

SABBATH ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDERS

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

July 25, 2020

North Canton: 2:00 PM at Gateway Event Center

Youngstown: 2:00 PM at Holiday Inn

Pittsburgh: 2:00 PM at Deer Creek Church

Wheeling: 10:30 AM at Wheeling Country Day School Gymnasium

2:00 p.m. local webcast -> <https://www.ucg.org/congregations/north-canton-oh/webcast>

NEXT TWO WEEKS

(may be subject to change)

Sabbath, August 1	North Canton: 2:00 PM – Gateway Event Center Youngstown: 2:00 PM – Holiday Inn Express, Youngstown W.
Friday, August 7	Friday night Bible study webcast – 7:30 PM (EDT) – Mr. Randy Stiver https://www.ucg.org/congregations/north-canton-oh/webcast
Sabbath, August 8	North Canton: 2:00 PM – Gateway Event Center Youngstown: 2:00 PM – Holiday Inn Express, Youngstown W.

*For Pittsburgh and Wheeling times, please see updates from Mr. Keith Wilson

Pastor's contact information: 2206 Eastwood Ave. NE, Massillon, OH 44646. *Home phone:* 330-809-0566, *Cell phone:* 740-739-7248
Email addresses: randy_stiver@ucg.org or rpstiver@gmail.com (both come to the same location).

Scheduling: To my email for church events, visits or counseling, and please copy my wife Linda ldstiver@gmail.com.

Announcements: Please send to my email *and* copy to Amanda Stiver at anstiver@gmail.com as she helps process them each week.

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!)

- **Joe Szymkowiak** (North Canton) – Prayers requested for healing of a Bell's palsy condition which causes extreme tightening of the facial muscles.

Ongoing:

- **COVID-19** – Please remember in your prayers for healing brethren, locally and around the world, in UCG and other Church of God groups who have come down with COVID-19.
 - Please also keep Feast planning in UCG and the greater Church of God in your prayers. The complications of the coronavirus emergency levels, shut-downs, and partial shutdowns make it challenging for Feast coordinators and others planning Feast details.
- **Linda Ritter** (North Canton) – Linda would appreciate your continued prayers for overall health improvement.
- **Steve Richmond** (Cambridge) – Steve continues to battle cancer, please keep him in your prayers.

2. RE-OPENING SERVICES In North Canton – July 25th – *This Sabbath!*

Our return to in-person services for North Canton will be *this Sabbath*, July 25 at 2:00 PM!

NOTE: Ohio now has a mask mandate, so they will be required for age 10 and above.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR IN-PERSON SERVICES

- Several hymns will be played, but no hymns will be sung - except in your heart.
- Plan to arrive about 15 minutes before service start time.
- Masks are mandatory for age 10 and above.
- We will take attendance as you enter with three questions about your exposure to Covid-19 (to comply with Gateway's requirements).
- An infrared, touchless thermometer will be used to check for fever.
- Ushers will seat you to provide for the necessary 6-foot, social-distancing.
- Family groups will be seated together.
- There will be no food or drinks (personal water bottles are excepted).
- Please remember to wipe down all surfaces touched when using the restroom (wipes are provided).
- After services we will vacate the hall within 15 minutes, but we can visit outside.

The 2:00 PM webcast from the North Canton webcast page will carry on as usual at:

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/north-canton-oh/webcast>

3. MASKS IN CHURCH SERVICES – from Chairman, and President of UCG

More and more state governments are issuing mandatory mask orders. This issue of being ordered to wear a mask in public is polarizing our nation. People are furious about their "rights" being taken away, about government overstepping its authority, and whether or not masks even work. These are certainly perilous times in which we now live. The apostle Paul listed 19 attributes of people in the last days and among that list are lovers of themselves, proud, unloving, headstrong and haughty (2 Timothy 3:1-5). These are many of the impulses and attitudes that we see in the world around us as people are warring over this matter, digging in their heels and demanding their "rights."

We must NOT allow the influences of this world to create polarization within the Church. Many pastors have shared issues that are "bubbling" in their local congregations over the mask issue. We might have very strong opinions about the efficacy of masks, or strong views about what is happening politically.

