

# UNITED NEWS



NEWS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, AN INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION • P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027 (513) 576-9796

Vol. 22, No. 1

WWW.UCG.ORG/MEMBERS

JANUARY 2016

## Web Team Launches New Members Section of UCG.org

■ There are exciting new changes at the members' website, along with a new Web address. See highlights on page 2.

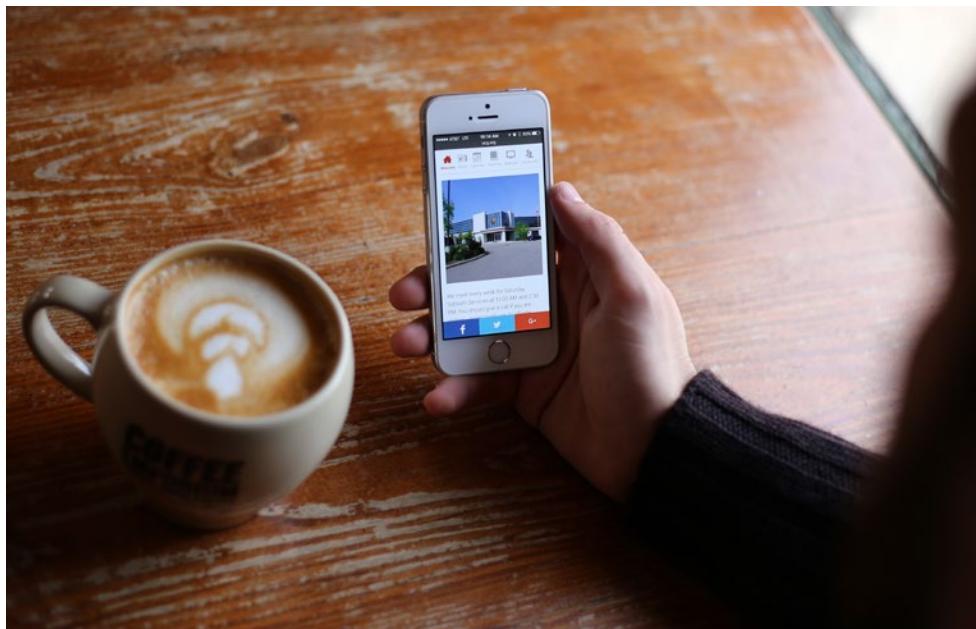
by Linda Merrick

The United Church of God recently launched a major refresh to its main website, UCG.org. And now there is an exciting new change to the members website for members of the Church to find articles, local church updates, a calendar of events happening within the Church and other information pertinent to them. The new website can be found at [www.ucg.org/members](http://www.ucg.org/members).

The new members site is more usable and functional for mobile devices, with a simpler and cleaner look. The Web team is always working to take advantage of the constantly shifting and changing Internet, improving the website and making it better for everyone to navigate. Everything will work together: the members site, local websites, the main UCG.org and the *Beyond Today* section.

### The search function

The search function works better than



Check out your new local congregation page at [www.ucg.org/congregations](http://www.ucg.org/congregations).

ever on the new UCG.org and members website. Any query searches all sections of the website. There are fewer drop-down menu tabs across the top of the page, so if you cannot find something that was there before, just search for it in the search engine. Since everything works together it's easier to find what you're looking for.

### Local congregation websites

The local congregation websites are

being transferred to their new home on the main UCG.org site, streamlining the look and making it easier for new and prospective members to find information on congregations near them. In the local sites, members can find updates and see a calendar of activities that pertains to their congregation. The project to transfer all the local sites is in process now and should be complete by the end of 2016

### New Members Site at a Glance

#### New Web Address

[www.ucg.org/members](http://www.ucg.org/members)

#### Better Search Engine

#### Calendar

#### United News

#### Family Study Guides

#### What Else Is New

Local Congregations  
Sermons

### The community tab

On each local congregation page there is a tab labeled "Community." Here, members can join a community that is just for people in their congregation—prayer requests, announcements, member-specific sermons and other information that might be sensitive in nature can be posted here with privacy so that only members who have been vetted by their pastor or the local congregation maintainer can see it.

Please see page 4

## Broadcast in Zambia and Malawi Produces Fruit



Nawa Talama and Derrick Pringle in the recording studio.

by Aaron Dean

Early in November, Zambian elder Major Nawa Talama was interviewed and answered questions on a talk show hosted by Filius Jere. Together, elders Derrick Pringle and Nawa Talama went to visit this developing area in the far east of Zambia. This visit was a follow up made because of increased interest in UCG's *Beyond Today* program that had been airing in the local language for over a year. The broadcasting station is called Feel Free and has a 200 kilometer radius, reaching approximately 800,000 people in both Zambia and Malawi.

