

# SABBATH ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDERS

North Canton & Youngstown, OH; Pittsburgh, PA; Wheeling, WV Congregations  
United Church of God, an International Association

## SABBATH, April 18, 2020

**12 Noon (EDT) – local webcast sermon by John Miller**  
<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/north-canton-oh/webcast>

\*DUE TO PRECAUTIONS RELATING TO PREVENTION OF THE SPREAD OF THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)  
THE UCG ADMINISTRATION FROM THE HOME OFFICE IN CINCINNATI HAS CANCELLED PHYSICAL SERVICES FOR THE TIME BEING.

### ----- NEXT WEEK and NEXT 2 SABBATHS

(may be subject to change)

<b>Friday, April 24</b>	<b>Friday night Bible study webcast – 7:30 PM (EDT) – Randy Stiver</b> <a href="https://www.ucg.org/congregations/north-canton-oh/webcast">https://www.ucg.org/congregations/north-canton-oh/webcast</a>
<b>Sabbath, April 25</b>	<b>Local Sabbath webcast – 12:00 Noon (EDT)</b> Split sermons: Freeman Kuhns and Randy Stiver <a href="https://www.ucg.org/congregations/north-canton-oh/webcast">https://www.ucg.org/congregations/north-canton-oh/webcast</a>
<b>Sabbath, May 2 – GCE</b> (no local webcast)	<b>GCE Sabbath service webcast – 2:30 PM (EDT) from Cincinnati</b> Split sermons: President Victor Kubik and Chairman Don Ward <a href="https://www.ucg.org/webcast">https://www.ucg.org/webcast</a> or <a href="https://www.ucg.org/sabbath-services/sabbath-webcast-cincinnati-area-and-gce-may-2-2020">https://www.ucg.org/sabbath-services/sabbath-webcast-cincinnati-area-and-gce-may-2-2020</a>

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### PASTOR'S NOTE:

## Alone Together & Differently Inspiring

Happy Sabbath brethren,

Our family hopes that you all have had a deeply prayerful, thoughtful and differently inspiring Passover season.

“Differently inspiring.” Don’t you just love the way our current culture mixes words together?! And yet this spring holyday season was different (due to the coronavirus outbreak)—yet it was also inspiring.

Even though we were all “hunkered down” at home to minimize exposure to the illness, it gave us considerably more unhectic time than usual to think and meditate. Think about what went through our Savior’s mind as He endured the beating and scourging. Those lashes of the scourge whip raised great welts all over Jesus’ body.

They're call His "stripes" (see Isaiah 53:5), and by them we are healed (1 Peter 2:24).

Although we were inspired by many webcasted or phone connected sermons during the holydays, we were still alone at home without the face-to-face fellowship we typically savor and draw strength from on God's weekly and annual Sabbaths. But, you know, our great Messiah was also alone when He suffered and died for our sins.

"For such a High Priest was fitting for us, *who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*, and has become higher than the heavens; <sup>27</sup> who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself" (Hebrews 7:26-27).

When He was arrested, tried, beaten, scourged, crucified and died on the ultimate Passover, all of Jesus' closest disciples had deserted Him. He endured it all alone. It's hard for us to imagine the true, spiritual grit and determined faith that our Savior had then—and has now!

This Unleavened Bread season gave us a small insight into our need for God's Holy Spirit working in our minds to be ready to endure with deep conviction whatever prophesied troubles, persecutions and trials await us before the end of the age.

We probably don't think much about this level of trial—and what it takes to "personally" endure. But now in 2020 we've had to think about it. The ice is broken, reflecting on Jesus' level of personal conviction is good for us. We have, of necessity, been alone together this Passover season, but that is indeed differently inspiring!

Sobered by our shared circumstances and with a renewed focus let us move forward toward the Feast of Pentecost!

Keep the truth faith and spread it!

Warm regards,



Randy Stiver, Pastor

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## 1. LOCAL PRAYER REQUESTS and UPDATES

*(If you notice that your prayer request needs updating, please drop us an email or a call with an update. Thank you!)*

- **Please pray fervently for the national and international emergency we are facing with the Coronavirus.** Pray that God protect His people and that He extends mercy to our nation and to all nations as they face this health and financial crisis.
- **Please also pray that our freedoms to assemble and to worship are restored as soon as is safely possible.** We have long been able to take those for granted, but now is the time to treasure them. Also pray that the financial impact globally, nationally, and individually is mitigated through God's mercy.

