



United Church of God

an International Association

eNews from Ministerial and Member Services

Issue 515

April 28, 2022

Personal From the President...

Being About Our Father's Business

What should be our focus today? During the Days of Unleavened Bread festival in A.D. 31, the resurrected Jesus Christ delivered a profoundly special message to Mary Magdalene, one that is of utmost importance to us today. You probably read it during your personal Bible study a week or so ago. What is it?

As we read in the account of John, Mary quietly arrived before sunrise to the sealed tomb donated by Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Jews' ruling council (Mark 15:43). It was now the morning of the fourth day since Jesus had died by gruesome crucifixion, and Mary desired to honor the memory of Jesus by anointing His battered body with burial spices.

But she was openly shocked by what she found. Mary "saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb" (John 20:1, English Standard Version). Alarmed, she breathlessly ran to tell Simon Peter and John the unbelievable news: the body of Jesus was gone. Both men dropped everything and ran back to the now-empty tomb to see for themselves.

Arriving in haste, the two disciples inspected the tomb. It was empty. There was no sign of a body anywhere.

Puzzled, the disciples didn't know what to make of it. They simply "went back to their homes" (John 20:10, ESV), leaving the distraught and grieving Mary behind at the empty tomb.

Then an astonishing event happened. Sobbing, Mary stooped to look inside the empty open tomb for herself. There she recognized two angels, who asked her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" (John 20:13, ESV).

As she explained her grief over not knowing what happened to the lifeless body that she planned to honorably anoint, she noticed another unexplained Figure nearby, whom she mistook for a gardener.

Suddenly everything came into focus. It was Jesus, come back to life!

Before she could come close to Him, Jesus gently stopped her: “Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father” (verse 17, ESV). He had not yet been presented as the ultimate wave sheaf offering to God the Father.

Then Jesus delivered a marvelous declaration that profoundly impacts you and me. He instructed Mary: “Go to my brothers and say to them ‘I am ascending to my Father and *your Father*, to my God and *your God*’” (verse 17, ESV, emphasis added throughout).

The personal connection here has now been ramped up. As were the disciples of old, Jesus is stating that we are now part of the very Family of God!

The resurrected Jesus was now “the firstborn among many brothers and sisters” (Romans 8:29, New Living Translation), opening the door for God to bring “many sons to glory” (Hebrews 2:10). The next verse in Hebrews sums up our new status: “now Jesus and the ones he makes holy *have the same Father*. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters” (Hebrews 2:11, NLT).

Now that we have completed the first season in the annual Holy Day cycle, we are to look to the coming day of Pentecost. The veil separating us from God the Father is torn asunder (Matthew 27:51) and we now have direct access to—as Jesus declared—*our Father and our God*.

What are we to do? As children of God, we are to be about our Father’s business! Each of us should be doing our part to demonstrate and proclaim the coming Kingdom of God. As does our Elder Brother, we are to be praying that the Father’s will be done here on earth and that He reveals that will so we can be directly aligned with it.

Over the past nine years, I have had the privilege of serving as President of the United Church of God, overseeing the day-to-day operations of the Church and putting into action the policies developed by the Council of Elders. Now, even as my wife Bev and I begin to transition into a new phase of service to the Church, things are as busy and fulfilling as ever. I expect that to continue in many respects as long as Bev and I draw breath.

It is inspiring and encouraging to see that the work of the Church continues to move forward at a strong pace. God has provided a tried and tested team that is able to quickly create new literature and gospel outreach that provides hope and direction for a world essentially held captive by the adversary, Satan.

Here’s an example: in a matter of days following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we were able to assemble and design a new powerful Bible study guide titled *Russia and Bible Prophecy*, which details biblical truth about prophetic potential events. I mentioned its availability in a Personal column a few weeks ago. Now we have just mailed an up-to-date letter to more than 200,000 *Beyond Today* subscribers offering this timely information.