Filius Jere, retired former radio broadcaster, decided to translate the *Beyond Today* programs in hopes of putting them

on the radio in his town of Chipata, Zambia on the far east of Zambia near the border of Malawi. As a recently ordained deacon by Nawa Talama during the 2015 Lusaka Feast of Tabernacles, Filius had interviewed me at the Feast in 2014 for his radio program. He had asked if he could use his own tithes to put the programs on his radio program and because of the low cost of the program was given the green light to test the market.

Mr. Talama's interview, done from a small studio in Chipata, went extremely well, with good answers to follow-up questions that came in. There is a large presence of Seventh-day Adventists in

Please see page 15



### INSIDE UNITED NEWS

What's New on the Member's Site	2
Forward: Return	3
From The Council: He Got on the Boat Anyway	3

The Good News in United News	5
Are Your Children Holy?	5
Beware of Wolves!	6
Announcements	7
Local Church Updates	9

A Colorful Description of God's Plan	10
Travel With A Passport	10
Audited Financial Statements	12
Winter Family Weekend	15

### BY THE NUMBERS

1,092

Attended the Sabbath at Winter Family Weekend 2015



## Where You Can Find Sermons

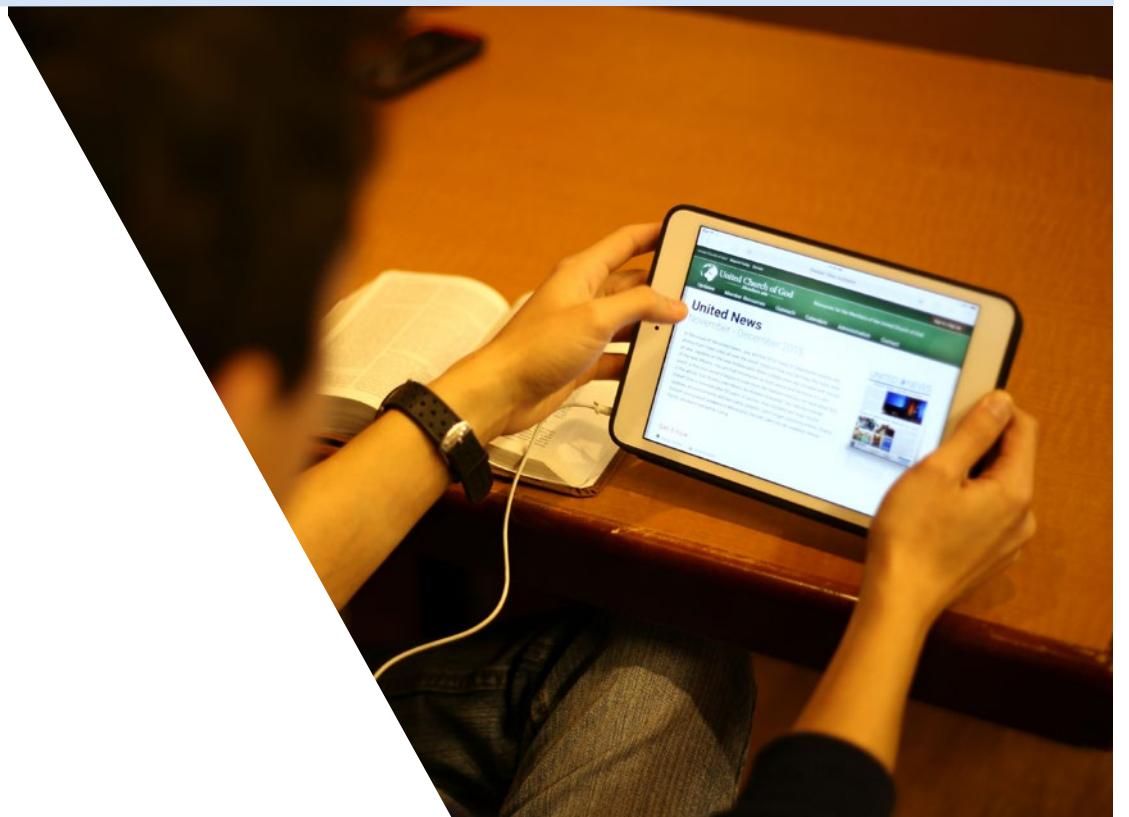
[www.ucg.org/sermons](http://www.ucg.org/sermons)

On UCG.org, it's now easier to find a sermon to listen to. You can quickly filter through them by topic, speaker, length, date and congregation. The mobile-friendly website makes the experience easy no matter where you are or what device you're using. You can easily enjoy a sermon on your lunch break or during a walk. Many sermons include a transcript and/or video, you can decide how you want to experience your chosen sermon.

