswell

3. Hickory, North Carolina

4. Beverly graduated from Patton High School with honors. She is a certified EMT and Open Water Diver and member of the Academic Decathlon and Quiz Bowl teams. She worked in the food industry this semester.

5. Beverly has attended Camp Cotubic. She enjoys swimming and being in the water, traveling and reading.

6. She will be attending Western Carolina University in the fall to major in political science.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more pain or mourning or crying or pain, for the former things have passed away” (Revelation 21:4).

Chloe Alexandria Brice

2. Elliott and LaDonna Brice

3. Dallas, Texas

4. Chloe graduated from Abeka Acad-



Caleb Austin Burgett

emy with a GPA of 3.9. While in school, she worked as a cashier at a local diner.

5. Chloe is a self-taught sketch artist. She enjoys spending time with animals, writing poetry, researching Asian cultures and making her own sushi! She loves to travel and has seen most of the US. Her travels abroad include visits to Jamaica, St. Lucia and Italy.

6. She plans to attend college in the fall and plans to study to become a veterinarian or physical therapist.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* “Do not be afraid of sudden terror, nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes; for the LORD will be your confidence, and will keep your foot from being caught” (Proverbs 3:25-26).

Caleb Austin Burgett

2. Steve and Anna Burgett, Jr.

3. Mansfield, Ohio

4. Caleb graduated from the Diesel Tech Program at Ehope Vocational School and South Central High School. While in school, he worked at Eagle Creek Golf Club and Mark’s Excavating and Trucking. He also participated in Future Farmers of America (FFA) for four years and enjoyed the annual “Drive Your Tractor to School” day.

5. Caleb is interested in anything farm related. He loves older farm equipment. He currently owns his own 1971 International grain truck and plans to haul



Isaiah Cole

grain for local farmers. Caleb went to Camp Cotubic in 2016.

6. Caleb plans to make a career at Mark’s Excavating and Trucking. He also plans to get his CDL license and hopes to own his own trucking business in the future.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).

Isaiah Cole

2. Brian and Danielle Cole

3. Richmond, Virginia

4. Isaiah graduated with honors and an advanced diploma from Churchland High School. He completed all requirements to graduate in January and has already completed his first semester at Tidewater Community College. In high school, Isaiah participated in Dual Enrollment First College and completed the welding program to receive his welding certification. He was also a member of Honors Society throughout his school years.

5. Isaiah is an all-around guy with many interests. He enjoys the outdoors, good food, the beach, playing video games and reading. He is a people person and enjoys going to movies with his friends. Isaiah

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Graduate’s Name

2. Parents’ names

3. Congregation

4. School, work, internship, co-op or other accomplishments

5. Interests, interesting facts about graduate, Church activities involved in, hobbies, unusual skills, etc.

6. Plans after graduation

7. Additional comments (favorite Scripture, favorite quote, motto, advice, poetry, wisdom, etc.)



PETER EDDINGTON
Media and Communications Services Operation Manager

■ What is your response to God for Him extending to you His grace and mercy—for Him giving you spiritual eyesight? How do we answer to God's grace?

In the book of Mark we have the example of blind Bartimaeus. He is one person among many in a large crowd. Those in the crowd see Bartimaeus as bearing the punishment for someone else's sin.

In the society of the time, many citizens would have been told from early childhood that people like Bartimaeus are blind because of someone's sin—perhaps his parents sinned, he sinned or a close relative broke the law.

Here is how the story goes: "Now they came to Jericho. As He [Jesus] went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging. And

Your Answer to God's Grace



The Holy Spirit is essential in our goal of eradicating sin. The key to solving the problem of sin is the help we receive through Jesus Christ. Jesus was born not only to make possible forgiveness of the past, but to help us conquer the pulls of sin, the entrenched habits that are so difficult to dislodge from our lives.

when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'" (Mark 10:44-48).

"Bart" was threatened to stay quiet! The crowd told him to keep his mouth closed! "So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the

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From The COUNCIL



■ Many people try to claim that God was harsh in the Old Testament. Yet they love Jesus Christ of the New Testament. In doing so, they try to do away with the law.

by Aaron Dean

While Jesus' sacrifice did replace the physical sacrifices, it did not do away with God's law. Indeed, He said He came to fulfill the law (Matthew 5:17).

Paul's writings are often used to do away with any laws not expressly stated in the New Testament. Yet Paul refers to the law as wonderful when it comes to how you live your life, but as nothing when it comes to salvation; mean-

Is Law Harsh?



When it comes to how to live your life, law is wonderful!

ing even if you could keep the law, it alone can't save you. The Bible does clearly show that you should keep the law (Revelation 22:14; Matthew 19:17; Hebrews 5:9). We are saved by grace, not by the keeping of the law. However, many then want to "choose" what laws

they wish to keep as long as they have "grace" and "love." But how do you show love toward God, a requirement Jesus made (Matthew 22:37), if it is not by following God's laws? The apostle John

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Is Your Christianity “The Real McCoy?”

■ “The Real McCoy” means “the best of its kind” or “the highest quality.” But do you know the story behind the phrase and what it teaches us about embracing true, biblical Christianity?

by John LaBissoniere

Elijah McCoy was born in Colchester, Ontario, Canada, in 1843. His parents had fled there from slavery in Kentucky in the late 1830s. When they resettled with him in Ypsilanti, Michigan, in 1849, they observed how their son demonstrated a strong mechanical aptitude.

When he turned 16, they sought to enroll him in a university offering an engineering education. But they soon learned that people of black African descent were not permitted to register. Despite this obstacle, they sent him to Edinburgh, Scotland, to be trained by a mechanical engineer.

After serving as an apprentice master mechanic there for five years, McCoy returned to his parents’ home in 1864. He began searching for employment in mechanical engineering but felt he was being denied entrance to the profession again due to racism.

He then took a job with the Michigan Central Railroad as a steam locomotive fireman and oiler. His duties included throwing wood and coal into the engine’s firebox as the flames generated steam to power the locomotive.

He was also responsible to keep the engine well-oiled to prevent damage due to overheating. Although the axles and bearings of the railroad cars (carriages) were lubricated automatically by oil-filled chambers, the locomotive engine was not—as its intense steam pressure pushed oil away from moving parts. The train had to stop periodically so McCoy would exit the operator’s cab to manually lubricate the engine.

McCoy’s Highly Successful Invention

Taking advantage of his mechanical engineering skills, McCoy began considering how steam pressure could be employed to automate oiling the engine. He set up a home machine shop where he designed, built and tested a potential device. This led him to invent his “automatic lubricator” and he obtained a patent in 1872.

Officials at the Michigan Central Rail-

road offered him support by testing the mechanism on their locomotives.

McCoy’s invention proved highly successful, dramatically enhancing efficiency by eliminating time-consuming lubricating stops. His original device and subsequent upgrades ultimately became standard features on locomotives throughout the United States and were adapted for stationary engines in factories and on steamships.

McCoy’s career soon took him to Detroit, where he began to focus on solving problems related to other railroad and train technicalities. These challenges arose due to the development of larger, more powerful locomotives using “superheated steam.” McCoy proved once again to be on the leading edge of designing critical lubricating methods.

In 1915 he was awarded a U.S. patent for his “locomotive lubricator.” This device allowed the use of a mixture of oil and powdered graphite, which could withstand extremely high operating temperatures.

Author and historian Robert Hayden, Jr., in his book *Eight Black American Inventors* (1972), quotes a letter from a railroad superintendent of that period: “We have found the McCoy graphite lubricator to be of considerable assistance in lubrication of locomotives equipped with superheaters. There is a decided advantage in better lubrication and reduction of wear in valves and piston rings.”

Inventions of Superior Design and Quality

Throughout his career, McCoy continued refining his engineering skills and products, over time obtaining at least 57 U.S. patents. His inventions generated enormous respect because they represented superior design and quality.

Although competing mechanisms were available, most purchasing agents sought McCoy’s authentic equipment. Many of them insisted on what they termed “the real McCoy,” meaning the industry standard, the best of its kind or that of the highest quality.

Elijah McCoy died in 1928 at the age of 85. His legacy of distinctive excellence lives on today through the expression that bears his name. The phrase “the real McCoy” migrated from industrial to consumer applications and remains in general use in much of the English-speaking world.

For example, people often use the slogan when referring to “brand-name” consumer merchandise. They prefer such products because they trust that the manufacturer or company offers premium quality over competing brands.



Photo by Wikimedia

Elijah McCoy’s name has become synonymous with authenticity—or the very best the industry can offer. Is your Christianity of the highest quality?

Accepting “Bargain-Brand” Christianity?

While bargain brands may be suitable if they meet the needs they’re used for, imagine if this practice was applied to one’s Christian life and beliefs. Would anyone *intentionally* reject Elijah McCoy’s model of highly valuing and pursuing quality in favor of a mediocre imitation of true, biblical Christianity, something clearly inferior? But the fact is, *many* people have done this very thing! How is this possible?

Christ gave the answer when He said: “Take heed that no man *deceive* you. For many shall come in my name, saying [that] I am Christ; and *shall deceive many*” (Matthew 24:4-5, King James Version, emphasis added throughout). Jesus cautioned His disciples that *many* people would be *fooled* into accepting less than “the real McCoy” in terms of Christianity (see also Matthew 24:11, 24).

The apostle Peter likewise wrote: “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as *there will be false teachers* among you, who will *secretly* bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them” (2 Peter 2:1).

The apostle Paul also expressed grave

concern about corrupt, fraudulent teachers and corrected some of the Christians in Corinth for easily accepting lies. They believed smooth-talking charlatans who preached heresy (2 Corinthians 11:4).

This wasn’t just a problem of that era. Paul warned that this situation *would continue into our time* (1 Timothy 4:1).

But why do people reject Christ’s original teachings and accept spurious ones?

Although Satan the devil plays a major role in adversely influencing human beings, they themselves are not without fault (Ephesians 6:12; Romans 1:18-21).

People often believe *what others say* about Jesus’ words, rather than studying for *themselves* what the Scriptures really teach (Ephesians 4:14).

The Mistake of Not Knowing the Scriptures

Jesus rebuked the religious leaders of His day about this error when He told them: “You are mistaken, *not knowing the Scriptures* nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29).

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The Ten Commandments Series

The Sixth Commandment

by Don Hooser

“You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17).

Murder is a horrible thing. Yet it has been a terribly common occurrence in earth’s history. The world has suffered an ongoing nightmare of murder ever since Cain, the firstborn of Adam and Eve, murdered his brother Abel (Genesis 4:1-8). Even the Son of God was murdered.

Murder even has special macabre names to differentiate between victims. Homicide, genocide, suicide or aborticide (usually referred to as *abortion*) are examples. There are numerous articles and messages on these topics at www.ucg.org.

God, the Source of all life, “created man in His own image” for a sacred purpose (Genesis 1:27). Every human being is a child of God, so only He can authorize the taking of human life. That is why murder—the unauthorized killing of a human being—is wrong.

What About Capital Punishment?

Some confusion has resulted from the translation in the old King James Version (KJV) of the Bible, published in 1611, which says, “Thou shalt not kill.” The Hebrew word, *ratsach*, used here and only a few times in the Old Testament, definitely means “murder,” and almost all modern versions translate it as such. The Hebrew word for “kill,” *qatal*, occurs hundreds of times.

Based on the translation in the KJV, many have assumed that every type of killing of a human being is forbidden. But one of the first commandments that God revealed to Noah after the Flood was the institution of capital punishment. Genesis 9:6 says, “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man.” This disproves the view that any execution must be by God because it says “*by man* his blood shall be shed” (emphasis added throughout).

The Contemporary English Version (CEV) combines verses 5 and 6 and makes the meaning clear: “I created humans to be like me, and I will punish any animal or person that takes a human life. If an animal kills someone, that animal must die. And if a person takes the life of another, that person must be put to death.”

Contrary to the thinking of many people, God’s law for ancient Israel requiring the execution of murderers *emphasizes how highly God regards human life*. All of



Photo by Wikimedia

The world has suffered an ongoing nightmare of murder ever since Cain, the firstborn of Adam and Eve, murdered his brother Abel . . . Every human being is a child of God, so only He can authorize the taking of human life.

the first five books of the Bible state that murderers should be executed. In Israel, under the Old Covenant, other crimes such as kidnapping and rape were to be punished with the same penalty. When people see honest, fair and swift justice being administered, they “hear and fear”—they are motivated to be law-abiding!

Romans 13:1-10 shows that civil governments are authorized by God to administer justice and maintain peace. In the New International Version (NIV), verse 5 says: “For the one in authority is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God’s servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer (Romans 13:5).

Many Spiritual Problems Lead to Murder

One sin leads to another, as described in Romans 1:20-32. Many sins can culminate in murder. Lack of emotional control of tempers, resentment and anger. Hatred. Jealousy. Revenge. Greed. Lust. Pride, including a desire to be “famous.” Self-pity. Mental illness, including damage from being abused or abandoned. Intoxication. Chronic viewing of violent entertainment.

Zeal for a perverted cause. Lack of conscience based on right values. Ignorance of the sanctity of life and purpose of life.

There are many emotions and reactions that are all called “anger.” But not all anger is sinful. Jesus Christ certainly got angry but never sinned. Some emotions that we call being “angry” or “mad” are not hateful and sinful. There is such a thing as righteous indignation. The *Good News Bible* translates Ephesians 4:26 as: “If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin, and do not stay angry all day.”

God created us with the whole range of emotions, but they must be controlled and pointed in the right directions. Hate is a good example. We must hate sin but love the sinners. “You who love the LORD, hate evil!” (Psalm 97:10).

It’s shocking and sad that many people place no value on their own lives, such as suicide bombers and other terrorists. And we frequently hear of mass shootings where the shooter knows he will be killed or captured! These people have a pessimistic, hopeless, cynical and nihilistic view of life. Suicide is a form of murder, *self-murder*.