At the same time, some of the major improvements to the Church’s website are coming online. You may recall comments made in former “Personal From the President” columns that solicited your prayers for this massive project. As you may have seen Media and Communications Services operation manager Peter Eddington writing about online in

social media, the all-new major technical search functionality is now active for UCG.org in each specific language!

That robust state-of-the-art search function will now make thousands of online articles, sermons, *Beyond Today* programs and content—and much more—easily accessible and categorized both for people interested in the truth and for our Church membership. Upcoming enhancements to functionality will also create vast improvements in how people can quickly find information that they are interested in and help us better engage and relate to those who find us online. You may not “see” these technical improvements in the “back end” of the website, but the experience you and others will have online will be substantially improved. Other improvements begun earlier, including a potential new visual theme for the website, continue to be developed.

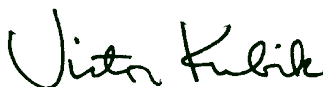
As I prepare my commencement address for this year’s Ambassador Bible College class, I am encouraged to see that we already have admission requests that match our current class level and good expectations that next year’s class may be even larger. Many prior ABC graduates are already serving the Church and we expect future leaders to come from these classes. I already look forward to the privilege of continuing to teach the General Epistles course at ABC for next year’s class, returning once a week to the ABC classroom in the fall.

There is much in the Church of God today to be encouraged and inspired about!

As implied in Jesus’ statement, the very Father of Jesus Christ is today *our* spiritual Father. As we approach the day of Pentecost, the next step in fulfilling the plan of God, I hope for and ask you to pray for the advancement of the Church and its work, fulfilling the Great Commission.

That includes *you* as you demonstrate and openly live God’s way of life, being about our Father’s business!

In Christ’s service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victor Kubik". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Victor Kubik

Personal From Ministerial and Member Services...

Dear ministers and members,

We have now begun the countdown to Pentecost!

It was a very inspiring and profitable Holy Day season for Barbara and me—our 43rd as husband and wife! We spent the Last Day of Unleavened Bread at a combined service with the Ann Arbor, Detroit and Flint, Michigan, congregations.

It was very meaningful for Barbara and me, as we lived the vast majority of our first ten years together near Grand Rapids, Michigan, and attended services there. We would often make the trip to Ann Arbor for youth weekends and we have many friends in the state, several that we were able to see on this trip.



Last Day of Unleavened Bread in Hartland, Michigan.

The Last Day of Unleavened Bread was a very encouraging day of healthy spiritual food and fellowship as approximately 120 members gathered together at the historic Hartland Music Hall in Hartland, Michigan. When I heard the attendance figures, I couldn't help but think about and draw comparisons to the 120 followers of Christ who gathered together on the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them and many others whom God was calling at that time. Much has happened and centuries have passed, but God's delivered word of hope and salvation remains the same.

All the messages were encouraging and uplifting, despite the difficult times in which we live. Like you, I am truly hopeful we have seen the worst of the pandemic and its affect will continue to lighten progressively. I suppose we might be a bit naïve to think we are completely past any significant issues with COVID-19, but certainly things have greatly improved. I know we are all truly thankful to God for this relief. It is very good to see more and more people physically returning to church services and to fellowship with our brethren.



Special music performance on the Last Day of Unleavened Bread.

As I listened to the offertory and to special music, I was struck by such a wonderful legacy that is being carried on by adults, young adults and children within the Church of God. So many children have been born into the Church of God over the past 70 years, and many remain to carry on the rich heritage that their parents have passed along to them.

We also enjoyed a lovely Sabbath in Ann Arbor with the brethren there and fellowshiped for a couple of hours after services while enjoying a variety of delectable treats. The brethren seemed to genuinely love each other and didn't seem to be in any hurry to leave!

That evening, all the elders from the three congregations and their wives met at Mike and Laura Phelps' home for a very enjoyable evening together. It was wonderful to see Keith Haab, of the Ann Arbor congregation again, as he reminded me of the time we sat at the scorer's table at a Y.O.U. basketball game nearly 40 years ago! Keith lived on the other side of the state from me and was ordained an elder in 1984. I was ordained an elder in 1985, so we go back a few years! I thought a great deal of Keith back then and even more so now as I consider his longevity and faithfulness.

It was really great to see Steve and Evelyn Shafer, two more long-timers, and to catch up and share experiences with them. We were able to get to know Chris and Deborah (Steve and Evelyn's daughter) Shude much better and I greatly appreciated hearing about how God called Chris initially, through his wife's example. Chris was ordained an elder in 2016 and serves in the Flint congregation along with the Shafers.

Another elder from the Flint congregation is Brian McGuire. Barbara and I greatly enjoyed becoming better acquainted with Brian and his wife, Laurie, who is Larry and Karen Walker's daughter. Larry is a retired elder and he and Karen continue to serve in central Oregon. Brian was ordained an elder in 2013. I am continually impressed and encouraged by the elders I am getting to know better and better as I see God working in them to serve His children humbly and effectively. This is certainly true of Mike and Laura Phelps, who lovingly care for the brethren with whom they are entrusted.

It was truly wonderful to spend some quality time with Mike and Laura, and with their daughter Kelsey (not to mention their elderly dog, Champ, and their cute little puppy, Sadie). God has richly blessed us all and it is truly a great honor and privilege to have these close relationships with one another and with our loving God and His wonderful Son!

I want to conclude by asking for your faithful prayers for the Council of Elders as they consider and determine who to appoint as United's next president. Let us all pray that God will be directly involved and will guide this selection. It has been a real privilege for me to serve with and to learn from Victor Kubik and I look forward to having a similar relationship with the new president.

Wishing you all a very meaningful and inspiring Sabbath!

In God's love and service,



Mark Welch, Operation Manager for MMS

From Ministerial and Member Services...

Second Passover

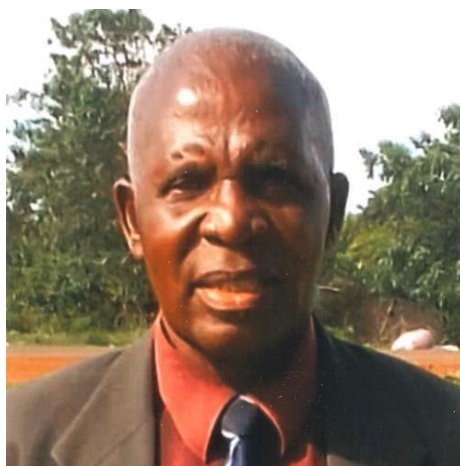
This year, the second Passover begins on Saturday evening, May 14. Members needing to take the second Passover should do so after sundown that evening.

Recent Ordinations



Rodrick and Patricia Epomba

On April 22, 2022, Rodrick Epomba was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Patricia, serve in the Solwezi, Zambia, congregation.



Christopher Ndunguyonga

On April 23, 2022, Christopher Ndunguyonga was ordained into the ministry. He serves in the Mufumbwe, Zambia, congregation.

Death of Joe Moulton



Joe and Mary Moulton

Joseph Moulton, an elder serving the Ottawa, Ontario, congregation in Canada, died on April 5 at the age of 97. Joe was born in 1924 in a very small hamlet called Delsymaine which is near Lansdowne, Ontario. He was the sixth child born into a family with nine children.

When Joe was 19 years old, he joined the Navy and served for 23 months. After the war was over, he worked on the merchant ships that traveled the Great Lakes for two summers.

In 1946, he began helping an elderly couple with their firewood and getting their groceries. It was at this small-town grocery store that he met his wife-to-be, a young lady named Mary. They married in 1948 and enjoyed 73 years of marriage. In 1950, Joe and Mary settled on the farm where they began a busy life raising their ten children, running the farm, milking cows and operating a construction business.

Joe's father introduced him to the Radio Church of God that aired from Wheeling, West Virginia, in those early years, where he learned of the need to keep the Sabbath. They kept the Sabbath at home for a while before attending church services in Ottawa in the mid 1960s. He was baptized in 1967, ordained a deacon in the 1970s, and an elder in 1987.

Joe dedicated his life to his family and to God. Much happiness filled their lives, including sharing their farm for many church socials and children's camps over the years. They also dealt with the heartache of losing two of their boys in the prime of their lives, in 1982 and 2002.

He was known for his warm smile, his commitment to his physical and spiritual family, and as a go-to man for many projects among his neighbors and friends, as he had an innovative talent.

Joe lived a long, full and healthy life, loved and respected by his eight living children and over 70 grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great grandchildren.

Feast of Tabernacles

Feast of Tabernacles registration, which opened up last Sunday, went very smoothly with our new system. Members are encouraged to register if they know where they intend to go. Registration numbers were a little low, but this is mostly due to registration not yet open for Panama City Beach and Glacier Country.

We hope to have an update on Panama City Beach by this Sabbath to be announced in all congregations, but if not, definitely by early next week.

This Sunday, May 1, general housing reservations may begin for the U.S. & Canada, except for Panama City Beach. At the time of writing, we are not sure about the timing for housing reservations and registration for Glacier Country.

—Charles Melear

United Youth Camps Announcement

(Announce in all U.S. congregations)

Camper and staff registration is coming along well at all five summer teen camp and seven preteen camp locations. Almost 700 teen campers and staff and 600 preteen campers and staff have applied so far. *Be sure to apply before May 1* at uyc.ucg.org. Camp scholarships are available, so talk to your pastor if you need one. We are all looking forward to a wonderful camp season this summer.

Also, both Camp Woodland and Camp Pinecrest need more female counselors and Southwest Camp needs a lifeguard and more male counselors.

Inside United Podcast



Roman Grynysyn—Ukraine’s Empty Breadbasket

Victor Kubik interviews Roman Grynysyn, founder and CEO of World to Rebuild Rural Ukraine (WRRU). He has been working for more than 10 years with elder Neal Kinsey who operates Kinsey Agricultural Services. Roman speaks first-hand about the war in Ukraine and its impact on agriculture. Ukraine is strategically important because it supplies food to more than 600 million people in the world. Their website is wrru.org. Roman and his wife, Lesya, are from Kyiv but live currently in Germany. They are on a speaking tour and making visits to American farmers. They visited with Vic and Bev Kubik last Sunday.

ucg.org/inside-united-podcast/inside-united-podcast-242-roman-grynysyn-ukraines-empty-breadbasket

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

Listen to past episodes: ucg.org/inside-united-podcast

Pray for the Gospel to Have Free Course
(2 Thes. 3:1 KJV)

Paper Shortages for *Beyond Today* Magazine and Study Aids

Scott Ashley, managing editor of *Beyond Today* magazine, described ongoing impediments to obtaining paper for *Beyond Today* magazine and study aids (booklets) due to economic and supply chain difficulties in the paper market. Here is some of what he wrote:

“We were barely able to obtain enough paper to print the March-April and May-June 2022 issues of *Beyond Today*, even though they had been scheduled for a year. Also, since we could not source enough paper to print the usual years’ worth of renewal cover wraps, we printed only enough for the May-June 2022 issue of *Beyond Today*. Furthermore, a different paper stock had to be used for the recent reprinting of our *Heaven and Hell* booklet because our usual paper wasn’t available. Plus, we had to delay reprinting *The Book of Revelation Unveiled* booklet because the printer could not acquire insert card stock until the first week of May.

“The bottom line is that I have never seen anything like this in nearly 50 years in the printing industry. We have been informed that paper shortages may continue well into 2023.”

Your prayers would be greatly appreciated that God will bless the Church’s efforts to obtain sufficient paper supplies to publish the truth of the gospel.

—Peter Eddington, Operation Manager, Media and Communications Services