## United News

[www.ucg.org/members/united-news](http://www.ucg.org/members/united-news)

*United News* is now an integral part of the members section of [ucg.org](http://ucg.org). News items, local church updates, calendar events and articles will appear online first, then compiled and printed on the current bi-monthly schedule.



## New Congregation Pages

[www.ucg.org/congregations](http://www.ucg.org/congregations)

Each local congregation has its own page on the main [ucg.org](http://ucg.org) site. It's a place where there are local updates, events and other posts. There is also a private section where prayer requests or other sensitive information can be posted that only vetted members of the congregation can see it.





**RICK SHABI**  
Treasurer and  
Operation Manager

All of us would agree that the Feast of Tabernacles is a great time of year. We're away from home, picturing God's Kingdom, being inspired by spiritually rich messages and multiple fellowship opportunities. And we enjoy the "physical" Feast, too, sometimes eating a lot more and a lot differently than we do the rest of the year.

Maybe you've come home from the Feast with "extra pounds" you didn't want. Maybe it's not as easy to shed those extra pounds and get back into the pattern of healthy eating as you thought it would be.

Anyone who has been on a diet knows it takes effort, will power, and a desire to change before you can adopt a new way of eating and exercise. It takes determination to say no to what you want and to start eating what is best for you, and it takes commitment to maintain that change. After a few weeks and months in this new lifestyle—your new pattern—you feel comfortable, encouraged, and motivated



Aly Johnson

by the positive changes in the way you feel, the way you move, and the energy you have. It is gratifying to step on the scale and see the results.

But, inevitably something comes along, like the Feast or another occasion, where you are tempted to interrupt that pattern. After all, you feel like you have your weight under control, that you are "in charge" and have this "mastered." You'll be able to get back into the old pattern without too much trouble, right?

You learn a valuable lesson. Once you "go back" to your old lifestyle, returning to the pattern of a healthy diet is tough to do.

When we come into God's truth, big changes have to occur in our lives. We give up our old ways, our old patterns of behavior that don't mesh with God's way. We commit to a new lifestyle; we commit to developing a pattern of obedience to God, following Him *exactly* as He says to

**Please see page 11**

 From The COUNCIL

## He Got on the Boat Anyway



by **Scott Ashley**

Ever since the last Feast of Tabernacles, this phrase has been repeatedly running through my mind. Why? Because it encapsulates what God expects of us. He got on the boat anyway.

While traveling during the Feast, my wife and I and nearly 80 others attended the Feast biblical study tour in Turkey. On the tour we visited the sites of the seven cities written to in Revelation 2 and 3, plus a few other significant ancient sites.

One afternoon, a few of us took a side trip to the ancient port city of Miletus, the next large port south of the city of Ephesus along the coast of Asia Minor.

There's not a lot to see at Miletus, since time and earthquakes have ravaged the city over the last 2,000 years. Still notable are a



Scott Ashley standing at the edge of the harbor at Miletus, with the silted-in harbor and the remains of the monument behind him at the right.

nically preserved Greco-Roman theater, an enormous bath complex built in the late second century with funds donated by the wife of the emperor Marcus Aurelius (the Roman emperor of the movie *Gladiator*), and the remains of a monument commemorating the victory of Octavian over Mark Antony and Cleopatra in the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. That famous battle set the stage for Octavian to become Caesar Augustus and establish a world of peace, roads, and free trade that made

travel in Roman Empire possible.

The monument originally stood at the head of the primary harbor of Miletus, and a main street ran from there into the heart of the city. As our small group stood at that spot and tried to envision what the ancient harbor would've looked like, a thought struck me: The apostle Paul would've walked within a few yards of this very spot.

**Please see page 11**

**United News** (ISSN 1088-8020) is published 7 times per year (in January, February, March, May, July, September, November) by the United Church of God, an International Association, 555 Technecenter Dr., Milford, OH 45150. © 2016 United Church of God, an International Association. Printed in the U.S.A. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited. Periodicals Postage paid at Milford, Ohio 45150, and at additional mailing offices. Canada Post publications mail agreement number 1487167.