The prevalence of suicides is utterly

heartbreaking. In 2017 in the United States, there were 19,510 reported homicides but 47,173 suicides! One of the Great Commandments is to “love your neighbor *as yourself*.” There is a desperate need for people to learn their God-given purpose in life and how God wants everyone to provide tender loving care for his God-given body and mind (see 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). We highly recommend our inspiring booklet, *Why Were You Born?*

Euthanasia is another form of suicide and murder. However, this should not be confused with a patient voluntarily deciding to let nature takes its course and terminating certain life-sustaining medical treatments, which is legal, moral and reasonable.

The world is sliding into another spiritual dark age. The apostle Paul wrote about the character of many people in “the last days” in 2 Timothy 3:1-7. Of course, the greatest evil influence is from Satan, the “ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). “The devil . . . was a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44).

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“The Real McCoy”

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People stumble over this same problem today. They believe—often without question—what their church, minister or priest has “always taught” about Christian doctrine (Matthew 15:9).

However, to build a steadfast relationship with Jesus, *His words and example*—not the teachings of men—must be our foundation (2 Timothy 3:15).

Consider another striking question Jesus asked those who claimed they were His faithful supporters: “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and *do not do the things which I say?*” (Luke 6:46). He emphasized this point when telling His disciples, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who *does the will of My Father in heaven*” (Matthew 7:21).

Are you faithfully obeying Jesus Christ and following His genuine teachings?

And what is the Father’s will? It is that people obey His commandments (1 John 5:3; Exodus 34:28). And where can we learn how to fully obey God’s commandments? By studying His Word, the Holy Bible. And to help us in living by His Word, God tells us to not neglect regular

assembly with fellow Christians (Hebrews 10:24-25). He knows we need this fellowship in God’s true Church, “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15).

The Church is Not a Building or Corporation

Jesus said He would build His Church (Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28). The Church consists of a small group of people the Father “calls out” of the world’s society into His service (John 6:44; 2 Timothy 1:9; Luke 12:32).

“Church” as used in the Bible is not a building or corporation, but *a spiritual body of believers* who are unified in purpose, faith and love (Ephesians 4:13; 1 Corinthians 12:12; John 13:35).

The Church is also God’s spiritual family. It protects, nurtures and guides His children as they grow in character, spiritual knowledge and godly wisdom (Romans 8:16; Ephesians 2:19; 1 Timothy 3:15).

The people God calls into His Church are to “seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matthew 6:33).

They are also commissioned to help proclaim Jesus Christ and His gospel—meaning “good news”—of the coming Kingdom of God and to make disciples throughout the world (Matthew 24:14, 28:19).

Jesus gave His repentant, Spirit-filled Church the mission of training new converts to “*observe all things that I have commanded*” (Matthew 28:20).

But what do we observe in the world of traditional Christianity? We see multiple

thousands of denominations and organizations, each teaching contradictory and incompatible beliefs.

Genuine Christians will recognize their complete dependence on their Creator and revere Christ as their Savior and coming King.

While they preach ideas about the *person* of Christ as Savior, they ignore the *very message* He taught about the Kingdom of God (Matthew 9:35).

This results in millions who believe in Christ but know *nothing* about the world-ruling government He will set up on earth at His return (Isaiah 9:6-7; Zechariah 14:4) or of being part of God’s family forever.

The end-result is a Christianity that doesn’t understand God’s purpose for humanity!

What About Your Form of Christianity?

What then is the authentic form of Christianity? People who are part of “the real McCoy” in this case will strive to have Jesus’ words guide their *every* thought and action (2 Corinthians 10:5).

They will deeply repent of sin. They will love God above all things and be building a lasting relationship with Him through fervent prayer and Bible study (Matthew

22:37; Psalms 73:28).

Genuine Christians will recognize their complete dependence on their Creator and revere Christ as their Savior and coming King (Galatians 2:20; 2 Peter 1:11). A Christian will exhibit the fruit of God’s Spirit through loving others and doing good works (John 13:34; Galatians 5:22-23).

A Christian will assemble regularly with like-minded Church members to worship God on His weekly, seventh-day Sabbath (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset) and His annual Holy Days (see our booklet, *God’s Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*).

Understanding these and other aspects of genuine Christianity is essential in identifying what true followers of Jesus Christ do and how they live.

Elijah McCoy drove himself to produce the highest quality lubricating devices for railroad and industrial applications, accepting nothing but the best.

If you applied the demand for excellence as found in “the real McCoy” to your Christian life, how would *you* measure up? Are you faithfully obeying Jesus Christ and following His genuine teachings? Or are you simply believing and acting on *what others say* is correct? With God only the genuine biblical standard will meet His requirements (Matthew 7:21-23; 1 Corinthians 12:31).

Is your form of Christianity “the real McCoy”? If not, what are you going to do about it? **UN**

The Sixth Commandment

continued from page 5

The Opposite of Murder: Love All of God’s Children

When Jesus Christ came to earth, He came “to magnify his law and make it glorious” (Isaiah 42:21, English Standard Version). By deepening, expanding and elevating the Ten Commandments, He revealed the spirit of the law, showing that obedience is a matter of the mind and heart as well as one’s actions. He made clear that the Sixth Commandment includes the commands to “love your neighbor” and live by the Golden Rule (Matthew 22:39; 7:12).

Love and good relationships greatly depend on forgiveness. God expects us to be forgiving. God clearly loves us because He is always ready to forgive when He sees godly sorrow, true repentance and the person’s readiness to forgive those who hurt them (see Matthew 6:12, 14-15). And we must make it as easy as possible for others to forgive us by having the humility to admit our faults, ask for forgiveness and seek reconciliation (see Matthew 5:23-26).

In Matthew 5:21-22, Jesus revealed that hatred, bitter anger and ridiculing attacks are the spirit of murder. When someone callously damages and scars a person’s heart, mind, reputation, self-respect, and/or aspirations by abuse of any kind, a vulnerable and precious part of that person can die. Whether the abuse is by commission or omission, that is the spirit of murder. Young children especially are often scarred to some degree, although God can give us the strength and hope to heal.

In Matthew 5:38-48, Jesus revealed that we must love *everyone*, not just those who love us back but even our enemies! See Leviticus 19:9-18, 32-37 for some specifics about how to love people in various situations.

Jesus revealed that hatred, bitter anger and ridiculing attacks are the spirit of murder.

Please understand that when Jesus said to “turn the other cheek” (Matthew 5:39), He didn’t mean that one should allow himself to be abused or that one should never defend himself against injury. One lesson is that God’s people should not retaliate, seek revenge or be spiteful and vindictive. Many scriptures tell

us that vengeance is God’s responsibility as only He can execute perfect justice. Romans 12:19 tells us, “Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord.”

Many scriptures tell us that vengeance is God’s responsibility as only He can execute perfect justice.

The context of Matthew 5:39 is about love, so another lesson relates to the fact that loving someone makes oneself more vulnerable to getting hurt. People often “bite the hand that feeds them.” Jesus is saying that we should persevere in loving people in spite of knowing that we will sometimes get hurt. We should never react to hurt by thinking, “Well, I’ll never try to help him again!”

One of the best indicators of a person’s spiritual conversion is that “we love the brethren” (1 John 3:14) with the same kind of love that Jesus Christ has for us (John 13:34-35). John further stated: “Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. By this we know

love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren” (1 John 3:15-16).

The Bible also addresses what can be called “negligent homicide.” God warns us that if we are responsible for allowing a dangerous physical condition or situation to exist that causes a person’s injury or death, we can be held accountable for that injury or death. For example, we should not leave something in a walkway that could cause someone to trip. If you have a below-ground pool, it is wise to keep some kind of fence around it to prevent a person from falling into it. Indeed, we are to be our “brother’s keeper.” See Exodus 21:28-29 and Deuteronomy 22:8 for examples.

Conclusion

You shall not murder, either in the letter of the law or the spirit of the law. Instead, “love one another!” (John 13:34; 15:12, 17, Romans 13:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11-12; 2 John 1:5). **UN**

This is part seven of an ongoing series covering the Ten Commandments. Missed a part? Visit www.ucg.org/tags/the-ten-commandments-series to find previous articles.

Trip to Brazil and Angola

continued from page 1

guess every Sabbath since.

The next Sabbath we were with 43 of the brethren in Maloca de Moscow. During that weekend we baptized Nayara Isaac (previously Souza) who has been attending services for a number of years. We also visited the LifeNets cattle which are doing a lot better than they were before and better than the other cattle in the region. Kraig, who has worked with cattle, gave some suggestions on the types of salt and minerals to give the cattle. The brethren have already implemented these suggestions.

From there we went to São Paulo where we met Sebastião Mendes. He met us last year and has had a tough year since he was robbed in his home. His computer, cell-phone and many other personal items were taken. As he lives on a meager income, it has been a long road to try to get back on his feet. He traveled about four hours within the greater São Paulo area to meet us. We were near the city center which was a safe and central location. In São Paulo, I hired a vehicle to then go farther inland to visit other prospects in Sumaré. Driving in some parts of Rio and São Paulo can be interesting and challenging.

Our next stop was in Uberlândia where we met with the Macedo family. Giovane helps me with the translations and his daughter Michelle, who attended ABC last year, is engaged to Kraig. She is going through the “fiancée visa” process and they intend to get married as soon as she can come to the U.S. I also baptized Josiane Chaves there. (I had conducted baptism counseling sessions with her via video conference.) This was another rewarding occasion.

After the visit to Uberlândia, Kraig stayed for about two weeks with the Macedo family so that the two families could get to know each other a little better. I then proceeded to fly across the “pond” (not really a pond—but across the Southern Atlantic ocean for a 7½-hour flight over the sea) to Luanda (Angola). I got there a day before Passover and celebrated Passover with 103 baptized brethren in that city.

In Luanda I visited their preteen and teenager’s school. It has four classrooms where they teach children in the local community as a Good Works service. I also observed the restroom construction they completed with the unsolicited funds UCG’s Good Works sent them for that purpose. I kept the Night To Be Much Observed with a small group of 15 brethren. We had Sabbath services during the first day of Unleavened Bread with 889 brethren and conducted a series of leadership training seminars for a full three days in Luanda. I also held a Kingdom of God



Top: Group on the Sabbath in Angola after the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. Right: Jorge de Campos visits the local school in Angola.

seminar in Luanda with about 100 people.

After Luanda I flew to Huambo, the second largest city in Angola. This is where I kept the last day of Unleavened Bread with 217 brethren and a combined Sabbath services with 346 brethren. I also conducted a Bible study and two full days of leadership training in Huambo.

The brethren in Angola are still awaiting further instructions from the government regarding their application for legalization after the government’s latest instruction that only churches with over 100,000 adult notarized members may freely gather. The government recently issued a new “freedom of religion” law reducing that limit if the religion has at least 65,000 adult members. The church in Angola has some 5,000 members, but that includes children and is well below the government stipulated minimum number of members. Please pray for God to open doors on this long outstanding matter.

Additionally, their bank account has been frozen and I had discussions with them and with a local lawyer for them to put their case forward to the bank. They are currently working with a law firm on this matter. A separate prayer request has been circulated on this issue.

After the two-week visit to Angola, I returned to Brazil where I met Kraig and we both traveled together back home. Kraig said this about the trip: “Whether I was in the capital city of Brasilia, the industrial metropolis of São Paulo, the small villages in the north near Boa Vista, or the smaller cities like Uberlândia and Patos de Minas, I was always taken in by those individuals who would meet with us and ask questions about God’s Sabbaths and His Holy Days. It was wonderful and very encouraging to see people looking for God’s direction in their lives.”

There are more details and pictures of this trip on my travel blog below: <http://v2.travelark.org/travel-blog/jorgedecampos/9>. **UN**



Garden Grove Congregation Honors Parents



Group who participated in ceremony honoring mothers.

On Mother’s Day eve, May 11, the Garden Grove congregation presented all the mothers and those that have mentored or served as mother figures to other children with gifts and a card especially made for them. The organizers of both tributes, Judy Dyches and Jesse Api and his family, did a wonderful job coordinating both events.

families were traveling for the weekend. The fathers were honored also on the Sabbath before Father’s Day and were presented with gifts and a card especially made for them. The organizers of both tributes, Judy Dyches and Jesse Api and his family, did a wonderful job coordinating both events.

Caty Seiglie

General Conference of Elders Report

continued from page 1

Chairman's Address: Dr. Donald Ward reminded ministers and elders of the important calling to prepare a people for the return of Jesus Christ and for the coming Kingdom of God. He spoke on the importance of bringing into remembrance the “big picture”—the truth of God’s plan that has been committed to the Church—to stir each other up to be more on fire than ever before, especially during these critical times in society. He also stressed courage, conviction and commitment as necessary traits to keep kindled the fiery zeal to do the work of the Church and the will of God.

President's Address: Victor Kubik focused on the necessity of open doors in order to preach the gospel. God is the one who opens doors through His Spirit (Zechariah 4:6; Isaiah 55:11) and calls the people to whom we preach the gospel. He asserted that the future of the work will not involve us battering down walls, but instead walking through doors that God opens for us. Mr. Kubik charged the entire Church, both members and leadership, to get on their knees and ask God to open doors for us.

Ministerial and Member Services: Mark Welch gave some updated numbers and statistics regarding the ministry and attendance. He also shared nine goals for the coming year(s):

1. Develop close relationships with all pastors and elders.
2. Encourage all pastors to be helpers of our members’ joy and to involve all members in service wherever possible. Develop church congregations around the world that are warm and inviting to new attendees.
3. Visit as many church areas as feasible with the intent to meet as many members as possible and to cultivate a relationship of mutual trust and openness.
4. Survey every congregation to determine overall satisfaction level of members and to help pastors and elders improve in their service to our local congregations.
5. Implement annual pastoral and elder self-evaluations, in collaboration with regional pastor and pastors.
6. Improve regional ministerial conferences and ministerial education, leadership

Ballot Results

Returned to Council: Mario Seiglie and Jorge de Campos

Added to Council: Darris McNeely and Randy Stiver

The 2019-2020 Strategic Plan was approved (213 yes, 20 no); the Operation Plan was approved (204 yes, 29 no); and the Budget was approved (193 yes, 39 no).

workshops, Pastoral Development Program, all programs and online training.

