



## General Conference of Elders Meeting Sees Two Members Seated, New Internet Strategy Unveiled

By Mitchell Moss

CINCINNATI, OHIO—Live via webcast for the second year, the 26<sup>th</sup> annual General Conference of Elders meeting saw Council seats filled, the Strategic Plan, Operation Plan and Budget approved, two proposed constitutional amendments balloted on, and various updates presented by Church leadership showing God’s blessings on the Church.

Council member Scott Ashley and Council Chairman Len Martin were re-confirmed to serve another term in their

Council seats; Brian Shaw and Paul Wasilkoff were added to the Council.

Two proposed amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws of UCG did not pass with the required <sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> majority, with votes of 142-120 and 95-172, respectively. The first proposal was to amend several parts of both the Constitution and the Bylaws to classify elders who don’t cast ballots at the GCE as “non-voting elders,” and to interpret the necessary majorities for passing issues as based on voting elders, rather than of all elders or of valid ballots cast. The second pro-

posed amendment would have precluded any church-employed elder who directly reported to a supervisor at the home office from being able to serve on the Council of Elders.

The Strategic Plan, Operation Plan and Budget for fiscal year 2021-2022 were passed by votes of 259-16, 254-20 and 251-23, respectively.

### Leadership updates on the state of the Church

To begin the four-hour webcast presentation, Chairman Len Martin introduced the con-



ference with a call to order and a welcome to elders ordained since the last GCE. Following Mr. Martin’s introduction, President Victor Kubik recognized pastors and employees who had reached milestones in their years of service.

Following the recognition, Mr. Martin returned to give an address as chairman of the Council. In his message, he reminded the conference of the

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## Pastoral Travel Reports: Visits Resume to Ghana

By Paul Moody

GHANA—About 15 months ago, COVID-19 restrictions shut down the opportunity for in-person visits to West Africa. By God’s blessing, the door of access to Ghana has now reopened.

On May 24, I departed on a trip which lasted nearly two weeks. All were excited for the opportunity to be reunited once again after an extended absence. My goal on this visit was to make the rounds to all six congregation regions in Ghana, touching base with the local leadership and seeing as many of the brethren as possible.

A good portion of this trip was spent on the road. Office manager Henry Aikins and I journeyed together throughout the southern half of Ghana, making stops all along the way

to encourage God’s people and to reinforce the leadership in their service to the brethren. Staying in different lodging each night and experiencing various adventures on the highway was all par for the course on this trip. We were grateful for God’s protection and provision each day.

The first Sabbath was spent with the Yeji brethren. Yeji is the northernmost congregation in Ghana. It is situated on Lake Volta, the largest man-made lake in the world by surface area. A number of our members take wooden ferries across the lake in order to assemble on the Sabbath day. Fishing and farming support the region and are also the primary livelihood for most of our members there.

At each stop, the leaders shared with me some of the challenges this past year has brought to Ghana.

Mercifully, there was very little impact on church members’ health from the virus itself. We thank God for that great blessing. However, the economic toll from the pandemic-related restrictions has created an increasingly difficult financial situation for all in the West Africa region. Some of our church members have lost their jobs, while others are finding it difficult to even sell their crops and goods at market due to the depressed economy. As a result of the decline in tax revenue, the Ghanaian government has imposed what many are calling a “COVID tax,” which has been attached to a number of services and goods that were not previously taxed. This has added additional weight to an already

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Top: Participants at a leadership workshop in Winneba, Ghana.

Bottom: The Yeji, Ghana, congregation.

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## ABC Graduates a New Class of 20 Students

By Victor Kubik

On Sunday, May 9, Ambassador Bible College held its 22nd graduation ceremony. All 20 students in the class successfully completed the program. Additionally, all 20 participated in the chorale, which performed two songs as part of the ceremony.

ABC Coordinator Dr. Frank Dunkle welcomed the class and the audience in attendance and delivered the invocation.

Class President Luke Barker addressed the students on the importance of continuing to make God their highest priority. He reminded them that when the school year began there were many uncertainties because of the pandemic, but they had made it a priority to come to ABC to study God's Word, and they must continue that priority beyond ABC.

Dean of Students Aaron Dean delivered a graduation address reminding students that "fear is a reaction, but courage is a choice." In it, he described the history and reputation of Gurkha soldiers who, rather than simply inherit their reputation, continually choose

it. Mr. Dean encouraged ABC students to live up to the reputation of Ambassador, and in the days ahead continue to choose courage and devotion to godly values.

The faculty also presented four awards to the students. Luke Barker and Faith Rains received the Ambassador Excellence Awards, and the Council of Elders Service Awards were presented to Collin McCrady and Ashlee Jennings.

Graduates, family and friends gathered outside for the iconic balloon release before taking photos, sharing cake and conversation, and reminiscing on all that they had learned over the past year. Various alumni living in the Cincinnati area volunteered by serving cake, ushering, aiding with set-up and take-down and welcoming the graduates into the now-extensive list of people around the world who have successfully completed the ABC program.

The class of 2021 was grateful the faculty, staff, congregation and all those who help make ABC possible each year.

As we got to know this class through the year, we developed a fondness and respect for them. They are committed to serving



Top: The ABC class of 2021 and faculty members smile after commencement. Right: Three ABC graduates pose during the post-graduation celebration; class president Luke Barker delivers the student discourse.



in the congregations they return to. ABC is not just about learning what the Bible says; it's also about the application of that knowledge.

We all look forward to welcoming a new class of students in late August. I want to give special thanks to all the instructors and staff of ABC who made this a most memorable year. If you are interested in attending ABC in the fall, there are still spots available! Visit [abc.ucg.org](http://abc.ucg.org)

to apply for ABC, view the course catalog and watch the promotional video. Please contact ABC Coordinator Frank Dunkle at [frank\\_dunkle@ucg.org](mailto:frank_dunkle@ucg.org) for more information.

A church member owns several houses in the area for the purpose of providing housing to ABC students. Scholarships are also available for those who need assistance. **UN**

## ABC Continuing Education Program Resumes at Home Office for 2021 Session

By Frank Dunkle

MILFORD, OHIO—The Ambassador Bible College Continuing Education Program took place in the home office from May 10-14. The 28 students who attended participated in classes ranging from "Highlights from the General Epistles," and "Why We Follow the Hebrew Calendar," to "Studies from 1 Corinthians," and more.

COVID-19 restrictions were still in place, so students wore masks when needed and maintained distancing as appropriate, but that did not dampen their spirits or lessen the pleasure of being able to enjoy this program again. Each day began with breakfast, and included six hours of instruction, with a lunch provided at mid-day.

Although there were some "first-timers," many of the stu-



The attendees of the 2021 ABC continuing education program in front of the home office, where classes took place from May 10-14.

dents have participated for several years. They traveled from as far away as Florida, and several stayed and celebrated Pentecost with the Cincinnati congregations. Most of them are retired, making a strong contrast with the young adults that normally fill the classroom. It is always sad

to see the graduates leave in May, but having old friends come in for continuing education classes brings renewed happiness.

The purpose of ABC Continuing Education is to allow Church members who are not able to attend the nine-month program to sample some of the academic instruction that has always been the central feature of Ambassador College. However, most participants say that the opportunity to spend more time with old friends—and to make new ones—is also a strong attraction. Some have said that this program is like a summer camp for older Church members.

Meeting restrictions across the United States have prevented ABC faculty from conducting weekend ABC samplers for local congregations, but they hope to resume that program as soon as practical. **UN**

## Reflections From an International Graduate of ABC

By Ashlee Jennings

Ambassador Bible College is a great opportunity to learn more about the Bible. Before deciding to attend ABC, I had reached a stagnant point in my life. I realized that I was reading the Scriptures and not fully understanding the context, which most likely meant that my understanding of the meaning of the scriptures was not as accurate as it could be. I thought about how I could obtain that teaching from the Bible, meet many new people and maybe even travel to a different country. Aha! Ambassador Bible College was the solution.

While it was intimidating traveling during COVID-19 without knowing when I would be able to go back home, I knew that if I didn't take this opportunity now, then I would likely continue to stay stuck where I was, spiritually and physically. So off

I went in June of 2020 to the big United States, excited for what God had in store for me for the upcoming year—and He did not disappoint! Not only was I able to travel across the world and meet so many people, but I was able to learn more about my relationship with God and with others.

I am so grateful that I was granted this incredible opportunity to focus and learn every day about our Creator. It helped me to really understand what I believe, and *why* I believe it. The instructors did such an incredible job teaching us and building relationships with the students and I know that my classmates and I are grateful for their service and consistent positive attitudes.

I would recommend ABC to anyone—young or old, international or not! It was definitely a highlight of my life and a precious, valuable year that I will never forget. **UN**

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## Mycelium Musings

There is something exhilarating and rejuvenating about a good walk in the woods. Whether the perambulation is for exercise or for relaxation, a person tends to reap many benefits. When trudging along forest trails near my house in the spring of the year, I keep a sharp eye out for a reclusive delicacy: morel mushrooms!

Morels can be found where they grow—dedicated mushroom hunters are reluctant to reveal the exact location of their patches hidden in arbooreal alcoves. However, morels prefer mature forests and seem to have an affinity for trees like elm, sycamore and hickory, especially if the tree is dead or dying. Once found and picked, the mushrooms are washed and then prepared. Sautéed with butter is my personal favorite way to savor these particularly fabulous fungi.

A reasonable question may be forming in the mind of some readers: *Is it safe?* Good question! It has been said that all mushrooms are edible—but some only once! Indeed, some mushrooms are quite deadly. It is highly recommended that you learn mushroom identification from an expert prior to eating any mushrooms you might col-



Beth Macdonald/Unsplash

*Some mushrooms are delicacies, such as the morel mushroom above. But using trial and error to figure out which mushrooms are edible can be deadly.*

lect in the wild. Your local college might offer a course in both finding and identifying safe mushrooms. In addition, purchasing a high-quality mushroom identification handbook is invaluable.

Did you know there are no telltale signs or characteristics that denote a safe mushroom from a toxic mushroom? The distinction can only be learned through either experimentation or external revelation. Some mushrooms taste awful, some cause digestive discomfort or distress, some are tasty and safe, while others are toxic and even deadly. Clearly, trial-and-error is not the best way to learn the difference!

For many beginners, the “false morel” is easily confused

with true morels. There are a number of clues which make the distinction clear—especially when a teacher is able to point out the differences. As a side note, the false morel contains a chemical compound that is similar to rocket fuel; not surprisingly, this compound has rather undesirable effects on the human body.

As we consider these learning methods related to mushrooms a spiritual parallel may be coming into view. Let's recall the account of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. In the latter section of Acts 8 we read how Philip was directed to the road connecting Jerusalem and Gaza. Philip, who evidently was a decent runner, caught up with the Ethiopian's chariot and engaged in conversation with the man.

Philip was prompted to ask the Ethiopian if he understood Isaiah's writing. The Ethiopian responded with sincerity and humility, saying, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” (Act 8:31). The Ethiopian, being hospitable, then invited Philip to join him in the chariot where Philip helped guide this new

convert into deeper understanding.

Many societies, past and present, have discovered the value of keeping some of the Ten Commandments such as not stealing, not murdering and telling the truth. However, when it comes to keeping the Sabbath, the annual Holy Days and other biblical commands, people aren't able to discover these teachings and incorporate them into their culture. As Christians we've been called and then guided and encouraged by the Holy Spirit. Throughout the years we've been coached by the Church—where we have also been given guidance, reminders and encouragement.

Mankind continues to attempt to find a good way of living through trial and error. The success rate has been very poor and has yielded mixed results at best. It is similar to trying to learn which mushrooms are good to eat though trial and error. Life, like mushroom hunting, is more fulfilling and contains much less heartache when we have a Guide and Handbook showing us the way. **UN**



*Paul Wasilkoff pastors congregations in Hamilton and Toronto, Ontario, serves as the IT manager for the Canadian National Office, and currently serves on the Council of Elders. He can be reached at paul\_w@ucg.ca.*

## Updates From Ministerial and Member Services

On May 4, 2021, Gary Evans was re-credentialed by the United Church of God. He and his wife, Sue, serve in the Cincinnati East, Ohio, congregations.

In early May, Andy and Amber Duran were transferred to New England where Mr. Duran now serves as an assistant pastor to Andy Diemer for the congregations in Southern New Hampshire, Worcester (Massachusetts), Saratoga Springs (New York) and Bangor (Maine).

A new Bible study group in Sugarcreek, Ohio, was added in early May with John Miller serving as pastor.

On Pentecost, May 16, we had five new elders ordained in the United States and Australia. Bill Ferrier and his wife, Kelli, serve in the Northern Arizona congregation. Charles Graby and his wife, Linda, serve in the Atlanta, Georgia, congregation. Steve Holladay and his wife, Jackie, serve in the Buford, Georgia, congregation. Roger Rains and his wife, Erica, serve in the Worcester, Massachusetts, congregation. Joe Rivers and his wife, Jenean, serve in the Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, congregation.

In mid-May, David and Joy Jones were transferred to Colorado where David now serves as pastor for the congregations in Denver, Colorado Springs, Loveland and Frisco. This will allow Scott Ashley to devote himself more fully to his responsibilities as managing editor of *Beyond Today* and will enable Charles Melear to devote more time to his role as conference planner who travels extensively to arrange many of our Festival sites.

In June, David Meidinger was hired to serve as an associate pastor. David and his wife, Laura, now serve the congregation in Albuquerque, New Mexico, assisting pastor Randy Schreiber.

On June 12, two ministerial trainees serving the Cincinnati East, Ohio, congregation were ordained into the ministry. Troy Phelps and his wife, Cindy, were transferred to the San Francisco area where Troy now serves as an assistant pastor to Tim Peabworth for the congregations in Petaluma and San Francisco Bay Area, California. Nick Lamoureux and his wife, Megan, were transferred to Rome, Georgia, where Nick now serves as an assistant pastor to Rick Beam for the congregations in Rome (Georgia), Gadsden (Alabama) and Chattanooga (Tennessee).

In mid-June, several additional pastoral transfers occurred. Randy and Linda Stiver were transferred to South Dakota, where Randy now pastors the Rapid City, Sioux Falls and Watertown congregations, replacing David Jones. Ryan and Nissa Hall were transferred to the northeast Ohio area where Ryan now pastors the congregations in North Canton and Youngstown (Ohio), Wheeling (W. Virginia), and Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania), replacing Randy Stiver.

We greatly appreciate the dedicated service of these men and their wives.

*Chris Rowland*

## New *Beyond Today* Interview With Andi Chapman

"Anxiety, Depression and Despair Have Consequences"

On Wednesday, June 9, we welcomed Andi Chapman to our *Beyond Today* TV studio to record a second round of *Beyond Today* Interviews. In our previous *Beyond Today* Interview, Andi talked about hospice and end-of-life-planning. This time we discussed, "Anxiety, Depression and Despair Have Consequences."

Ms. Chapman is a Registered Nurse and Regional Clinical Educator for Heart to Heart Hospice. She is also owner and consultant for SelectMed Seminars, specializing in educational and consulting services for general community and health-care staff.

This two-part interview, conducted by *Beyond Today* TV producer, Peter Eddington, will be edited and available in August on our website at [ucg.org/beyond-today/television](http://ucg.org/beyond-today/television) under the "Beyond Today Interviews" tab.