**UCGIA Council of Elders:** Scott Ashley, Bill Bradford, Aaron Dean, Bob Dick, John Elliott, Mark Mickelson, Rainer Salomaa, Mario Seiglie, Rex Sexton, Donald Ward, Anthony Wasilkoff, Robin Webber

**President:** Victor Kubik  
**Media and Communications Services Manager:** Peter Eddington  
**Managing Editor:** Mitchell Moss  
**Assistant Editor:** Linda Merrick  
**Copy Editor:** Milan Bizic

**Doctrinal reviewers:** Arthur Suckling, Chuck Zimmerman, Gerald Seelig

**Web-first article doctrinal team:** Gerald Seelig, Arthur Suckling, John LaBissoniere, Chris Rowland

Scriptural references are from the New King James Version (© 1988 Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers) unless otherwise noted. **Subscriptions:** *United News* is sent automatically to members of the United Church of God and is free to all who request it. Your subscription is provided by the generous, voluntary contributions of members of the United Church of God, an International Association, and their coworkers. Donations are gratefully accepted and are tax-deductible. To request a subscription, write to *United News*, United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, or to one of the international addresses below.

Address changes: POSTMASTER—Send address changes to *United News*, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027

**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Church of God is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God in all the world, make disciples in all nations and care for those disciples.

**International addresses:**

AFRICA & ASIA (except as listed below): United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. E-mail: info@ucg.org  
AUSTRALIA: United Church of God—Australia, GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Qld. 4001, Australia. Phone: 0755 202-111 Fax: 0755 202-122

BENELUX countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg): P.O. Box 93, 2800 AB Gouda, The Netherlands.  
BRITISH ISLES: United Church of God—British Isles, P.O. Box 705, Watford, Herts. WD19 6FZ England. Phone: 020 8386 8467 Fax: 020 8386 1999

CANADA: United Church of God—Canada, P.O. Box 144, Station D, Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1, Canada. Phone: (905) 614-1234, (800) 338-7779 Fax: (905) 614-1749 E-mail: info@ucg.ca

CAMEROON: United Church of God Cameroon, BP 10322 Bessengue, Douala Cameroon.

OTHER FRENCH-SPEAKING AREAS: Église de Dieu Unie—France, 127 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris, France.

CARIBBEAN: United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. E-mail: info@ucg.org

EAST AFRICA (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda): United Church of God—East Africa, P.O. Box 75261, Nairobi 00200 Kenya. E-mail: kenya@ucg.org

GERMANY: Vereinte Kirche Gottes, Postfach 30 15 09, D-53195 Bonn, Germany. Phone: 0228-9454636 Fax: 0228-9454637 E-mail: info@gutenachrichten.org

ITALY: La Buona Notizia, Chiesa di Dio Unita, Casella Postale 187, 24121 Bergamo Centro, Italy. Phone/Fax: (+39) 035 4523573. E-mail: info@labuonanotizia.org

MALAWI: P.O. Box 32257, Chichiri, Blantyre 3, Malawi. Phone: +265 999 823 523. E-mail: malawi@ucg.org

NEW ZEALAND: United Church of God, P.O. Box 22, Shortland St., Auckland 1140, New Zealand. Phone: 0508-463-763

NIGERIA: United Church of God, P.O. Box 2265, Somolu, Lagos, Nigeria. Phone: 803-323-3193. E-mail: nigeria@ucg.org

PHILIPPINES: Philippines. P.O. Box 4774, MCPO, 1287 Makati City, Philippines. Cell/text: +63 918-904-4444. Website: www.ucg.org.ph. E-mail: info@ucg.org.ph

SCANDINAVIA: Guds Enade Kyrka, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027 U.S.A. E-mail: norden@ucg.org

SINGAPORE: United Church of God, P.O. Box 535, Brisbane, Queensland, 4001, Australia.

SOUTH AFRICA (and Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland only): United Church of God, Southern Africa, P.O. Box 1181 Tzaneen 0850. Phone: (+27) 0797259453. E-Mail: RSA@ucg.org

SPANISH-SPEAKING AREAS: Iglesia de Dios Unida, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. Phone: (513) 576-9796

TONGA: United Church of God—Tonga, P.O. Box 518, Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

SWITZERLAND: Phone: 49 228 945 4636. Website: http://www.vkg.org

ALL OTHER SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONS NOT LISTED: United Church of God—Australia, GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Queensland, 4001, Australia

ZAMBIA: United Church of God, P.O. Box 23076, Kitwe, Zambia. Phone: (0026)0966925840. E-mail: zambia@ucg.org

ZIMBABWE: United Church of God, Zimbabwe, P.O. Box 928, Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe. Phone: 011716273. E-mail: zimbabwe@ucg.org

Internet access on your computer:

The United Church of God, an International Association, has a home page on the Internet's World Wide Web. The address www.ucg.org gives you access to general information and news about the Church, issues of *The Good News* and *United News*, as well as our booklets. The address www.ucg.ca accesses the Church's Canadian website, www.ucg.org.au the Australian website, www.labuonanotizia.org the Italian website, www.goodnews.org.uk the British Isles website, www.ucg.org.ph the Philippines website, www.ucgastafrica.org the Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda site and http://south-africa.ucg.org the Southern Africa website.