7. Respond to international requests and needs for training and help.

8. Encourage all pastors to mentor others in their congregations to serve in the ministry.

9. Endeavor to head off conflicts in the early stages—point everyone involved to follow Matthew 18.

Address from Treasurer: Rick Shabi’s address covered significant financial events of the past year including the audit, the completion and capitalization of the video recording studio and some property acquisitions. The audit was completed with no proposed adjustments for improved internal controls for the fifth year in a row.

Total studio construction costs, to date, are \$1,004,000 and so far we have received \$936,000 in restricted fund donations. A building for the Columbus, Ohio congregation was purchased largely by the congregation and a property in Cape Girardeau was donated to UCG this year.

Before April 2019, the income was 3 percent under budget and 8 percent lower than the previous year. After April, however, the income is now on budget, albeit still 3 percent lower than the previous year. The Days of Unleavened Bread and fall Holy Day offerings this year were \$100,000 over budget, while general contributions were lower. This is due in part to demographics of the Church; as more people retire, they give offerings but have less titheable income. The income is steady out in the \$18-19 million range, about equal to estimated expenses this year as they have steadily risen in the last five years.

Media and Communications Services: Peter Eddington updated the audience on the new video recording studio and its results. The new studio is about 10 times larger than the old one, and can also be used for photoshoots, reenactments and other projects. Above it is a prop and costume room, sound console and lighting board. Adjoining upstairs is a radio and recording studio for capturing sermons, podcasts and voiceovers.

To date, the media team and presenters have recorded 15 new programs with each one hosting about 50 guests in the audience. Since February 2018, our Roku app has seen a 56 percent increase in channel installs, an 81 percent increase in channel sessions and a 74 percent increase in videos watched. Average watch time is 24.5 minutes of the 28-minute videos. The *Beyond Today* YouTube channel has gotten 10.48 million video views and hosts over 1,935 videos with 46,685 subscribers. UCG.org is currently ranked by Alexa as the 13th most popular religious denomination website in the world. Last year, the UCG.org website received over 10 million unique visitors and 99.8 percent were non-members.



GCE Photos by Mitchell Moss



Top: Bob Dick chuckles with a colleague. Middle: Rainer and Claudia Salomaa receive an award from Dr. Ward and Mr. Kubik. Bottom Right: Rick Shabi gives an update on the finances.



Keynote Address: Bill Bradford, pastor of six congregations in Queensland, Australia, gave an address entitled “The Compact” in which he explained that God’s plan of salvation for mankind is because of an agreement, or compact, between God the Father and Jesus the Son.

This greatest agreement ever made is still honored and always will be. Understanding this eternal compact allows us to assess where we are on the spiritual spectrum of God’s plan. Are we on it? Is the path ahead clear to us upon whom the ends of the earth have come? When we properly understand the mystery of this great compact, it gives us the capacity to know where we are and who we are in the great plan of God. It is the heart of everything that is.

Following the international reports was a presentation by Greg Thomas honoring the deceased elders and wives of the past year. The proceedings ended with chairman Donald Ward announcing the ballot results.

Monday, May 6

The day began with the ministerial wives’ workshop led by Barb Welch. The theme, “Becoming Resilient Women,” set the tone for an edifying discussion about maintaining and caring for one’s health, relationships and mentoring. At the same time, Steve Myers led the men in an elders

workshop called “The Heart of a Shepherd” where he covered a number of practical and relevant scriptures and points about being more effective ministers.

Following the workshops were three seminars: In “LGBTQ & You,” Dan Dowd discussed the “second sexual revolution” that is currently underway and how to counsel with compassion while also maintaining godly standards. In “New and Incredible Discoveries Backing Intelligent Design,” Mario Sieglie covered the amazing new scientific breakthroughs that point to a Creator God, not evolution. In “Artificial Intelligence: Assumptions (Not) Included,” Dr. Steven Britt debunked many of the myths surrounding man’s pursuit of artificial intelligence and showed the natural limitations to creating true intelligence.

The weekend concluded with chairman Donald Ward’s closing comments, in which he encouraged elders to become more passionate in their speaking by giving challenging and convicting messages. Bob Dick ended the weekend with a closing prayer. **UN**

General Conference of Elders Report

Ministers and Employees Honored for Years of Employment at GCE Meeting



GCE Attendees share a laugh at the GCE.

50 Years	Mitchell and Linda Knapp	<i>Church Pastor and Wife (U.S.)</i>
50 Years	Rainer and Claudia Salomaa	<i>Church Pastor and Wife (Canada)</i>
40 Years	Diane Bailey	<i>Executive Assistant for Home Office</i>
40 Years	Herb Teitgen	<i>Church Pastor (U.S.)</i>
30 Years	Steve and Kathe Myers	<i>Church Pastor and Wife (U.S.)</i>
20 Years	Janet Treadway	<i>Outgoing Mail Clerk for Home Office</i>
10 Years	Philip and Sarah Aust	<i>Church Pastor (U.S.)</i>
10 Years	Jorge and Kathy de Campos	<i>Church Pastor, Managing Editor of A Boa Nova</i>
10 Years	Tom Disher	<i>Senior Web Developer</i>
10 Years	Ed and RaeAnn Dowd	<i>Church Pastor and Wife (U.S.)</i>
10 Years	Fred and Lidia Nance	<i>Church Pastor and Wife (U.S.)</i>
10 Years	Moses and Rhodah Nyaira	<i>Church Pastor and Wife (Kenya)</i>
10 Years	Patrick and Jo-Anne Read	<i>Church Pastor and Wife (Canada)</i>

Church Attendance as of March 2019

6,861 (In person)
7,378 (Including webcast connections)

Total Elders: 389

U.S. Elders: 282
International Elders: 107

U.S. Leadership Numbers
Full-Time Church Pastors: 74
Associate and Assistant Pastors: 13
Non-Pastoral Elders: 195
Ministerial Trainees: 4

Two Added to Council of Elders

Darris McNeely and his wife, Debbie, live in Batavia, Ohio. They have two children and four grandchildren. They have been married 46 years and have served that same time together in the ministry. Together they have pastored congregations in North Carolina, Tennessee and Indiana. Mr. McNeely works at the home office as a presenter on *Beyond Today* and an Associate Media Producer for the Church's media operations. He is also a faculty member at Ambassador Bible College, teaching Fundamentals of Belief, World News and Prophecy and Acts.



Darris McNeely

served two previous terms on the Council of Elders (2008-2014). Mr. McNeely currently serves on the Ethics, Media and Strategic Planning and Finance committees. [UN](#)

He serves on the Ministerial and Member Services Education Team. He

Randy Stiver is a 1974 graduate of Ambassador College in Bricklet Wood, England. He met his wife, Linda, on the "Big Dig" in Jerusalem in 1973 and they were married at the Feast of Tabernacles the following fall. They have one daughter, Amanda.



Randy Stiver

Youngstown, Ohio, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Wheeling, West Virginia. Their first love is for God's truth. They enjoy serving His people and preaching the gospel of His Kingdom as a team. [UN](#)

Since his ordination on Pentecost in 1977, they have pastored congregations in Montana, Oregon, Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Ohio. He assisted former church president Dennis Luker in 2010, taught at Ambassador Bible College, edited the former *Vertical Thought* magazine and served as the Council reporter. Mr. Stiver and his wife currently pastor in North Canton and

Honored for 50 Years of Service in the Ministry

<i>Name</i>	<i>Ordination Date</i>	<i>Current Congregation</i>
Bud and Sally Beymer	Feb. 26, 1969	Houston, Texas
Richard and Betty Duncan	May 24, 1969	Portland, Oregon
Jerold and Mary Ann Aust	May 26, 1969	Mobile, Alabama
William and Carol Morgan	May 26, 1969	Phoenix, Arizona
Dudley and Louise Trone	May 26, 1969	Sacramento, California

New Corporate Secretary: Frank Dunkle

Dr. Frank Dunkle currently serves as the Coordinator of Ambassador Bible College, where he also teaches several courses. He is a 1989 graduate of Ambassador College and subsequently earned a PhD in American History from Texas A&M University. He and his wife, Sue, have an eight-year-old son named Connor. While employed by the United Church of God, Frank has pastored congregations in Ohio and Kentucky, directed the teen Camp Cotubic and the Boundary Waters Adventure program and coordinated the Winter Family Weekend. His previous employment by the Ohio Humanities Council as a Program Officer required,



Frank Dunkle

among numerous other duties, providing staff support for that organization's board of directors. [UN](#)

General Conference of Elders Report

Updates on International Work

English-Speaking West Africa

Nigeria contains about 130 members scattered throughout the three congregations of Lagos, Benin City and Owerri, as well as the Bible study group in Ibadan, served by Oludare Akinbo. As teens and young adults make up about 60 percent of the Church there, a UYC program is regularly held. Ghana contains a total membership of about 330 in the seven congregations of Accra, Winneba, Kwanyako, Agona, Obuasi, Kumasi and Yeji. Three of these congregations, making up about 80 members, were re-established as recently as February. David Messelebe (wife Betty), the regional pastor for Ghana, is assisted by pastor Benjamin Agyapong (wife Gloria) and others. Brethren run a cassava production operation in Agona as a means of income. American and other international young adults are encouraged to visit the coastal UYC in Nigeria and Ghana to meet like-minded peers from other cultures.

Paul Moody

Portuguese-Speaking Areas

Jorge de Campos and Kraig Bledsoe recently traveled to Brazil before Passover to visit the Portuguese-speaking brethren and prospects. Additionally, Jorge de Campos observed the Spring Holy Day season in Angola with a number of combined congregations in two large Angolan cities. (For more details about this trip, please see the article on the front page.) The subscription list for the 32-page Portuguese version of *Beyond Today* magazine *A Boa Nova* is currently at 3,100. On average, about 4,000 new users visit UCG's Portuguese website daily. On Easter Sunday, visitors to the website peaked at nearly 8,000 new users. The Angolan brethren are having many challenges with their government's new religious laws and the church's bank account is currently frozen. Legal counsel in Angola is being sought to resolve the banking issue. Due to the God-given growth of the work in this area, which leads to an increased workload in the Portuguese language, Jorge asks us to pray fervently for God to provide additional laborers to assist in this area of God's work.

Jorge de Campos

Canada

There are 23 UCG congregations and two Bible study groups in Canada, with a total of 448 baptized members. The 543 donors and 148 coworkers provide about 25 percent of the income. At the Church's Canadian National Office, there are two full-time employees and eight part-time employees, four of which are church pastors. The Canada National Council has



Top: UYC camp in Nigeria. Bottom Left: The 2018 annual leadership conference in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. Bottom Right: Members working at the Cassava production property in Agona.

a board that consists of nine members, of which Rainer Salomaa is the chairman. *Beyond Today* has aired in Canada for almost 13 years with nearly 60,000 responses. About one-third to one-quarter of the responses each airing are brand new! Canada has almost 17,500 *Beyond Today* magazine subscribers, 1,400 *Pour L'Avenir* (French *Beyond Today* magazine) subscribers, and 389 enrolled in the Bible study course, with a total of 91,000 names in the literature database. Currently, *United News Canada* is sent to 472 people four times a year.

Anthony Wasilkoff

British Isles

There are about 200 members in the British Isles, with about 100 coworkers and 80 donors. Of the eight congregations, six are able to meet weekly for Sabbath services. Over 5,000 copies of *Beyond Today* magazine are distributed per issue, including a supplement with eight pages of local content. This year's

plan is to improve the ucg.org.uk website by making technical adjustments and incorporating more local content, both written material and recorded sermons. The needs of the British Isles include encouraging members to contribute articles for the supplement and the website. There is also a need to develop and mentor future leaders who have potential for the ministry, congregational leadership, national council and youth activities.

David Fenney

French-Speaking Areas

There are an estimated 400-500 French-speaking members of the United Church of God spread across 12 countries. Currently, in the area administered directly from France, there are 17 congregations in seven countries with three pastors serving these members. In addition, there are congregations in Canada, Haiti, Burundi and Rwanda overseen by Canada, the Caribbean region and the East African region. This year, we will be

holding another annual three-day leadership training conference in Cote d'Ivoire to help mentor future leaders. With the goal to seed leaders for the future, volunteers through UYC and the Good Works program will be sent to a French-speaking camp this summer. Volunteers with an interest in serving in Africa will be sent to Bordeaux to participate in an intensive language learning program while living with a host family. We are currently printing *Pour L'Avenir* with six issues per year and sending 5,000 copies per issue to 40 countries. We have translated 20 booklets, 12 correspondence course lessons, and written eight new booklets in the last seven years. The eight-page French version of *United News* is *Trait D'Union*. The goal to establish regular virtual Sabbath services via video conference has been met with 55 people regularly tuning in on 10 connections. Weekly attendance in congregations is up 33 percent over the past three years.

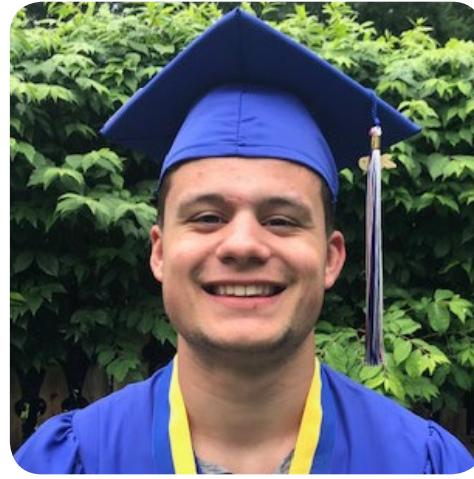
Tim Pebworth



Michael Hunter Crawford



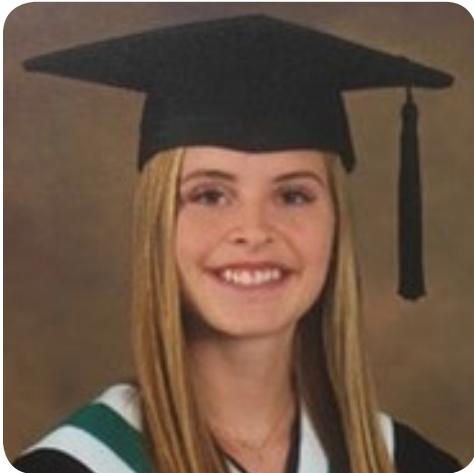
Amber Rose Cunningham



Vincent Gianni Del Signore



Kristopher Dawson Dyer



Sarah Erickson



Brianna Foster

is very athletic and enjoys playing sports. Most of all, he enjoys spending time with his family at church on the Sabbath, learning and growing with God. Isaiah has conquered many goals already. He has been employed since he was sixteen working as a busboy and dishwasher at the local steakhouse. He was determined to save up his own money to buy the car he wanted. When he wants to accomplish something, he goes for it; he managed to get his driver's license and that car all at once.