Some of the interesting questions covered during the 45-minute interview (which will be edited into two parts), include:

- We see more and more children becoming anxious and distressed today. Doctors will often prescribe medication. How do we help children and teach them to cope with anxiety? What are the consequences for children who have anxiety?
- Many people are anxious about the future, about things they cannot know. They fret over events that have not yet happened, or may not ever happen. How do we maintain a proper perspective on the future, and on things we cannot know?
- Is there a link between anxiety and depression? Can anxiety or despair lead to clinical depression?
- Are there differences in men and women when it comes to anxiety, depression and despair?
- Sometimes anxiety and de-

pression strike close to home. How can we best help our spouse and our friends who are suffering from anxiety?

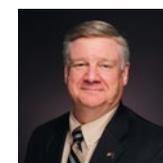
- How do I recognize anxiety in myself? Maybe I have it but don't know it, but others see it in me?
- What are some of the good outcomes and positive impacts of stress in our lives?
- How has COVID-19 impacted our stress?
- Are there solid ways we can control the negative influences in our lives?
- What are some of the physical and emotional impacts on our health because of too much stress?
- How can I escape burnout?
- I've heard that joy can be an antidote to stress. How does that work? And are there other antidotes to anxiety, despair and depression?

Please look for the interview in August on our website, and



Peter Eddington and Andi Chapman discuss how to navigate anxiety, depression, despair and stress in the latest *Beyond Today* Interview.

also on all of our *Beyond Today* TV apps on Google Play for Android devices, Roku, Amazon Fire TV, Samsung smart TVs, LG smart TVs, and Apple iOS devices. **UN**



Peter Eddington serves as operation manager for Media and Communications Services. Ordained an elder in 1992, Mr. Eddington has served the Church for almost 30 years. He can be contacted at [peter\\_eddington@ucg.org](mailto:peter_eddington@ucg.org).

## Newsmax TV: 2-minute Spot Results

*Beyond Today* television is continuing to run 2-minute, short form programs on Newsmax TV. Eight different topics have been discussed, with relevant booklet offers for each.

In addition, viewers are offered a free subscription to *Beyond Today* magazine. More than 10,000 responses have been logged so far.

The primary budget for

what was initially a test in this market, has now been exhausted. But a reduced amount of spending in the new fiscal year (starting July, 2021) has been set aside to continue these 2-minute spots for the near future.

We feel it is good to continue to be seen nationwide on

Newsmax TV by this predominantly conservative television audience. It brings awareness of the gospel of the Kingdom and the work of the United Church of God, an *International Association*, to an important segment of our population.

Please see the chart below

showing results for the first 24 weeks of the campaign. And please pray for the success of this endeavor, and all that we are undertaking to preach the good news of God's Kingdom. May our efforts fall on fertile ground and be pleasing to our Father in heaven. **UN**

	Date	Booklet Offered	Website Visits	Booklet Requests
<b>Week 1 &amp; 2</b>	Dec. 13–26, 2020	The Gospel of the Kingdom	443	242
<b>Week 3 &amp; 4</b>	Jan. 3–16, 2021	The Middle East in Bible Prophecy	1,173	728
<b>Week 5 &amp; 6</b>	Jan. 17–30, 2021	The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy	2,201	1,189
<b>Week 7 &amp; 8</b>	Jan. 31–Feb. 13, 2021	Are We Living in the Time of the End?	1,105	576
<b>Week 9 &amp; 10</b>	Feb. 14–27, 2021	Why Were You Born?	668	346
<b>Week 11 &amp; 12</b>	Feb. 28–Mar. 13, 2021	The Horsemen of Revelation	906	560
<b>Week 13 &amp; 14</b>	Mar. 14–27, 2021	The Book of Revelation Unveiled	496	282
<b>Week 15 &amp; 16</b>	Mar. 28–Apr. 10, 2021	You Can Have Living Faith	176	81
<b>Week 17 &amp; 18</b>	Apr. 11–24, 2021	The Middle East In Bible Prophecy	628	341
<b>Week 19 &amp; 20</b>	Apr. 25–May 8, 2021	Are We Living in the Time of the End?	1043	534
<b>Week 21 &amp; 22</b>	May 9–22, 2021	The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy	494	267
<b>Week 23 &amp; 24</b>	May 23–Jun. 5, 2021	The Horsemen of Revelation	896	470
		Totals	10,229	4616

## Media Department Begins Planning for Video Animation— Looking for Animators

Media and Communications Services has begun exploratory work towards the creation of video animations. These will explain core Bible teachings and some of the most compelling beliefs in an interesting and engaging way to capture the interest of our viewers.

And so, a search is underway for qualified video animators to work at the home office in concert with our video production team. Media and Communications Services Video animators who are interested in this opportunity can email [human\\_resources@ucg.org](mailto:human_resources@ucg.org) for more information.

Subjects are being outlined in order of production priority, and a proof-of-concept sample is planned for completion in the next 12 months. If the concept proves itself, from this, a full-scale plan will be developed.

Thank you for your continued prayers for the success of all our efforts to find the best ways to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Peter Eddington



**James Michael Summers**

June 16, 2021



**Luna Jo Tomes**

May 2, 2021



**Joseph Paul Camerata**

Feb. 24, 1941-May 3, 2021



**Dodie Foster**

Nov. 28, 1928-Dec. 31, 2020



**Larry Griffith**

March 22, 1941-Jan. 27, 2021

## Births

### James Michael Summers

Gordon and Rosemarie Summers of the York, Pennsylvania, congregation are pleased to announce the birth of their second child, James Michael Summers. He was born on June 16, 2021, weighing 7 pounds, 8 ounces and measuring 21 inches long.

James is the third grandchild of Charles and Karen Lavaty of the Los Angeles, California, congregation. Gordon Jr., 26 months, is intrigued by this new addition to the family and is settling into his new role as big brother.

### Luna Jo Tomes

Kyle and Shaylee Tomes, of the Las Vegas, Nevada, congregation, are happy to announce the arrival of their daughter, Luna Jo Tomes. Luna was born on May 2, 2021, weighing 7 pounds, 12 ounces and measuring 20 inches long.

Grandparents are Dean and Laurie Matson, Dennis and Maria Thomas, and Keith and Christy Tomes.

Kyle, Shaylee and Luna will be moving to northern California this summer to be closer to family, and will be attending the Reno, Nevada, congregation.

to Parkinson's disease. George was a longtime member of the Church of God, and served in the data processing department of the Worldwide Church of God in the 1970s. George had been unable to attend services for many years due to his health, but remained faithful to God until his death. At his request, no memorial services or funeral were held.

### Joseph Paul Camerata

Joseph Paul Camerata, 80, died on Monday, May 3, 2021.

In his first year of life, he was placed in a "New York Foundling home" followed by many years in various foster homes until his grandmother took him into her home when he was 12 years old. He graduated from high school in 1959, followed by three years in the army.

Joe was called in 1967 when he began attending the Worldwide Church of God and was baptized in 1968.

He is survived by his wife Roma; step-son Bryan Tennison (wife Ally) and two grandchildren Jake and Jamie; two brothers and a sister. He was preceded in death by his step-daughter Rene Tennison and two sisters, Marie and Jodi.

Joe was ordained a deacon in the Phoenix Northwest congregation on Feb. 22, 1992. He graduated magna cum laude from Western International University in 1993 with a bachelor of science in management.

Before retiring in 2006, Joe was a chemist working most of his life for Honeywell Bull, then several years with the city of Phoenix. Following retirement he became a substitute teach-

er for elementary grade school children; followed by many years as a volunteer for Banner Boswell Hospital in Sun City, Arizona.

Because of his circumstances as a young child growing up in foster homes, he had a special heart for fatherless children; helping and mentoring them as often as possible.

Joe was very dedicated for years, even up to the last few weeks of his life with the annual "Bible Reading Program" on Facebook. He had found his niche in reaching out to preach the gospel. There were well over 1,200 names from across the nation and around the world reading the Bible together year after year; communicating day and night with questions and answers pertaining to Scripture. People near and far knew he could easily be reached in the middle of the night; many of whom were not associated with the Church and from unknown islands and countries in the most remote parts of the world.

Joe had a passionate belief that when a door closes you find a way to open other doors to serve others. His personal mission was to spread the gospel everywhere he went. He undertook a never-failing effort to carry booklets, articles, sermons and *Beyond Today* magazine in his suitcases or satchels, leaving them everywhere he traveled: airplanes, hotels, libraries, restrooms, etc. He never set at leisure; when he saw an open door, he carried the baton and ran with it; even to his last breath he was preaching the gospel to the nurses and doctors in the hospital.

Joe carried a legacy of reaching out to everyone: male, female, young and old; he will be deeply missed!

### Dodie Foster

Could any good thing come out of Babylon? Yes, for in this case, we speak of Babylon, New York. On Nov. 28, 1928, the daughter of Grace Helen Neatherland and William Barde was born and named Doramay Barde. The second of five siblings, she became known affectionately as Dodie.

At age 15, she took a job in New York City, a two-hour commute each way, to work at the credit department for Sears Roebuck department store. It was there that she met a gentleman named Charles Jonathan Foster, known as Jack. They were married Sept. 17, 1950, and later had two children: Joan Florence and David Charles Foster, both of whom are still alive.

In 1958, the family moved from Long Island, New York, to Sebring, Florida. Becoming a widow at age 62, she moved to a newly built home in Palm Bay, Florida. It was there that God began to turn her thinking toward Him. She requested and was granted baptism in 2013 at the Feast in Jekyll Island, Georgia. She became a member of the Vero Beach, Florida, congregation and was loved by her brethren. This was a hallmark of her joy as she would say how she had never been loved by a group of people like she was by the brethren in the Church.

She packed up from her home at 89, and moved to Lake Worth, Florida, where

she moved into a condominium complex. She continued her tradition of being a good neighbor—whether they were two-legged people, four-legged critters, had webbed feet, slithered, crawled or swam. They were all appreciated.

"She never knew a stranger" is often a motto to describe our sister Dodie.

"She would open her home to brethren if we asked about a place to stay and was thankful God called her before it was too late," said one lady in the Church who knew her.

"Dodie was a great inspiration to me. She always had kind words that were loving and kind especially when you needed it," said another. "A great value we all learned was to give and get her 'Sabbath Day Hug' and to feel her constant upbeat attitude of gratitude."

"She was a real person," one fellow said. There was a frank honesty together with a genuine joy about Dodie.

In her concluding days, she would speak to her daughter daily from across the country and still convey how thankful she was. Time was running out and God in His mercy allowed her to go to sleep peacefully on Dec. 31, 2020, at Wellington Hospital. She had interment beside Jack at Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell, Florida, on Feb. 16, 2021.

With Dodie, we were pointed toward the Kingdom of God and shown to go forward in hope. God's truth gives us strength that there will be a

*Please see next page*

## Obituaries

### George Alphin

George Alphin, of the Columbia, South Carolina, congregation died on March 19, 2021, from complications due



**Robert Hancock**

May 17, 2021

*Dodie Foster  
Obituary, cont.*

great celebration of life—the way she requested her funeral service to be—with no black garments of sadness, but bright colorful ones of joy!

### Larry Griffith

Larry was born on March 22, 1941, the youngest of three sons born to Clarence and Margaret Griffith.

He was mostly of German heritage, with some Irish and English heritage. He was never close to his brothers or mother, but greatly admired his father. He grew up on the tough streets of the north side of Cincinnati.

Larry met his wife Betty at Hughes High School, where she was a year behind him in class. Later Larry graduated from the Ohio College of Applied Science with an engineering degree.

Larry and Betty got married on June 30, 1962. Over the next eight years they had three daughters, Joni, Beth and Kris. Larry began working for GE Aviation in 1965, first as a draftsman and later as a design engineer until he retired in 2001.

He started attending the Worldwide Church of God in 1967 and was a deacon for many years. He was a stickler for the truth and began attending the United Church of God from the beginning.

Larry had a great sense of humor that everyone will always remember about him. He loved his garden and canning, his many Shetland Sheepdogs and playing in softball leagues.

Larry is survived by his loving wife Betty of almost 59



**Anna Margaret Hastings**

March 11, 1933-Sept. 15, 2020

years. The family thanks all of the friends and family for their loving support and help during his final year.

### Robert Hancock

Robert Hancock, a longtime member of the Springfield, Missouri, church, died on May 17, 2021.

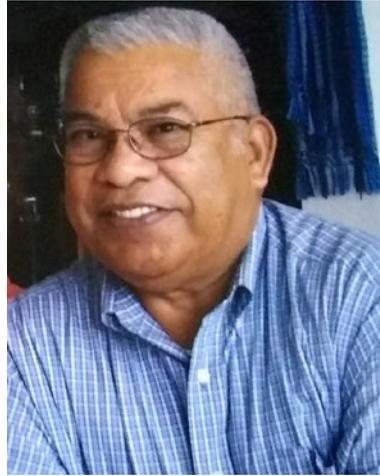
Robert was 79 years old, had suffered from ill health for decades and died while undergoing treatment at Brookhaven Nursing, Rehab and Hospice. Even during painful episodes, he was always praying for the Church and those in need of healing. He was preceded in death by his parents, Clarence and Geraldine Hancock, both members of the Springfield congregation.

### Anna Margaret Hastings

Anna Margaret Hastings of the Fargo, North Dakota, congregation, died on Sept. 15, 2020. She was born Anna Leeder in St. Louis, Missouri, on March 11, 1933.

Anna was a longtime, faithful member of the Church of God, as well as a faithful friend to those who came to know her. She was baptized in the Worldwide Church of God in St. Louis in October of 1963. She spent many years attending church in Denver, Colorado, and was well known to brethren in that area.

Anna married Calvin Hastings in 1947. They had four children, Freddy, Elizabeth, Douglas and Aaron (called Corbin). Anna lived with her youngest son, Corbin, and his wife, Robin, in the Pelican Rapids, Minnesota, area for the past



**Lionel Garcia Marquez**

Dec. 5, 1939-May 1, 2021

several years.

Another son, Douglas, is living in Georgia. Freddy, the eldest, is deceased. Daughter Elizabeth was with Anna until her death.

Anna looked forward to being reunited with her family in the future resurrection, and talked often of that wonderful time ahead. She had six grandchildren: Corbin's two sons, Shawn and AJ; Freddy's daughter, Teresa; and Douglas' children, Brittany, Kyle and Alex; great-grandchildren, Kylee and Dustin.

When Anna received a diagnosis of breast cancer that eventually took her life, she held fast with courage, knowing God would see her through her trials. She wasn't afraid; she was at peace, knowing the truth of God's future plan for her.

Anna always had a kind word to say and a smile on her face. She is remembered as a woman of great faith in God, and no matter what happened to her, she reflected that faith until the end of her days.

The COVID-19 outbreak delayed a memorial service for Anna, but a service is planned after Sabbath services in Fargo this summer.

### Lionel Garcia Marquez

It is with great sadness that the family of Lionel Garcia Marquez announce his death due to complications of COVID-19 on May 1, 2021, at the age of 81.

Lionel will be lovingly remembered by his wife of 55 years, Linda; children Lisa (DJ), Russell (Mayumi), Robert (Cynthia), Albert and Fe-



**Donald Mathie**

Jan. 15, 1928-May 3, 2021

licia; 18 grandchildren; seven great-grandchildren; siblings Tito (Brenda), Trinidad, Jr. (Lillian), Martha (Manuel), Israel (Mary), David (Sara) and numerous other family members and friends.

Lionel was predeceased by his parents, Trinidad and Felicianita, and twin siblings, David and Daniel; infant grandchildren, Kate Margaret and Tobias Oliver.