Charles Melear

## New Members Site

Continued from page 1

### United News

*United News* is now a Web-first publication—meaning that important updates, articles, calendar events, news items and other information will be published online at the members site continually, with a print edition continuing to be published bi-monthly. Check out uploaded articles in the “Latest Updates” section on the page, or go directly to [www.ucg.org/united-news](http://www.ucg.org/united-news).

### Where will sermons be?

All sermons—including those from every local congregation website—are now migrated to the new site at [www.ucg.org/sermons](http://www.ucg.org/sermons). The updated site is easier to listen to on mobile devices. You can also subscribe to an RSS feed ([www.ucg.org/sermons/rss](http://www.ucg.org/sermons/rss)) of the newest sermons uploaded.

### UCG member e-mail updates

Members can now sign up for updates on the members site by following this link: [www.ucg.org/email-subscribe](http://www.ucg.org/email-subscribe). When you sign up you will receive an e-mail

a few times a week with latest updates and articles posted to the members website ([www.ucg.org/members](http://www.ucg.org/members)). Updates include United Church of God member updates, announcements, events, *United News* content, sermons and more.

### How you can get involved

The Web team is always looking for more volunteers to help with posting sermons and material pertaining to their local congregation. If you would like to get involved and help out with your local congregation website, please talk with your minister about what you can do for the website.

There have been close to 300 local volunteer maintainers of the local congregation websites who have already been helping out. They have been valuable and helpful to the Web team, who could not possibly maintain all aspects of the Church's various websites without them. The Web team would like to thank all those volunteers.

There is one Body with many members, and the members website is just one of the places where they can come together. It is an exciting new development for everyone to enjoy and utilize. **UN**



## Up and Coming

## Southeast Regional Formal



The Nashville and Murfreesboro congregations cordially invite all teens and young adults to the United Church of God Southeast Regional Formal!

This year's event will be held at the Baird Chapel of Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tennessee on March 26 with a catered dinner starting at 6 p.m. and dance from 7:30 p.m. to midnight.

### Registration:

The deadline to register is March 5, 2016. The fee is \$20 per catered dinner and dance with snacks and drinks. *We will not be able to accept payment at the door. All attendees must pass by the deadline.*

Be sure to mail your registration form with your check. This form is made avail-

**Please see page 6**

# Report About Sabbath-keepers in Angola

by Jorge de Campos

On Oct. 30, I received a message through the Portuguese website from Mesac Catombela, with warm greetings to the United Church of God saying he was a baptized member of the Worldwide Church of God in Angola, in the local congregation of Huambo.

He said it was a surprise and an enormous joy to get to know about us, as we have the same beliefs, hope and calling. He then mentioned the Church in Angola is going through a rebirth as they survived a number of leadership conflicts and some have separated from the Church.

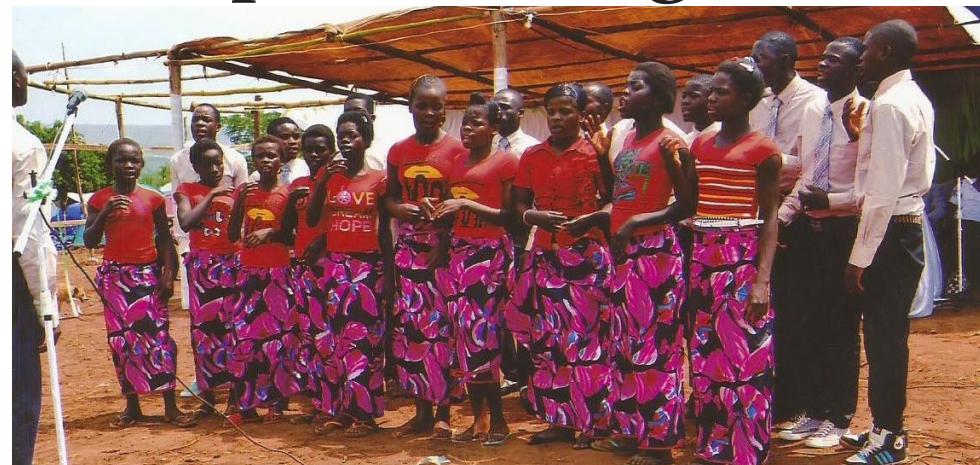
He asked for more details about us and our history due to our identical doctrinal belief and they wish to have a relationship with fellow Christians in the unity of the Body. I pointed him to the appropriate links on our Portuguese website which addressed all his questions. He also had a number of specific doctrinal and Christian living questions.

