



# United Church of God

## an International Association

### eNews from Ministerial and Member Services

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#### Personal From the President...

Good afternoon everyone,

For those who live in America, I hope you had a nice Thanksgiving Day last week. Time with family and a time dedicated to focus on the gratitude we should have for all God has given us is beneficial and has such positive effects.

Every day in our lives should be a day of thanksgiving. God's Word gives us the keys to a joyful, fulfilled life, and He instructs us "in everything give thanks" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Sometimes we overlook the last part of verse 18, where we are told that "this is the will of God" for us.

The apostle Paul also wrote something very encouraging in his letter to the church at Philippi: "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7). Note the connection here: "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding" will be granted to those who can be anxious for nothing and thankful for everything.

Wherever we live in the world, and whether or not our secular governments set aside a day for thanksgiving, that fundamental attitude and trait must come to mark God's people. If it does not, then we are not becoming and we cannot become who God wants us to be.

There are fundamental attitudes we must develop and that we must "wear" in our lives. At the root of rebellion, sin, disregard and disrespect for God and His way is a lack of thankfulness. Of Satan, God says, "You were the anointed cherub who covers; *I established you*" (Ezekiel 28:14, emphasis added).

Satan didn't remember that. Look what it led to—and look at the behavior and depravity that resulted from the lack of thankfulness among the gentiles and those who choose not to know God (Romans 1:21-28).

Furthermore, we know that in the last days “unthankful” is one of the characteristics describing the state of mankind (2 Timothy 3:2). It's something we need to be mindful of.

Do you want lives that are full of joy, purpose and zeal? Start with taking time to “count your blessings” and recognizing God as the source of all we have and ever will have.

Over the last few Sabbaths in the Home Office/Cincinnati East church there have been sermons given on “garments” Christians should wear. Among them are the garments of praise, joy and a cloak of zeal for God's work. You might want to take the time to listen to them if you would like to build these traits back into your life.

Here at the Home Office, we have been busy assessing what we are doing in God's work in both the areas of effectively preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world, and in how we are caring and providing for those whom God has called and made part of His body.

In this time of year, as we examine everything, we are developing plans for next year and beyond that we will present to the Council of Elders next week at their meetings.

At the core of what we do, we are reminded that we are God's Church and that we are committed to the truth of God. We must speak it, but as importantly (if not more so), we must live it and demonstrate it in our lives. Christ made the foundational statement that He is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

As part of His body, all of us must be dedicated to living, becoming and speaking the pure, plain truth taught by Christ and preserved for us in His Word. “Your word is truth” (John 17:17).

That we will do, as we follow Jesus Christ, the Head of this Church, and seek His will and guidance in all we do.

Personally, since being here in Cincinnati at the Home Office, I have become even more grateful to God for the resources He has provided. My zeal and energy, and anticipation for the fulfillment of God's will for His Church grows day by day. We feel His direction as He guides us to what His work must become in the areas of public proclamation, congregational care and administration. There are things to be done and a lot of work to do. Over the next few weeks, months and years you will see and hear of the wondrous works God will do through His work and His people in this world that is becoming darker and darker (John 14:12; Habakkuk 1:5).

Pray for God's work. Pray for His will to be done. Ask God and do the things that will lead to joy, zeal and complete commitment to God in your life and in the lives of God's people.

And pray for all of us here at the Home Office—in addition to the Council of Elders for their meetings next week—that God will guide us, direct us and give us the humility to follow Him as He leads us to His Kingdom.

In Christ's service,



Rick Shabi

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### **Northwest Weekend in Portland, Oregon—Dec. 23-26**

The 56th Annual Northwest Family Weekend will be here soon! This year the Sabbath services, Bible studies, teen and family dances will be held at the Holiday Inn Columbia Riverfront (formerly the Red Lion) on the Columbia River. The facility has been remodeled and updated recently. The family dance will feature a live band playing a variety of big band and modern numbers. The weekend will begin with a meet and greet and Sabbath sing on Friday evening, and end with snow skiing at Mt. Hood on Monday, Dec. 26, for those interested.

Dates for the event are Dec. 23–26. Complete information for the schedule, housing and addresses is available at the web page: [www.ucgpdx.org](http://www.ucgpdx.org)

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### **Circle of Care Forum—Jan. 9**

Elders' wives, please plan on joining us for our next Circle of Care forum scheduled for Jan. 9, 2023, at 7:30 p.m. Eastern time. Women's Services has prepared a topic of discussion that affects all of us during our lifetimes.