Lionel was born in Weslaco, Texas, on Dec. 5, 1939, to Trinidad and Felicianita Marquez. In 1950, the family moved and settled in Mabton, Washington. Lionel graduated from Mabton High School in 1961 and promptly went to work at the El Ranchito tortilla factory where his father was working as a baker. In 1963, he met the love of his life and best friend, Linda. They married in November 1965 and built a home in Mabton where they eventually added five beautiful children to their family.

In 1977, the family moved to Goldendale, Washington, and Lionel worked at the Martin Marietta aluminum plant as a welder for 10 years. He went back to school after the aluminum plant closed and got a degree in diesel mechanics from Yakima Valley Community College. He then became a mechanic for Braun Enterprises for the next 10 years.

In 1999, Lionel moved to the Richland area so that he could be closer to his parents. He worked as a stud welder for Canam before retiring. He came out of retirement to begin an entirely new endeavor

by working with children in the Richland School District. He started out helping as a translator and eventually found his heart leading him to work as a paraeducator specializing in helping children with autism or other specializ needs.

The two most important things to Lionel were his family and his service to God. He was baptized in 1982 as a member of the Church of God, and became part of the founding members of the church in Hood River, Oregon.

He was made a deacon in the United Church of God in the fall of 2010, and he enjoyed serving in that capacity until the end of his life. He also loved listening to Mexican music, gardening, tinkering in his shop and traveling. A perfect day for Lionel would involve waking up to a beautiful sunrise while hearing the ocean in the distance and sitting around a campfire with cocoa or coffee, or having backyard barbecues with family and friends.

A celebration of life service was held on June 19 in Richland, Washington. The family wishes to send a special thank you to the staff at the Kadlec Regional Medical Center for their care and compassion offered to Lionel and his family.

### Donald (Don) Mathie

Donald (Don) Mathie died peacefully on May 3, 2021, at the age of 93. Don was preceded in death by his wife, Louella, in 2006 after 56 years of marriage.

Don grew up and lived in Wausau, Wisconsin. His family was among the original settlers of Wisconsin, to the point of even having the original land charter signed by Abraham Lincoln. He was a dairy farmer for most of his life and came from a long family history of dairy farmers. He also owned and operated a sawmill for 50 years until his retirement in 2015. He loved playing softball and sheephead.

Don first came into contact with the Worldwide Church of God (WCG) in 1968 through conversations he had with a dairy salesman who would come to his farm. That man's name was Maurice Benson (who later served as an elder in WCG and UCG), and they would have long talks about the



**Anna Petersen**

July 4, 1939-March 28, 2021

*Don Mathie  
Obituary, cont.*

Bible and the teachings from Mr. Armstrong. Don initially would drive with his family from Wausua, Wisconsin, to Blue River, Wisconsin, (more than a three-hour drive today even with highways).

As the Church grew in attendance, new congregations were added in the north of the state—Richland Center, Wisconsin Dells, Appleton and Wausua (all in Wisconsin). Being a dairy farmer, Don had to learn how to keep the Sabbath and still be able to continue in that career. He was a regular fixture at the Feast of Tabernacles site in Wisconsin Dells.

Don leaves behind several legacies. He was a loving husband, father of five, grandfather of eight, great-grandfather of 10 and great-great-grandfather of three! He was a pillar of the community, with many still coming to him as an elder in God's Church many years after their departure from Church attendance. He was also an anchor of God's Church in Wisconsin, being ordained a deacon in 1975, an elder in 1981 and serving congregations in Wausau and later Oshkosh, Wisconsin, in the United Church of God.

Don was a true man of God. He will be greatly missed, but his race is over and he waits in the grave to hear his call to eternal life!

Fellow minister Mitchell Knapp commented, "Mr. Mathie was a pillar in the Church in the central Wisconsin area for decades. Known for his attitude



**Josephine Damania**

April 19, 1937-June 1, 2021

of service, he could be counted on to go and help near and far when there was a need. Be it a moving crew, transportation, work party or anointing, he would show up to help.

Many members relied on his willing and reliable attitude. He contributed to the Church in many ways and set a wonderful example of love, service and leadership."

Steve Myers shared, "I've known Don since 1982. One remarkable trait of Don Mathie was his sense of humor and overall good nature. He loved God and I believe that was reflected in his cheerfulness, affability and love for life. Of course, no one farms for 50 years without ruggedness and tenacity, and Don certainly had that. But he loved family and the brethren, and would do whatever it took to serve them and God right up to the end of his life."

### **Anna Petersen**

Anna Petersen was born in San Francisco, California, in 1939. She was the first of three children born to Robert and Dorothy (Eomurian) Petersen. She is survived by her siblings Robert and Dorothy; and her three children, Renea, Robert and Eric.

Anna was a faithful and beloved member of the San Francisco Bay Area congregation. She loved the brethren and was a "prayer warrior" for them and their families. Several members have written words of remembrance which capture the essence of her character and the impact she had on all of our lives.

Priscilla Gans wrote, "When I worked at the San Francisco International Airport, Anna and I used to meet. We talked and walked to the Terminals before I caught BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) to go home. I could never get her to allow me to pay for lunch or after-work treats because she always brought her own lunch or treats. I loved Anna. She was a beautiful person, and she was always trying to help people. I will deeply miss Anna because she was true to God, to others and herself."

Felix and Vicky Gutierrez wrote, "She seemed to anticipate needs, and would just get in there and do things without being asked to."

Felix added, "When we made it to church early, she would come up and ask how I was doing, and would truly listen to my response. She was always willing to pray about any concerns."

Vicky added; "When I would come to church without Felix she always asked after him. On at least two occasions that I remember, she brought me articles she had found related to Felix's health issues and said she hoped they would be helpful."

Diana Hixson wrote: "She was a very private person, and didn't share much about her past with me . . . but we developed a love bond like no other. She was my 'sister-in-Christ'—and she sure loved to be hugged and called 'my sister' and to be included into our family. She would always ask about my daughter and granddaughter—being deeply concerned how things were going with us. We would always share prayers for one another. I am missing her very much, but I know God placed her where she would have no more worries. I shall look forward to seeing her in the first resurrection and sharing eternity with her friendship and love."

As a concluding tribute to Anna in this obituary, Tim Peabworth, pastor of San Francisco Bay Area, congregation shares: "We all have our struggles in life and Anna had perhaps more than her fair share, but even at the end of her life as she battled cancer, when I called her, she always wanted to encourage me. She always had a biblical question as well to ask

me as she thought deeply about God's Word and her faith. She will be missed."

### **Josephine Damania**

Josephine, darling wife of Mehernosh Damania for more than 47 years, was a lovely child of God. She prayed daily just after she woke up, dressed well for Church services, took great pains in preparing meals and refreshment for Sabbath and Feast services, volunteered to work in the kitchen and eventually volunteered to send out congregational Get Well and Condolence cards.

Josephine was the third of five children of a Singaporean Eurasian couple, Joseph David and Jane D'Cruz. She was named Josephine Margaret D'Cruz after her father Joseph. Josephine was the favorite child of her father, who was a deacon in the local Roman Catholic Church.

Josephine was a very good student. She got grade "A" even in English—which was a remarkable achievement for a non-native English-speaking student. She used to correct all her husband's grammar and spelling mistakes, which he will miss very much. As was witnessed during the Feast of Tabernacles, she could beautifully recite several poems and even Shakespearean passages from memory. Josephine and Mehernosh were blessed to travel to many parts of the world and fellowship with many brethren on the Sabbath and annual Holy Days over the years. She had a talent for sewing and cooking and was better than her husband at fixing things in the house. She had a strong bond with her family, also supporting or taking care of the needs of her brother and sisters.

After graduation from school, Josephine took on a nursing career. She got a scholarship under the United Nations Colombo Plan and was sent from Singapore to Australia, where she graduated as a nurse tutor—the youngest with number three position in Sin-

gapore Nursing hierarchy.

God was working His plan. Josephine met Mehernosh at a ballroom dance class in Singapore. Although Josephine was born a Roman Catholic, she subscribed to the *Plain Truth* magazine, where biblical truth opened her eyes.

For Josephine to marry her husband was no small thing. As a Parsee, her husband's family forbade him to marry a non-Parsee. However, God worked things out for them so that a proper marriage took place.

One month after they married, Mehernosh was posted to Nigeria and had to leave Singapore. Josephine had to stay in Singapore for seven months due to an unusual delay, which was a blessing. The Church led by Mr. Guy Ames came to Singapore and Josephine was baptized with her husband's consent, even though he was not a Christian. They both knew that scriptural truth had been perverted by the clergy over the years and it was important to stick to the truth found in the original source.

When Josephine joined her husband in Nigeria after seven months, the Church was once again established in Lagos, Nigeria. Mehernosh began attending services to understand what the minister was teaching Josephine, so that as husband and wife they would be one and have no disagreements. They put God first and kept Him in the center of their relationship, and Mehernosh got to know the Bible and Jesus Christ through the Church.

Josephine suffered much during the last three weeks of her life due to a severe coronavirus infection. However, we know that as stated in Psalm 116:15, "The death of one that belongs to the LORD is precious in His sight" (New Century Version). We know we will meet Josephine with an incorruptible spiritual immortal body in the millennium. We look forward to spending time with her for all eternity. **UN**

Announcements for *United News* can be emailed to [un@ucg.org](mailto:un@ucg.org), or sent by mail to *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027. Please include a color photo. Announcements should not exceed 500 words, and may be lightly edited for length and clarity by *United News* staff.

## Is your congregation involved in service or fundraising projects? Let us know!



We know many local congregations are always working to serve their local community or support international projects!

The Good Works team is looking to highlight service initiatives that congregations are doing locally in addition to the major Good Works projects being funded and carried out all around the world. Send us an article and photos! Email Good Works Coordinator Lena VanAusdle at [lena\\_vanausdle@ucg.org](mailto:lena_vanausdle@ucg.org) for more information, or to submit a story.

Watch the Good Works video at [bit.ly/ucggoodworks!](https://bit.ly/ucggoodworks!)

### About Good Works...

Following the directive in Galatians 6:10 to “. . . do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith,” the Good Works Program is intended to provide an organized way for brethren to help others (primarily those in the Church) who face unusual, emergency situations that could not be anticipated or budgeted for. The intent of the program is to make these situations known to the Church, and to coordinate the distribution of funds that are raised by individuals, congregations or groups in fundraising efforts.

We do not ask that tithes and offerings be directed to this program, for the reasons given above. Instead, if individuals, congregations, or groups within a congregation wish to engage in individual or special fundraising efforts (for example, car washes, garage sales, candy or fruit sales, etc.). The coordinator will see to it that they are then passed along to the appropriate designees. Once sufficient funds for a particular project or need are received and passed along, that project will be marked complete.

Lena VanAusdle

## 2021 Canadian Ministerial Conference Held Virtually

Every two years, the ministry and lay members of the Canadian National Conference hold a ministerial conference in June. This year because of COVID-19 restrictions, the conference was held via Zoom on Sunday, June 6 from noon till about 6 p.m. EDT. We had 31 connections. The technology worked flawlessly, thanks to Paul Wasilkoff and Warren Poffenroth, who took care of the technical details.

Anthony Wasilkoff, the Director of Operations, asked Robert Berendt to start the meeting with prayer. After that, we were shown a PowerPoint presentation with photos from past conferences and photos of deceased elders and wives.

Robert Dick gave an insightful presentation titled, “The History of United’s Founding.” He traced events from 1992 up to the General Conference of Elders meeting in December 1995. This topic had been assigned to him for presentation at the U.S. General Conference of Elders meetings in May 2020, but the pandemic hit and it was never presented. It is wonderful to have this material archived for future generations.

Gary Antion gave a two-part presentation on “Facets of the Ministry” covering Pastor, Preacher, Counselor, Visitor, Personal Life and Family Life. He read a poem, “Requirements for Being a Shepherd,” written by late elder Gary Lucas, and covered a handout with scriptures from 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9 and 1 Peter 5:1-3. He also covered some scriptures from another handout, “How to Look on the Congregation.” Elders need to serve their congregations with

respect, love and care.

John Elliott, connecting online from Tulsa, Oklahoma, presented on “Mentoring in Action,” along with an extensive handout, “Pastor’s Mentoring Program for Elders.” Afterwards, he left time for some heartfelt discussion about priorities and usage of our time. A part of the presentation synopsis said: “Mentoring is not a program, nor a duty. It’s an action that one engages in to alleviate himself from limiting responsibilities that others would benefit from taking on. A mentor leaves a wake of responsibilities being managed by a growing number of people. From mentoring infant children to budding church leaders, your legacy can be one of actively transferring responsibilities to others in order to pursue more important things at hand.”

After a short break, Rainer Salomaa gave a presentation on “Becoming Whole Again.” He had taken part in a two-day virtual conference sponsored by the Canadian Mental Health Association, which had been designed to help employers create and maintain mentally healthy workplaces despite the obstacles of 2020. He shared material from one presentation by Dr. Susan Biali Hass, MD, on Becoming Whole Again—foundations of mental health, healing and resilience. The focus was on burnout—what it is and how to protect yourself from it—and building resiliency.

Next, Sheldon Sitter delivered a message on “The Conversion of Our Congregations,” in which he discussed some of the challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic where we have seen our congre-



Clockwise from top left: Gary Antion, Bob Dick, John Elliott, Sheldon Sitter, Rainer Salomaa and Victor Kubik were among those who presented during the meeting.

gations and church services convert from in-person gatherings to online meetings. In his synopsis, he wrote, “If government restrictions on gatherings are lifted, will our members return to assembling and fellowshiping in person; or will they be more comfortable and apt to stay home and participate in an online service? If some of them opt for an online service, will that service be ours? As congregational leaders we must be prepared and ready to serve all of God’s people, whether in-person or remotely. How do we do that? What does this mean for each of us from a practical point of view? We could look at this congregational conversion as a threat to our current method of operation, but we could also choose to see it as an opportunity. So, what exactly is the opportunity, and how can we make the most of it as we do our best to serve God?” He left time for some good discussion.

We were honored to have UCGIA president Victor Kubik online during the entire meet-

ing. He took about fifty minutes to discuss the future of the Church and what we should be doing now to prepare for the next phase. He spoke about how we are living in a momentous time of transition for mankind. It is also a time of transition in the churches and the ministry of the United Church of God. We are already preparing the way for new overseers and a new generation of leadership. He also spoke about steps that we are currently taking to facilitate this progression. He asked, “How are we reaching out to the world and how are we caring for the people whom God has called without altering God’s unchangeable doctrines and values? What we are doing in the proclamation of the gospel, training ministers, and caring for our brethren?” He also took time to respond to some questions before and after the presentation.

Robert Dick’s final presentation was titled, “Yardsticks to Measure Sermons and Speakers.” He shared his experience

being part of a pilot project in a group of eight elders who listened to and evaluated each other’s sermons. Some entered the program with trepidation. Robert said “the big bonus so far has been getting to know fellow elders more through the shared experience.” In the presentation, he took time to share some thoughts on speaking.

Michael Erickson, the chairman of the Compliance Task Force, reviewed two policies that are required to be presented to the National Conference every two years, our Anti-Spam Policy and Sexual Misconduct and Youth Protection Policy.

Before we were dismissed with a prayer given by David Palmer, there was time taken for questions to the presenters.

The day went quickly and we look forward to having a face-to-face ministerial conference in June 2023. For next year, the plans are to have two mini conferences over Zoom, one for the east and one for the west.