Various discussions have evolved since then and I was introduced to their home office leadership. On two successive mornings (Dec. 13 and Dec. 20, 2015) I had Skype video calls followed up with telephone calls with their leadership in Angola, Avelino Bumpa, pastor, and their radio voice; Rufino Mudendo, pastor, member of the Ministerial Board and general evangelist; and Felisberto Cassoma, deacon and Chairman of the

Ministerial Board. The local Angolan Church is healthy and they appreciate every help we may provide of a spiritual nature. They also send their kind regards to the leadership and all the members of United Church of God.

The members of the Church in Angola were originally Catholic, and through Bible study they realized they needed to keep the Sabbath and formed the ‘Evangelical Church of the Apostles of the Seventh Day’ in Angola. They had limited biblical knowledge and needed to deepen their understanding regarding the gospel of the Kingdom of God. They found WCG in the early 1990's and sent people to Namibia to contact WCG. At that time I translated their request and put them in contact with Pasadena. Their contacts with WCG developed through literature and visits. From there the teaching grew as the Church learned and taught the various local congregations of the truth. In some regions/congregations they were successful and grew in the truth, and in others they were not. In 2002 they were visited by two former WCG leaders and told that they did not need to keep the Sabbath and the Holy Days and the relationship floundered.

They kept the Feast in Luanda this past year (2015), and the festival attendance was approximately 2,500 people. They have 31 ordained elders. The approach they have taken in Angola to evangelize has been pushed down to the local con-



Young members of the church in Angola sing special music at the Feast of Tabernacles in Luanda.

gregations and the local pastor. Appointed leaders teach the members on a determined topic for two evenings a week and on a determined day they go out into the field in groups of two to evangelize. However, more recently in Luanda, pastor Avelino Bumpa has been preaching through a local radio station and has had good success.

They have convened a special meeting with all their elders to discuss what they have learned about us and to decide what relationship they would like to pursue with us. They asked for prayers in the success of this meeting and they said they are praying for us and our leadership. At this stage our cooperation is an informal one, helping them with spiritual content in whatever way as they ask. From the home office we have sent all 31 elders a full set of the 33 booklets in Portuguese (out of a total of 35 booklets in English), and 10

DVDs with four Portuguese sermons each, a total of 40 sermons). They have also been given printer ready material of those booklets and the latest *Good News*. I have also given them authority to quote or reprint any of our articles or booklets, as long as they honor and respect the editorial rights of the United Church of God. They will also be considering costs and the possibility of printing the Portuguese version of *Beyond Today in Angola*.

Let's pray God will bless this exciting opportunity for us to work together serving our God the Father and our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, give us discernment to proceed according to His will, and protect us from Satan's devices. God does wondrous works through the leadership of His Son, and it is not our doing. We are only too honored and privileged to be able to serve Christ and His work as He guides us. **UN**

# The Good News in United News

Starting with this issue, you will notice that *The Good News* title is replacing the section previously titled “From the Word.” We feel this change honors the decades-old heritage of *The Good News*, which has always been a name the Church has used to preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God, and will be a platform where we can offer articles of spiritual meat for God’s people.—from the managing editor

## The Good News

# Are Your Children Holy?

■ Our children have the potential of being a kingdom of priests to our Great God. Together let’s teach our children, encourage them through our words, and show them by our example that God’s way is a blessing and it really does work!

by Ed Dowd

When adults look around at the youth in our congregations and in our households, what do we see? Do we see future members of God’s family with the opportunity to know God and live His way, having the same calling God extended to us? Do we interact with the youth in a way that shows respect and inclusion in this special calling? Or, do we find ourselves separated, wondering if God is calling the youth among us?

God perfectly constructed the bond of marriage in order to produce godly offspring. It’s interesting that the Old Testament prophet Malachi talks about this. “But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring” (Malachi 2:15). God wants godly offspring! Through proper teaching and training of our youth, God desires future leaders who will rule with Christ. God wholeheartedly wants our youth to embrace His truth and commit to being members of His family!

In Romans 8:30 the apostle Paul describes the process a person, regardless of age, goes through when becoming members of God’s eternal family. First God calls, or invites the person. If they answer that call, then through baptism they are justified (which means to set free or make innocent). The final step then occurs at Jesus Christ’s second return when they are glorified (which means to render honor and glory), and so they are welcomed into the Family of God.

Jesus Christ Himself references this invitation when He made the statement that “many are called, but few are chosen”

(Matthew 22:14). This statement shows that the invitees are welcomed and their presence is desired, but that they have a choice in how they will reply. God calls, or invites, many people; but each one’s response determines whether he becomes chosen and included in God’s eternal family.

