

SABBATH ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDERS

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

August 15, 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: 10:00 AM at Belmont Gymnasium

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

NEXT TWO WEEKS

(may be subject to change)

Friday, August 21	Friday night Bible study webcast – 7:30 PM (EDT) – Mr. Randy Stiver https://www.ucg.org/congregations/north-canton-oh/webcast
Sabbath, August 22	North Canton: 2:00 PM – Gateway Event Center Youngstown: 2:00 PM – Holiday Inn Express, Youngstown W.
Sabbath, August 29	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.

SABBATH FOCUS:

DO WE RESIST GOD'S SPIRIT TODAY?

When did you last read of Stephen's ordination as a deacon, and then how he expounded the gospel of God's Kingdom in Jerusalem. He raised the ire of some of the angry Jews who found witnesses willing to perjure themselves by officially lodging false reports about the faithful Stephen (see Acts 6).

The false accusers brought Stephen to court before the Sanhedrin (the governing Council of the Jews). The High Priest at least asked God's deacon if the accusations were so.

Stephen launched into a remarkable historic dissertation of the history of the Israelites going back to the time of Abraham citing the promise God made to free the patriarch's many descendants, the Israelites, from their bondage in Egypt.

He told the story of how a change of Pharaohs enslaved all Israel. God then raised up a savior for them—Moses, to whom He revealed Himself at the burning bush in the wilderness. Moses would lead Israel out of Egypt.

Then Stephen recited the habitual rebellious nature of the successive generations of Israel – always rebelling against God's way and stubbornly for over 850 years—from the Exodus to even after the Jewish captivity in

Babylon. The deacon told his fellow Jews what they did wrong down to that very day! “*You* stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did*, so *do you*” (Acts 7:51).

In their anger, they snarled furiously at him!

At that moment God gave the faithful Stephen a vision, he exclaimed, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man (Jesus Himself) standing at the right hand of God (the Father)!” (Acts 7:56).

The anger in the court ignited; religious wrath exploded! They shouted in anger and grabbed God’s deacon and dragged him out of the city to execute him with stones. As the rocks hit his body, Stephen fell to his knees calling out to God to not charge them with the sin of his execution—then he collapsed in death as a faithful martyr.

A sobering episode in the true Church of God history! Yet we know that other brethren in following centuries also fell as faithful martyrs like Stephen. And our century follows their centuries.

Faithfulness to God and His truth and way of life has and will always ultimately lead to joy, love, inner peace and great faith—total dedication to God the Father and our Savior, Jesus the Christ. That kind of faithfulness will lead to eternal life in the Kingdom of God.

One final note about Stephen’s ultimate example of true faith. The Danite judge Samson was inspired to say it as a riddle, “Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet” (see Judges 14:14). The chief persecutor of the Church in Jerusalem was an overseer of Stephen’s execution. His name was Paul—the one we know later as the Apostle Paul!

God never stops working with those He is calling out of this world! That’s you and me, and even sometimes our enemies.

—Randy Stiver, Pastor

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!)

- **COVID-19** – Please keep the health of God’s people in your prayers, locally and around the world, in UCG and the greater Church of God, especially those who have come down with COVID-19. Please also remember those whose livelihoods have been affected by the economic impact of the outbreak.
- **Feast Planning** – Please keep Feast of Tabernacles planning in UCG and the greater Church of God in your prayers. The complications of the coronavirus emergency levels, shut-downs, and partial shut-downs make it challenging for Feast coordinators and others planning Feast details.
- **Chuck Anderson** (North Canton) – Chuck, husband of Bonnie, collapsed at work on Tuesday and was admitted to Mercy Hospital. Through God’s amazing intervention in various circumstances he is still alive. After thorough testing it was found he has several severely clogged arteries. He will be having a quadruple bypass surgery very early this Saturday morning (Aug. 15). Your prayers for God’s healing and blessing on the intricacies of the surgery are greatly appreciated. Please also keep Bonnie in your prayers for strength and encouragement.

On-going

- **Rose Szymkowiak** (North Canton) – Lyme Disease diagnosis: “I would like to request prayers for my complete healing of this condition and that it will disappear quickly. According to the doctor, this sometimes hangs on for several years.”

2. FEAST UPDATE -- MASKS AT THE FEAST

We are aware that some won't attend services unless they are wearing masks--with the intention to avoid others who are not wearing masks. Overall, most Feast sites in the U.S. will attempt to have two sections to accommodate those preferences. That information for each site will become available over the coming weeks and can probably be found at the Feast webpage of the site you are attending.

--From Festival Planning Team

3. LETTER ON FEAST KEEPING FROM MR. MARK WELCH, MMS

Personal from Ministerial and Member Services...