Rainer Salomaa

## Nearly 150 Gather for Joyous Pentecost Weekend in Brown County, Indiana



BROWN COUNTY, Indiana—Resuming a long tradition after last year’s COVID-19-related interruption, nearly 150 members and families from Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Texas and Virginia gathered May 14-16 to take part in the United Church of God annual Pentecost weekend celebration.

With the weekend literally filled with worship, fellowship and song, the record attendance resembled a “living Psalm.” Members stayed in family cabins and newly renovated lodge accommodations in a verdant environment. With its rolling hills, lush forests and many hiking trails, Brown County State Park is known as “the little Smoky Mountains.”

Sabbath and Pentecost services took place in the aptly named Melodeon Hall, decked with elaborate floral arrangements by Julia Shew and Grace Arnold of the Terre Haute, Indiana, congregation. The Friday before the Holy Day weekend, the park hall was transformed into a professional sound stage capable of supporting multiple singers and musicians by brothers Tim and Sam Howie, who also served as overall music directors for the weekend. The professional staff at the state park graciously helped to accommodate the expanded needs of the weekend while still complying with state COVID-19 regulations.

Afternoon Sabbath services began the weekend, with a sermonette from Terre Haute member Brandon Zollner, and a sermon delivered by Illinois

elder Mike Arnold. The first of many pieces of worship music of the weekend was performed by Katie Zucca and Tim and Maria Howie.

Following services, members and families all re-assembled for the traditional Sabbath potluck in a nearby outdoor shelter with beautiful Indiana spring weather as a backdrop. The much-anticipated traditional Concert for God—this time expanded with a record 15 musical presentations and one interpretive ballet dance—followed, beginning at 7:30 in the evening. Church President Victor Kubik served as master of ceremonies for the event.

The Concert for God this year included uplifting musical presentations by Brenda Wendling and Rick Peterson, joined by extended family members that also included the Clore family. Rick Peterson’s presentation of One Voice brought back memories for many. The church music group Together United—made up of Tim and Marie Howie, Sam Howie, Dustin Howie, Ray Clore III, Sabrina Clore, Rhiana Krohn, Reese Krohn, Corbin Rose and Jamie Snyder—performed several songs, including How Great Is Our God. Other Concert for God musical performers included Mandy Cobb, Meredith Keeney, Kur Rose and Brandon Zollner.

Ballet dance, performed to the music of El Shaddai, was presented by Tessa Bushert, Emilee Saathoff, Sabe Lla Zucca and Mrs. Howie.

The inspiring evening was capped off by the weekend’s

traditional congregation hymn sing, accompanied on the piano by Mr. Kubik and Mr. Rose and supported by other musicians.

More than 140 brethren returned to the Melodeon Room on Pentecost morning. Indianapolis deacon David Cobb presented the sermonette and offertory, which included an original composition titled Peace written by Corbin Rose and performed by Corbin and Kur Rose. The Pentecost children’s choir performed delightfully enthusiastic special music, directed by Maria Howie. Ray Clore II delivered a Pentecost-themed sermon titled “Peace (Shalom) in the Church.”

Following a catered meal in the Abe Martin Lodge, members and families returned for the final afternoon service. As is tradition, the sermonette time was devoted to multiple pieces of special music, capped off by a powerful performance of Use Me Lord by the Pentecost combined adult choir, directed by Meredith Keeney. Victor Kubik, whose wife Beverly helped organize the first Pentecost state park weekend many years ago, closed out services with a sermon in which he spoke about the origins and purpose of the Church that Jesus Christ founded.

The weekend of song, worship and fellowship (with record attendance) was made possible by the help of many people, especially Indianapolis deacon and deaconess Tony and Jane Pacelli. Plans are already being made for an enthusiastic return to Brown County for Pentecost in 2022.

*Jamie and Michael Snyder*



*Nearly 150 people spent a joyous weekend worshipping God through music over Pentecost weekend. Those offering special music over the course of the weekend included musicians of all ages!*

By Jorge de Campos

*This report compiles entries from Jorge de Campos' travel blog at [v2.travelark.org/travel-blog/jorgedecampos/11](http://v2.travelark.org/travel-blog/jorgedecampos/11), which chronicles his baptizing and visiting tour in Brazil from May 17-June 11, 2021.*

After leaving Cincinnati on May 17 and traveling for a few days, I arrived in Boa Vista on Thursday, May 20. Arlindo, our elder in Maloca, drove me to Maloca de Moscou to visit the church hall and spend the day with his family. Another family joined after lunch, and we went to see the Church's 26 LifeNets cattle. Another 10 belong to the brethren. They recently sold almost all of the males and bought cows so they can increase the herd. Two families moved closer to where the cattle are kept so they can manage the cattle carefully.

On Saturday morning, May 22, some 10 minutes out of the hotel on my way to Sabbath services, a car coming from the left ran a stop sign and T-boned my rental car. I do not remember the accident. All I remember was smoke in the car, a white cloth or plastic over me (I later learned it was the air bag), and first aid people by the door of my car telling me to get out quickly as there was gasoline on the floor. I must have been unconscious for a while.

They took me to the sidewalk, sat me down and told me that the accident was not my fault. They took me into the Emergency Room trauma unit and gave me an X-ray. While I waited, one nurse let me use his Wi-Fi so I could contact my wife, as I did not have cell coverage. The brethren from Maloca, who were worried since I hadn't arrived, were then able to call me. Arlindo and his son and cousin also visited me.

I had no broken bones on my chest or neck. But I was extremely sore due to the seatbelt over my chest and collarbone. My back and neck were also sore, and my eyeglasses were bent out of shape by the airbag.

After many difficulties getting the case reported to the police, I got another rental car.

Had that vehicle T-boned me one second later, I would be dead. God intervened in many ways.

I was able to drive on to Maloca de Moscou on Sunday,

May 23, and I spent the day with brethren.

We had an interactive Bible study with 19 adults to address lessons from the pandemic to prepare us for the days of trouble ahead. We concluded by discussing how to be counted worthy of the Kingdom.

I had a meeting of the local church committee, which I reorganized, then Arlindo and I drove back to Boa Vista. The day was very profitable and the brethren were tearful as we said goodbye.

We arrived in Brasília Monday night (May 24) and stayed in Athos and Denise's home. They found us on the Internet two years ago and have been doing weekly Bible studies with me. They fetched us from the airport and hospitably gave me their own bedroom to sleep in.

The next day, I baptized a couple in a pool near Denise and Athos's home.

Afterwards, dinner and fellowship lasted till about 11 p.m. The next day was mostly spent in travel to Ariquemes, to the home of Paulo and Tânia de Oliveira. They have been keeping the Sabbath and realized the need to keep the Holy Days as well. They found us on the Internet a year ago and for the last six months have been doing weekly virtual Bible studies with me. We spent many hours discussing the nature of God, the gospel, the Church, Holy Days, resurrection and other doctrines.

Their 24-year-old daughter, Elani, is seriously handicapped and bedridden. She had meningitis at eight months old and her brain's motor control system was damaged. She cannot talk, walk or stand and is deformed. I anointed her. They suspect that she has bowel cancer due to heavy medications she has been taking, and have scheduled tests for her. The next day, I baptized Tânia and Paulo. I am confident that God has important things to do in this region of Brazil.

Arlindo and I spent the Sabbath in Uberlândia. The Macedo family and Josiane Chaves attended services at the Sanare Hotel with us, making a total of six people. They were overjoyed, as it has been over a year since they were last able to have a live Sabbath service—they could not even meet for the Feast of Tabernacles due to COVID-19. We talked for many hours.

After flying to Curitiba the next day, a man named Raylan



Top left: Jorge de Campos visits with Maloca de Moscou elder Arlindo and his family.

Top right: Lunch in Paul and Tânia's home.

Bottom: Those who attended the interactive Bible Study in Maloca de Moscou.

came to see us at the airport. He lives in another city about two hours away by bus, and has been doing regular studies on baptism with me. We talked about counting the cost (Luke 14:25-33) and the Holy Days.

We spent the next afternoon in Congonhas (near São Paulo), with two brothers, Antônio and Mauro, who met us at a hotel with Antônio's wife Maria and their sister Maria Araújo.

We completed the counseling session with the two brothers and with the two Marias also present. As we talked, it became evident that their sister Maria Araújo was interested and began asking questions. I also learned that she has been listening to my sermons online. I believe she is being called.

We then went to the rooftop and baptized Mauro and Antônio. God is calling more people in Brazil and we are blessed to serve God in this way.

After traveling for all of Tuesday, on Wednesday we got up and continued the trip to Janaúba to spend time with Eldo Macedo and his wife Juliana, with whom I have been counseling.

After that we proceeded to Maria Macedo's home (Eldo's mothers' home) where we discussed God's Ways, unity in the Church, the true Church of God as a spiritual organism, marriage and the Feast of Tabernacles. Maria Macedo was baptized in Worldwide many years ago and has been attending with an independent group.

The next day was spent traveling by car and plane, from Janaúba to Montes Claros to Belo Horizonte before finally arriving in Rio de Janeiro after midnight.

Friday morning, May 28, we drove to Araruama to the house of José Manuel. His wife, Márcia, prepared us—with lots of love

and care—a lovely homemade meal for lunch. I completed a final counseling session with José before baptizing him. He was extremely joyful after this great spiritual step in his Christian life. He has been helping me record audio for the booklets and is transcribing my sermons online.

We spent the Sabbath in Búzios (the location for the Feast in Brazil). Everything is clean and the venue is lovely. I am sure that the brethren will enjoy a physically relaxing and spiritually uplifting Feast there. We spent Sunday in Três Rios visiting Fábio, who was baptized last year during my previous visit.

The next few days were spent traveling and visiting more members and prospective members before making my way back to Cincinnati, arriving home on the afternoon of Friday, June 11.

Overall, it was a very successful trip and I thank you all for your prayers. UN



Kaylee Brunick



Zachary DeSouto



Jacob Dean Dupuis



Rylee Gjesvold



Dylan Greer



Seth Ryan Hall



Christian Myers



Lauren Sheets

## High School Graduates

### Kaylee Brunick

Kaylee Brunick, daughter of Joel and Kristin Brunick of the Sioux Falls, South Dakota congregation, graduated from Mapleview Academy this past May and continues to work at the local nursing home. Before taking on a position as a nursing assistant, she cleaned assisted living apartments for several years. An accomplishment that Kaylee is particularly proud of is her ability to find desserts no matter how well her mother hides them.

Kaylee enjoys serving as teen staff at preteen Camp Ironwood, as well as helping lead the children's choir for her local congregation. She is very interested in health and you'll often find her trying to motivate her younger siblings to work out with her. She will be the first to admit this is a great exercise in increasing her patience.

Kaylee plans to attend Lake Area Technical College where she will enter the physical therapist assistant program. As it turns out, she enjoyed forcing people to work out with her so much that she decided to make it her career!

### Zachary DeSouto

Zachary DeSouto, son of Michael and Jennifer DeSouto of the Roanoke, Virginia, congregation, graduated from Salem High School as a Distinguished Scholar (4.0 or higher GPA) and earned an Advanced Diploma. He was also the recipient of the Walter C. Bell Scholarship. Zachary's interests include video games and computer programming. He plans to attend Virginia

Western Community College to obtain his associate's degree and then transfer to Virginia Tech to pursue a bachelor's degree in computer science.

### Jacob Dean Dupuis

Jacob Dean Dupuis, son of Rebecca and Jason Dupuis of the Greensboro, North Carolina, congregation, graduated Early College of Forsyth.

While in school, Jacob was a member of Crosby Scholars. He also received his associate's degree in science along with his high school diploma. Jacob enjoys playing his guitar in his free time.

After graduation, Jacob plans to attend Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, to study computer science.

### Rylee Gjesvold

Rylee Gjesvold, daughter of Scott and Sarah Gjesvold of the Twin Cities, Minnesota, congregation, graduated from Andover High School with highest honors as a four year academic letter winner. During her senior year, Rylee took classes at Anoka Ramsey Community College as a Post-Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO) student and received an Advanced Placement Scholar Award as well as being a member of National Honors Society.

During high school, Rylee was on the track and field team and cross country ski team. She also enjoys water skiing and baking. She plans to staff at preteen Camp Ironwood and attend Northwest Camp and Camp Cotubic this year. Rylee is attending the University of Minnesota, Twin

Cities college of education and human development, majoring in kinesiology, with plans to progress into Pediatric Occupational Therapy.

### Dylan Greer

Dylan Greer, the son of Todd and Tina Greer of the Kalamazoo, Michigan, congregation, graduated from Portage Northern High School with highest honors, as a member of the National Honor Society. While in high school, he was a member of the marching band and track team, and was dual-enrolled in Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC). Dylan was in also in teen speech club for six years and served as its president for two years. For the past four summers he has detasseled corn to make money.

In his free time, Dylan loves to play basketball, volleyball and all other sports. Two of his favorite activities are attending summer camps and Winter Family Weekend. Dylan plans to continue for another year at KVCC and then transfer to Western Michigan University to obtain a bachelor's degree in computer engineering.

### Seth Ryan Hall

Seth Ryan Hall, son of Ryan and Nissa Hall of the Rome, Georgia, congregation, graduated from Armuchee High School, Floyd County College and Career Academy. Seth enjoys carpentry and playing his guitar, and he serves as a guitarist for his local congregation. Seth is registered for Ambassador Bible College. After ABC, he plans on attending trade school to become a carpenter.

### Christian Myers

Christian Myers, son of John and Patricia Myers of the Oshkosh, Wisconsin, congregation graduated from Stevens Point Area Senior High. Christian loves spending time in nature on long bike rides and is very interested in environmental and animal conservation. He enjoys spending time with his family playing card and dice games, watching movies and spending time with his grandmother. His interest and talent in graphic design and videography is where he hopes his future will lead him with the goal of working in that field.

Christian has been accepted into Project Search, which is a year-long program beginning in September of 2021. During and after his Project Search internship, he plans on continuing his pursuits in education and creation of work in computer graphic and video arts.

### Lauren Sheets

Lauren Sheets, daughter of Dennis and Joan Sheets of the St. Louis, Missouri, congregation (and granddaughter of Kurt and Fran Schuster and Tom and Irene Hoffahrt of Madison, Wisconsin), is graduating from Clayton High School. She plans to attend George Washington University in Washington, D.C., this fall.

Lauren played varsity softball and junior varsity lacrosse her freshman year and participated as a Java coder on the "Robohounds" Robotics team her junior and senior years. She served on the Clay-

*Lauren Sheets graduation, cont.*

ton Mayor's Youth Council her junior year assisting the mayor with community service projects. She has taken private violin lessons for six years. She's played in the school orchestra for seven years and made the "by-audition-only" Symphonic Orchestra her senior year.

Lauren was a Girl Scout for 12 years, receiving both the Girl Scout Silver Award for updating a women's shelter in St. Louis and the Gold Award. She was selected to represent the Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri as a delegate to the national convention in Orlando, Florida, in the fall of 2020, which later became a virtual conference.

Lauren will receive her Gold Award at a ceremony in June for her work creating an English library at the Jawk Tiang school in Burma, run and supported by Church of God members Jum Seng Pan, and Leon and Gloria Sexton of Legacy Institute in Chiang Mai, Thailand. She sent five boxes of books to the school and made audio recordings to help students learn English.

Lauren received the "Dessert First" scholarship for her leadership in Girl Scouts, and a financial award from Clayton High School from an essay contest. Lauren was one of three speakers at her high school commencement.