Paul states that our youth are important to God. They are so important to God that they are described as *holy*. Even in families where either the Dad or the Mom are the only parent baptized, the children are still holy to God (1 Corinthians 7:14). The word *holy* means to be set apart, sanctified, worthy of awe, sacred, and sharers of the covenant. “The Complete Word Study Dictionary” by Spiros Zodhiates states that its fundamental idea is separation, consecration, devotion to the service of God, sharing in God’s purity, and abstaining from earth’s defilement. We must take seriously the tremendous opportunity and future made available to our youth by God Himself. He considers them holy!

Parents especially, but by extension all members of the Church, must take the calling offered to our youth seriously. We should view them as participants of the congregation, praying for them, while expecting and encouraging them to one day make a commitment through baptism to God. Let us together encourage the youth to answer God’s calling!

### What is our responsibility?

Parents, your God-given role is to actively and daily be involved as teachers and mentors of God’s true way of life to each of your children. The Church supports you through family study guides, teen bible studies, Feast activities, regional activities, and the United Youth Camps. But none of these activities can replace your total involvement with your precious godly offspring. These activities are offered to help support you, but they cannot replace you in your God-given role as a father or mother. So what are some of your responsibilities?

Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:4, “Fathers, do not exasperate your children, instead,



Unsplash/Ion Ottosson

bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord (NIV).” While the basic teachings of God’s way of life should be taught to our youth, our example will shine more powerfully than our words.

Moses reminds us that our teaching and example should be diligent throughout the day, when we walk and sit, when we rise up and lay down (Deuteronomy 6:7). As parents, we should take the time to recognize examples throughout each day of God’s way in action, or Satan’s way in action. Then, take those examples and use them as talking points with our children, no matter what their age. Consider the Proverb which instructs parents to “train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). Our daily example, what we talk about, the way we interact with others, how or if we take the time to grow our relationships within the family, and how we keep God’s law are so influential to our youth.

David gives us some concepts to consider when we teach. “Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD” (Psalm 34:11). Notice the proximity and relationship in this verse. Come to me; listen to me; I will teach you. There is a personal and close relationship that should be prevalent between parent and child. Deep respect is shown here from the parent to the youth and also from the youth to the parent. This kind of relation-

ship takes great care and consistency to develop.

### Our children are called, and they are holy!

Parents, and all members of the Church, must view children as genuine, respected participants of the congregation, hoping and expecting that they will become baptized fellow members. The biblical perspective is always to encourage people to answer God’s calling, as opposed to offering loopholes legitimizing no response. Implying it is equally valid for a child to not respond to God now is a serious mistake. Just as Abraham “commanded” his children, God urged ancient Israel to respond to Him for their own good. He said, “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19). Because God’s calling represents the best life available, children should be kept well aware of God’s special invitation to them now (source: UCG study paper, “Are Our Children Called Now?”).

Our children have the potential of being a kingdom of priests to our great God. Together let’s teach our children, encourage them through our words, and show them by our example that God’s way is a blessing and it really does work! **UN**

## Beware of Wolves!

■ Wolf attacks on humans probably aren't something to fear. So what then does the Bible mean by looking out for wolves in sheep's clothing?

by Kelly Irvin

A recent short article in the *Westside Eagle Observer* posed the question, "Are There Wolves in Arkansas?" by Randy Moll, managing editor of the publication, reminded us of another article he posted in February of 2012 about wolf sightings in Arkansas. Were there sightings of real, wild wolves, or just mixed breeds or escaped domesticates? The latter is what the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission believed and advised. Mr. Moll included a reminder of an article from Cape Girardeau, Missouri, which revealed a downed canine to be a true gray wolf from the wild. Cape Girardeau, located in southeastern Missouri, is only about 60 miles north of the Arkansas border.

I have a good friend at church who is certain she has seen a wolf crossing the highway near her home, and she lives about five miles away from me! Do we have anything to fear from these creatures if found in the wild? Well, it's always wise to avoid contact with wild predators, but most people would agree that legend does not live up to reality. In the U.S. there have been three reported human casualties from wolf attacks since 1942, according to Wikipedia, and fewer than 8,000 worldwide known reports since A.D. 1400, or, on average, 13 every year, worldwide.

Notably, almost 3,300 of those reports came from France alone, a highly disproportionate record to that reported in other nations.

So if wolves aren't as treacherous a creature to humans as legend would have it, why would the apostle Paul write: "Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20:28-30)? He claims wolves to be grievous, fierce, or savage, depending on the translation.

Well, just for the sake of anecdotal comparison, in a blog post published at [opg.org](http://opg.org), 199 cattle and 249 sheep were reported killed by wolves in the Northern Rockies of the United States in 2012 ("Gray Wolves: By the Numbers"). If the Northern Rockies would have been running sheep and cattle since A.D. 1400, over 122,000 cattle and sheep might have been attacked and killed by wolves in that time period. In 2012, wolves in the Northern Rockies killed no people.