6. His five-year goals: graduate with a degree in physical therapy, travel the world and see as many Steelers games as possible.

Michael Hunter Crawford

2. Michael and Kristy Crawford
3. East Texas
4. Hunter graduated summa cum laude from Bullard High School. He graduated in the top 10 percent of his class with honors and a distinguished level of achievement. He also attained performance acknowledgements for bilingual studies, 24 dual credit hours and SAT scores for reading and math. He was the president of the local chapter of National Art Honor Society and vice-president of National Honor Society with many awards in arts, leadership, honors court, tennis and talent shows.

5. Hunter enjoys music, sports and playing guitar and singing for school and church functions. The most important event in his life was his baptism on March 2, 2019. Hunter enjoys serving in his local

congregation on the sound and stage crew and performing special music. He will serve as an assistant camp counselor at preteen Camp Piney Woods for the sixth consecutive year. He will also be serving at Camp Pinecrest as an assistant counselor. He has enjoyed being a camper at UYC summer and winter camps for many years and he cherishes being awarded the Ozzie Engelbart Leadership Award last year at Camp Pinecrest. His passion for art and music is matched by his love for the brethren and his love for the outdoors, including rock climbing, running, mountain biking and tennis.

6. Hunter will be attending the University of Texas at Tyler this fall for a bachelor's degree in biology with the intent to pursue a career in the medical field.

Amber Rose Cunningham

2. Terry and Tracy Cunningham
3. Watertown, South Dakota
4. Amber graduated the top of her homeschooled class.
5. In 2016 she became a certified nurse's assistant at the local nursing home, enjoying her work with the elderly. She currently still works there, receiving several proposals from the residents, but hasn't accepted any yet. Amber has been actively involved in the community and with church activities for many years, including the church choir. Her hobbies center around church youth camps as a camper and a volunteer worker and traveling as

often as possible. Amber is amazing at working with people and has wonderful organizational skills, helping her family and friends become remarkably efficient. Amber is also fun to be with, finding humor in most things.

6. She is excited to attend ABC this fall, meeting new friends and testing her rural driving skills for the first time in a big city.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* Matthew 7:12
Favorite quote: "You should always say the truth, but the truth shouldn't always be said."

Vincent Gianni Del Signore

2. Vinny and Becky Del Signore
3. Southern New Hampshire
4. Vincent graduated as a NH scholar and AP National Scholar from Londonderry High School. While in school, he was named senior captain and team MVP of the wrestling team, a member of Future Business Leaders of America, Spanish National Honor Society and a part of debate club. He also worked as a restaurant server and a lifeguard throughout high school. Vincent was the recipient of the Euler Award in mathematics and the English Writers Award of Excellence.

5. Vincent enjoys attending church camps and serving in his local congregation. He regularly translates church services into Spanish for brethren both locally and at the Feast of Tabernacles, participates in Spokesman Club and helps run sound. He also enjoys reading, playing sports and traveling.

6. After graduation, Vincent will study finance and applied mathematics at Bentley University.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* Romans 8:20-21
Favorite quote: "I have found that if you love life, life will love you back" –Arthur Rubinstein.

Kristopher Dawson Dyer

2. David and Francie Dyer
3. Orlando, Florida
4. Dawson works over 30 hours a week as a lifeguard at the YMCA and was a member of his varsity track team. Despite his busy schedule, he has still managed to graduate with a 3.8 GPA.
5. He will be traveling this summer as

well as attending both Camp Cotubic and Woodland.

6. He plans to study at Daytona State College in the fall with the goal of transferring to the University of Central Florida to obtain a master of business administration degree.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). This goes well with his common quote, "Don't worry Mom, I got this..." and it would seem that he does.

Sarah Erickson

2. Michael and Angie Erickson (deceased), stepmom Tonya Erickson
3. Prince George, British Columbia
4. Sarah is a graduate of Prince George Secondary School. She has worked at a local clothing store for the past year as well as leading a community outreach for clothing the needy. She was awarded top math and academic awards throughout high school and was a part of the PGSS Polar's soccer team.

5. Sarah is as outdoorsy as it gets: she has enjoyed hiking, fishing, camping and hunting since she was able to walk. She has spent hours with her family out in the bush and is an avid hunter. Although she has hunted several animals, a recent highlight was a week-long backpacking trip with her brother where she successfully got a mountain goat and almost froze to death overnight. This year will be her second year going to Northwest as she hopes to start volunteering during the summer church camps.

6. After graduation Sarah will begin a bachelor of science with a major in biology at the University of Northern British Columbia. After that, her goal is to pursue a career in veterinary medicine with a primary focus on wildlife.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* Matthew 7:13-14.

Brianna Foster

2. Rod and Tammy Foster
3. San Antonio and Austin, Texas
4. Brianna is graduating with a 4.08 GPA and highest honors. She has completed 24 college credits in dual enrollment. She also earned the 2018 Ozzie Englebart Award from Camp Pinecrest for outstanding Chris-



Alyssa Hall

tian conduct as well as the Pinecrest 2016 Volleyball Award for outstanding teamwork.

5. She enjoys volleyball, archery, baking and studying penguins.

6. After graduation, Brianna plans to complete her degree from American Public University in environmental science with a concentration in fish and wildlife management. She will begin the marine zoological career training program with Sea World San Antonio in July.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* “And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, of the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15).

Alyssa Hall

2. Ryan and Nissa Hall

3. Cincinnati East, Ohio

4. Alyssa graduated from Milford High School with honors.

5. She has played guitar for almost 11 years and is actively involved in special music. She also is currently learning American Sign Language to help with interpreting for the deaf brethren at church. She enjoys writing, filming and music.

6. Alyssa plans to work for a year before attending ABC in 2021. She has dreams of traveling the world and opening her own coffee shop.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* “Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in the mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit



Sophie M. Hand

orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world” (James 1:21-27).

Favorite poem: “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost.

Motto: But first, COFFEE.

Sophie M. Hand

2. Greg and Kelley Hand

3. Columbus, Ohio

4. Sophie graduated from Westerville South High School. While in school, she worked as a Water-Safety Instructor (WSI) at AquaTots Swim Schools.

5. Sophie was a four-year varsity bowler in high school and played volleyball in her free time. She also enjoyed playing and writing music, singing in the church choir and playing in orchestras inside and outside of school.

6. Sophie will attend the Ohio State University to pursue a degree in forensic biology with pre-med.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:6).

Favorite quote: “You know, sometimes all you need is 20 seconds of insane courage. Just literally 20 seconds of embarrassing bravery, and I promise you, something great will come of it” (Benjamin Mee, “We Bought A Zoo”).

Myka Hermann

2. Karl and Lori Hermann

3. Fort Wayne, Indiana

4. Myka graduated Leo High School with a 4.1 GPA. Her senior year she had internships at Parkview and Lutheran Hospitals. She was in National Honor Society and completed the Project Lead the Way program. She also worked part time in retail.

5. Myka loves to travel and has enjoyed her years at Camp Cotubic and Northwest Camp.

6. She was awarded the Resident Distinguished Scholarship at Indiana University Fort Wayne and will attend there in the fall to pursue a B.S. in nursing. She plans to go on to be a physician’s assistant.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* “Trust in the LORD with all your heart; and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).



Myka Hermann



Julia Jackson

Stephanie Kay Herridge

2. Todd and Susan Herridge

3. Omaha, Nebraska

4. While in high school, Stephanie was on the honor roll, lettered in band and academics and received character awards. She was also the French Club president and Marching Band section leader. She recently was awarded the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Regents Scholarship.

5. Stephanie enjoyed playing percussion in the band, writing, video games, taking her dog for walks and church choir.

6. After graduation, she plans to attend the University of Nebraska-Lincoln as an actuarial science major.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* “No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him” (Luke 8:16-18).

Favorite quote: “Love isn’t transactional; you don’t give it to get something in return. You give it continuously and selflessly, like water to a flower . . . That’s what love is.”

Julia Jackson

2. Giannina and Jerry Allsbrooks

3. Denver, Colorado

4. Julia graduated as valedictorian of her high school class. While in school,



Stephanie Kay Herridge



Neisha Jean-Louis

she was president of the National English Honor Society and vice president of the National Spanish Honor Society chapters at her school. She also was a recipient of the Churchill Cup Award for history, the Barbara Kennedy Bess Award for English in the International Baccalaureate program and the Faculty Award Scholarship for Future Teachers.

5. Julia’s greatest passion is for writing. She has been working on a novel since she was in fifth grade. She also enjoys serving at church by helping with the webcast and accompanying hymns on the violin during combined services at her congregation.

6. After graduation, Julia plans to study at the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, where she will study English and education.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18).

Advice: Julia’s advice for anyone still in school is to pursue the joy of learning the things you care about before you pursue the status of academic perfection.

Neisha Jean-Louis

2. Alix and Edelyne Jean-Louis

3. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

4. Neisha graduated from Archbishop Ryan High School on June 3, 2019.

5. In addition to working at Estée Lauder, she enjoys reading, writing, coding and playing volleyball and tennis.

6. She plans to major in computer science at Pennsylvania State University-Main Campus in the fall.



Jennifer Kellers



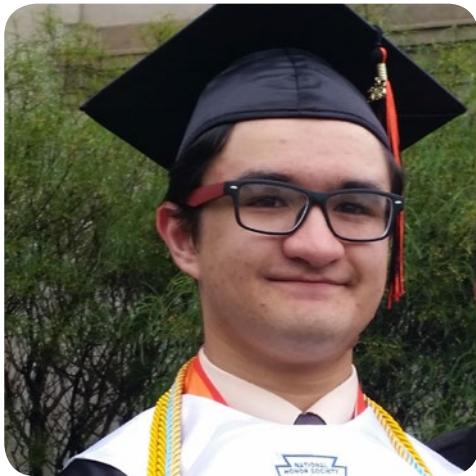
Andrew McGuire



Ariella McNally



Alexandra Oesterle



Christopher David Pacleb



Jennifer Phelps

7. *Favorite Scripture*: “And we know that all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose” (Romans 8:28).

Favorite poem: “Our Deepest Fear” by Marianne Williamson.

Favorite quote: “If you don’t stand for something, you’ll fall for anything.” –Peter Marshall.

Jennifer Kellers

2. Fred and Darline Kellers
3. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; formerly Loveland, Colorado
4. Jennifer graduated as an Oklahoma Academic Scholar from Norman North High School. She was a member of National Honors Society, FCCLA and Youth for Christ.
5. Her interests include cooking, antiques, hiking, horseback riding, reading, playing the piano, listening to John Denver, watching Hallmark movies and spending time with her friends, family, and cat (Miss Moppet).

6. Jennifer has been accepted to the University of Oklahoma and plans to obtain a degree in early childhood education. She plans to be a kindergarten teacher.

7. *Favorite quote*: “Nature is so fantastic. Enjoy it. Let it make you happy.” –Bob Ross.

Andrew McGuire

2. Brian and Laurie McGuire
3. Flint and Ann Arbor, Michigan
4. Andrew graduated summa cum

laude from Charyl Stockwell Preparatory Academy in Brighton, Michigan. He was in National Honor Society and was a student body representative. He has worked the last two years as a shift leader in the food industry which has allowed him to save money for his future.

5. Andrew loves the church camps he has attended and plans to continue serving at them whenever possible. He has also enjoyed his time spent with the Michigan Teen Speech Club. He enjoys playing basketball and football, but mostly loves to spend time fishing on his boat.

6. Andrew was awarded the Trustee Scholarship at Kettering University and plans to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering in automotive design starting this summer. He starts a four-year co-op with a Tier 1 automotive supplier after the Feast.

7. *Favorite Scripture*: “And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men” (Colossians 3:23).

Ariella McNally

2. Michael and Aimee McNally
3. San Jose, California
4. Ariella has been homeschooled preK-12th grade and has participated in many co-op activities including Girls Club, sports and art classes. She has several hundred community service hours including: working at a local animal shelter, baking and feeding the homeless, babysitting and visiting the elderly. She sang in a youth choir and took piano lessons for four years. She finished four years of Ameri-

can Heritage Girls Club, receiving several awards. She was an avid contributor on the DIY.org website and received 38 staff picks for her art and creative entries.

5. Ariella enjoys cross-fit, ultimate frisbee, hiking and being out in God’s Creation. She has traveled to many overseas Feast sites and spent a summer in France. She enjoys creative cooking, baking and sharing meals with family, friends and brethren.

6. After graduation, she will attend a local community college with plans to transfer to a four-year university. She would like to give thanks to her family and friends for their support and love during her high school years.

7. *Favorite Scripture*: “Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

Alexandra Oesterle

2. Loren Oesterle and Blanca Oesterle
3. Los Angeles, California
4. Alexandra graduated from Glendora High School.
5. While in high school, Alexandra played oboe in the band and wind ensemble. She also was a member of the Color Guard and Winter Guard.
6. After graduation, she will attend Citrus College.