Lauren has attended Winter Family Weekend and Pinecrest, Northwest and Winter Camp as well as preteen camp Ironwood in Minnesota. Lauren loves to cook, hike, run and make music. Her favorite Scripture is Isaiah 41:9-10.

**Addison Talbott**

Addison Talbott, the son of Kirk and Kristine Talbott of the Atlanta, Georgia, congregation, finished high school this year. He currently works for a multibillion-dollar company processing trans-



Addison Talbott

actions on a daily basis (a.k.a. Wendy's). To quote his manager, "Addison has no problem running it like he owns it." He also currently has an art installation in the Delta Flight Museum in Atlanta, Georgia. His art installation is a paper model of a discontinued Delta 777-200LR. He also has played music gigs in multiple countries. Addison's interests include paper model design/production, music (acoustic guitar, electric guitar, bass, drums and piano—along with singing in the shower), building LEGO models (the bigger the better!) and working at Camp Nacome. He also enjoys helping other people and helping with the church hall set up and tear down. One special skill he has is the ability to wiggle his ears! Going forward, Addison plans to enroll in a technical college to pursue mechanical engineering.

**Austin Wickham**

Austin Wickham, son of Eric and Sarah Wickham of the Cedar Rapids, Iowa, congregation, graduated from Anamosa High School. For the last three years of high school, he served on the Student Council. Additionally, he qualified for a Silver Cord upon graduation by exceed-



Austin Wickham

ing a set number of community volunteer hours throughout his high school career. Austin also played various sports during high school including golf, football, cross country and swimming, of which he received multiple varsity letters for both golf and cross country. He also participated in band and choir all four years, including jazz band and drumline, and was awarded with the Iowa Bandmasters Association Award of Merit.

Austin had the honor of playing taps multiple times at the annual Veteran's Day assembly. By taking dual credit courses through the local community college, Austin earned several college credits prior to his high school graduation.

He has worked as a lifeguard the last four years and also works in other capacities with the local community Parks and Recreation Department. This summer he will serve as one of the pool managers in addition to working part-time at Walmart.

Austin has attended camp almost every year since he was four, starting with pre-teen camp and then moving into teen summer and winter camps. He enjoys playing sports, helping others and spending time with friends and family. After



Ariel Jordan Winger

graduation, Austin plans to attend community college in the fall and serve on his town's local volunteer fire department.

**Ariel Jordan Winger**

Ariel Jordan Winger, daughter of Raymond and Tanya Winger of the Portland, Oregon, congregation, graduated from Camas High School and the culinary certificate program at Cascadia Technical Academy.

She has served as a student panel speaker for the Oregon branch of the International Dyslexia Association. She also worked as a teen counselor at UYC preteen camp several times and thinks summer camp is probably the best place on earth. Ariel's interests include visual arts, ceramics, music, camping and spending time with her pug. She also has a special interest in traveling.

Ariel is a fourth-generation member of God's Church on both sides of her family. Her favorite scriptures are all about courage. After graduation, she plans to attend the Ambassador Bible College class of 2021-22, then return to Washington State to attend Clark College Culinary Program for patisserie and baking. **UN**

**University Graduates****Ellen Cain**

Ellen Cain of the St. Louis, Missouri, congregation received a bachelor's degree in nursing from St. Louis University (SLU) and worked as a patient care tech junior and senior year. Throughout her time at SLU, she studied abroad in Madrid, Spain,

for a semester where she traveled to various countries like England, Italy and Ireland. She was involved in a learning community, Diversity and Global citizenship. She believes this setting taught her to be a more compassionate person, which is definitely needed in a nursing career. At church, Ellen serves on the door greeting schedule. During COVID-19, she took temperatures of the members. She looks forward to playing hymns at church again, now that she will have the time to practice!

Upon taking and passing her licensure exam, Ellen plans on starting work as a graduate nurse this summer on a Bone Marrow Transplant floor at Barnes Jewish Hospital in St. Louis, which is where she previously worked as a tech. One scripture that kept her going throughout the four years was Galatians 6:9, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (New International Version). **UN**

**Barbara Gutierrez**

Barbara Gutierrez, who grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area congregation, has graduated from St. John's University in Queens, New York, with a bachelor of science degree in adolescent education with a concentration in social sciences.

While in New York for school, she attended the Queens and Manhattan congregations. Barbara also completed a semester abroad in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, where she attended the Brisbane congregation. Barbara is a member of the National Society of Leadership and Success.

Barbara was able to complete her student teaching at Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School, teaching ninth grade world history (virtually).

Barbara's passion is history. She also loves to bake and provided many baked goods for the Queens congregation during her time in New York.

Barbara's immediate post-graduation plan includes teaching middle or high school history and social sciences in the Bay Area. Long-term, she is planning to attend Ambassador Bible College and then pursue a graduate degree in history. **UN**



Left: The Kwanyako Community Center under construction. Above: The Winneba church has been gathering materials for a building upgrade.

## Pastoral Travel Report cont.

stressed system.

Through it all, God's people are holding fast! We discussed a better day that is coming for the whole world—the Kingdom of God. They all yearn earnestly for that day. It is a focus that is especially encouraging in the midst of challenging circumstances.

Traveling through the coast-

al region of Ghana gave us the opportunity to visit the building projects for the Kwanyako and Winneba congregations. These two projects are the recipients of an Ambassador Bible College and LifeNets fundraiser. Kwanyako has recently completed the construction of the walls to their new church hall, which will also serve as a community center. Winneba is upgrading their current struc-

ture to include plumbed washrooms, as well as a perimeter wall surrounding their complex. Both congregations are grateful for the generosity of others which has made these projects possible.

My last Sabbath in Ghana

was spent with the Accra congregation, before returning home to the United States on June 6. Further details and pictures surrounding this trip are contained within a June 12 video sermon at [ucg.org](http://ucg.org) titled, "You Shall Be a

Blessing" (see link in box below).

The brethren in Ghana wish to thank you all for your love, prayers and support on their behalf. They truly feel connected to you all as brothers and sisters in Christ. **UN**

The sermon, "You Shall Be a Blessing" shares details and photos from this trip. Find it at: [ucg.org/sermons/you-shall-be-a-blessing-report-on-ghana-travels-0](http://ucg.org/sermons/you-shall-be-a-blessing-report-on-ghana-travels-0).

## Media Team Visits Dallas for Broadcasters Conference

DALLAS, TEXAS—*The week of June 21-25, members of the Beyond Today team traveled to the annual National Religious Broadcasters conference. Victor Kubik wrote the following:*

The NRB Christian Media Convention is the premier conference for Christian broadcasters, media pastors, program producers, film producers, webmasters, social media managers, bloggers, podcasters, authors, publishers and other communications professionals.

As we all know, the Church faced a highly unusual year in 2020 and into 2021. For several months, our church services were largely changed from in-person attendance to streaming TV productions into members' homes. Many outreach efforts for preaching the gospel took on different forms. Some of what we did with emergency workarounds in live streaming, for example, has given rise to

new ways to preach the gospel to the public and feed our people through online sermons, Bible studies, discussion groups and new ways of communication. Forums and workshops here have addressed the technical aspects of connecting and various techniques of presentation.

At this conference we are gaining knowledge by talking to people who are successful in what they do, and who can give us good advice. For me, podcasting is of particular interest and I've gone from one podcast in progress to another to gain further insight into this medium.

Another interesting presentation was about the power of telling a story through your speaking and writing. After all, the Bible is a compendium of stories that tell the story of humanity.

One highlight for us was a luncheon with Phil Cooke who is a writer, television producer and media consultant based in

Burbank, California, who gave a noon presentation on Tuesday. Afterwards, we were able to speak privately with him about the trends and questions asked by the public, as he saw them. We live in a time like no other with divisions, anger, intolerance and indecency. Yet, in the midst of this darkness and morass there is hope—as not all are duped. A study has shown that 80 percent of people who don't attend or belong to a church are well aware that "something is out of control" in the world and are looking for someone to give them answers. Can we be the ones to do this?

We in the United Church of God are blessed with superb media resources. We have well-trained ministers and writers. We have a state-of-the-art television studio that will soon also have the capacity to produce animated presentations.

Every day I pray to God for



Phil Cooke with Peter Eddington and Gary Petty at the National Religious Broadcasters Conference in Dallas, Texas.

insight and direction. Are we effectively preaching the gospel? Are we focused on making disciples? We need a unified, zealous effort to renew our efforts to proclaim the glorious truth

of God and Jesus Christ to all the world. As this world and its ways decay, we want to proclaim a message of joy and of a coming Kingdom. We want to bring hope, real hope. **UN**

## “Outgoing Concern for Others” Proves an Inspiring Theme at Enrichment Weekend



The Portsmouth congregation spent an enriching weekend together focusing on building “Outgoing Concern for Others.”

PORTSMOUTH, OHIO—There were 45 brethren from the congregation who met at the beautiful Greenbo State Park Lodge over the Memorial Day weekend for an inspiring enrichment weekend themed “Outgoing Concern for Others.” Wally and Sharon Browning coordinated the event for the brethren, which was packed with activities.

Everything began with an interactive Bible study of six of the “Ten Points of Outgoing Concern” (modeled after the Ten Commandments) on Friday evening followed by a hymn sing. Saturday morn-

ing, we gathered for a seminar on the four remaining points. The brethren were encouraged to spend time considering the needs of others, and they focused on numerous ways to accomplish this.

After that the group split into five groups to complete an escape room activity. All of the groups were successful in “helping the pastor locate his sermon notes” in under 30 minutes!

Sabbath school took place prior to Sabbath services which consisted of messages from John McKinney and Kevin Call. Following services, the entire

group ate a Thanksgiving-type meal together at the facility.

Next we completed three service projects including putting together treat bags for local law enforcement officers, blanket tying for nursing homes, and homemade cards for members. We wrapped up after sunset with a family movie, popcorn, and soda.

On Sunday morning, some adventurous folks enjoyed a hike before everyone packed up and left for home. Everyone is eagerly looking forward to repeating this event next year!

*Kevin Call*



## New Video Resource Recorded With Andi Chapman: “Anxiety, Depression and Despair Have Consequences”

MILFORD, OHIO—On Wednesday, June 9, we welcomed Andi Chapman to our *Beyond Today* TV studio to record a second presentation for our ministry and membership. In the previous recording, Andi talked about hospice and end-of-life-planning. This time she presented, “Anxiety, Depression and Despair Have Consequences.”

Ms. Chapman is a Registered Nurse and Regional Clinical Educator for Heart to Heart Hospice. She is also owner and consultant for SelectMed Seminars, specializing in educational and consulting services for general community and healthcare staff.

This 75-minute presentation will be edited and made available in August for our ministry and membership. Videorecord-

ed in front of a live studio audience, Ms. Chapman covered the following points and more:

- Learning how to recognize stress.
- Understanding the good impact of stress.
- How has COVID-19 impacted our stress?
- How to control the negatives.
- Understanding the impact of stress on health (physical and emotional).
- What is burnout and how do we escape it?
- What is “joy” and why discuss it when talking about stress?

Please watch for this video to be released in August. It contains helpful information as we navigate our difficult world and look towards the Kingdom of God.

*Peter Eddington*



Regional clinical educator Andi Chapman gives a presentation on the consequences of anxiety, depression and despair. The presentation was recorded and a video will be made available in August.

## Update: Members in Myanmar Face Conscription and Potential Civil War

MYANMAR—Our brethren continue to face a stressful situation. The Myanmar military is now coming through villages at night looking for men to conscript (women have been excluded so far). Our deacon in the south heard from nearby villages that the Myanmar military is now requiring village Headmen (think mayors) to create a list of 25 young men per village to man a new branch of the military called the People's Militia. Because of this, in order to escape conscription, several of our young men are leaving their homes in the village and hiding in the rice paddies, jungles or even crossing the border into Malaysia.

I spoke with the pastor of our friends at Church of God Myanmar in central Myanmar. Everyone is alright at this point, but they are in a more difficult situation there. There are

600 military soldiers encamped nearby, and about fifteen miles away is the third largest military outpost with both air force and army. It is on a mountain which I have visited. There they have long artillery that can shoot up to 25 miles. The military is building up in this area because it is located in Karen State, and the Karen National Liberation Army ("KNLA") is nearby, which is one of the strongest tribal armies.

As you may know, various tribal armies like the KNLA are forming and supporting the newly established National Unity Government (NUG) coalescing around Aung San Suu Kyi, chairperson of the National League for Democracy ("NLD") which reportedly won 82 percent of the vote in the November 2020 elections. The Myanmar military arrested Aung San Suu Kyi and leaders of the NLD on Feb. 1, 2021, under charges of illegally

importing walkie-talkies, breaking COVID-19 restrictions, election fraud and other infractions. Her trial began on June 14.

Since the coup, the various tribal armies are training together and helping to train young people who want to fight the Myanmar military. These combined tribal armies are referred to as the Peoples' Defense Force ("PDF"). Our pastor in the north said that there are about 100,000 people now trained in the PDF. Conversely, how strong the Myanmar military force might be is not known. Our deacon says the Myanmar military claims to have more than 200,000 soldiers, but this is not believed. More than 900 military soldiers are known deserters, and more than 1,000 others have been killed—some by their fellow soldiers, as was the case in one situation where about 200 soldiers were killed by fellow Myanmar mili-

tary personnel who did not want to fight against the local people. The Myanmar military has cut pay, which is also affecting the attitude of many soldiers who don't really want to kill civilians anyway. So, the actual strength of the ruling Myanmar military in a battle situation is not fully known.

The PDF is planning for civil war in the near future—possibly in the next weeks. Right now, the PDF is building their arsenal. Our pastor says it is commonly understood that the sources of funding and weapons include countries like South Korea, Japan and the U.S. Once their arsenal is built sufficiently, they plan to give the Myanmar military warning to step down. If they do not, then the NUG and PDF armies will attack.

Our brethren in central Myanmar would be in the middle of some of the more severe fight-

ing if/when this occurs as they are located close to the Myanmar military outposts as well as the KNLA. Their trust is in God for protection. But as their pastor said, they will just have to wait and see where fighting might actually occur, then move to safer locations as the fighting moves.

Please continue to pray for our brethren. In the next weeks, a positive outcome may occur. The Myanmar military might be looking for a way to save face, back out of a serious problem, find Aung San Suu Kyi not guilty and stand down. Or they may double down and lead the country headlong into a full-out civil war.

God is most certainly on His throne, and we look forward to the day when the only force in this world will be Jesus Christ showing humans what true peace really is!

David Bensinger

## "A True Church Somewhere"

By Wilma Edelbach Salmon

My dad, James W. Ford, was baptized in the Radio Church of God in July of 1957. He had been saying, as far back as I can remember, "God has to have a true Church somewhere." In 1954 he received a *Plain Truth* magazine in the mail with his name and address on it. We never did find out if someone specifically sent my dad's name in or if God just decided to have it sent.

My dad tried to get me to see that the Lutheran Church was wrong. But, being a stubborn teenager, I decided I wouldn't look into it. So, he left some *Plain Truth* magazines laying on the coffee table. He knew I would read whatever I got my hands on. I was convicted almost instantly, and would often spend four or five hours at a time studying God's Word.

When the Lutheran minister came out to convince me to go back to church, Dad introduced him to the *Plain Truth* literature as well. He would take a stack of magazines home, read

them, bring them back and get more. We never heard if he started preaching from them but he got kicked out of the Lutheran church and moved back to North Dakota.

On July 11, 1960, my mom, my brother Leslie and I were all baptized in Blackduck Lake in northern Minnesota when Roger Foster and Carn Catherwood came through on a baptism tour. That was the beginning of a wonderful new life!