For many, the word "grief" comes with a big, looming assumption: death. Grieving the death of a loved one is a universally painful and emotional journey. What some don't realize is that grief is not always about *death*. Grief is about *loss or change*, which comes in many forms, from the loss of a marriage to the loss of a career or job, loss of stability, loss of health, or even the loss of innocence that comes from abuse or neglect. Additionally, change can be a positive thing, but that also brings a grief process for what has changed or been lost. During this forum, "Grieving Losses other than Death," we will define grief, look

at the six types of loss, review ways to manage our and others' grief processes, and then share helpful resources.

Ladies who currently have a UCG email account will receive an invite. If you have questions or cannot register for this upcoming Circle of Care forum, please reach out to the Women's Services Team: Barbara Welch ([Barbara\\_Welch@ucg.org](mailto:Barbara_Welch@ucg.org)), Kay Schreiber ([Kay\\_Schreiber@UCG.org](mailto:Kay_Schreiber@UCG.org)), Lena VanAusdle ([Lena\\_VanAusdle@ucg.org](mailto:Lena_VanAusdle@ucg.org)) or Kristina Fogelson ([Kristina\\_Fogelson@ucg.org](mailto:Kristina_Fogelson@ucg.org)).

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## **Wamatochick Weekend—Feb. 17-20**

Young adults are invited to join their brothers and sisters for the second annual Wamatochick Weekend, Feb. 17–20, 2023, for a winter weekend in the pines of northern Arizona at the same facility used for the Southwest teen camp. It will be an inspirational and educational opportunity. The Sabbath will include church services, and sessions in the afternoon on topics close to our hearts, all connecting back to this year's theme, "The Word of God is Living and Powerful" (Hebrews 4:12). Sunday will feature additional sessions, as well as indoor and outdoor activities. Everyone is welcome to stay an additional night this year to extend the weekend into Monday to enjoy more fellowship and activity time.

Ages are 18–32, and married and single are welcome. Cost is \$150 per person, including sleeping arrangements and seven meals. Camp is outside of Prescott, Arizona, and the Phoenix Airport is a two-hour drive from camp. If you are interested in attending, or for more information, please text (269-615-0864) or email ([mckeonbre@gmail.com](mailto:mckeonbre@gmail.com)) Breanna McKeon. We hope to see you there!

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## **UPDATE: Six Video Recordings Available of ABC Class, Acts of the Apostles**



A total of six video recordings of the Ambassador Bible College class, “Acts of the Apostles,” are now available to view at: [ucg.org/ambassador-bible-college/acts-of-the-apostles-ambassador-bible-college](http://ucg.org/ambassador-bible-college/acts-of-the-apostles-ambassador-bible-college). A new video will be released on Thursday of each week for the next 10 months.

These recordings are available on our website, but *also available on our UCG app on Roku and Amazon Fire TV*. Navigate to the “sermon videos” line to view on these streaming devices.

We pray this will be a helpful tool in your ongoing study of God’s Word.

—Rick Shabi and Peter Eddington

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## Pray for the Gospel to Have Free Course

(2 Thes. 3:1 KJV)

### **The Work of God in the Philippines and East Malaysia—Part 3**

David Dobson, senior pastor for the Philippines and East Malaysia, wrote: “Denise and I enjoyed a wonderful Feast trip to East Malaysia and the Philippines. After spending the Day of Atonement with the Manila congregation, we traveled to Sabah, East Malaysia, where we joined 42 members for the first three days of the Feast.

“On day four of the Feast, we flew to Tacloban on the Philippine island of Leyte. Attendance at Leyte was about 100 members each day. In Baguio (Luzon, the north island) 110 to 120 brethren attended, and in Mindanao daily attendance was just over 230. Counting the 42 brethren keeping the Feast in Malaysia and several small groups and families gathered at their homes, overall attendance was above 500. Upon the close of this Feast, we were reminded of Paul’s words to the church at Rome: ‘For now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed’ (Romans 13:11).

“Regarding our nationwide telecast of *Beyond Today* each Sunday on GMA-7TV and on Facebook and YouTube channels, we want to thank everyone for their prayers for this important witness of the gospel to the Philippine people. We are pleased to report that since programming began several months ago nearly 800 responses have been received. Your ongoing prayers for God’s people and His work in the Philippines and East Malaysia would be greatly appreciated.”

—Peter Eddington, Operation Manager, Media and Communications Services