Christopher David Pacleb

2. Hilario and Carolyn Pacleb; grandson of Leah Goltz
3. Dayton, Ohio
4. Chris graduated valedictorian from Stivers School for the Arts. He earned the National School Orchestra Award and was a member of National Honor Society, Mu Alpha Theta, Jazz Orchestra, 48 Strings and the Stivers Philharmonic. He also played in the Dayton Philharmonic Youth Orchestra for three years and joined the Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestra as assistant principal violist this year.

5. Chris enjoys composing, playing and singing for local church services, Feasts, Camp Cotubic, the Winter Family Weekend and the Midwest Teen Prom.

6. He will attend Atlantic Music Festival Institute in Maine this summer. Chris plans to major in viola performance and engineering at Miami University–Oxford, in the fall.

7. *Favorite Scripture*: “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:1-2).

Favorite quote: “This is where the fun begins” –Anakin Skywalker

Jennifer Phelps

2. Duane and Lisa Phelps
3. Cincinnati East, Ohio
4. Jennifer graduated from Ohio Virtual Academy. While in high school, she was a member of National Honor Society, was Student Council vice-president, made the high honor roll, was a mentor in Impact Academy and was a mentor for the Build-A-Bicycle STEM program. She graduated with a 4.33 GPA in the top 2 percent of her class of 1,527 students. She graduated with over a year of college classes completed and made the dean’s list at University of Cincinnati–Clermont College.
5. Jennifer has been dancing for 16 years, which has included training in ballet, pointe, tap, jazz and hip-hop among other styles. She also enjoys skiing, snowboarding and reading. Some of her favorite church activities included the Columbus, Ohio Teen Speech Club, Feasts, Camp Cotubic, serving on field games staff at preteen Camp Buckeye, Winter Camp (especially the off-site snowboarding trip), Winter Family Weekend and the Columbus, Ohio Teen Prom.
6. Jennifer has been accepted to the University of Cincinnati–Clermont



Mimi Margarete A. Presbitero

College, where she will pursue a degree in business management technology.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* "Being confident of this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

Favorite quote: "You know, sometimes all you need is twenty seconds of insane courage. Just literally twenty seconds of just embarrassing bravery. And I promise you, something great will come of it" (Benjamin Mee, "We Bought a Zoo").

Mimi Margarete A. Presbitero

2. James and Mesaila Presbitero

3. Butuan City, Philippines

4. Mimi graduated from Agusan National High School with an academic award in April 2019.

5. Her interests include singing, watching movies, playing sports and meeting people with the same beliefs. Her favorite part of the year is summer because she can attend United Youth Camps. Mimi loves attending UYC and spending time with people in the Church. She has attended UYC four times now. She has found that "each one is different, yet all awesome and full of learning." Mimi believes that UYC really helped her build godly character and socialize better, especially with co-believers. Mimi also participates in the Church choir during the Feast of Tabernacles. She has done archery for the last two years of her junior high school and it was the best years of her school experience. Another hobby is making paper art to give as presents to her friends.

6. This coming August, she will be entering college to pursue a bachelor of science degree in psychology.

7. *Favorite quote:* "The best view comes after the hardest climbs."

Olivia Urwiller

2. Randal and Penny Urwiller

3. East Texas

4. Olivia graduated as salutatorian from Hawkins High School on May 31, 2019. She was a member of National Honor Society for three years and secretary her senior year. She was also involved in student government throughout high school, serving as senior class president



Olivia Urwiller

and student body president. Olivia played volleyball and tennis throughout high school, lettering in both sports. She was the district champion in girls' singles her junior and senior year. She was named to the Academic All State First Team in tennis and to the Academic All District Team in volleyball. Olivia lettered in band and participated in UIL speaking events and the Technology Student Association where she was a state qualifier her junior and senior year. She was also a national qualifier her junior year and was named KTBB Scholastic All-Star her senior year.

5. Olivia enjoys working alongside and being with the brethren, serving on the cleaning, kitchen and sound crews. Olivia also enjoys playing tennis, working out, spending time with friends and family, listening to music and watching movies.

6. Olivia was awarded a Presidential Scholarship to Concordia University Wisconsin where she will be attending this fall to pursue a degree in kinesiology and a master of occupational therapy.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7) because it reminds her to keep the goal of the Kingdom firmly in mind.

Favorite quote: "Life is too short to wake up in the morning with regrets. So, love the people who treat you right, forgive the ones who don't and believe that everything happens for a reason."

Aurora Washburn

2. Bill and Kate Washburn

3. Indianapolis, Indiana

4. Aurora graduated from Eastern High School as an early graduate, earning academic honors and 12 college credits. She was a member of National Honor Society, Kiwanis Key Club (president), Family and Consumer Science Club (president), Students Against Destructive Decisions (board member), Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Writing Club (president), Eastern High School Ambassador and Varsity Bowling. With her school she was able to travel to Washington D.C., Florida, Scotland and England.

5. Aurora participated in United Youth



Aurora Washburn

Camps for many years as both a volunteer and a camper. She was part of the Columbus, Ohio, Teen Speech Club for one year and the Indianapolis, Indiana, Teen Bible Study. Aurora was baptized in 2017. She has been learning American Sign Language (ASL). She enjoys baking, reading, writing and spending time with her great church friends.

6. Aurora will begin attending Purdue University in the fall. She plans to study speech, language and hearing science for her bachelor's degree and speech pathology for her master's degree, both at Purdue University.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened" (Matthew 7:7-8).

Richard Keith Whitehead III

2. Richard and Rachel Whitehead, Jr.

3. Omaha, Nebraska

4. R.K. has participated in church choir and was on preteen camp staff. He also attended United Youth Camps for several years. Homeschooled from an early age, R.K. was able to take advantage of many opportunities, one of them being dual enrollment at Metropolitan Community College during his high school years. As a result, he will graduate from high school one week prior to his college commencement where he has earned his associate degree in science. R.K. has played high school lacrosse, flag football and participated in Teen Serve, Teen Court and Toastmasters. He is also an Eagle Scout.

5. This fall he will attend College of the Ozarks in Point Lookout, Missouri in pursuit of his medical degree.

6. *Favorite Scripture:* "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You" (Psalm 119:11).

Cole Wickham

2. Eric and Sarah Wickham

3. Cedar Rapids, Iowa

4. Cole graduated with high honors, a GPA over 4.0 and within the top 10 of his class. He has received an academic letter all four years and multiple varsity let-



Richard Keith "R.K." Whitehead III



Cole Wickham

ters for both golf and football. He played various sports during high school which included golf, football, track, basketball and swimming. Cole also served on Student Council and was selected for both the National Youth Leadership Conference and National Honor Society. Upon graduation, he qualified for a Silver Cord by exceeding a set number of volunteer hours throughout his high school career, also receiving an Excellence in Science award. He also made the dean's list at the community college where he took dual credit classes. During Cole's senior year, he was able to intern in the radiology department at the local hospital. The last two years, he has worked as a lifeguard and in other capacities with his community's parks and recreation department.

5. Cole has attended camp almost every year since he was five, starting with pre-teen camp before moving into teen summer and winter camps. He enjoys playing sports, working out and spending time with friends and family.

6. Cole plans to attend college in the fall to pursue an undergraduate degree within the realm of pre-medicine. He then plans to attend Baylor College of Medicine to begin a doctoral program specializing in radiology.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* "Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and my enter through the gates into the city." (Revelation 22:14). **UN**

Gerald Seelig Retires As Corporate Secretary



Dr. Ward presents Mr. Seelig with a gift in honor of his service as corporate secretary.

The United Church of God would like to recognize Gerald Seelig for his dedicated service as corporate secretary of the United Church of God and secretary of the Council of Elders. For the past 20 years, Mr. Seelig has worked tirelessly, guiding the Church as a legal organization through transitions and administration changes to ensure that UCGIA maintains compliance with corporation requirements. Possessing a thorough

knowledge of the bylaws and responsible for ensuring their correct implementation, he has been vital to the success of UCGIA as a nonprofit through his diligence and commitment to the governing system. Mr. Seelig is also the banking and investment manager for United Church of God and will continue to serve in this capacity after his retirement from corporate and Council secretary, which took effect on July 1, 2019.

A few who worked closely with him during his time in this role reflected on the value of his service to UCG and God's people:

Peter Eddington, Media and Communication Services operation manager: "Mr. Seelig will be greatly missed as corporate secretary for the Church. His decades of service in this regard have brought a sense of stability and important continuity from Council to Council and administration to administration. His knowledge of the organization's Constitution, Bylaws and Rules of Association has been invaluable—with him being the 'go to' person when questions would arise as to precedent, interpretation and intent behind our governing documents. Mr. Seelig has made a great contribution to the work of the Church."

Donald Ward, chairman of the Council of Elders: "As chairman of the Council of Elders it has been a pleasure working with Gerald. The chairman of the COE relies a great deal on the secretary. He is always available and very responsive to fulfilling whatever he is asked to do. Gerald is a person of high integrity—a person of high character in every sense of the word. He is fair and balanced and has been able to

handle his duties as a true professional."

Victor Kubik, president: "Gerald and I have shared a wall between our offices for the past six years, and have known each other for 50 years. We speak every day when together in the home office as we are co-workers as well as friends. I admire his and Connie's openness to those of like mind. They are tireless, indispensable workers."

"Since the start of the United Church of God 25 years ago, Gerald, as Secretary of the Council, has been the knowledgeable and authoritative voice of the Council of Elders. His experience has always found solutions to challenges. He is knowledgeable in our governing process, and even more knowledgeable as a Christian in how to wisely explain and resolve matters at hand."

Frank Dunkle, incoming corporate secretary: "Gerald Seelig has served UCG as secretary for most of its corporate existence, and his experience and knowledge are a very valuable asset to the church. He's made a challenging job look easy. It has been a pleasure to work with him to learn the job, and I'm very thankful that he'll be around to provide guidance and advice as needed." **UN**

Milestones for Home Office Employees



Peter Eddington and Victor Kubik with Janet Treadway, Tom Disher and Diane Bailey.

In a ceremony on Monday, May 20, three home office employees were recognized for their hard work and dedication to God's Church. Diane Bailey has worked for the Church for 40 years, the past several years primarily as Executive Assistant for the President's office but also in the Church's legal office. Janet Treadway was recognized for 20 years of ser-

vice to the Church contributing articles to various UCG publications and working as the Outgoing Mail Clerk at the home office. Tom Disher was recognized for 10 years of service and currently works as the Senior Web Developer for UCG's online publications and promoter for *Beyond Today*. **UN**

Updates from Ministerial and Member Services

In April, Mr. John Petrisor was appointed interim pastor for the Seattle, Washington congregation.

At the beginning of June, Mr. Devin Schulz was appointed pastor for the Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo and Lansing, Michigan congregations. We thank Mr. Mike Joseph for his service to those congregations over the past eight years.

On Pentecost, June 9, David Elliott was

ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Hannah, serve in the London (Central), United Kingdom, congregation.

On June 15, Joel Borton was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Suzanne, serve in the Fort Wayne, Indiana congregation.

Please continue to pray for the men and wives who serve God and His people.

Chris Rowland

ABC Continuing Education Program Held for the 20th Year



The 20th class to attend the ABC Continuing Education Program.

During the week of June 16, Ambassador Bible College conducted its 20th five-day Continuing Education Program. Thirty-seven students attended six hours of classes each day, starting the day with a shared breakfast at the home office before classes commenced. The topics were excerpted from the ABC curriculum to give a sampling of the longer 9 month program. These topics included "Studies in I Corinthians" by Steve Myers, "Babylon and the Beast" by Darris McNeely, "Genesis: Jacob's Journey" by Frank Dunkle,

and more. Among the students, some had attended the program every single year since it began, but there were also some participating for the first time. The program provided opportunity for good fellowship along with biblical instruction.

The ABC Continuing Education Program is held every summer in June for those who want to spend a week laboring in the word of God with others of like mind. For more information, please email frank_dunkle@ucg.org.

Frank Dunkle

Is Law Harsh?

Continued from page 3

even defined godly love as “keeping the commandments” (1 John 5:3).

When it comes to how to live your life, law is wonderful. In England, I drive on the left side of the road, respecting their laws, while in the U.S. I drive on the right side. I follow each country’s laws. I don’t try to force my preference on the country I visit. I comply.

Let’s look at what would happen if we did away with these driving laws created by man. If we decided to drive on whichever side of the road we wish, the result would be chaos, accidents and death. It would not be showing love to God or our neighbor.

But how do you show love toward God, a requirement Jesus made, if it is not by following God’s laws?

Satan realized that if we keep different laws it brings what he wants: chaos. Thus he has deceived the whole world into choosing its own laws, whether in physical elements, moral or spiritual. You can’t have world peace without a common law.

In America, people tout diversity as strength. Indeed, it can be strength, and it was when people came to this country in prior centuries and assimilated into the population and accepted the laws of the land. With immigrants, old and new, all keeping the same laws set up by our founding fathers on a biblical base, we have had tremendous prosperity. God directed a single law for all in Israel (Exodus 12:49; Leviticus 24:22; Numbers 15:16).

However, recent immigration has not brought strength when people come and try to bring their own different set of laws with them. We see that when communities want to set up Sharia Law in parts of America and Europe. In many ways, these two sets of laws are so different that keeping the one violates the other.

The world, under Satan’s sway, will eventually try to create one world government, selling it as a panacea to mankind’s problems. But it will be under Satan’s selfish way of life, and will never benefit all people. We will see the failure of man’s final attempt to rule himself before the return of Christ to start the Millennium.

When Jesus Christ returns, He will set up one law for all people and require them to keep it. God’s law will bring peace and prosperity and the opportunity for salvation “by grace” to all who will accept it. **UN**



Local Church UPDATES

Dayton Congregation Aids Tornado Victims

On May 27, the Dayton, Ohio area was hit with at least 13 tornadoes. Many neighborhoods were devastated and there was quite a bit of damage to Hara Arena—a venue used many years for the Feast of Tabernacles. Thankfully, no members were injured and only a couple sustained any physical damage to their property. Some were without water, phone, Internet and electricity for a few days. The Dayton congregation collected \$1,563, many

cases of water, food, toiletries, diapers and other items needed by our neighbors who have lost so much. We have been distributing supplies to neighborhood relief centers who are very grateful for the donated items. Thank you for your continued prayers for our area as clean up and relocating those who had their homes destroyed will be an ongoing process that will take months.