That fall we attended our first Feast of Tabernacles in Big Sandy, Texas. It was wonderful even though we had to stay in a tent and sort of rough it. That year I met my wonderful husband-to-be, Russell Edelbach. We married on March 19, 1962.

In the fall of 1962, our assigned Feast site was in Squaw Valley, California. So, Russell and I drove out there. We had \$265 in second tithe. We camped there and took all our own bedding, canned foods and necessities. Some brethren were running short on funds; we were able to help them out and still have \$20

left when we got home!

We didn't have a local church to attend until the fall of 1963. Before the church congregation was established in Minneapolis, Russell and I went to Chicago for the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

When we were first married, we lived in southern Wisconsin. It was a 138-mile drive to Minneapolis from there. So we decided to move to Minneapolis so we could be close to the church. God provided the way for this to work out. We lived in the Twin Cities area for 37 years and God blessed us very much. Our daughter Beverly was a baby at the time we moved. Later on, Jean and then Tim were born.

We have been through many experiences over the years—both positive and negative.

My wonderful Russell died of cancer in 2009. I still miss him, but I am thankful that God blessed us with 47 years of marriage.

Then in the fall of 2011, my sister-in-law, Karen Edelbach and I decided to go to ABC. That was a wonderful experience!

In the fall of 2013 I met Elmer Salmon at the Feast in Wisconsin Dells. We have now been married six years. This year will be my 61<sup>st</sup> Feast of Tabernacles.

It has been an exciting and fulfilling life! UN



As a regular feature in *United News*, we are including stories of how God has called various people into the His Church over the years. If you'd like to submit your story, please send it along with a photo to un@ucg.org. Stories may be edited for length and/or clarity and not all submissions may be published. We hope this section proves interesting and encouraging to readers.

Top: Wilma in Mizpah, Minnesota, after her baptism in 1960.

Bottom left: Wilma attending Ambassador Bible College in the fall of 2011.

Bottom right: The first summer after Wilma and Russell were married, photo taken in Cochrane, Wisconsin, in 1962.

## GCE Report, cont.

Church's model of governance, which is predicated on involvement by the elders of the Church. It is a model seen in the Acts 15 conference in Jerusalem, and as such, he made four suggestions to help improve how effectively the church can be governed. The four points were directed to elders: 1) Update their bio on the elders' website; 2) Intentionally leave or remove their name from the running for Council positions depending on whether they are interested in serving on the Council; 3) Watch the video recordings of the quarterly Council meetings and respond with feedback; 4) Cast a ballot as described in the governing documents. On point four, he explained that 33 percent of the ordained elders in UCG consistently don't cast a ballot, and he requested those who do not cast a ballot share why so he could better understand their reasons.

After the chairman's address, Mr. Kubik gave an overview of the state of the Church over the past year under COVID-19 restrictions, beginning with how it has resulted in many positive outcomes despite the hardship. In many areas, local leaders have solved problems with ingenuity, coming up with solutions they likely wouldn't have if normal travel from senior pastors had been uninterrupted. He mentioned the expected return to a level of normalcy for Ambassador Bible College, United Youth Camps and the Feast of Tabernacles this year. In the last half of his address, he revealed plans for a new framework for "customer" relationship management in the Church's Internet strategy. The goal of the new strategy is to build a platform that better engages people, building a relationship where the Church is a trusted, go-to source for answers to life's questions. The intent is to determine how to take advan-

tage of the enormous wealth of resources already on the website, which brings so many people to our site, and further build relationships with them.

Ministerial and Member Services operation manager Mark Welch followed president Kubik, reporting the rising attendance post-pandemic and the ordained manpower of the Church before enumerating 10 goals for his department (see box on next page). Overall, the goals are based in Ephesians 4:11-16, which describes the different types of service ordained ministry are called to as they serve the members of the Church.

Following a brief break, the annual presentation honoring deceased elders and wives was given by pastor Greg Thomas. Following this presentation, Media and Communications Services operation manager Peter Eddington gave his report. He highlighted a few ways his department has contributed

to preaching the gospel of the Kingdom to the world over the past year. After some brief comments regarding trends toward secularization that he believes could potentially cause future censorship of the Church's message, Mr. Eddington went on to show the growth in audience for the Church's *Beyond Today* Roku channel (see slides on next page); most importantly in the average length of time that viewers are watching per session (66 minutes). He then enumerated goals for the coming year. First is to increase *Beyond Today* magazine circulation to 350,000+ (currently about 322,000). More subscribers naturally result in additional donors and coworkers, and with more addresses on file the Church can reach out with other offers to develop a relationship with them. Next is an increased advertising campaign online, in print and on television. Third is to ensure the Church's messaging is more rele-

vant and compelling for its audience, including on more difficult topics like depression, suicide and despair.

In the final operation manager presentation of the day, treasurer Rick Shabi reported that the fiscal year's income was better than anticipated (given the pandemic), with reduced expenses, meaning the Church's finances over the past year have been in a very good condition. He walked through the nine months of the fiscal year for which there was data, showing good financial health in nearly every category. He finished his presentation by sharing the pay scales for Church employees, and by reading a few scriptures: Jeremiah 10:23, Proverbs 16:9 and 2 Chronicles 26:5.

After Mr. Shabi's presentation, the balloting results were read by Council secretary Frank Dunkle, who then led a closing hymn and called on Aaron Dean to deliver a closing prayer. **UN**

## Two Added to Council of Elders

**Paul Wasilkoff** was raised in the Church of God and attended congregations in Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta. In Calgary he met and married his wife Coreen (nee Groom). While in Calgary Paul worked for a marketing company in both sales and in media. In 2000, Paul and Coreen moved to Cincinnati to attend the inaugural class of ABC. After graduation Paul worked for over 15 years in the IT Department of United Church of God, an *International Association*. In August of 2015 the Wasilkoffs, along with their three sons, moved to Canada. Paul was ordained that fall and



began pastoring the Hamilton, Ontario congregation. Presently, Paul is the pastor of the Hamilton and Toronto congregations and serves as the IT Manager for the Canadian National Office.

**Brian Shaw** has been a member of the Church of God since 1982. He was ordained an elder in the United Church of God in September of 2003 and was hired into the full-time ministry in September of 2009. Completing UCG Pastoral Training in March of 2010, Mr. Shaw currently pastors UCG congregations in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Little Falls, and Duluth, Minnesota, as well as Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Mr. Shaw also holds a bachelor of science degree in management sciences from the State University of New York



at Oswego, and an MBA from Northern Illinois University. He also received the Vachel Pennebaker Award in Direct Marketing from DePaul University.

## Three Couples Honored at GCE for 50 Years in the Ministry

**Vince Szymkowiak** was ordained on May 31, 1971. He commented: "Carol and I feel richly blessed to have been given the opportunity to serve God and His people throughout our ministry. In the words of James 1:17, 'Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.' And, without a doubt, prayer has been the most important part of my ministry. Early on, I learned to take every problem to Him." Carol Szymkowiak shared: "What a privilege it has been to love, serve and walk alongside God's people. The ministry has been a calling that has given us spiritual rewards as we witness the spiritual growth of God's people."

Council of Elders Chairman Len Martin shared: "Vince and Carol celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary last August. They love nature and enjoy being in the beauty of God's creation. The Szymkowiaks have been blessed with two children, who are both married. They are also grandparents to five grandchildren. We have been very blessed to have this fine couple in the ministry for the past 50 years."

**Robert Berendt** was ordained on Sept. 21, 1970. He commented: "During the 50 years of serving God, there were many times in which His Hand and the Hand of His Son have been evident in my life . . . One great lesson of life is to serve with all your might and trust God to be with you until the end. Life is full to the brim. I consider myself to be blessed more than words can say. God has blessed me with two wonderful wives who sacrificed much to serve in the ministry with me. My daily prayer is one of thanksgiving." Chairman Len Martin shared: "Having grown up in the mountains of Western Canada, every outdoor sport has been Bob's passion: hunting, fishing, mountain climbing, skiing, hockey, etc. Val is also passionate about physical fitness and sports and loves to swim, play field hockey, squash and tennis and run."

Valerie Berendt shared: "It is a joy to help people turn their lives over to God and to become friends with so many of them. Life has given me many twists and turns I never expected, but the great hope that humanity has been given through Christ is priceless."

**Frank McCrady** was ordained on Oct. 17, 1970. Mr. McCrady shared: "The most memorable experiences over my 50 years of serving in the ministry center around the many friends I have made in the church. Relationships truly are what lasts in life; other things come and go." Sonja shared: "My best memories will always be of our wonderful brethren. They are some of the most gracious, generous and sincere human beings I have ever met anywhere. In my opinion, our members are the best part of the Church; and my most valued accomplishments were those occasions when I was able to add to their wellbeing by imparting information and processes I had learned"

Chairman Len Martin commented: "Since their retirement from the full time ministry, the McCradys have continued to lead a full and busy life. Having more time to spend with family is one blessing of retirement and the McCradys are taking full advantage of that." **UN**



## Media and Communications Report Materials

In his GCE presentation, operation manager Peter Eddington shared a photo of the new *Beyond Today* studio and several statistics relating to the media outreach of United Church of God.



### Roku App Results: November 2016 – April 2021

- **256,830** channel installs (13% increase since last April).
- **961,745** channel sessions (21% increase since last April).
- **897,580** videos watched (14% increase since last April).
- **36.48** average minutes on channel (29% increase).
- **66** average minutes on channel for **last 12 months!**

GCE|2021

### The Church's *Beyond Today* YouTube channel

- **13.83** million video views.
- Has **63,100** subscribers.
- Hosts more than **2,395** videos.

GCE|2021

### Plans for 2021-2022

- Increase subscribers to *Beyond Today* magazine.
- Increase advertising for the magazine, booklets and TV program.
- Ensure our message is always relevant, compelling and motivational.

GCE|2021

### Increased Circulation

- From the current **322,450** recipients to **350,000** or more.
- Generates more **donors** and **coworkers**.
- Adds to our address list.
- Gives more people to write to and interact with through letters and other promotions.

GCE|2021

## Recognitions for Employee Milestones

40 Years	Vince & Carol Szymkowiak	Church Pastor	United States
40 Years	Carmelo & Antonella Anastasi	Church Pastor	Italy
30 Years	Tom Robinson	Senior Writer, Copy Editor	United States
20 Years	Terri Eddington	Internet Correspondence Manager	United States
10 Years	Sarah Bizic	International Mail Processing Clerk	United States
10 Years	Stella Combare	Accountant	Philippines
10 Years	Roc & Nancy Corbett	Church Pastor	United States
10 Years	Frank Dunkle	ABC Coordinator	United States
10 Years	Barbara Fenney	Editorial/Administration	United Kingdom
10 Years	Jaime & Maria Gallardo	Church Pastor	Chile
10 Years	Roy & Shiela Gilos	Church Pastor	Philippines
10 Years	Frank & Dot Jarvis	Church Pastor	United Kingdom
10 Years	Jonathan Magee	Video Editor and Producer	United States
10 Years	Stan & Penny Martin	Church Pastor	United States
10 Years	Len & Julie Martin	Church Pastor	United States
10 Years	Gerhard Marx	Ministerial/Editorial	United Kingdom
10 Years	Don & Peggy McCoy	Church Pastor	United States
10 Years	Mitchell Moss	Editorial Content Editor	United States
10 Years	Israel & Thelma Robledo	Church Pastor	Guatemala
10 Years	Chris Rowland	HR Manager, MMS Administrator	United States
10 Years	Jamie & Janet Salek	Church Pastor	Colombia
10 Years	Rick & Deborah Shabi	Treasurer, Church Pastor	United States
10 Years	Tim Sipes	Facilities and Shipping Manager	United States
10 Years	Natasha Teague	Managing Editor—Russian	United States
10 Years	Greg & B.J. Thomas	Church Pastor	United States
10 Years	Jacob Trone	Chief Accountant	United States
10 Years	Lena VanAusdle	Proofreader	United States
10 Years	Braden & Georgia Veller	Church Pastor	United States
10 Years	Isella Wallis	Office Manager	South Africa

### Ministerial and Member Services Goals for the Next Year

1. Personally develop closer relationships with every elder (implementing regional camping retreats)
2. Member engagement—pastors should be helpers of the members' joy
3. Visit as many local congregations as possible
4. Assess the congregational survey results and help pastors improve using the data
5. Have self- and peer-assessments between elders and pastors
6. Develop 10-day ministerial development program at the home office
7. Improve and respond to international needs and work more closely with senior pastors
8. Encourage mentoring by pastors to develop local individuals
9. Head off conflicts early using principles from Matthew 18
10. Develop speaking program to improve speaking quality

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## The Good News

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### How to Confront and Defeat Fear and Anxiety

With God's great help we can perform rationally and calmly in anxious situations and win every battle against fear and anxiety.

By John LaBissoniere

Late one night I was walking alone down the middle of a moonlit street. It was quiet and still. The houses were dark. No one was outside and not a single car was moving. Suddenly, I heard a strange noise behind me. Looking back, I saw a huge lion rushing madly toward me from about a half block away! Fear gripped me and I began to run!

With my heart pounding I sensed the beast was gaining on me. In panic I rushed through the front yard gate of an old house and hurdled up the stairs to the porch. Glancing back, I saw the lion racing through the gate! Pushing open the front door I scrambled up some stairs to the second floor. Looking down I saw the fierce creature charging up the steps. Dashing down a hallway, I found a large old trunk, dove inside of it and quickly closed the lid. Seconds later it reopened. It was the lion! His mouth was wide open! And then . . . I woke up.

Yes, it was a terrible dream, a frightening nightmare that I had experienced as a child. Not only did I occasionally endure bad dreams as a youngster but various fears troubled me. Perhaps during your youth, you experienced the same. The fact is, both children and adults are affected by real or imagined fears and anxieties.

#### Healthy fear vs. harmful fear

Numerous books are available today which pledge to help individuals overcome their fears and worries. But, are some of our fears justified? Yes, there is healthy, proper and necessary fear which is simply the desire for self-preservation. Without it, people would not take appropriate caution to avoid perils or injury.

For example, healthy fear was demonstrated in the 1962 Academy Award winning motion picture, *To Kill*



God will give us the spiritual, mental and emotional strength we need to face and conquer our fears and anxieties.

*a Mockingbird*. In one scene a violent, rabid dog was roaming a residential neighborhood causing frightened people to huddle in their homes for protection. However, Atticus Finch, played by actor Gregory Peck, chose to deal with the threat. Standing alone outside, he took his rifle and shot and killed the dog, thus ending the menace. So, legitimate, healthy fear was present yet it was accompanied by a critical element: the willingness to take suitable steps to confront it.

What is harmful fear? It is the result of not taking measures to deal with a disquieting, potentially fearful situation. The consequence of not facing and dealing with our fears is anxiety, distress, nervousness and worry. Healthy fear can actually mutate into harmful fear when alarm and panic, rather than knowledge, logic and godly faith, governs our thinking and actions.

#### Confronting our fears

Challenging, managing and mastering our fears is essential to living a happy, successful life. Experts in psychology offer helpful advice on contending with fear. Stanley J. Rachman, Ph.D., a psychologist and Pro-

fessor Emeritus of the Department of Psychology at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada is the author of the book, *Fear and Courage* (W. H. Freeman, New York, 1990). He wrote, "When a situation becomes predictable, the fear diminishes." In other words, when facing a fearful condition, the more information available about it, the better it can be precisely and rationally dealt with. Additionally, when grappling with a demanding and potentially distressing event, discussing the circumstances with others, who will not be judgmental or critical, can help alleviate distress. Obtaining wise input and advice from trusted sources is important, because, as Dr. Rachman wrote, "Suppressing fear is not a very effective technique."

