

eNews from Ministerial and Member Services

Issue 545

December 29, 2022

Winter Family Weekend 2022

The Cincinnati Winter Family Weekend 2022 was a wonderful opportunity for God's people to come together for a time of activities for everyone!

Winter was the word, as arctic storm "Elliott" pounded much of America and hindered many in their travels to Cincinnati. But the weather could not steal the joy of those attending despite the snow and the cold temperatures.

This year's theme was "Your Next Step" focusing all to strive to "reach the mountain top" on this spiritual journey and to take the next step in our calling toward fulfilling God's great purpose.

The Holiday Inn Cincinnati North–West Chester was completely filled by Church members and bustling during the Sabbath, beginning with the Friday evening Bible study "Living God's Purpose in Your Life" presented by Dr. Brian Hoselton.

Sabbath morning featured music from two musical groups with four seminars focusing on our theme. Beginning with "Baptism—The First Step!" presented by Marcus Lucas followed by "Rethinking Marriage" presented by Scott Delamater. After a musical interlude, "Our Purpose in the Church" was presented by Jacob Mammen, and Andy Lee finished the inspiring morning sessions with "Do All to the Glory of God." Sabbath activities also included Youth Instruction for children of all ages as well.

The teen choir performs special music during Sabbath services at Winter Family Weekend.

Despite weather travel delays, Sabbath services were attended by about 700 people in person and well over 1,800 online connections to the webcast. They listened to United Church of God president Rick Shabi expound the theme of the weekend with his sermon "Three Books" supporting *the* key book that directs and guides our actions and thoughts—the Bible. Services also featured a variety of special music that included an inspiring teen choir that sang uplifting praises to God.

Family carnival night at Winter Family Weekend.

Evening activities included a family carnival night with game booths, giant board games, clowns and prizes for the children, all accompanied by live music. Throughout the weekend there were also several dances for teens and adults, family games, visual arts on display, and a live show featuring everyone's favorite character—Jelly.

Basketball game at Winter Family Weekend.

Sunday through Tuesday, hundreds of members played basketball and volleyball in round robin style tournament play at a nearby sports facility while scores of spectators cheered on the teams. Bible seminars were also well attended in the conference center.

A hit with children and adults were the giant inflatables available for fun throughout the weekend, including a bounce house, a huge obstacle course with slides and a sunken pirate ship to navigate along with other interactive inflatables. With all the various activities, there was certainly something for everyone!

Perhaps most importantly, throughout the entire weekend and between activities, brethren enjoyed the opportunity for fellowship. So, whether a person was athletic or not, part of a large family or single, old or young—spending time with our spiritual family was by far the primary reason for Winter Family Weekend.

Grateful thanks first go to God for His blessing and protection on the weekend and to Gregg and Rebekah Drury and the many volunteers who devoted hundreds of hours to make it possible.

The weekend exemplified “How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1).

—Steve Myers

Northwest Family Weekend Report

The Portland, Oregon, congregation welcomed nearly 200 brethren from around the Pacific Northwest to another annual Northwest Family Weekend from Dec. 23–25. While cold temperatures, snowy weather and icy conditions on Thursday evening threatened to forestall the event, God’s intervention allowed festivities to carry on with only the cancellation of a meet and greet planned for Friday night.

Sabbath services at Northwest Family Weekend.

Adult and teen Bible studies followed by church services with special music highlighted an enjoyable Sabbath day, while dances spotlighted Saturday night.

The teens enjoyed music, dancing and games to a “Knights and Ladies” themed and delightfully decorated dance, which encouraged some to dress up in period appropriate attire. The family dance was themed “Field of the Cloth of Gold” from the famed historical event with beautiful decorations that brought the theme alive. A live “big band” provided an enjoyable musical experience to go along with dancing and the many conversations that abounded.

Sunday offered two Bible seminars along with volleyball, basketball and games for the little ones held together at a local high school. The weather cleared up significantly by the end of the weekend, allowing for a much less stressful trip home for attendees.

Many thanks and a lot of appreciation go to those who planned and executed all of the outstanding activities and events enjoyed throughout the weekend.

—Rex Sexton, pastor, Portland and the Dalles, Oregon

UCG Israel 2023 Feast Announcement

The UCG Israel 2023 Feast of Tabernacles Tour is almost at capacity! There are still about 20 spaces if you'd like to join us. Please let us know by filling out the registration link on our website. You will also find details and costing information there: travelgallery.com/ucg-israel-2023.

We'd love to have you join us for the Feast 2023 in Israel!

Home Office Weekly Update Launches Next Week

After 12 years of weekly publication, we are revamping the *eNews from Ministerial and Member Services* and have renamed it the *Home Office Weekly Update*. This new name better reflects the scope of the newsletter, as it encompasses news and updates for all operations of the United Church of God.

The new publication will be launched on next week, Jan. 5, 2023, and will continue to be published on Thursdays.

Because newsletters of this type are often caught by junk and spam email filters, it may be helpful to configure your email client to expect our *Weekly Update*. You should add both weekly_update@ucg.org and enews@ucg.ccsend.com as trusted senders that should not be blocked or considered “junk.” Also, so that you know what to look for in your inbox, the sender's display name will show up as “Home Office Weekly Update” and the subject line of each newsletter will begin with “UCG Home Office Weekly Update:” followed by a date.

We hope that you will find the *Weekly Update* informative about events and news in the United Church of God. Be sure to look for the new, refreshed newsletter beginning next week.