Ron Barker



A tree branch punctures a Dayton home.

Old Friendships Rekindled During Unleavened Bread in Cleveland



The First Day of Unleavened Bread this year was a very special day for the United Church of God Cleveland congregation. They hosted a combined Holy Day service with brethren from the Church of God International. A total of 180 brethren attended from several northern Ohio congregations. Services were held at the UCG-owned church building in Grafton, Ohio. After the service, a potluck was held along with an ice cream social. Some individuals who had not seen each other for 30 years were able to rekindle

old friendships.

The service was conducted in a split-sermon format with CGI elder Wayne Hendrix giving the first sermon and UCG pastor Greg Thomas giving the second message. Other duties were shared by both congregations. The service also included extended special music after the Holy Day offering. Each fellowship uses different colored envelopes for the offering. Members from both fellowships expressed delight and excitement with the opportunity to worship and fellowship together.

Left: Brethren fellowship during a potluck. Below: Elder Wayne Hendrix gives a split-sermon during the combined service.



This relationship began in November 2016 when UCG president Victor Kubik was invited to speak at a CGI Sabbath service in Medina, Ohio. After the service, Greg Thomas (pastor of the Cleveland congregation) suggested to Bill Watson (the CGI pastor) that their congregations worship together during the upcoming Spring Holy Days in 2017. Mr. Watson and Mr. Thomas were long-time acquaintances going back to their first meeting in 1971.

The invitation was accepted and a relationship was forged. The two fellowships combined for a service during the first day of Unleavened Bread in 2017 and the mutual friendship has been maintained since that time.

Greg Thomas



Upcoming Events

Dates of Portsmouth Congregation's 50th Anniversary Celebration and Third Annual Enrichment Weekend Announced

The Portsmouth, Ohio congregation will be hosting two exciting upcoming events! First, we will be hosting our 50th Church Anniversary Celebration on the Sabbath of July 20. We are currently looking for any family or friends who attended Portsmouth in the past 50 years to join us for this event.

Sabbath services are scheduled to begin at 1:00 p.m. with Mr. Don Hooser as the guest speaker. A meal and reception will follow. If you are interested and able to attend, please RSVP to kevin_call@ucg.org for planning purposes. Hope to see many of you there!

Kevin Call

Together with the Prestonsburg, Kentucky congregation, we would like to invite you to our Third Annual Enrichment Weekend at beautiful Butler Springs Christian Camp in Hillsboro, Ohio. The weekend topic is "Who is Like a Friend?", and you may join up to 144 new and old friends on the weekend of

August 16-18 for this event. The cost is just \$20 a person or \$50 a family. This includes spiritual food, physical food, fellowship and lodging. If interested, you may contact us at kevin_call@ucg.org. We would love to have you join us for this fun-filled weekend!

Kevin Call



Local Church UPDATES

Phoenix Holds Annual Spring Dance During the Days of Unleavened Bread

The Phoenix churches combined for the first day of Unleavened Bread. During the announcement period of the holy day service, southwest regional and Phoenix pastor, Jim Tuck, called on three men from the combined congregation to come forward to the stage.

Mr. Tuck announced these men were going to be ordained deacons. All elders who were present assisted in ordaining Mike Bose of the northwest Phoenix church, Rheo Knudson and Stephen Tuck of the Phoenix east congregation. Brethren were pleased to see these three men ordained, and while it was recognized that these men have already been serving in the capacity of deacon by their personal service in the church, they are now officially

ordained into the ecclesiastical office.

In the evening after the first day of Unleavened Bread service, the Phoenix congregations hosted what has become an annual spring dance with brethren coming from the northern Arizona church and other congregations in the region.

The 160 brethren who attended the festive event enjoyed a sumptuous dinner together while enjoying much friendly fellowship. Assistant pastors Scott McKeon and Monte Knudson coordinated the event along with a team of other brethren who worked to make this special activity successful.

The dance took place after the meal and included excellent music and lighting coordinated by John Karlik, a deacon of the Bakersfield congregation. Mr. Karlik played



The three newly ordained deacons and their wives.

music of multiple genres, which was appealing to all ages.

Conner and Courtney Ferrier coordinated some special touches to help make the evening unique and special, such as

providing a photobooth-style background so members could take memento pictures of the event. The night was a fitting and enjoyable ending to a truly special holy day.

Scott McKeon

10th Annual Dinner to Honor Senior Brethren in Columbia, Maryland

For the 10th year, the senior brethren in the Columbia, Maryland congregation were honored. This annual event is held to follow God's instruction in Leviticus 19:32: "You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man and fear your God: I am the LORD." There were 19 who attended the dinner on May 18. The theme this year was "An Evening of Jazz." As the guests entered the room, soft jazz music welcomed them.

The evening began with the new assistant pastor in the area, Steven Britt, addressing the guests. He reminded them that they were not at the dinner just to socialize but were invited because they are respected for their years of experience walking with God! He also thanked them for their service to the congregation.

The seniors were then treated to a performance by children, youth and teens in the congregation who sang "I Sing for Joy." A delightful meal followed, consisting of a French country salad, Chicken Francaise, French onion potatoes and pastry-wrapped asparagus. Dessert was a lemon tart. The meal was prepared by some of the ladies and served by youth and teens from the congregation.

Rhonda Diggins



Announcements



Alyce Grace Emehiser

Born June 6, 2019



Gordon LaMar Summers, Jr.

April 8, 2019



Jillian Pauline Prescod

May 8, 2019



Bernard & Colette Audoin

65th Wedding Anniversary



William Dwornik & Linda Merrick

May 12, 2019



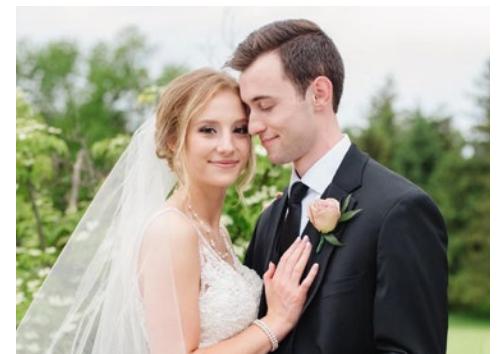
Tracy Grant & Lynn Gaudio

June 2, 2019



David Rains & Kayla Weaner

May 27, 2019



Alan Waterhouse & Kendall Hermann

May 26, 2019

Births

Alyce Grace Emehiser

Raymond and Lauryn Emehiser of the Lewiston, Idaho congregation are pleased to announce the birth of their first child Alyce Grace, born June 6, 2019. Alyce weighed 7 lbs., 4 oz. and was 19 in. long.

Grandparents Ron and Donna Raudenbush and Jeff and Berenice Emehiser as well as great grandparents Greg and Nancy Czech are overjoyed with the additional blessing to the family.

Jillian Pauline Prescod

Stephen and Chrisian Prescod are excited to announce the birth of their daughter, Jillian Pauline Prescod. She was born on the evening of May 8, 2019 weighing 7 lbs., 3.2 oz. and measuring 18.5 in. long. As their first daughter, she has been welcomed home with love by parents, overjoyed big brothers Alexander and Lincoln, as well as extended family, friends and the New England congregations (Worcester, Massachusetts and Londonderry, New Hampshire) that they attend.

Gordon LaMar Summers, Jr.

Gordon and Rosemarie Summers joyfully announce the birth of their first child, Gordon LaMar Summers, Jr., who was born on April 8, 2019 weighing 6 lbs., 10 oz. and measuring 19.5 in. long. The Summers recently moved from Columbia, Maryland to Red Lion, Pennsylvania. Gordon Jr. is the second grandchild of Charles and Karen Lavaty of the Los Angeles, California area.

Anniversaries

Bernard and Colette Audoin

Bernard and Colette Audoin are celebrating their 65th wedding anniversary on Aug. 14, 2019. They have been members of God's Church in France for 53 years.

They first heard the truth in 1964, were both baptized on the same day in 1966 and attended the first Church of God service ever held in Paris in 1967. They have two daughters and two sons-in-law, Annette and Victor Bernal in France and Maryse and Tim Pebworth in California. They have five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren living in France, California and Florida.

Colette was ordained a deaconess in 1969 and Bernard a deacon in 1968, and an elder in 1973. He worked for the French National Railway company as an electrician before being hired full-time in the ministry in 1974. Over the years, he pastored churches in Geneva (Switzerland), Lyon, Angers, Toulouse, Nimes, Narbonne and Bordeaux (France) before his retirement in 1994. Since then, he and his wife have continued to serve the United Church of God by proofreading the *Pour l'Avenir* magazine (*Beyond Today* in French) and various other Church letters and publications.

Bernard also contributes by providing, as he is able, French sermon recordings for the members in France and other French-speaking countries and serving during the Feast of Tabernacles.

Weddings

William Dwornik and Linda Merrick

John and Kathy Merrick of Crown Point, Indiana and Bill and Sherry Dwornik of Lorena, Texas are excited to announce the marriage of their children Linda Merrick and William Dwornik on May 12, 2019.

The two were married in Newport, Kentucky, at the Carnegie Hall Newport which used to be a library and was built in 1898. They had a vintage inspired wedding. Close friend and minister Lewis VanAusdler officiated the ceremony and about 90 friends and family celebrated with the couple. The couple lives in Austin, Texas, and attends the UCG congregation there. However, they plan to make time to visit various congregations in Texas.

Tracy Grant and Lynn Gaudio

Tracy Grant and Lynn (Gaudio) Grant are happy to announce the union of their marriage on June 2, 2019. The wedding ceremony took place on the banks of the Clearwater River in Orofino, Idaho, on a beautiful sunny afternoon.

The mountains and the flowing river were the backdrop for the special day. The ceremony was officiated by Paul Moody, pastor of the Lewiston/Spokane congregations. Friends witnessed the joining of the couple with each other and with God.

Afterwards, everyone enjoyed a delightful reception which included dinner, conversation and music. Tracy and Lynn know how very blessed they are to have had God the Father and His son bring

them together, equally yoked spiritually and compatible in all areas.

Tracy and Lynn enjoy fellowshiping with the brethren, wherever they may be found, such as in the United Church of God, Lewiston, Idaho congregation, Pacific Church of God, Church of the Great God and Intercontinental Church of God. Tracy and Lynn look forward to building their marriage based on the biblical principles God has ordained for marriage in His word.

David Rains and Kayla Weaner

Alan and Christina Weaner and Roger and Erica Rains are pleased to announce the marriage of their children, Kayla Weaner and David Rains. About 180 guests joined the couple to mark the start of their new life together on Memorial Day, Monday, May 27, 2019.

The wedding ceremony was held in a stone church from 1787 in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and officiated by assistant pastor Steven Britt. The reception luncheon was held in the detached fellowship hall and chapel. The couple now attends the Worcester, Massachusetts congregation.

Alan Waterhouse and Kendall Hermann

Karl and Lori Hermann of Fort Wayne, Indiana and Roy and Michelle Waterhouse of Columbus, Ohio are pleased to announce the wedding of Kendall Hermann and Alan Waterhouse on May 26, 2019 at Orchard Ridge Country Club in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The groom's

Announcements



Phyllis M. Hagquist

June 30, 1925–April 12, 2019



Susan Horton

July 9, 1956–Oct. 3, 2018

father, Roy Waterhouse, performed the ceremony which was attended by about 180 of the couple's family and closest friends.

The very happy couple will reside in Cleveland, Ohio where Alan will finish his bachelor of science in mechanical engineering and a master's degree in engineering management at Case Western Reserve University. Kendall will attend Cleveland State University in pursuit of her doctorate in physical therapy.

Obituaries

Phyllis M. Hagquist

Phyllis M. Hagquist, 93, of Malmo, Minnesota, died on Friday, April 12, 2019 in Aitkin Health Services. She was born June 30, 1925 in Linton, North Dakota to Ferdinand and Frieda (Berreth) Hetterle.

Phyllis grew up on a farm near Temvik,

North Dakota and graduated from Temvik High School in 1943 as valedictorian. She received her bachelor of music degree from the Chicago Conservatory of Music and taught piano in Bismarck, North Dakota for 25 years. She was united in marriage to Dennis Hagquist on Oct. 19, 1969 in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Phyllis and Dennis lived on a small dairy farm near Malmo. They enjoyed driving the countryside and greatly enjoyed their cats, dogs and birds. Phyllis enjoyed telling of the cute tricks they would do.

One of the ways Phyllis served was by playing piano at church services, weddings and funerals. She also sewed hundreds of quilt tops for Retired and Senior Volunteer Program and knitted fleece mittens. Her other hobbies included drawing, painting pictures, reading and making banners and clocks.

She and Dennis enjoyed a happy and

abundant life and were married for 37 years until his accidental death from a tractor roll-over on Sept. 17, 2007. After Dennis died, Phyllis sold the farm and moved to Maryhill Manor in Aitkin, Minnesota. Phyllis is preceded in death by her husband, Dennis, and her parents. Phyllis leaves behind cousins and many friends.

Susan Horton

Susan Horton died on Oct. 3, 2018. She was born on July 9, 1956 in Euclid, Ohio and grew up in Cleveland, Ohio. Her father was called to the faith when she was 10 years old. Despite her father being blind, he was very active with woodworking and electronics and Susan enjoyed helping him on projects. Susan met Joseph Horton and they were married in March 1975. She was devoted to her family and had a special way of helping and inspiring them in ways they needed it most. She particularly enjoyed getting anniversary and birthday cards to arrive on the exact day!

Susan's hobbies included photography, bowling and putt-putt golf—especially at the Feast of Tabernacles. She spent many Feasts at Wisconsin Dells, including her last one in 2017. She also had an affinity for horses and dolphins. Susan was a natural peace-maker, with a patient and kind spirit. Many family and friends said they never heard her say a negative thing

about another person. She truly put others ahead of herself every day of her life.