Dear Ministers and Members,

"Where God has Placed His Name" and "Temporary Dwellings"

We understand that preparing to observe the Feast of Tabernacles in 2020 is unlike any prior year, no matter how many Feasts you have observed.

We have done our best to provide designated Festival sites where God has chosen to place His name this year. Of course, God allows many things to affect the decisions given to His servants to make regarding the observance of His Holy Days and where God is placing His name.

We have seen sites cancelled and new sites spring up to take their place in order to adequately serve the needs of our brethren who desire to honor God on these days.

We believe these days are commanded for God's people. Please do your best to attend one of our designated Feast sites, if possible and prudent, for you and your family.

However, we do understand that everyone's circumstances are different in a variety of ways and we ought not judge anyone in their personal decisions in regard to how it is best for them to observe the Feast under the "present distress." These are decisions between the individual and God and we ought to believe that each person is doing their best to honor God and protect their health and their family members as they are being led to do so.

We might consider what the phrase means: "where God has placed His name." We should all understand that some people have not always been able to attend the Feast at a designated Feast site due to a variety of reasons, such as sickness, advanced age, finances, pregnancy, childbirth, very pressing family issues, etc.

In these cases, we have made Feast sermon recordings available to our members and they have observed the Feast as best they could by listening to these sermons, studying their Bibles, and meditating on the coming Kingdom of God and their role in preparing for and serving in the Kingdom. Our members made the best of a difficult situation and would have much preferred being able to join in the fellowship and observance of the Feast at a designated Feast site. Hopefully they were able to do so the following year.

We believe God was with them during the difficult times and their genuine observance was accepted by God. Their circumstances dictated where God "had placed His name" for them personally that given year.

God is always with His children through the power of His Holy Spirit dwelling within them. If circumstances sometimes dictate an extraordinary decision after prayer, meditation, and perhaps, fasting, always remember that God has promised to never leave or forsake us. He and His Son are with us in Spirit and God will place His name there with us, as long as we are truly striving to do our best to please Him.

Of course, we should always seek to be supportive of the decisions God has led His servants to make in sincere desire to best please God and to care for His people. Moreover, we should all strive to love our brethren and think well of them as they make decisions regarding this year's observance of the Feast of Tabernacles.

We greatly appreciate your patience and cooperation this year. We are all doing our best to do "everything decently and in order." If you haven't yet registered for the Feast, please do so as quickly as it is feasible for you, as it will make our planning easier and more effective.

Some have wondered about the "temporary dwellings" aspect this year if they have decided to stay in their home area where there is a Feast site nearby.

It appears that will likely be the case for Barbara and me personally this year. A number of deaf brethren have now decided to attend the Feast in Cincinnati where we do have a designated Feast site. Since Barbara is an interpreter and she and I coordinate the deaf program, we will likely attend here. If so, we will stay in our home, which still seems very much like a "temporary dwelling" since we haven't been here long and aren't at all sure how long we will be living here!

Such decisions are personal ones that ought to be done in faith as we strive to keep God's laws in ways that we believe would be acceptable and pleasing to Him. Others ought not to set themselves up as judges to question sincere, faithful decisions. God is our ultimate Judge and we will answer to Him.

I listened to a fine message this week from Randy Schreiber entitled, ["Will You Be 'Where God Places His Name?'"](#) Randy goes into greater detail in his message. You may want to listen to this message if you have any questions regarding the meaning of the phrase, or are a bit uneasy about having to possibly stay at home for the first time ever during the Feast.

I also listened to another fine message this week by Doug Wendt titled, ["Developing a Proper Perspective."](#) Doug encourages all of us to have a godly perspective concerning all people, realizing that God desires that all people will eventually come to accept Him as God. How we treat people in the meantime is very important!

If you listen to a message that especially moves you, motivates you, or educates you, I would appreciate you emailing me the title at mark_welch@ucg.org.

Wishing you all a very inspiring and peaceful Sabbath!

In God's love and service,

Mark Welch, Operation Manager for MMS

SPECIAL RESOURCES FOR DURING THE COVID-19 SITUATION

GUIDELINES FOR IN-PERSON SERVICES

- Several hymns will be played, but no hymns will be sung - except in our hearts.
- Plan to arrive about 15 minutes before service start time.
- Masks are mandatory for age 10 and above for Ohio. They are mandatory in PA for age 2 and above. In West Virginia masks are required for age 9 and up.
- We will take attendance as you enter with three basic questions about your exposure to Covid-19.
- An infrared, touchless thermometer will be used to check for fever if needed.
- Ushers will seat you, if needed, 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 or so minutes, but we can visit outside.

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!

-END-