



United Church of God an International Association

eNews from Ministerial and Member Services

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Personal From the President...

Indianapolis—Fulfilling a Long-Time Vision

Over the past few weeks, we virtually visited two of our congregations in Africa. This week I'd like to write about an American congregation that traces its roots back to the days of the Radio Church of God. After many years, the vibrant assembly in Indianapolis, Indiana, fulfilled a vision that many had held for decades and received a major blessing, one that is still unfolding. Through a joint effort between the Indianapolis congregation, the Council of Elders and others at the home office, a 12,000 sq. ft. building was purchased in northeast Indianapolis in 2019. Previous owners had bought and converted a former data processing facility into a multi-use church building with a formal assembly area, fellowship facility and other useful amenities.



Bev Kubik stands in front of the Indianapolis church building.

To see a complete report about this story with many photos, please go to <https://kubik.org/indianapolis-fulfilling-a-long-time-vision/>.

A somewhat nomadic congregation in decades past, the Indianapolis congregation had a history of finding a meeting place, putting down some roots, and then having circumstances force a move. Like many other congregations, this happened several times over the decades. Sometimes the halls were subpar, and sometimes very nice, like the fellowship hall the Indy congregation leased from a nearly new Lutheran church before it moved into its existing facility. But that rental hall, like other halls, presented several challenges, including short-term

hassles of finding alternative meeting space when the Lutheran church hosted its own events.

Bev and I lived in Indianapolis for several years when we pastored the Terre Haute and Lafayette congregations, and when I was serving as a member of the Council of Elders (Cincinnati is only about two hours away by car). We attended in Indianapolis from time to time, especially when the congregation would host a joint service with outlying congregations (which would often require the renting of a large meeting room to accommodate everyone).

The Indianapolis congregation had set up a separate building fund in 1995. Over time, this fund grew to six figures, and the Indianapolis brethren showed their generosity time and again by providing funds to other church congregations to help purchase buildings in Indiana and Ohio.

Now, owning a church hall and having 24/7 access has provided many major benefits, even during the restricted time of COVID-19 social distancing. Just before the church moved in, then-pastor Bart Bornhorst took up a new post in Pennsylvania. Joshua Creech and his wife, Lizzy, formerly serving in Tennessee, were transferred to serve the Fort Wayne and Indianapolis congregations, which has worked well.



Pastor Joshua Creech speaks at services in Indianapolis.

Indianapolis, which merged with the Lafayette congregation a few years earlier (and also serves members from Muncie, Kokomo, Columbus and places in southern Indiana), holds a legendary reputation for service in hospitality and potlucks. As soon as the church moved into its new building, those and other church activities quickly ramped up. No more would chairs, audio equipment and hospitality areas have to be torn down and the building vacated before 6 p.m. each Sabbath.

A 24-hour fun weekend “lock-in” for the teens was soon organized, something that could not have happened previously. Additional rooms in the new church building were dedicated to young people and expanded Bible classes for children. Other social events and after-services fellowship were expanded, including pizza and other types of gatherings. Members quickly organized to begin upgrading the facility and making improvements to freshen up areas to allow better use by brethren.

In March 2020, things changed dramatically. Experience previously gained through setting up

phone and Internet connectivity would prove very valuable during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

With an expanded capacity for support, members in Indianapolis were able to set up multiple camera angles and video graphics to enhance streaming services. While brethren safely stayed home during the early days of the pandemic, Mr. Creech and other elders were able to lead traditional services from the church building with only a handful of people present to conduct services. Everyone else linked in live through the Internet and phone, and a song leader led hymns in the traditional fashion. On occasion, live special music was presented. It provided familiar continuity, an important aspect during uncertain times.

During the lockdown, the church building was physically reset to meet Indiana COVID-19 meeting requirements, and over time larger groups of members were able to return, all adhering to Indiana's mandated standards.

As restrictions relaxed, more members began attending. A major moment came recently with the staging of the first-ever Night to Be Much Observed at the Indianapolis hall with dozens of members pitching in to help with and enjoy a catered meal. My wife Bev and I were privileged to attend this first-time event and it was indeed a lovely and memorable evening.

Ironically, the previous hall rented by the Indianapolis congregation was closed right at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis and only recently began allowing people back in. If Indianapolis had not made its move, the UCG congregation would not have been able to meet in any fashion at the old hall for well more than a year!

The Indianapolis congregation hosted the Fort Wayne congregation for the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. The additional available building space allowed both congregations to safely attend while remaining in compliance with state regulations. Many people had not seen each other for months. More such joint meetings are planned, since the Indianapolis church building is conveniently located near Interstate 69 that links to Fort Wayne.



The Indianapolis congregation sings hymns during a Sabbath service.

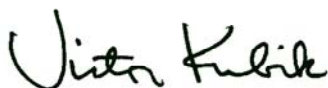
Today, with upwards of 100 people attending each Sabbath, the Indianapolis church looks forward to even more activities, Bible studies, seminars and other events to maximize the use of the building. Now well-versed in online technology, Mr. and Mrs. Creech are able to regularly unite brethren from all over Indiana through online women's Bible studies, Second-hand Lions club and other meetings.

The Bible tells us "Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it" (Psalm 127:1). At the first church service back in 2019, both Darris McNeely, a former long-time

Indianapolis pastor (and currently a *Beyond Today* host), and I were able to positively reaffirm that members *are* the church, *not* the building, and I had the privilege of reviewing Solomon's prayer of dedication (1 Kings 8:22-61). The members in Indianapolis certainly have been living up to those high standards!