Susan was skilled in working with numbers and budgeting. She had an 18-year career at American Greetings in Financial Services. At home, she preferred the “old-fashioned” way and was still writing paper checks for most bills. She also still used a paper map to find places. Susan diligently managed her household and career and Joseph said that she was “a Proverbs 31 woman.” He shared that she was “the most wonderful wife a man could have, for 43 years.”

She is survived by her spouse Joseph R.; sons Joseph J. (Tina) and David; sister and brother-in-law B.J. and Greg Thomas; sister Linda Shoulders (Michael); and grandchildren Marissa Tranquada (John) and Jacob. We miss her dearly and can't wait to see her again, glorified in the Kingdom. **UN**

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. **Email is preferred**, but we will also take physical mail as well! Please include a self-addressed envelope if you'd like photos returned.

Chicago Hosts Young Adults Weekend

The Chicago congregation hosted its annual young adult weekend in April, welcoming over 45 young people for fellowship and spiritual growth while studying themes from 1 Peter 3:15—“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”

The weekend began on the last day of Unleavened Bread with an interactive Bible study from Mr. Bob Fahey on what it means to have God sanctified in your heart. Mr. Randy D'Alessandro's sermon “Leaving Spiritual Egypt Behind” showed that this day pictures us leaving spiritual Egypt and the false hopes that Satan would have us embrace. This was followed later that evening by a breakout session considering common scenarios in which Christians are asked to defend their faith.

The Sabbath Bible study was presented by Mr. Bill Bradford and examined God's Word as an anchor for the hope that lies within us. During Sabbath services Mr. D'Alessandro explained how daily review

and study of God's Word maintains, renews and builds the hope we have in Christ's return.

That evening, the group congregated at the Fahey home to enjoy fellowship, build-your-own kababs and a desert bar! A second breakout session looked at ways to respond with meekness to questions that had been brainstormed the previous evening. This was followed by a series of fun trivia and improvisation games challenging the young people to be creative and test their memory!

The weekend concluded on Sunday with a brunch in downtown Chicago—complete with a full buffet including delicious options from fresh fruit to waffles and a chocolate fondue fountain! Mr. Fahey presented a final seminar on encouraging hope in our lives and then the group explored some Chicago landmarks such as Millennium Park and the famous Cloud Gate sculpture. Thank you to all who attended this weekend of inspiring messages and relationship-building!

Kaitlyn Gjesvold



The attendees of the Chicago Young Adults weekend in front of the Cloud Gate sculpture.

Linda Dwornik Recognized for Service to United News

The United Church of God home office staff would like to thank Linda Dwornik for four years of outstanding service to this organization through her work as managing editor of *United News*.

President Victor Kubik commented, “We really enjoyed and appreciated Linda’s presence at the home office. She is a creative, resourceful person whose skills fit the jobs that needed to be done. She was very conscientious about all the various internal publications that needed to be created. She always used good judgment and made certain that our Church’s mission was never compromised. Linda is interested in people in other parts of the world and has traveled to South America, Africa and other places to participate in Youth Corps projects. We will miss her infectious bright smile and hope that she will come back to visit us from time to time.”

Media and Communications Services operation manager Peter Eddington reflected on Linda’s service: “She was a pleasure to have around the home office, and her work on our internal publications—including *United News*, the Camp Magazine and the Festival Brochure—was very much appreciated. She will be greatly missed as a valuable member of our Media and Communications Services department.”



Linda Dwornik

Beyond Today presenter Darris McNeely: “Linda did an amazing job as the managing editor of *United News*. How she jockeyed all the articles and edits for the dozens of different items each issue always impressed me. She was a pleasure to work with over the years.”

Editorial content editor and former managing editor of *United News* Mitch Moss commented: “Linda’s natural, friendly demeanor made her a fun person to work with. Her love for travel gives her a wide perspective of the world, and her love of children and experience in the classroom made her especially suited to working on UCG’s youth education resources. It was satisfying to see, after apprenticing her in *United News* and the rest of the Church’s internal publications when she first started, the ways she went on to bring a fresh perspective to bear on them.” **UN**

Letter from the New Associate Editor

Dear Readers,

As the new associate editor of *United News*, I want to take a moment to introduce myself. I’m pleased to serve the Church in this way and feel blessed to be able to get to know more of the brethren through the local church updates and announcements we print in the *United News*. Although I may never meet you all in person, I appreciate that this role provides a way to connect likeminded people from around the world through the news we publish.

Writing and editing has always been a passion of mine. I hold a bachelor’s degree in English and I spent my years in college tutoring essay structure, writing, researching university publication trends and editing a literary magazine called *First Circle*. My last year of college, I oversaw the entire editorial process of *First Circle*, from soliciting student content submissions on campus to physically taking the finished manuscript to the printers. During that time, I ran meetings with the editorial staff and magazine contributors in addition to editing and formatting the magazine before publication.

Last year, I attended ABC and interned in the media department as a web content editor. In this way, I was able to spend time training for this position while attending ABC. Although it was tiring at times because of the rigorous ABC schedule, I appreciated the teaching that Linda Merrick (now Dwornik), as the managing editor, offered. I hope to continue the commitment to excellence of the *United News* that



Ariana Del Signore

she demonstrated.

As the associate editor of internal publications, my job responsibilities include editing the Camp Magazine, Festival Brochure and ABC pictorial in addition to the *United News*. This process includes seeking articles, editing text and creating the layout of these publications from start to finish. I also post the *United News* online each issue, as well as other updates on the members website such as Feast sites, upcoming events, featured articles, Family Study Guides or letters from the president or chairman. Additionally, I run the presenter’s notes during *Beyond Today* recordings.

I’m thankful for this opportunity to serve members of the Body of Christ in this capacity and will be diligent to give this work the best that I can offer. You can always reach me at UN@ucg.org, and if you ever make it to the home office, feel free to stop by and say hello.

Sincerely,

Ariana Del Signore

Portland, Oregon Hosts Women’s Enrichment Weekend



Ladies listen to Sandy Cafourek’s presentation at Portland’s women’s enrichment weekend.

Around 95 ladies from Washington, Oregon, California and Kentucky gathered on Feb. 22-24, 2019 for this year’s Portland, Oregon Women’s Enrichment

Weekend. It was hosted, for the 13th year, by the lovely Canby Grove Conference Center. This forested river-front venue was the perfect environment for

the theme of the Weekend, “Growing in Gratitude.”

Lisa Richards gave the opening presentation, “A Temple of Gratitude,” on Friday night which set the tone for the weekend. Tia Christopher sang “My Grateful Spirit Sings” which was followed by an enjoyable hymn-sing and lively fellowship.

After a delicious Sabbath breakfast, Mr. Bob Dick and Mr. Fred Reeves gave split sermons that offered spiritual enlightenment on gratitude. Tammy Kelly directed a combined ladies’ choir gifting all with two beautifully fitting numbers to the theme this year titled “Joyful Thanks” and “Reasons to Thank You.” On Sabbath afternoon, Sharon Browning gave a thoughtful presentation titled “Gratitude: Change Your Life—Change Your Vision.” Later Sharon offered an encouraging vocal solo “Be Still and Know.” Rounding out the Sabbath, Kathleen Kelly, Lindsay Campbell, Vicki Rising and Carmella Weis, our panel presenters, shared moving and uplifting stories of how gratitude has shaped their lives.

Saturday evening was full of laughter as the ladies enjoyed the annual and very popular silent auction organized

by Dona Banister, which was anything but silent—instead filled with lively interactions among the ladies cementing their friendships and sharing the joy of being together. The ladies raised \$1,200 at the auction, all of which will go to the UCG Good Works Program.

On Sunday, LeeAnn Luker led an interactive workshop where groups were formed to discuss ways to express and feel gratitude. To complete the weekend, Sandy Cafourek provided a moving presentation titled “Tragedy and Tears . . . Growth and Gratitude.” She shared the grief felt after the loss of her husband of almost 48 years, pastor John Cafourek, now reflecting on the heartfelt gratitude for blessings and support received.

The bonds of friendship, laughs and tears shared on this weekend were expressed in a closing hymn with a moving song called “Daughters in the Lord” by Mark Graham. Many also shared their gratitude for being able to attend the Women’s Enrichment Weekend and their plans to attend again next year.

Carmella Weis, Tina Slocum
and Becky Hornor

Garden Grove Congregation Enjoys Its 20th Sabbath in the Park



The Garden Grove congregation sings hymns together in the park.

On April 6, 2019, the Garden Grove congregation hosted its 20th Sabbath in the Park in the beautiful rustic Irvine Regional Park in Orange, California. Most of the 92 attendees were from the Garden Grove congregation but others from nearby congregations came for this special Sabbath held in God's Creation.

An area under a green canopy of carob trees surrounded by towering oaks, sycamores and open grassy areas had been reserved for services and fellowship. The Garden Grove congregation has continued to host this special Sabbath in the Park twice a year, beginning this tradition in the fall of 2009.

Services began at 11 a.m. Enrique Vidal gave the sermonette and Mario Seigle, pastor of the Garden Grove

congregation, shared recent scientific discoveries on God's amazing design of the human genome.

The hymns were accompanied by six talented guitarists. After services concluded, the group enjoyed a delicious barbecue hamburger and hot dog lunch along with tasty salads, side dishes and desserts provided by the brethren, followed by relaxing fellowship.

This day is always a special treat for many of the regular Sabbath crews who were able to enjoy a relaxing day off from their regular duties, allowing them more time to visit with brethren. These biannual Sabbaths in the Park are one of the Garden Grove congregation's favorite activities.

Jean Updegraff

ABC Graduation

continued from page 1

to gain wisdom, leadership skills and biblical knowledge. They took classes that covered all the books of the Bible. There were also units devoted to discussions on practical Christianity, apologetics and career direction. Additionally, students learned public speaking and financial planning skills. Over the course of the year, the students were able to form lasting relationships, sit in on *Beyond Today* television studio recordings, record podcasts with Mr. Kubik and attend Sabbath services at the General Conference of Elders weekend.

While attending ABC, the class also completed many service projects: they produced a fundraiser cookbook, served the community through leaf-raking and

garbage pick-up, babysat about 40 children during Cincinnati East's Marriage Enrichment Weekend, presented the annual Charity Auction and hosted numerous social events for the class and members of the Cincinnati East congregation. In addition, they accompanied, directed and sang in the choir while performing in various congregations around the Midwest. This year's class of ABC students grew close to one another while learning, serving, laughing and, this winter, grieving together over the loss of their eldest classmate, George Rusnak. The students completed their studies with the motto "Enter to Learn, Go Forth to Serve" in mind.

Post-graduation, students are expected to apply what they have learned in order to serve, teach, lead and edify the Body of Christ in their congregations—all stemming from the biblical foundation they have received over the past nine months.

Ariana Del Signore



Victor Kubik and Hayli Messer record a podcast about her ABC experience.

Mr. Kubik's *Inside United* podcast interviews with ABC students can be found at www.ucg.org/members/united-new/inside-united (Episodes 86, 88, 115 and 121).

An ABC Graduate's Reflection

by Autumn Boehland

Looking back on my experience at Ambassador Bible College, I can't help but think how blessed I have been with this opportunity to further my relationship with God and gain the knowledge and truth in His Word.

Not only did I grow spiritually and strengthen my core foundation of faith, I also gained a loving support group, lifelong friends and some of my favorite memories.

The ABC atmosphere is unlike anything I have experienced. It is a unique environment where students have a purpose and desire to learn God's truth.

From fall to spring, we took an in-depth look at the Bible and examined how God's plan was laid out from the very beginning. One of the most valuable truths I learned was a deeper understanding of the nature of God.

My favorite class was Former Prophets, taught by Mr. Steve Myers. Former Prophets covers the books of Joshua through Kings, showing the migration of ancient Israel as they entered and conquered the Promised Land. Those books made it clear that with faith and full trust in God, He will bless and protect us from our enemies. Along with biblical knowledge, I have also gained more confidence and determination to defend my faith against the false teaching of society.

My favorite memories from ABC were singing in the chorale and serving God



and His people with music. We were all able to come together to blend in harmony through the passion and diligence of every member of that chorale. It was a great way for our class to bond, contributing to some of the most powerful and meaningful friendships I have had.

These relationships encouraged me throughout my spiritual journey because we all grew together with the same desire to serve God and each other. After nine months of time with these people, I am proud to call the class of 2019 my family.

Taking off a whole year of school and moving across the country to attend ABC was one of the biggest risks I have taken in life, yet it was one of the best decisions.

I would recommend ABC to all who are interested in gaining a deeper understanding of God's truth, growing in all aspects of life and forming some of the best relationships you will ever have. [UN](#)

Interested In Learning More About ABC?

Visit abc.ucg.org to watch the ABC Experience Video, view the course catalogue or apply for ABC.

Your Answer to God's Grace

continued from page 3

blind man, saying to him, 'Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.' And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus. So Jesus answered and said to him, 'What do you want Me to do for you?' The blind man said to Him, 'Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go your way; your faith has made you well.' And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road" (Mark 10:49-52).

This blind man is different from the seeing "many." He cannot see what they see, and yet Bart sees *much more*. He announces Jesus' character, His person, His act, as "mercy." Jesus then says, "your faith" has made you well—Bart's faith. His faith allowed him to see something that the many could not see: that God is a God of mercy.

Bart announced a truth.

Trusting in God's Mercy

Trusting in God's mercy implies ceasing from making any excuses for your behavior. The moment you trust in God's mercy, you give up all apologies and excuses. You don't try to justify why you sinned.

Trusting in mercy is a final giving up of all reliance upon justice.

If you are on trial before a civil court, so long as you plead with excuses and try to justify your actions, you appeal to justice. But if you go before the court and plead guilty, offering no justification or apology whatsoever, you throw yourself upon the *mercy of the court*.

So it is in parenting our kids. If your child sternly justifies himself, he makes no appeal to mercy. But the moment your child casts himself into your arms with tears and says I am all wrong, he ceases to make excuses and trusts in your mercy.