Nevertheless, if fear or worry persists, experts advise seeking professional help to determine if treatment could be beneficial. Suggested resources include, The National Institute of Mental Health, [nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml](http://nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml), The Anxiety Disorders Association of America, [adaa.org](http://adaa.org) and The Ross Center for Anxiety & Related Disorders Inc., [rosscenter.com](http://rosscenter.com).

**Challenging, managing and mastering our fears is essential to living a happy, successful life.**

#### God offers us powerful help

In confronting and defeating fear and anxiety, let's examine the most important tool we can employ, which is the marvelous support our Creator generously offers. Since He doesn't want us to be tormented by harmful, destructive fear, He provides us tremendous aid. "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, emphasis added throughout). A "spirit of fear" doesn't originate from God but arises in the human mind, influenced negatively by Satan the devil (1 John 5:19). However, with God's limitless help we can perform rationally and calmly in fear-inducing situations (Isaiah 41:10).

We can also be fully confident that we will win our battles against fear because God cares for us deeply and is close by our side. "For I, the Lord your God, will hold your right hand, saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'" Plus, God's way of love is flawless: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love" (1 John 4:18).

Considering what God is willing to do for us, we never need to feel lost and alone or be embarrassed when we occasionally feel and display anxiety. The fact is, even some of the great personalities of the Bible felt and expressed fear. For instance, the apostle Paul

Continued on next page



Paul Gilmore/Unsplash

## How Effective Songleading Significantly Enhances a Worship Service

Singing hymns together is a critically important part of worshiping and glorifying God in our church services.

*We can be fully confident that we will win our battles against fear because God cares for us deeply and is close by our side.*

By Don Hooser

articulated some of his personal fears to the brethren at Corinth. “We were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears” (2 Corinthians 7:5). Nevertheless, Paul didn’t stay fearful but relied on God’s love and strength to aid him in successfully facing and overcoming his fears (Romans 8:38-39). We can do the same!

When Jesus Christ walked on the earth, He fully grasped what human distress was like and clearly understood our fears and worries. So, when we are threatened by fear and anxiety, we can call upon Him instantly for His loving, powerful help in order to address it. “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:15-16).

### Be anxious for nothing

Unlike human beings, who can sometimes be fickle, God will never let us down if we fully trust and obey Him. He will give us the spiritual, mental and emotional strength we need to face and conquer our fears and anxieties. “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you” (Deuteronomy 31:6, New International Version). Furthermore, the apostle Paul admonishes us to, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6). What will happen as a result of our diligent prayers and God-given faith (Ephesians 2:8)? “And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).

So, it is God’s intense desire that we be completely free of harmful fear. Even so, there is a type of fear He actually wants us to have. Proverbs 1:7 explains that, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” The term “fear” in this verse actually means “profound respect and awe.” God does not want us to be fearful of Him but rather that we honor and faithfully submit to Him in order to be blessed with true peace of mind and great joy (Deuteronomy 5:29). With God’s steadfast guidance, strength and encouragement we can confront and defeat fear and anxiety! **GN**

Hymn-singing is the only portion of a church service in which all of the members do more than just listen. This is their opportunity to actively praise and worship God—plus, lift one another up!

The level of spiritual and emotional benefits of the hymn-singing depends significantly on the songleader. When the songleader puts his heart into his songleading, he helps the members to put their hearts into singing and worship.

To be a highly effective songleader, there is much to be learned about the combination of responsibilities, and much more could be written than this brief article. To begin with, I recommend “Principles of Songleading,” a YouTube video of a 2002 ABC songleading class conducted by Gary Antion. That can be accessed at [bit.ly/songleading](http://bit.ly/songleading).

### Elements of inspiring songleading

With church songleading, it is very important for the songleader to be an enthusiastic emcee (master of ceremonies). More about this later.

From a technical standpoint, it is essential for the songleader to be able to sense the beat of the music. His arm gestures should be in sync with the rhythm of the music.

It’s valuable if a songleader can read sheet music. It’s particularly important to understand the patterns of the arm gestures that are used with the  $\frac{1}{4}$  and the  $\frac{3}{4}$  time signatures.

Those arm gestures should be done gracefully. It’s wise to carefully watch effective songleaders to learn from their styles and techniques.

Having a good singing voice is a nice asset. However, having an outgoing personality and being a good emcee are more valuable than being a good vocalist. The songleader who lacks a good singing voice can sing softly or back away from the microphone during the hymn.

Advance prayer, planning, preparation and practice for the song service are imperative. If there is to be an accompanist such as a pianist, check to see which hymns he or she feels confident to play. It is considerate to send the accompanist the songs a few days in advance in case they need time to practice.

Give careful thought to your choice of hymns and their sequence. It’s good to start the service with a lively song. Generally, don’t try to learn more than one new

song in a service, and put it in the middle of the first three hymns. On a piece of paper, make a detailed outline that shows the sequence of your words and actions. If you are not highly familiar with certain hymns, practice leading them ahead of time.

The hymn that follows a sermonette or sermon can reinforce the message if the right hymn is chosen. Therefore, it’s wise to contact the speakers and ask them if they would like to select that hymn. If they don’t want to make the choice, at least they can tell you the subject of their messages so you can make a suitable selection.

It’s very important that songleaders enunciate their words well and project their voices, especially for our hard-of-hearing brethren.

It’s important that the songleader isn’t attempting to speak over the din of conversation. Various methods can be used to try to achieve a quiet auditorium. I’ll explain the method I prefer. I go to the microphone and announce that the service will begin in five minutes. Then I announce the two-minute mark, and then the one-minute mark. Then I state that it is time to begin the service. This method has worked remarkably well.

### Why and how to be a good emcee

All songleaders should appreciate the great importance of their responsibility. Having someone up front waving his arms is actually not necessary for singing the hymns, but being an enthusiastic emcee can be considered essential!

The songleader must get the service off to a cheery start with a warm welcome to everyone. He sets the tone! What members hear and experience through the week is often depressing so it’s a real blessing if the songleader lifts their spirits! And his cheerful personality and warm words help the listeners to be optimistic and responsive to the rest of the service. Speaking of words, avoid controversial subjects. Make any essential announcements including “let’s all silence our cell phones.” Be sure to thank the accompanists. Before the service begins, ask someone if he will give the opening prayer and another if he will give the closing prayer. Ask them to be on or near the stage by the end of the hymn so there is not a long delay before he gets to the microphone. It’s fine to thank the speakers after their messages, but do it consistently so it doesn’t appear that you are favoring one speaker over another.

A good emcee is outgoing and enthusiastic. This may come more easily for some songleaders than for others. Obviously a songleader should not be self-centered, trying to impress people, but he also should not be engaging in false humility, thinking that being holy means not being outgoing and dynamic. You are serving by stimulating interest and a little excitement.

We come to church services to “rejoice before the LORD!” It’s very helpful if the songleader radiates enjoyment, joy and love for the brethren. Smiling is contagious so it helps all of us if he smiles between hymns and smiles occasionally during each hymn. If you can’t sing and smile at the same time, just stop singing long enough to smile!

Adding a little wholesome humor increases joy. The Bible even contains humor. Of course, humorous remarks should be brief, positive, relevant, appropriate, in good taste, etc. For example, when I was a songleader at several Feast sites in Canada, I would joke about Canada and Texas, and many members thanked me for the added enjoyment.

So, to all songleaders: Thanks for serving at church services as a songleader! Do your best with God’s help to combine sound songleading techniques with being an effective emcee who is well-prepared, enthusiastic and joyful! **GN**

# Keeping the Feast for the First Time—or the First Time in a While

If this is your first Feast, or your first Feast back, what do you need to know in order to properly keep this Festival of God?

By Dan Preston

The Feast of Tabernacles is right around the corner. Maybe you have kept the Feast for many years—or perhaps this is your first Feast, and you're a little unsure of what to expect. Perhaps it will be the first Feast you've kept in quite some time.

If this is your first Feast, or your first Feast back, what do you need to know in order to properly keep this Festival of God? If it's not your first Feast, what can you do to help the first-timers get the most out of their Feast experience? Let's consider these questions from three different aspects of Feast keeping.

## The spiritual aspect

The Feast of Tabernacles is, first and foremost, a spiritual event, "And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: "The feasts of the Lord, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My feasts"' (Leviticus 23:1-2). He then describes His Feasts as holy time.

Holy time is simply defined as time that God has sanctified and set apart as holy. The Feast of Tabernacles and the Eighth Day are part of God's Feasts. They aren't something the United Church of God came up with as a way to worship God; they are days that God prescribes to us to keep and worship Him.

In verse 40 of the same chapter, God says, "And you shall take for yourselves on the first day the fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days." Rejoicing is a big part of the Feast of Tabernacles. But we must always remember we are there to rejoice before, or in the presence of, God.

So, how do we spiritually rejoice at the Feast? One of the primary ways we do so is to fill up on the spiritual food provided via the messages given at the Feast. Most of the year, we hear one or two sermons a week. During the Feast of Tabernacles and Eighth Day, you will hear probably eight or ten full-length sermons!

Another important way in which we worship God during the Feast is with music. Many of us come from smaller congregations, so when we get in a room with several hundred others singing praise to God's name—Wow, what a difference! It's also a time to hear special music pieces such as vocal solos, choirs and instrumental ensembles and accompaniment. For most people, these musical performances are a rare treat

that can inspire and edify them during their worship at this Festival.

One way to prepare to keep the Feast before you arrive would be to read our booklet, *God's Holy Day Plan: The Promise of Hope for All Mankind*, available for free in print or online at [ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/gods-holy-day-plan-the-promise-of-hope-for-all-mankind](http://ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/gods-holy-day-plan-the-promise-of-hope-for-all-mankind). You could also bring a booklet or two to read while you're at the Feast, or traveling there.

By praying and asking God to help us get the most out of the messages and music we hear at the Feast, we can arrive in the right frame of mind, prepared to learn. As you pray for this spiritual growth, don't forget to ask God to bless those who will be doing the speaking and performing as well. Trust me, they will appreciate it!

## The Emotional Aspect

Have you ever been on a long journey, perhaps one that has kept you away from home for weeks or months? How do you feel when you get back home? Relieved, at peace and ready for a break from whatever it was that took you on the journey?

Arriving at the Feast is kind of like that. Ultimately, the Feast of Tabernacles represents the coming Kingdom of God—our ultimate home. Our current zip codes, jobs and other life responsibilities are a temporary journey we are on. Arriving at the Feast is like coming home after a long, difficult trip.

A reality of life for most of us is that we have jobs and/or school to deal with. And while it might be necessary to deal with some of those things on non-Holy Days while keeping the Feast, in order to truly rejoice, we need to minimize those types of interruptions.

One way to deal with such interruptions is to not let them be interruptions! If you absolutely must do work or school while at the Feast, make it a scheduled part of your day so that it doesn't randomly disrupt your enjoyment of the Feast. When our children were younger, we designated the time just after services to be school work time. By the afternoon and evening, they were free to go enjoy themselves without the emotional weight of schoolwork to drag them down.

Of course, enjoying the Feast is about more than just managing work and school. It's also a wonderful opportunity to meet new people or get acquainted with those you've lost touch with. Attending activities and social gatherings are great ways to connect with people. Look for opportunities to do new things. Invite others to go with you! It doesn't have to be an expensive outing—maybe a stroll through town, or picnic lunch in a park. And if someone invites you to go somewhere or do something, take them up on it if your schedule permits!

If we spend the Feast trying to keep up with all the things going on back home, we can lose out on an important opportunity to pick up on the atmosphere of the Millennium and Kingdom of God as experienced during the Feast.

## The physical aspect

For the majority of Feast-goers, keeping the Feast is a physical experience as well. Many people drive there, so they plan by getting the car ready, bringing special snacks for the trip, packing a suitcase, planning the route and maybe even getting a new Bible or notebook to take notes in during the Feast. Those are all appropriate ways to prepare for the Feast—and it's worth mentioning, appropriate things to spend your second tithe on before the Feast. A tithe means a tenth, or 10



*We picture a time when we will all be a part of God's spiritual family—and we can start practicing those inclusive, loving family relationships now!*

percent. This is the amount of our annual income that God commands we set aside in order to keep the Feast (Deuteronomy 14:22-23).

Then, of course, there's the physical rejoicing at the Feast itself. In speaking of the tithe that we save in order to keep the Feast, we're told in Deuteronomy 14:26, "And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household." There's no doubt; this is one of the easiest commands in the Bible to keep!

While the Feast is, first and foremost, a spiritual event, the reality is that for most, it's the only time during the year they have the time and a little extra money to get away and do things they can't do during the year. God wants us to enjoy this time and it's okay to be more generous in our spending at the Feast. Just remember that in all we do—eating, drinking, playing, etc.—we should do in a way that honors and glorifies God while still sticking to our budget. This is a command to rejoice and celebrate God's promises for the future.

So, what if you don't have a lot of tithe money? Maybe you are new to keeping the Holy Days and have only recently begun tithing. Or, what if you aren't able to travel anywhere for the Feast due to a physical or financial hardship? Do you lose out on this aspect of keeping the Feast?

Not at all. God doesn't require that we have a lot of money to keep the Feast. In fact, even if you can't leave home, you can still keep the Feast this year (if you are keeping the Feast at home this year, check out an article I wrote a few years back, at [ucg.org/members/united-news/connecting-with-others-from-home](http://ucg.org/members/united-news/connecting-with-others-from-home)). You can also register for the Feast at [ucg.org/members/feast/sites/2021/celebrating-the-feast-at-homeonline](http://ucg.org/members/feast/sites/2021/celebrating-the-feast-at-homeonline) for resources and support during the Feast while you keep it at home. Or check with your local pastor to see if there is a local or satellite site close by.

What God does require is faithfulness. If you've dutifully kept your tithe, but it isn't sufficient, or if you're on a fixed income that does not allow you to tithe, the Church has funds for those in need. Perhaps you can't afford five-star dining, but sharing a pizza in a hotel

*Continued on next page*

room can provide quality time and create memories with friends, old and new.

If you're an old timer when it comes to Feast-keeping, you have an opportunity to help those new to keeping the Feast. Perhaps they don't have a lot of money, or just don't know where to go. An invite to dinner or even to tag along on an outing can make a huge difference in making their Feast special. We picture a time when we will all be a part of God's spiritual family—and we can start practicing those inclusive, loving family relationships now!

### Get ready to keep the Feast!

If this is the first time you're keeping the Feast, you might not know what to expect. The good news is that those you will be keeping it with have been right where you are! Don't be afraid to go up to new people, introduce yourself and even tell them it's your first Feast. Chances are, they'll have an interesting story about their first Feast, and share what helped them along their journey.

Old timers: look for opportunities to help first timers. If you spot a new person who might seem a little overwhelmed, go out of your way to make them comfortable and help ease whatever fears they might have. And if you spot someone who you know has not kept the Feast in many years, it's not the time to ask them why. Instead, give them a big smile and let them know how good it is to see them.

By focusing on the spiritual, emotional and physical aspects before we even get to the Feast, we can prepare to rejoice in the manner God has commanded. Whether it's your first or 45<sup>th</sup> (like mine!), may this coming Feast be your best Feast ever! **GN**

## Three Parables for Slackers

How can we examine ourselves while we await Christ's return?