### Updates:

- **John Williamson** (Columbus/North Canton) – John, son-in-law of Louis and Carol Petit, has a confirmed diagnosis that the cancer he has been fighting for the past two years has returned. Please include along with your prayers for God's healing, a request for encouragement and peace of mind for both John and Lisa during this trying time. Louis and Carol, likewise, appreciate your faithful prayers.
- **Nancy Bair** (Youngstown) – Nancy's test came back clear – no COVID-19! Thank you for your prayers!

### Ongoing:

- **Debbie Booth** (Wheeling) – At home, recovering from a hospital visit to address several blood clots in the lungs and legs. Medication is helping, but prayers are appreciated in guiding physicians to the cause of the clots.
- **Carol Donston** (Wheeling) – Recovering at home following treatment for a broken elbow. She will see a specialist soon about the fracture. Your prayers for guidance in that process and healing are greatly appreciated.
- **Steve Richmond** (Cambridge) – Steve continues to battle cancer. Your prayers are greatly appreciated.

**2. CHURCH-WIDE FAST CALLED – choose either: SABBATH APRIL 25 – or – Sunday APRIL 26**

The lockdown and prohibition of public gathering has now expanded to six weeks or more and there is no definite restart date at this moment. Many are hopeful that it will be in May. As a consequence, along with Chairman Don Ward, we would like to call for a church-wide day of fasting either next Sabbath or Sunday, April 25 or 26.

**Why fast?**

- For our minds and hearts to be humbled so that we can understand and act on the deep things taught by Jesus Christ about repentance, becoming like Him, and abiding in Him.
- To look to the needs of others. We have brethren around the world in desperately poor places like Myanmar and Malawi whom we can't even directly help at this time. Ask for God's intervention and help for them.
- Pray that we can take seriously the commission that we have been given to preach a warning message to the world.

*--Victor Kubik, President UCGIA and Don Ward, PhD, Chairman UCGIA Council of Elders*

**3. Should I Tithe On My Economic Stimulus Check? - Answered**

*Here is our response to this question that members are asking as deposits begin to be received from the U.S. government:*

Thank you for asking whether you should tithe on the Economic Impact Payments to American households provided by the recently approved CARES Act of 2020. According to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, these Economic Impact Payments are to ensure that Americans receive fast and direct relief in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. They are characterizing these payments as "assistance to workers and their families."

A tithe is 10 percent, and the Church upholds the biblical teaching that tithing is a command instituted by God for doing His work and caring for His Church.

Deuteronomy 14:22 teaches, "You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year" (emphasis added). Based on this clear and direct biblical guideline, we see that we should calculate our tithe based on our "increase." Increase is determined by any profit or earning we receive after we have subtracted the cost of doing business or the cost of investing in any work or investment activity.

This particular payment is being given equally to all Americans regardless of whether they are working or unemployed, and it is not tied to their level of income. Thus, it should be considered either assistance or a free gift, and therefore you need not pay tithe on it. It is not necessary to give a tithe on a gift or any form of gratuity for which you do not perform some type of service. However, it would be appropriate to show thanks to God by giving an offering for having been blessed with a substantial gift.

All tithing mentioned in the Bible had to do with what an individual labored for--the increase from gleaning grapes (and producing wine), olives, barley, wheat and the like, to harvesting fruit from orchards, to the increase from year to year from cattle, sheep, goats, etc. We find no specific command given to the children of Israel, or to the Church, to pay tithes on gifts.

For those families who have been impacted by this health crisis by having reduced work hours or losing their employment, this assistance will be vital to helping them to keep their homes and to pay their bills, and should be accepted and spent for that purpose.

For families who have not been economically impacted, but are still receiving this Economic Impact Payment, a thank offering could and perhaps should be considered. But such an offering and the amount given is totally up to the recipient of the gift.

*--Ministerial and Member Services*

#### 4. FEAST REGISTRATION *Has Begun!*

This Sunday, April 19, Feast housing can begin for all sites except for Panama City Beach, Lake Junaluska and Puerto Vallarta. See schedule below for details.

The **Festival Planning Brochure** is moving slowly in the postal system, but it is *published online* at [feast.ucg.org](http://feast.ucg.org). Also, accommodation information for each site can be found at <https://www.ucg.org/members/feast/sites>.