So it is in God's realm. Trusting in mercy is a final giving up of all reliance upon justice. You have no more excuses and you make none. You need God's grace and mercy—and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ—if you are to live forever.

How do you respond to God's mercy and then approach His throne of grace?

The Gift of Grace

The apostle Paul reminded the Ephesian brethren: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9, emphasis added throughout).

Eternal life comes as a result of God's

grace and mercy. It is His gift, unearned and undeserved on our part. No one will ever be able to boast that he or she has earned or deserves the gift of eternal life.

But can we do things—or not do things—that will disqualify us from receiving that wonderful gift? If there is an authority on receiving eternal life, it has to be Jesus Christ. After all, He is the one through whom we receive it.

Note this statement from Hebrews: "And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him" (Hebrews 5:9).

God balances justice, and His insistence on us keeping His commandments, with mercy, by considering what is in the heart.

Since salvation is God's gift, what does this passage mean when it speaks of "eternal salvation to all who obey Him"? If we must do something to receive God's gift of salvation, how can it be a gift? And where does God's grace fit into the equation?

Gifts Can Have Conditions

God sets certain conditions for receiving salvation. Some conditions *enable us* to receive that gift, His grace, and other conditions *disqualify us* from receiving it.

To use an analogy, if someone offered to send you \$1 million if you would send him your bank account information, he would be offering you a gift. If you failed to provide the information, you would not receive the gift. You might complain, but you still would not receive the gift because you had not met the conditions.

On the other hand, if you sent the required bank account number and the \$1 million was deposited, you did not *earn* the gift. You simply met the necessary conditions. The fact that conditions are attached makes it no less a gift.

[But! Don't succumb to dangerous *scams* on this one!]

Since Jesus is the author of our salvation, let's examine just one of His statements that tell us what we must do to receive that gift: how to receive the million dollar inheritance—or, more appropriately, the gift of eternal life as a child in God's family.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but *he who does the will of My Father in heaven*" (Matthew 7:21).

Jesus made it clear that merely acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord and Master—saying "Lord, Lord"—is not sufficient. To inherit the Kingdom, we must *do something*. We must *do the will of the Father*, as He clearly stated.

Jesus wants us to understand that there is more to receiving eternal life than just mental acceptance—or just saying you love Him. Our conviction that He is our Savior

must be more than just a warm, comforting thought or intellectual concept.

At one point a wealthy young man asked Jesus how he could receive eternal life: "Now behold, one came and said to Him, 'Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?'" (Matthew 19:16).

Christ's reply, in verse 17, might shock some who think obedience to God's law is unnecessary. Notice Jesus response: "So He said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. *But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments*'" (Matthew 19:17).

Jesus didn't answer that nothing is required other than believing in God or in Him. He told the young man that he must *obey the commandments of God* to receive the gift of eternal life. This is, as Matthew 7:21 states, doing the "will of [the] Father in heaven."

God Balances Justice with Mercy

Let's add some balance to the equation. As blind "Bart" showed us, God is not only the God of justice but also the God of mercy. Look at the last part of the second of the Ten Commandments: "but showing *mercy to thousands*, to those who love Me and keep My commandments" (Exodus 20:6).

God balances justice, and His insistence on us keeping His commandments, *with mercy*, by considering what is in the heart. So long as that possibility exists, God is not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9).

We can be thankful that God's law considers first our *attitude*. One who is willing to "*sin no more*" is eligible for mercy instead of condemnation—as Jesus told the woman caught in adultery in John 8:11—go and sin no more. Mercy.

The Right Response to God's Grace and Mercy

The right approach to obeying God after we are forgiven is to *exceed* the mere letter of the law. We should obey it according to its intent (or spirit), not by doing only the bare minimum of what is explicitly stated. It serves us as *our guide* for attaining truly righteous thinking and behavior.

We can be thankful that God's law considers first our attitude. One who is willing to "sin no more" is eligible for mercy instead of condemnation

It is God's grace and mercy that allows us to be pardoned for our sins when we accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We are then eligible for the "gift" of eternal life. The word *grace* is regularly used by some religious people as if it replaces all need to obey God's law. That conclusion is very wrong. Here is the reason:

Without law there would be no *need* for grace. Grace refers to how God extends His *favor* to *repentant* sinners by *forgiving* their former disobedience of His law—their sins previously committed. This is necessary because everyone who sins *breaks the law*; in fact, *sin is lawlessness*. If there is no law to break, there is no such thing as sin. And if there is no sin the very idea of *grace*, as God's forgiveness, has no meaning at all.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Grace encompasses more than just the forgiveness for past sins. It also includes the *gift* of the Holy Spirit to help us obey God's laws. Indeed, it refers to *all* the free and unmerited gifts of God. It includes His help in initially turning us away from sin and leading us to His truth and way of life, His forgiveness of our past sins and ultimately His granting us the *greatest gift of all*—eternal life in His Kingdom.

What's our answer? We must ask God to fill us with the Holy Spirit. We must be willing to let God write His law in our heart!

The Holy Spirit is essential in our goal of eradicating sin. The key to solving the problem of sin is the help we receive through Jesus Christ. Jesus was born not only to make possible forgiveness of the past, but to help us conquer the pulls of sin, the entrenched habits that are so difficult to dislodge from our lives.

He is our merciful High Priest in heaven, interceding with the Father on our behalf—sitting at the Father's right hand. "Who is he who condemns? *It is Christ who died*, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Romans 8:34).

What Must We Do?

What's our answer? We must ask God to fill us with the Holy Spirit. We must be willing to let God write His law in our heart!

When God opens our mind to understand His ways, He now holds us responsible for what we know and do. God expects us to begin *changing our lives*. When living our lives it is comforting to remember those verses in Hebrews chapter 4: "Come boldly to the *throne of grace*, that we may *obtain mercy and find grace*."

With that assurance we can look forward to receiving another wonderful promise, the gift of eternal life.

Let's live our lives with confidence and thankfulness for the grace and mercy of God the Father, for our spiritual blindness having been removed, for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and for our elder brother and High Priest, Jesus Christ. **UN**

College/University

Congratulations! Class of 2019



Jacob Greider



Jessica Ryann Helwig



Kendall Hermann



Montana Hermann

Jacob Greider

3. Twin Cities, Minnesota

4. Jacob graduated from the University of Wisconsin–Stout with a bachelor of fine arts in industrial design. He graduated magna cum laude and from the Honors College, as well as being recognized as a 2019 IDSA Merit Award Nominee. He was president and lead instructor of his university's swing club, where he taught swing dancing and other dances.

5. He loves backpacking, running and canoeing and will be getting married in July. He is from the northern Chicago area and grew up attending the Milwaukee, Wisconsin congregation before moving to college and attending the Twin Cities, Minnesota congregation.

6. In college, he had an internship with Colony Brands, Inc. in southern Wisconsin and was offered a full-time position with them after graduation. He will be designing furniture, dinnerware and home decor among other things.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* “She said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more” (John 8:11).

Jessica Ryann Helwig

3. Milwaukee, Wisconsin

4. Jessica graduated summa cum laude from the University of Wisconsin–Platteville with a bachelor of science degree in soil and crop science. She has been active in different research projects taking place in the plant biotechnology laboratory at UW–Platteville.

Jessica also earned an undergraduate research internship in the Department of Plant Pathology at Cornell University. During her internship, she presented her research project at the Summer Scholar Day held at Cornell University. Along with peer mentoring students, Jessica has been honored with several scholarships including the Undergraduate Research Scholarship, Scholarly and Creative

Activity Scholarship, Academic Merit Scholarship and most recently the Ross Fellowship for the recruitment of outstanding, Ph.D.-track students to graduate programs at Purdue.

5. She enjoys baking homemade cinnamon rolls and breads. Jessica also loves to garden.

6. Jessica was accepted into the graduate program at Purdue University to begin her Ph.D. in plant pathology. She will begin her graduate assistantship position at Purdue in June.

7. *Favorite quote:* “If your dream doesn't last 100 years, you're not dreaming big enough.”

Kendall Hermann

2. Karl and Lori Hermann

3. Fort Wayne, Indiana

4. Kendall graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor of science in exercise science from Trine University. She graduated with a 4.0 GPA. While in college, Kendall was president of the Health Science Association and had an internship at Turnstone Center for Children and Adults with Disabilities. She also worked at Gap, Kohl's and Indiana Physical Therapy while attending school full-time. She has been accepted to Cleveland State University's doctorate of physical therapy program.

5. Kendall enjoys volleyball, exercising and attending church camps (Cotubic, Northwest Camp, Winter Camp, Camp Buckeye). She also enjoyed volunteering at a Youth Corps trip to Guatemala in 2016-17.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Montana Hermann

3. Fort Wayne, Indiana

4. Montana graduated from Trine University with a bachelor of science in bio-



Lauren Kellers

medical engineering. Throughout college she completed two internships and a co-op, graduating with a year and a half of work experience.

5. She loves cycling, backpacking, crocheting and visiting new congregations while traveling.

6. She is now living in the Madison, Wisconsin, area working for a company that develops clinical research software. She will also be getting married this summer!

7. *Favorite Scripture:* Isaiah 40:31

Lauren Kellers

2. Fred and Darline Kellers

3. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; formerly Loveland, Colorado.

4. Lauren graduated from The University of Alabama with a Bachelor of science degree in chemical engineering and graduated with university honors. Lauren was a resident advisor for three years.

5. Her interests are hiking, outdoor activities, traveling, reading and spending time with friends and family.

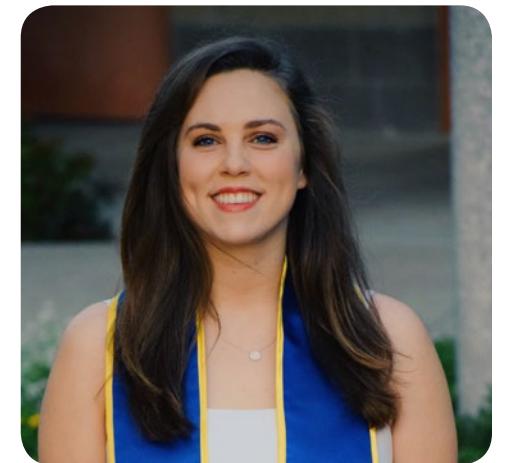
6. Lauren will be pursuing a career in her field of study.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* Revelation 21:4.

Sophie Pebworth

3. While in school, she attended the Los Angeles, California congregation.

4. Sophie graduated from the Univer-



Sophie Pebworth

sity of California Irvine, with a bachelor of science in computer science, a specialty in intelligent systems, and a minor in management. During her time in college, she enjoyed immersing herself in all the resources and opportunities her university had to offer.

She played on the women's club water polo team, was a member of the Engineering Student Council, an executive board member for the Information and Computer Science Student Council, president of her sorority, Gamma Phi Beta, and she graduated a member of the Order of Omega Honor Society.

5. Sophie loves traveling, reading and her dog Pebbles. She also enjoys exploring the great outdoors and working out. She is excited to be completing her first half marathon this summer! Her favorite food is sushi but she is always up for some good mac 'n' cheese. She enjoys playing the piano and has been a member of her congregation's choir as well as a camp counselor for the UYC program.

6. After graduation, she will be attending ABC. Upon completion of the ABC program, she has accepted a position with Pariveda Solutions as a technical consultant in Seattle, Washington.

7. *Favorite Scripture:* Matthew 6:34
Favorite quote: “Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts” –Winston Churchill. **UN**

What's New In MEDIA?
**BEYOND
 TODAY**
Television Airing Schedule

Title	Host	Literature	Airing Period
<i>Three Signs Before Jesus Returns</i>	Darris McNeely	<i>Seven Prophetic Signs Before Jesus Returns</i>	July 7-13
<i>Will I Go to Heaven?</i>	Steve Myers	<i>Heaven and Hell: What Does the Bible Really Teach?</i>	July 14-20
<i>Prayer: A Tool for Spiritual Growth</i>	Gary Petty	<i>Tools for Spiritual Growth</i>	July 21-27
<i>The Book of Revelation Unveiled</i>	Darris McNeely	<i>The Book of Revelation Unveiled</i>	July 28- Aug. 3
<i>Three Surprising Facts About Angels</i>	Darris McNeely	<i>Angels: God's Messengers and Spirit Army</i>	Aug. 4-10
<i>The Rapture Versus the Bible</i>	Steve Myers	<i>The Rapture vs. the Bible</i>	Aug. 11-17
<i>God's Plan Through the Festivals</i>	Gary Petty	<i>God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind</i>	Aug. 18-24
<i>You Can Understand Bible Prophecy</i>	Steve Myers	<i>You Can Understand Bible Prophecy</i>	Aug. 25-31

2020 Feast Site in Israel Announced

The United Church of God will offer a Feast site in Israel in 2020. This announcement comes early due to the need to reserve hotels and activities far in advance as Israel is very popular during the fall Feast season. There will be additional touring offered before the Feast in Israel and post-Feast in Jordan.

Details of the trip and registration can be found on the Feast webpage at feast.ucg.org. If you have additional questions email USFestival@ucg.org or call (970) 484-5878.

Charles Melear



Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, Israel.

Photo by Sander Crombach/Unsplash

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- June 30-July 7:** *Camp Pinecrest, Missouri*
- June 30-July 7:** *Camp Hye Sierra, California*
- June 30-July 7:** *Camp Cotubic, Ohio*
- July 14-17:** *Northwest Preteen Camp, Oregon*
- July 14-17:** *Preteen Camp Ironwood, Minnesota*
- July 20:** *Portsmouth Congregation 50th Anniversary, Ohio*
- July 21-28:** *Northwest Camp, Oregon*
- July 21-28:** *Boundary Waters Adventure*
- July 26-Aug. 8:** *Camp Woodland, Georgia*
- July 28-31:** *Preteen Camp Buckeye, Ohio*
- Aug. 11-14:** *Preteen Camp Seven Mountains, Pennsylvania*
- Aug. 16-18:** *Portsmouth Enrichment Weekend, Ohio*