



United Church of God an International Association

eNews from Ministerial and Member Services

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Personal From the President...

The Holy Days have been a blessing to us here in Ohio, as I'm sure they have been throughout the entire Church. We were able to meet in person for the Passover, the Night Much to Be Observed and the First Day of Unleavened Bread. We know that there are those who were not able to meet physically, but I pray that the day will soon come when we can be together. There is a strength and joy that comes from being with brothers and sisters of like mind.

From time to time I like to share some of the stories from our ministry about noteworthy activities in their areas. One such story is from Northeast Ohio where a hastily organized local Feast of Tabernacles last fall led to the establishment of a Bible Study and regularly sustained meetings with dozens of people in the community. It's a story of evangelism spanning the Feast of Tabernacles to the Spring Feasts. You can read that story with photos at <https://kubik.org/ne-ohio-evangelism-from-fot-to-the-days-of-ub/>.

God, the Moon and the Suez Canal



The *Ever Given* in the Suez Canal (Photo by CHINE NOUVELLE/SIPA/Newscom).

Longer than the Empire State Building is tall and weighing more than 200,000 tons, the massive Evergreen container ship *Ever Given* had wedged itself sideways in a narrow section of the Suez Canal. Hundreds of ships were blocked from passing through the Egyptian sea gate. For six long days, various tugboats yanked and pulled, trying unsuccessfully to break free the mammoth-size vessel.

Finally, as one news source described it, “a piece of celestial good luck”—an unusual high tide that topped out a foot and a half higher than normal—helped engineers break loose the 1,300-foot vessel. The high tide was caused by the first “supermoon” of the year, so called when a full moon orbits to its nearest point to the earth.



The *Ever Given* blocking the Suez Canal (photo by Wikimedia).

This particular supermoon also heralded in the First Day of Unleavened Bread that we observed last Sunday. The coincidence was not lost on some, as some humorously pointed out online that the Evergreen ship had been set free during the Passover season, just as the Israelites had been set free from the Egyptians long ago. We also note the geography and vicinity of the Red Sea and passage through it.

The event, especially as it required the direct help of a God-placed celestial object to resolve, reminded me of Psalm 19, where David wrote: “The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. They speak without a sound or word” (Psalm 19:1-3, New Living Translation).

It’s remarkable that global shipping companies and Egyptian canal specialists required a force outside their control to avoid more costly delays mounting up in the billions of dollars. Of course, many people don’t choose to recognize this truth, despite the evidence for it. As Paul answers those who don’t believe: “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse” (Romans 1:19-20, English Standard Version).

Thankfully, we *do* perceive this through our understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ, as Paul also tells us: “The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:17). Peter declares this faith and its source: “who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:5). How privileged we are!

This week we in our small flock seek God to become more like Him, surrendering our wills to “put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:24). We are privileged to know that it is none other than Jesus Christ Himself who “upholds the universe by the word of his power” (Hebrews 1:3, ESV) and makes this possible. This includes the incredible gravitational force of the moon to raise uncountable tons of water in a high tide.

It also means that this same power of God is available to us! I encourage us all again to read and meditate during these Days of Unleavened Bread on these passages, among many passages that tell of God's willingness to give His power to us:

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

"But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

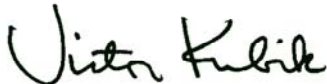
"My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Psalms 73:26).

"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7).

This world may hold many challenges, but as the Word of God teaches us anew from the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33).

As we near the end of the first season in God's marvelous Holy Day cycle, let's appreciate the mighty power that God has and expresses through His Son, and let us sprint toward making this a truly remarkable and fulfilling Days of Unleavened Bread. Despite whatever trials or challenges we may be facing, let us hold our hands high and remember from these days going forward "The LORD will fight for you"! (Exodus 14:14).

In Christ's service,



Victor Kubik

From Ministerial and Member Services...

Recent Ordinations



Wayne Ward

On March 27, 2021, Wayne Ward was ordained into the ministry. He has been transferred to the Okanagan Valley where he will serve as an assistant pastor in southern British Columbia, Canada.



Jeff and Julie Brown

On March 28, 2021, Jeff Brown was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Julie, serve in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, congregation.

New Ministerial Trainee



Troy and Cindy Phelps

Ministerial and Member Services is pleased to announce the recent approval by the Council of Elders to hire Troy Phelps, a deacon in the Cincinnati congregations, to serve as a Ministerial Trainee. Beginning in April, he will serve as a trainee with Cincinnati pastor Steve Myers until later this summer when he and his family will transfer to the San Francisco area for further training and to assist Tim Pebworth. Mr. Pebworth pastors the San Francisco Bay Area and Petaluma congregations and also heads up our French-speaking work. Your prayers are much appreciated for a very smooth and successful transition for Troy, his wife Cindy, and their family.

Inside United Podcast



Howard Marchbanks—Caring for Aging Parents


Howard Marchbanks joins Victor Kubik to navigate the sensitive and important topic of caring for ailing parents. In this conversation, they cover challenges, solutions and encouragement.

<https://www.ucg.org/inside-united-podcast/inside-united-podcast-197-howard-marchbanks-caring-for-aging-parents>

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