



## United Church of God an International Association

eNews from Ministerial and Member Services

Issue 408

January 30, 2020

### Personal From the President...

Dear fellow servants of God,

On Tuesday this past week, our Web development team met to discuss the future of UCG.org. Our website is currently ranked by Alexa as the tenth most popular Christian denomination website in the world. Our main developer, Tom Disher, is moving on to other employment in February, so we are currently seeking a person to fill this critical position.



Our Web development team, joined by home office management, discussing how to best cover the many tasks Tom Disher was responsible for until a replacement for him can be found. (From left to right: Chris Stewart, Richard Kennebeck, Melanie May (via Skype), Tory Trone, Rudy Rangel, Peter Eddington, Tom Disher, Aaron Booth.)

### What is Your Hope For 2020?

In our last *Beyond Today* subscriber letter, I asked our readers a question as we offered our newest booklet *What Does the Bible Teach About Grace?* The question was: What is your hope for 2020? I was not expecting many responses on the return coupon for the booklet request. Yet we received over 1,400 handwritten, heartfelt responses to this simple question. It was humbling and moving to read what our readers shared. They expressed their worries, anguish and fears. So many earnestly hoped that 2020 would bring them a better relationship with God and the people close to them.

Some longed to grow spiritually and to increase their faith. Others hoped they would see a turnabout in their health and finances. Many expressed a desire for world peace and no war, unity and for the return of Jesus Christ. Some asked for personal prayers on their behalf or for family members to find relief from addictions, troubled relationships, grief and the pain of depression.

While reading these many comments that arrived in within days of one another, I felt the pain of so many people around us who are hurting with nowhere to turn, or having only a tiny glimmer of optimism for their future. I could not help feeling a deep sorrow for them and wished that I could touch them and give them a loving, reassuring hug that there is a way through their pathos.

I would like to share a number of these comments as they represent a current snapshot of the people *Beyond Today* serves:

- I don't have any hope.
- To be closer to God.
- I lost my mother who was (my best friend late this past year) and I'm having a very hard time finding my way without her in this world. I would like to learn and turn to God for guidance and to ask Him to lead the way.
- My hope is to keep my faith through the rest of my terminal illness. Keep me in your thoughts and prayers.
- My desire is to know God like He knows me. I want a closer relationship with Him and have more daily prayer and Bible reading.
- I need a spiritual breakthrough. My hopes and prayers for the new year 2020 are that I will continue to move forward with my struggles, and that everything that I have gone through or still going through settles. I want peace of mind!
- To be a better person and get closer to God. Quit using drugs and get my depression and anxiety under control.
- I hope to beat my depression and addiction so that I am not trapped by them anymore. My number one desire is to grow closer to Jesus so I can live out His will and not my own.
- That my marriage will heal and so will my health. I am tired of always being sick due to cancer and its side effects. I want to stop feeling like I am drowning.
- Peace in the world, no more wars nor fighting.
- My hope is for America and the rest of the world to come to know our Creator better.
- God's return to fix a broken world.
- More peace in the world. More unity in government. More help for the homeless.
- Healing, sanity, peace and compassion!
- That God will grant healing to my broken family
- I need prayers to get out of a very toxic relationship
- My daughter finds her way back to church
- To come to peace with the death of my Dad. It has been very hard on me.
- I pray that God will help me. I have no money and very little food. Pray that all the people in need have food.
- I pray to get out of debt. I need God's help.
- I hope to have my roof fixed so I can be warm. That's all.
- I hope my family can come back together. I hope my health gets better.

- That my body stays cancer free.

Do any of these comments resonate or ring true with you? Perhaps you have walked in similar difficult spaces of life and felt this heartache. Maybe these were--and maybe still are--some of your own hopes and prayers. If so, what can you do? Are you moved to be more empathetic and compassionate?

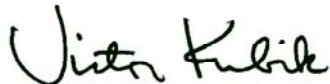
Jesus Christ came into a hurting world as well and exclaimed the following about His time:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed" (Luke 4:18).

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

The work of God in proclaiming the gospel is one that includes the passion of Jesus Christ towards the hurting. As we speak, write and live out our lives, we should be aware of this, and offer hope to a broken world, both as a Church and individually.

In Christ's service,



Victor Kubik

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### Personal from Ministerial and Member Services...

Barbara and I greatly enjoyed our opportunity to travel to Texas for the South Central Regional Ministerial Conference, held January 19-21 at Lake Texoma near the Texas/Oklahoma border. This was the fourth regional conference in our current cycle, with just two more remaining in 2020, in the Northwest and Southwest regions.

Once again, we had a very profitable conference and our elders expressed their appreciation for those of us at the home office who are committed to improving our service to God, to our ministry, and to all our brethren God is calling at this time. We at the home office also greatly appreciate the faithful and dedicated service from all our elders in the field and are very thankful for our brethren who have responded to God's call. Together we seek unity and peace and have a desire to please God the Father and Jesus Christ more fully.

Prior to the conference, Steve Myers gave the sermon in the Dallas area and I traveled down to speak to our congregation in Waco, Texas. Barbara stayed in Dallas to listen to Steve speak! Well, perhaps the real reason she stayed in Dallas was to spend more time with many close friends. Stan Erickson is our pastor in Waco and Coleman, Texas, but he and his wife, Judy, were out-of-state for the week to visit family and attend a family wedding. I greatly enjoyed meeting just about everyone in the relatively small Waco congregation and we had a wonderful Sabbath service there. I spoke about the Parable of the Barren Fig Tree and the importance of repentance and producing the fruit of God's Holy Spirit.

Since Waco meets in the morning, I was able to get back to Dallas by the end of services and, also, enjoyed spending time with our friends there.

During the conference, as regional pastor, I personally met with most of the pastors in the South Central region to discuss their self-assessments. This is something that all our regional pastors will be doing with the pastors in their respective regions over the course of the next several months. As Operation Manager for MMS, I will also be reviewing the assessments from all pastors in the U.S.--not face-to-face as the regional pastor might do, but I will read through all the assessments in due course.



Jim and Joan Tuck

I was happy to announce at the conference that Jim Tuck is replacing me as the new regional pastor for the South Central region, effective immediately. Jim is no longer pastoring the congregations in Arizona, as mentioned in the last eNews. He will remain the pastor for Hawaii in addition to helping as regional pastor now for both the Southwest and South Central regions.

I enjoyed making a trip to Big Sandy to spend some time with one of my Ambassador College professors, Don Ward, and his wife, Wanda. I greatly appreciated Dr. Ward as an instructor from 1974-1977 in Western Thought, Survey of the Gospels, Principles of Leadership, and one of the instructors in a class on Doctrines of the Bible. His faithfulness and stability, along with his wife by his side, have been invaluable to the Church of God throughout many years. I also greatly enjoyed a visit with Dr. Randy Urwiller, another former professor at Ambassador College, Big Sandy, and currently Assistant Pastor to Dr. Ward, serving the East Texas, Ruston (Louisiana), and Texarkana (Texas) congregations. Randy also travels to Cincinnati periodically to teach at Ambassador Bible College.



Dallas Children's Choir

On the Sabbath of January 25, the congregations in Ft. Worth and Dallas combined and Stephen de Campos and I gave split-sermons. Stephen gave a very fine sermon entitled, "Choose Your God, but Choose Wisely." It was about the "Showdown on Mt. Carmel" featuring the prophet Elijah and the prophets of Baal. The Dallas congregation has a number of fine young men who serve well. I gave a sermon entitled "For You See Your Calling" and stressed the uniqueness and magnitude of our calling at this time as firstfruits.

Services were followed with a potluck and an annual family fun show that was greatly enjoyed by all. Barbara and I were grateful that we did not need to spend a single night in a motel (except for the conference), as we stayed with brethren.



Stan and Penny Martin

We finished our stay with a few nights at Stan and Penny Martin's home and enjoyed sharing stories and getting to know them better. We greatly appreciate the love and the care they have for the members they serve in the Lawton (Oklahoma), Ft. Worth, and Dallas areas. Barbara and I flew back to Cincinnati the following day after a very enjoyable and rewarding trip! We look forward to staying home for a while!

In God's love and service,  
Mark Welch

## Inside United Podcast



### **Peter Eddington and Steven Britt - Conference on Science and Faith**

Peter Eddington and Steven Britt talk with Victor Kubik after attending the Dallas Conference on Science & Faith 2020, sponsored by Discovery Institute, to discuss the things they heard.

<https://www.ucg.org/inside-united-podcast/inside-united-podcast-147-peter-eddington-and-steven-britt-conference-on-science-and-faith>

Listen to past episodes or read the transcripts:

<https://www.ucg.org/inside-united-podcast>

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### **GCE Webcast Sabbath Service - May 2**

Most U.S. and Canadian congregations connect to the live webcast during the annual meeting of the GCE. For planning purposes, there is a time change this year. Services will be at 2:30 p.m. EDT.

-- Charles Melear

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### **GCE February 1 Deadline Registration Reminder**

For those registering by February 1, your housing and meals will be paid for. After February 1 you may still register, but food and housing arrangements will need to be made on your own and at your expense.

For those registering prior to the deadline of February 1, you will be assigned a hotel room. You do not need to call the Holiday Inn Eastgate or any overflow property. Your hotel confirmation number and details will be sent to you by mid-February.

Here is the link to begin registration: <https://www.ucg.org/members/general-conference-of-elders/general-conference-of-elders-2020>

-- Charles Melear

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### **Family Study Guide Available**

The latest Family Study Guide, *The Armor of God: The Shield of Faith* is ready. Ephesians 6:16: "...hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil." We know that Satan constantly bombards us with thoughts and trials intended to knock us down and keep us from following God. The Shield of Faith is another vital piece of armor God gives us to protect us from those attacks. In this Family Guide, we discuss why we need the shield of faith and how we personally demonstrate faith to push the enemy back. We review how joining together in faith to support each other provides incredible protection against Satan's assaults.

You can find the guide on the [Family Study Guides webpage](#) or in the [Family Guides Dropbox](#). Let us know if you have questions or need support with implementing these Youth Instruction Family Study Guides.

-- Randy and Kay Schreiber, Youth Instruction Coordinators

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## Unleavened Bread Cookbooks

The Days of Unleavened Bread are fast approaching and time to begin to prepare for the Holy Days; that includes preparing unleavened cookies and treats.

We still have a supply of "Healthy Eats and Unleavened Treats," our three-ring hardcover cookbooks. These books have some wonderful recipes including unleavened bread, main dishes, soups and sides and treats

The proceeds from the sale of these cookbooks go towards the Ambassador Bible College international student fund.

Cost of the cookbook is \$12.00 + \$3.00 shipping. Please send orders to:

Ambassador Bible College  
ATTN: Cookbook  
555 Techne Center Dr.  
Milford, OH 45150

Please send your order on the form provided [at this link](#). Orders are sent out at library rate, so please place orders soon to receive your cookbook by Days of Unleavened Bread.

Our e-mail address for any questions you may have is [healthy.cookbook.2019@gmail.com](mailto:healthy.cookbook.2019@gmail.com). Thank you so much for your support!

-- The ABC Class of 2020

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## Job Opening - Web Developer

The United Church of God has announced an opening for a Web Developer. The position will require the following:

- Custom programming and Web application development for Church websites.
- Testing, maintenance and troubleshooting of existing Church sites.

- Contributing ideas and efforts towards internal projects and working as part of a team to find solutions for various problems.
- Plus, other duties as assigned.

Required skills for this position include:

- A solid understanding of PHP, AJAX, HTML, Javascript, and CSS, or knowledge of other programming languages and a willingness to learn.
- Familiarity with source control systems such as Git.
- Ability to communicate technical ideas to business users and other teams (design, QA).
- Ability to both collaborate with team members and to work independently.
- Eager to embrace current and emerging Web technologies.

The following experience would give an applicant preference:

- Knowledge of SEO coding best practices.
- Proficient in Drupal, including custom module development, key contributed modules and core API.
- Two-plus years of Drupal hands-on development experience.
- Experience integrating open source and third-party applications into existing systems.

A bachelor's degree (B.A.) is preferred. An equivalent combination of education and experience may be considered. Strong language, logic and communication skills, and algebra/geometry level math skills are required. Those applying for consideration and invited for an interview must supply a resume of their education and/or experience.

Potential employees must be baptized members (in good standing) of the United Church of God. Applicants must be biblically literate and possess a thorough working knowledge of the doctrines, beliefs and practices of the United Church of God.

For an employment application or for more information, please contact [human\\_resources@ucg.org](mailto:human_resources@ucg.org).

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