Looking carefully at Acts 20:29, we find that Paul is drawing an analogy where members of the Church of God are likened to sheep, not humans. The warning, then, appears quite substantial when we review the damage wolves can cause to a flock of sheep or herd of cattle. But what does it mean? Who is Paul equating with wolves?

In His own words, Jesus Christ helps make this clear:



Unsplash/Josh Felise

*Spiritually speaking, as sheep in God's flock, we should always be wary of false teachers who are likened to wolves in the Scriptures.*

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?" (Matthew 7:15).

There will be people who look and act like us in many ways, appearing to be sheep, but they will bring with them false religion, making it possible to deceive followers of Christ, leading them away from the truth. These men and women, like wolves, can divide flocks and take down the weak. As in nature where sheep and cattle should be always wary of the presence of wolves, we, too, should be always watchful, looking to the Good Shepherd for protection (John 10:10-14).

So should we concern ourselves with nightmares about wolves attacking

humans? I don't believe so, because I believe it is a baseless fear. But spiritually speaking, as sheep in God's flock, we should always be wary of false teachers who are likened to wolves in the Scriptures. In some of Jesus' final hours before being crucified, He prayed to the Father on our behalf, "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth" (John 17:17). The word Jesus referenced was none other than the written Word of God, so to be able to look to our Good Shepherd, we must gauge all teaching against the true Word of God. If that teaching is taught in sync with God's Word, then your teachers are, themselves, sheep like you, and members of the flock.

Read your Bible and let the power of God's Word always protect your spiritual journey so that no wolf can bring you down. **UN**

## Southeast Regional Formal

Continued from page 4

able through the Facebook group under the files tab.

Please make checks out to United Church of God - Tennessee. You can mail your payment to Regina Horvath at 2600 Cloversprings Lane, Franklin, TN 37067.

For questions about registration, please send an email to [UCGsoutheastprom@gmail.com](mailto:UCGsoutheastprom@gmail.com).

### Sabbath:

Sabbath services will be held at Cumberland University in the Baird Chapel (same location as the dinner and dance). Time is to be determined.

If you are interested in performing special music at services, please contact [UCGsoutheastprom@gmail.com](mailto:UCGsoutheastprom@gmail.com) or Mandy Kellers at 615-415-5774.

### Senior bios:

2016 seniors! Please submit this year's senior bio form along with your registration form. All of the seniors and their accomplishments will be recognized at Formal. The senior bio form is made available through the Facebook group under the files tab.

### Prom photos:

We will have a silly photo booth and opportunities for formal photos to be taken free of charge! All photos will be uploaded to the UCG Southeast Regional Formal Facebook group following the event.

### For more information

- [www.facebook.com/groups/501814639841015/files](http://www.facebook.com/groups/501814639841015/files)
- <http://nashville.ucg.org>

## Atlanta Singles Weekend And Family Dance

The Atlanta and Buford congregations are hosting a singles' weekend and family dance the weekend of March 5-6, 2016, and you are invited! The theme is *Building Relationships that Last: God, Friends, and More*.

The family dance is titled the Atlanta Spring Spectacular. Singles activities will include three interactive seminars and a Sunday get-together at the Georgia Aquarium. A family dance will be held between these two and is open to those of all ages in addition to the singles visiting our area.

Details for both activities are available at: <http://atlanta.ucg.org/announcement/singles-weekend-family-dance-march-5-2016>.

We look forward to seeing you in Atlanta in March!

# Announcements



**Taelyn Claire McCoy**

Born Aug. 29, 2015



**Emily Lorraine Moss**

Born Aug. 26, 2015



**Elizabeth Lilian White**

Born Oct. 20, 2015



**Giorgio & Alison Cecala**

Married on Sept. 6, 2015



**Stafford & Lois Bell**

50th Wedding Anniversary



**Melvin & Diane Rhodes**

40th Wedding Anniversary



**Gordon Barr**

Jan. 5, 1933 - Oct. 5, 2015

## Births

### Taelyn Claire McCoy

Kevin and April McCoy of the Delmarva congregation joyfully announce the birth of their daughter, Taelyn Claire McCoy. She was born on Aug. 29, 2015, weighing 9 lbs., and was 21 in. long. She is the fourth child for Kevin and April, the seventh grandchild for Don and Peggy McCoy, and the 10th grandchild for Don and Brenda Marvel. Taelyn is a beautiful blessing, and a wonderful baby. She is loved by many aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends.

### Emily Lorraine Moss

Zack and Melody Moss of Batavia, Ohio, would like to announce the birth of their first daughter, