



United Church of God *an International Association*

Len Martin
Chairman

Rick Shabi
President

United Church of God Council of Elders Confirms Rick Shabi as President

[CINCINNATI, MAY 20, 2022] After weeks of prayer and periodic fasting, the Council of Elders selected Mr. Rick Shabi to serve as the next president of the United Church of God, *an International Association*. Mr. Shabi's three-year term began on May 18. The Church's home office staff in Cincinnati looks forward to serving under the leadership of Mr. Shabi and his wife, Deborah.

The Council of Elders has asked Mr. Shabi to give this week's Sabbath sermon during the Cincinnati East PM service. Although he is known to many as Church treasurer for the past eight years, other members may not have met him or heard him speak, so this is an opportunity to hear from him and get to know him. The service will be webcast live beginning at 2:30 p.m. EDT on www.ucg.org (then click on "Webcast").

Rick and Deborah both grew up in the Greater Chicago area, where his parents (Paul and Lela Shabi) and her parents (Glenn and Betty Metz) were active members of the Church dating back to the 1960s. The two attended Ambassador College briefly and Rick graduated from Indiana University with a Bachelor of Science in Business and a major in accounting.

After the Shabis were married, over a 25-year period they lived in Indianapolis, Indiana; Nashville, Tennessee; and West Palm Beach, Florida, before moving back to Indianapolis. Rick was ordained an elder in 2000 while serving in the Indianapolis church, and relocated to northern Florida in 2004 where they have lived since.

After enjoying a rewarding career in corporate hospital finance and administration, he became a pastor in January 2011. Since then, the Shabis have served in the Orlando and Jacksonville, Florida, congregations. Rick also served as the treasurer for the United Church of God from 2013–2022.

Reflecting back over their lives, Rick commented, "I now understand how God prepared Debbie and me for what He wanted each *next step* of the way." He looks forward to working with the home office staff and looks to God to lead the Church and provide direction to accomplish what Christ wants for His Body.

Rick and Debbie have four children, Eric (wife Tere), Kristin, Kate (husband Martin Hall), and Patrick (engaged with plans to be married this summer) and two grandchildren.

Mark Welch, operation manager for Ministerial and Member Services, writes: “Rick Shabi has done an exemplary job as pastor of the Jacksonville and Orlando, Florida, congregations for the past 11 years, and as the treasurer of the United Church of God for eight and a half years. I greatly appreciate his faithful service and look forward to working with him and learning from him.

“I’m sure the members of our congregations in Jacksonville and Orlando have mixed feelings about their pastor becoming our new president. On the one hand, they are happy for the direction and leadership he will give UCG, but they will miss him and Deborah as their pastor and wife. I would like to assure them that Rick and I will be working together to provide them with a pastor and wife who will serve them well.”

Peter Eddington, operation manager for Media and Communications Services, adds: “Our entire media department is looking forward to working with Rick to continue to develop and enhance our efforts to preach the gospel of God’s Kingdom as effectively as possible—engaging with our readers and viewers on matters of eternal salvation. I look forward to enhancing my relationship with Mr. Shabi and moving the work of the Church forward on many fronts.”

The United Church of God staff look forward to working with Mr. Shabi as he transitions into the role of president of the organization.

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***About the United Church of God, an International Association.** Basing its beliefs on the biblical practices of the original 1st Century Church, the United Church of God maintains congregations in more than 40 countries around the world. Following the recorded example of Jesus Christ and the first apostles, the Church observes a seventh day Sabbath and the annual Holy Day seasons as outlined in the Old and New Testaments. The main offices of the Church are located in Cincinnati, Ohio. The Church produces the Beyond Today television program (airing globally on a variety of outlets), publishes the Beyond Today magazine, and provides a variety of multimedia material outlining its beliefs and teachings. For more information about the Church and its activities, please visit www.ucg.org.*