Want to experience Indianapolis firsthand? The congregation welcomes visitors; anyone can easily find the address of United Church of God in Indianapolis through a Google search or by going online to www.ucg.org/congregations/indianapolis-in

In Christ's service,



Victor Kubik

Personal from Ministerial and Member Services...

Dear Ministers and Brethren,

Visit to Poplar Bluff and Cape Girardeau, Missouri, Congregations

Last Friday, I drove to Paducah, Kentucky, to visit our pastor Doug Collison and his wife, Dianne. I greatly enjoyed their warm hospitality and spent both Friday and Saturday night with them. I really appreciate their dedicated service to God and our brethren and it was really good to get to know them a bit better and to spend some quality time with them!

On the Sabbath, we visited both the Poplar Bluff and Cape Girardeau, Missouri, congregations. I really enjoyed getting to meet nearly all of our members in both locations. Each has a very uplifting and bright meeting hall. We lease the building in Poplar Bluff on a full-time basis and we own the very fine building in Cape Girardeau.

It is our hope that all our congregations will be able to meet in halls conducive to uplifting worship and fellowship, whether purchased, leased, or rented.

We greatly appreciate our pastoral couples and our dedicated members who meet together in unity and peace on God's Sabbath and annual Holy Days. Of course, we do so to worship God the Father and Jesus Christ in spirit and truth!

I am hoping to return before too long to visit the other two churches that the Collisons serve, Paducah and Henderson, Kentucky. It is my hope to visit as many congregations as feasible in the months ahead.

Of course, we have been busy this week planning for our annual General Conference of Elders meeting this Sunday afternoon and for the Council of Elders meetings to follow.

We greatly appreciate your prayers for God's blessing and direction on our meetings.

Barbara and I are also looking forward to a trip to Annapolis, Maryland, in just a little over

two weeks from now. Five area congregations will be combining for services on Pentecost: Philadelphia, Delmarva, Columbia, Northern Virginia and Richmond.

Wishing you all a very blessed and peaceful Sabbath day!

In God's love and service,



Mark Welch, Operation Manager for MMS

United Youth Camps Registration

(U.S. pastors, please announce to your congregations)

We are delighted that more than 430 campers have now registered for teen camp. The deadline for camp registration is May 2 but for Camp Wamatochick (wa-ma-TOE-chick), Arizona, the deadline is May 7.

Northwest Camp update: Because of many restrictions at our normal Northwest Camp facility, UYC is looking at another camp which is located in central Oregon for the week of June 27–July 4. There will be more information next week in the *eNews* about Northwest Camp.

And please note that camper scholarships are available, so please see your pastor. We are really looking forward to having camp this summer!

Camp Scholarship Process Reminder (for U.S. Pastors)

Because of the generosity of the brethren, there is a scholarship fund to assist any teen or preteen camper who needs financial assistance in order to attend their closest geographical camp. Pastors, here are guidelines about the scholarship program.

- The parent/camper registers online for camp at uyc.ucg.org.
- The parent asks their local pastor to see if any local scholarships are available. Sometimes local members contribute to help campers in their area. If no local scholarships are available, the parent asks their pastor to request scholarship assistance.
- For a preteen camp, the pastor should notify Mark Welch, the overall preteen camp coordinator.
- For teen camps, the pastor notifies the specific camp director asking for scholarship assistance (providing camper name, age and church area).
- The camp director notifies the overall camp coordinator who then begins the online process. An online application is emailed to the parents and, once completed, the form is e-mailed to the pastor for his approval.
- Scholarships are available for United Church of God families who are in financial need.

- A camper receiving a scholarship is only eligible to attend one camp during that camp season.
- A camper receiving a scholarship is only eligible to attend the closest camp to him/her geographically.
- The scholarship is generally for 50% of the camp tuition but if more is needed, please request it.

If you have any questions about teen scholarships please contact the specific camp director or Aaron Creech (Aaron_Creech@ucg.org). For questions about preteen scholarships, please contact Mark Welch.

—Steve Nutzman, UYC coordinator

Sabbath Services May 1

Services begin at 2:30 p.m. EDT
1st Split Sermon—Rick Shabi
2nd Split Sermon—Vic Kubik

Live webcast at www.ucg.org/webcast

Normal Calling Directions for Sabbath Services:

For those who can pay for long distance calls or have an unlimited phone calling plan, call: 508-924-1634 (NO access code needed).

Toll Free Call Directions for Sabbath Services:

For those who have limited phone calling time or have to pay for long distance calling, call: 1-844-855-4444. When asked enter access code: 599110 followed by # (Please call as close to 2:30 p.m. Eastern as possible—we will try to start the call at 2:25 p.m.). If the host has not called to activate the meeting you will be put on hold, and then asked to call again later. This is to prevent unnecessary phone charges for waiting time.

May 2—Annual Meeting of the General Conference of Elders

The meeting will begin at 1 p.m. EDT. Elders and wives can connect to the meeting and find the schedule at (your ministerial website passcode will be needed):

<https://unitedchurchofgodaia.sharepoint.com/sites/homeoffice/SitePages/GCEWebcast.aspx>

Inside United Podcast



LeeAnn Luker—Catching Up and Women’s Services

LeeAnn Luker, who served closely alongside her late husband, Denny Luker, joins Victor Kubik to reflect on her vast experience of service, starting the Women’s Services department, and the impact of her husband.

<https://www.ucg.org/inside-united-podcast/inside-united-podcast-201-leeann-luker-catching-up-and-womens-services>

Send us your questions, comments, or suggestions at podcast@ucg.org.

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