However, we must have peace at services on the Sabbath. Our pastors must make decisions based upon state and local conditions. When these mandates do not contradict scripture, they must be followed. Nothing in these "mask" orders contradicts God's law. For most Church members, having to wear a mask in order to meet together on the Sabbath is preferable to remaining at home. Right now, our adversary is stirring up strife and division in the world and in the Church! If we let THIS divide us, what will become of us when REAL persecution comes?

If you are attending services in an area where masks are required in public, then you must wear a mask. There are reasons why some cannot wear a mask, and it is recommended that those people stay at home and watch a webcast service. When coming to services with a mask, please do not wear masks with "statements" on them (the temptation to have a "Don't Tread on Me" statement will not help to unify the congregation). Let's keep the politics of all of this far away from church.

Also, please be extra-vigilant about NOT coming to services if you are sick. This should always be our "best practice." Sometimes when we are sick, we may take a dose of medicine. Although the medicine may help us "feel" better, we're still sick. We should always be considerate of others and stay home if we are sick, rather than expose others.

We know these are very frustrating times, but we will get through this. We appreciate your patience and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Len Martin, Chairman, Council of Elders
Victor Kubik, President

4. IMPORTANT FEAST UPDATES COMING IN EARLY AUGUST

There has never been a year like this in terms of planning with the COVID crisis. No nation on earth has escaped the impact and that includes us and the keeping of the “sacred feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses” (Deut. 16:15). We are still looking to God to lead us to some available locations so members can gather together and celebrate the meaning of the Feast as a group.

Many members will be affected by potential cancellations or reductions in attendance capacity, but the upcoming August 7 deadline provides ample time to make alternate housing and travel arrangements and selecting a site that fits your needs. We are trying to find replacement sites for any site that is canceled or being reduced in attendance capacity. There will be some sites without social distancing or without the requirement to wear masks (as of today’s restrictions).

On August 7 or earlier the Feast webpage will post a chart listing all the sites and describing what will take place at each site. We want to announce any cancellation at the same time we announce a replacement. If we announce a cancellation and everyone immediately makes other arrangements, and if we open up a new site and nobody comes, the Church will have committed financial deposits and planning in vain. August 7 allows enough time to make adjustments.

Here is the schedule:

August 7 - U.S. Feast Coordinators send out a description and schedule to their registration list. New sites announced. - Post on the main Feast website overview chart & descriptions of each site and any new sites.

August 8 Sabbath - Local congregation announcements informing all members of the latest Feast site options and emphasizing to update their registration.

August 11 - Deadline for members to update their registration allowing any final contracts to be signed by the Church for replacement facilities.

- Charles Melear, National Conference Planner, United Church of God

5. GRENADA and ALL PHILIPPINES FEAST SITES CANCELLED

Due to COVID-19 complications, both the Grenada Feast site and all Feast sites in the Philippines have been cancelled for 2020. If this affects you, please be sure to update your registration online.

6. UNITED YOUTH CAMPS – Teen Friday Night Bible Discussions

We are going to have more interactive talk among the teens this Friday night during our live Bible Study program. Specific questions have been posted on the UYC site, so please take a look at them before the study begins. The password remains the same, but if you need it then ask your pastor. The Bible Study video and Zoom discussion begin at 8 p.m. Eastern/7 p.m. Central or 7 p.m. Pacific/8 p.m. Mountain (pick your time). Log onto uyc.ucg.org at one of these two times this Friday evening July 24.

-- Teen Camp Directors

7. HYMNS AT HOME!

Though temporarily we can’t enjoy singing hymns together at services there is no limit to our options for in-home hymn singing. To help make that possible, please investigate this link from the UCG.org website: <https://www.ucg.org/members/hymnal>

You can download the recordings of the hymn accompaniment (with or without the vocal ensemble included) and sing along from your personal hymnal. Or, if you are musical, play the hymns yourself and sing. Or simply sing praises to God in your heart (Ephesians 5:19).

Let’s not allow this logistical bump in the road stop us from praising God in song!

SPECIAL RESOURCES FOR DURING THE COVID-19 SITUATION

COVID-19 Links and Resources:

Ohio COVID-19 Risk Level Guidelines for the Public: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/OPHASM/COVID-19-Risk-Level-Guidelines-GP.pdf>

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 Updates and Hymn links:

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

UCG Hymnal recordings and other links: <https://www.ucg.org/members/hymnal>

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!

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