By Craig Scott

In a long passage of prophecy found in Matthew 24, Jesus gave an overview of the events that would unfold before He would return in glory. He gave this as an answer to the disciples' questions regarding when He would return and what the signs would be leading up to His return. He told them of some significant signs, but in verse 36 He tells the disciples that no one knows the time of His return.

So, the question remained: would it be a short time, or would it be a long time?

After this session of prophetic teaching, Jesus continued with a series of parables through which ran a common theme: each of us is expected to be alert, watchful and *not slacking off* (Matthew 24:42-44). His parables give us warnings about dangerous attitudes that can develop when the time of waiting is very long or delayed.

### The first parable

Matthew 24:45-51—in this scenario a master comes back sooner than expected and finds his ser-



Andrew Lancaster/Unsplash

*Do what is needed to fan into flame the burning embers of the Holy Spirit that has been put within you.*

vants behaving badly. The wicked servant is like a person who thinks they have a long time to wait before Christ comes back and therefore plenty of time left in which to repent and change. Such a person believes they can put off till tomorrow the difficult endeavor of overcoming sin. That person will be surprised when the master comes back before expected and they are found unprepared.

### The second parable

Matthew 25:1-13—in this scenario the bridegroom comes back later than expected and the virgins are sleeping. The virgins with untrimmed lamps are like a person who observes that Christ is taking a much longer time to return than expected. They are getting tired of constant vigilance, overcoming and preparedness and would like to rest. But they have not stirred up the Spirit or fanned it into flame; they have lost their enthusiasm for spiritual change and growth. Time wears them down, their eyes grow heavy, they decide to take rest for a while, and they fall asleep. Then the bridegroom arrives and these guests are unprepared.

### The third parable

Matthew 25:14-30—in this scenario the master comes back after a long time to find that some of his servants have done nothing because they thought the assignment was too hard. The master gave three different servants deposits of money. Two of the servants use what they are given to create profit and increase. The third servant does nothing and when the master returns, he is unprepared.

In verses 20-23 the servants who created growth with the investment entrusted to them were rewarded accordingly. Then, the servant who did nothing was asked to give an account for his actions.

The “do nothing” servant explains that he was paralyzed with fear of the master. He was fearful of failure and loss, so he did not use the sum of money given him. He knew the expectations and standards of the master.

The servant who did nothing is like a person who

concludes, “It's too difficult, I'll never be good enough, so why even try?”

The master's reply to that servant is, “Why didn't you at least try? At the minimum you could have put the money in the bank and gotten a little interest. It wouldn't have been much and your reward would have been small, but that would be better than nothing.”

These three parables provide different scenarios for how we might react when we see the time of waiting is long. We might drift into evil, thinking we have time to change later. We might decide to take a break, thinking we have time to get busy later. Or we might give up because we think the task is too difficult.

### A lesson about effort

There is an additional lesson about our personal effort found by comparing parables two and three.

- Don't overestimate the effort required
- Don't underestimate the effort required

The foolish virgins thought the task of preparation was so easy that they didn't need to put much effort into preparation. So, they took a break and napped. The original Greek word that is translated “foolish” here is *moros*. It's a harsh criticism meaning stupid, or dimwit. This is a warning delivered to believers who do not soberly consider what is required and the amount of effort needed.

The servant who did nothing is a believer who has been given gifts and blessings from God. And God expects them to be used to produce spiritual growth and character development. The “do nothing” servant took a look at what was required, and the amount of effort needed and was overwhelmed. This servant considered the task at hand to be so hard that there was no point in trying.

The “do nothing” servant did not understand that while God wants good outcomes, He also appreciates effort and attitude. Errors and sins we commit while we are still maturing and growing can be dealt with through the sacrifice of Christ for sin—but it's difficult trying to work with someone who makes zero effort.

### Some questions to ask yourself

For the slacker scenario found in the first parable: Are you putting off making the necessary changes in your life thinking you've got time to get around to it later? If so, then commit yourself to acting quickly. Make haste and be urgent to get started now.

For the slacker scenario found in the second parable: Are you growing weary of doing good and thinking about taking a break? Are you underestimating the importance of showing forth the fruit of the Spirit in your life? Are you underestimating the effort required to be adequately prepared? If so, then shake yourself awake. Wake up and do what is needed to fan into flame the burning embers of the Holy Spirit that has been put within you.

For the slacker scenario found in the third parable: Are you letting recurring sins and lapses cause you to think all effort is hopeless? If so, commit yourself to showing a good effort in spite of failures along the way. God will appreciate your sincere effort—probably a lot more than you might think. When you fail, come under Christ's blood so your faults and sins may be forgiven and passed over. Then persevere, make the effort, repent and change!

Use the warning and instruction embedded in these three parables to give you a sense of urgency and a readiness to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit—even when the time you spend in preparation seems long! **GN**

*By Mike Phelps*

FLINT, MICHIGAN—We have all heard the phrase, “There’s no place like home.”

This saying resonates with the members of the Flint, Michigan, congregation, who have owned their church building for decades.

In 1995, the Church of God went through a challenging phase of our history due to doctrinal issues in the Church and a resulting loss of stability. As the Flint congregation continued to hold fast to sound teaching, the opportunity to purchase their own building was one many members felt moved to pursue. Flint congregants assisted with a property search, and after looking at several options, a viable building and piece of property was located.

Originally, the current home of the Flint congregation served as a restaurant which went out of business and sat vacant until the congregation purchased the building in 1995. The building required an extensive remodel that took most of the summer and was aided by several members with construction and trade backgrounds. Work involved removing the commercial kitchen, rewiring the electric, installing a new roof, drywall work, grounds cleanup and a great deal of cleaning and repainting.

Retired pastor Steve Shafer and his wife Evelyn recall the challenges the congregation previously faced when trying to find a location to rent for services on a weekly basis: “Schools

and union halls were not wanting to rent to a group every Sabbath, so we struggled finding a place to meet. There were also date conflicts, especially for the Holy Days.” As the new building began to come together, excitement grew among the Shafers and members of the congregation.

“When we walked in the first time, I was just overwhelmed with the beauty of the building!” exclaimed Evelyn. She added, “It’s God’s house—a place to go on the Sabbath. We treat it with respect, for this building is a blessing from God.”

The congregation has continued to provide regular maintenance and care for the building as a way of expressing their appreciation to God for this special gift. The congregation’s local board President Michael Rose and his wife Amy (an original board member herself) recall how the board was focused on making sure money was set aside for building maintenance. Members themselves have also provided for building needs through donated items, legacy donations, installation of a front road sign and regular landscape and maintenance projects.

“We have seen a lot of cooperation among members over these many years,” Amy recounted with appreciation.

But it has not been “all work and no play” for the congregation. The building has served as a location for family weddings, memorials, board meetings, Night to be Much Observed evenings, baptisms, game nights, themed dinners, and clubs. In 2020, the building served as a



Top: The church building owned by the Flint, Michigan, congregation.  
Middle: Blessing of little children.  
Bottom: Members of the congregation organize a blanket donation.



local Feast of Tabernacles site for the first time. Outreach has also been important to the Flint congregation, and the building has provided many opportunities to host events which serve the community.

“The congregation has a place that is theirs, and they have a voice in how the building is used,” remarked the Shafers. The Roses added, “People know where we are every week, both in and out of the Church of God.”

For the Flint, Michigan congregation, our building provides a place of stability and constancy to the members. It’s our home. We’re thankful for the many blessings our building has provided and will continue to in the future. **UN**

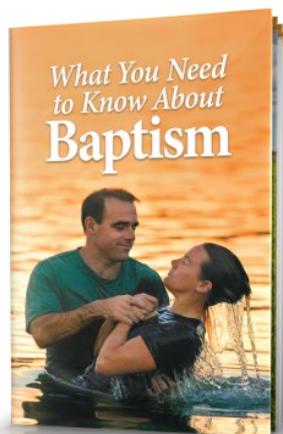


## Resource Spotlight

### Renamed Booklet: “What You Need To Know About Baptism”

The booklet previously called *The Road to Eternal Life* has been renamed to *What You Need to Know About Baptism*. The change better represents the booklet’s content, which has not changed.

What is the purpose of human life? Are we here for a reason? Does the Bible provide answers for these questions? What does the Bible mean when it talks about repentance, baptism and conversion? Inside this booklet you will find the answers to these questions. **UN**



Ambassador Bible College will operate live, in-person classes next year and is currently accepting applications! If you are interested in spending an academic year studying God’s Word with like-minded Church members, please consider attending. Visit [abc.ucg.org](http://abc.ucg.org) to learn more about the program and apply. You can also direct questions to Director of Admissions Frank Dunkle by emailing him at [frank\\_dunkle@ucg.org](mailto:frank_dunkle@ucg.org). **UN**



## Youth Camp Facility Fund



An exciting new development was approved by the Council of Elders during their meetings in May. The Council approved setting up a restricted fund account for purchasing a camp property in the Northwest region of the United States. This is a first for UCG, since we have never owned our own camp facility even though we have sponsored camps since 1995. The Council also approved that if future funding allows it, perhaps additional camp properties could be purchased in other areas of the U.S.

This came about because of a very generous donation by a family in the Northwest to buy a camp facility specifically in that region. Two other families have committed to donations as well that have now totaled \$308,000. As we work towards our goal of \$1.5 million, we are already off to a great start!

We wish to thank these brethren for their vision and their generosity. We are praying for God to show us His will as we begin to look for an appropriate camp. We have placed this into His hands, and ask Him to direct our steps and to open up an excellent camp facility where His Name is glorified, and where His truths will be taught to all who stay at the camp facility.

We feel that the ideal location for a Northwest camp facility would be in the state of Oregon, which is centrally located to families throughout the region.

Such a camp facility and retreat center would serve as a multi-use venue for the entire Church. Uses would include teen and preteen camps, young adult weekend retreats, women's enrichment weekends, men's retreats, family retreats, weddings, marriage retreats and ministerial meetings. It is anticipated the facility would be used on an average of once a month and most of these uses would be multi-day events.

Since the beginning of the United Church of God in the spring of 1995, youth camp has been a part of our vision. Our goal in United Youth Camps has been to teach campers God's Word and encourage them to live His way of life. Since the first youth camps in the summer of 1995, thousands of young people have attended either preteen or teen camp. Once teens move into their young adult years, many of them become an integral part of camp by serving as staff, then as adults serving in their local areas. What they learn at camp becomes a part of their godly character for the rest of their lives.

We would dedicate such a camp facility as a place where the Word of God is taught as the foundation of all knowledge to those who attend. This camp would be dedicated to teaching the true values from the Bible, where future generations will be inspired to learn more about

God's vision for them and become pillars in His Church. It will be a place where the laws of God are taught and lived. Adults and families could also enjoy the benefit of coming together on special family weekends for Sabbath services, for recreation and for fellowship. The camp and retreat center would serve members of the Church from all across the U.S., including Canada and other nations.

We are excited about the potential of the United Church of God owning its own camp and retreat facility. We see this as a literal investment in the lives of many children, teens and adults for years to come. Our desire is that God would use such a facility to provide a positive environment where spiritual fruit will be produced in the lives of the youth, adults and families. We ask for prayers that the Almighty God will direct our decisions and our search, and that His will be done.

You can donate online to the Youth Camp Facility fund through our donation page at [donate.ucg.org](http://donate.ucg.org) or send a check with "Youth Camp Facility" written in the memo line. All donations are tax-exempt and you will receive a receipt at the end of the tax year. We thank you for your prayers and support in this endeavor!

*Victor Kubik and Steve Nutzman*



- July 4-10 **Are You Prepared for the Ultimate Crisis?**  
Presented by Darris McNeely  
Literature offered: *Are We Living in the Time of the End?*
- July 11-17 **The Coming Prophetic Storm**  
Presented by Steve Myers  
Literature offered: *The Book of Revelation Unveiled*
- July 18-24 **After COVID-19: What Is the New Normal??**  
Presented by Gary Petty  
Literature offered: *The Church Jesus Built*
- July 25-31 **Has God Given Up On America?**  
Presented by Darris McNeely  
Literature offered: *The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy*
- Aug. 1-7 **Is Satan Real?**  
Presented by Steve Myers  
Literature offered: *Is There Really a Devil?*
- Aug. 8-14 **What Motivates Your Citizenship?**  
Presented by Gary Petty  
Literature offered: *Why Were You Born?*
- Aug. 15-21 **The Handwriting on the Wall**  
Presented by Darris McNeely  
Literature offered: *The Final Superpower*
- Aug. 22-28 **The Mystery of Death**  
Presented by Steve Myers  
Literature offered: *What Happens After Death?*
- Aug. 29-Sept. 4 **Jesus and Today's Cultural Christianity**  
Presented by Gary Petty  
Literature offered: *Jesus Christ: The Real Story*



**United News**  
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## Using a Charitable Lead or Remainder Trust in Your Estate Planning

Many people want to incorporate charitable giving into their estate plan. For them, a charitable trust may be an effective way to achieve their goals including: to give money to charity, to provide a limited economic benefit to themselves or their heirs, and to potentially receive savings in income, estate or gift taxes.

Perhaps once in a person's life they may have a large windfall and have concern about the many facets of decisions that come with such a blessing.

For those whose hearts are moved to give there is good news in the form of charitable trusts, which that can provide substantial tax deductions while at the same time provide a gift to the Church.

There are two types of charitable trusts that may help: Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT) and Charitable Lead Trust (CLT). Both trusts can provide a sizable current tax deduction that can be used over a five-year period.

These two trusts are similar in several ways. In both cases two parties are involved: the donor and the charity. The donor will place their money or assets into one of these irrevocable trusts types. Contributions to fund the trust can include: cash, stocks, or real estate. Both charitable trusts will have investments that are earning income that will be distributed as a payment.

The big difference between the two types of charitable trusts is who will receive the income from the trust and what happens to the trust investments at the end of the trust term.

A Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT) uses the trust income to provide taxable payments from the income to the donor. These income payments last the life of the trust. When the CRT terminates it will gift the charity the remainder of trust assets or investments as a future gift.

The strategy of the CRT is for the donor to transfer their highly appreciated property or assets prior to any windfall or sale into the tax-exempt CRT they establish. After the transfer into the CRT, the trustee (donor) sells the property, now owned by the CRT, with no long-term tax liability.

The money that would have gone to pay taxes now remains in the trust, to be invested to produce income for the donor. After the income years have ended the remainder of the unused trust account becomes a gift for charity. A CRT must be established before any such windfall or transaction because there must be a clear and timely intent to make a gift. Early planning is critical.

In contrast, Charitable Lead Trust (CLT) uses the trust income to provide an annual gift to the charity for the term of the trust.

When the trust terminates, the balance of the unused trust goes back to the donor or their family. The CLT is good to use when the donor wants to see and appreciate their gift being used while they are still living, and have the satisfaction of knowing their gift will keep giving after their death while still allowing their family to have an inheritance.

	Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT)	Charitable Lead Trust (CLT)
Income payments go to	Donor	Charity
End of Trust Term— account balance goes to	Charity	Donor
Tax deduction now	Yes	Yes
Trust Term	20 to life	14- or 20-year
Pre-planning	Required	Before or after

For both of these trust types, one needs to consult with a qualified tax advisor or lawyer to get them established.

For additional information or assistance please contact our planned giving coordinator Howard Marchbanks by emailing [plannedgiving@ucg.org](mailto:plannedgiving@ucg.org), or by phone at (513) 570-2343.

*Howard Marchbanks CFP®*