Online Festival registration has begun, so please be sure to register and begin making accommodation reservations when appropriate, and as your circumstances allow.

*If you need local assistance, please contact your festival coordinator:*

**North Canton:** Freeman Kuhns and Mark Miller      **Pittsburgh:** Nathan Courtney  
**Youngstown:** James Guy      **Wheeling:** Jim Kocher

In addition, if you have questions about housing or registration, send an email to [USFestival@ucg.org](mailto:USFestival@ucg.org) or call (970) 484-5878.

##### (1) Registration

We recommend that if you know where you plan to attend that you register for that Feast site as you normally would. This will help the Church in planning. Some members don't have access to the Internet, but all pastors were sent instructions on how to help with registering.

##### (2) Housing Reservations

**Hotels & Motels:** Making hotel reservations should be fine, as they normally only require a one-night deposit and the cancellation is without penalty usually within a week of the Feast. All hotels and motels have decreased their personnel significantly, but most should have reservations open or the ability to leave a phone message. There are plenty of rooms reserved at the hotel you want so we should be fine even if it is next month before reservation systems are back to normal.

##### **Two key properties to note:**

**New Braunfels** - The Ramada Inn is closed so try the national toll free number: (800) 854-9517.

**Branson** - Thousand Hills: reservations not open until 9 a.m. Central Time.

**Condominiums and Homes:** These unit types normally require higher initial deposits and some are not refundable. Some are changing their normal policy to accommodate the national situation. Carefully review the cancellation policies of any condominium or home before committing a deposit.

##### (3) Airfare

There might be some great deals right now, but be sure you understand the cancellation policy. If an airline provides cancellation insurance, make sure of the allowable parameters to receive a refund. Coronavirus might not be included.

##### **Important Dates:**

**April 19 (Sunday):** General housing begins for U.S. & Canada (except for Panama City Beach, Lake Junaluska and Puerto Vallarta).

**April 21 (Tuesday):** General housing begins at Panama City Beach and Lake Junaluska.

**May 3 (Sunday):** Online Festival registration begins for Puerto Vallarta at 11 a.m. EDT.

*--Charles Melear, Overall Festival Coordinator*

#### 5. COVID-19 Coronavirus Crisis Links and Resources:

National: <https://www.coronavirus.gov/>

Ohio: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/>

Pennsylvania: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

West Virginia: <https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>

UCG home office: <https://www.ucg.org/members/news/united-church-of-god-coronavirus-updates>

#### 6. VIEWING SABBATH WEBCASTS – How-to

The following link can help you better connect to the webcasts from the UCG.org website. Please follow the link and read the extensive directions for more information and troubleshooting help:

<https://www.ucg.org/help/problems-viewing-ustream-and-youtube-videos>

**7. PHONE HOOK-UP to Home Office Webcasts**

If you need a phone hook-up to the webcast services from Cincinnati (2:30PM on Sabbaths) here are the directions:

*Please call no earlier than 5 minutes before the service will begin. If the Home Office has not activated the meeting, the caller will be put on hold, and then asked to call again later.*

**Normal Calling Directions for Home Office Webcast:**

For those who can pay for long distance calls or have an unlimited phone calling plan:

**Call: 1-508-924-1634**

No access code needed.

*If you know someone who could use the phone hook-up number, but does not get the announcements by email, please call them and pass along the information! Thank you!*

**8. PROVERBS READING PROJECT – From now till Pentecost, May 31**

From now until Pentecost we'll be reading through the books of Proverbs, following the schedule below.

**BOOK OF PROVERBS READING SCHEDULE**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Chapter(s)</b>
1	Jan 12-18	1
2	Jan 19-25	2
3	Jan/Feb 26-1	3
4	Feb 2-8	4
5	Feb 9-15	5
6	Feb 16-22	6-7
7	Feb 23-29	8-9
8	Mar 1-7	10-11
9	Mar 8-14	12-13

10	Mar 15-21	14-15
11	Mar 22-28	16-17
12	Mar/Apr 29-4	18-19
13	Apr 5-11	20-21
14	Apr 12-18	22-23
15	<b>Apr 19-25</b>	<b>24-25</b>
16	Apr/May 26-2	26-27
17	May 3-9	28
18	May 10-16	29
19	May 17-31	30
20	May 24-30	31

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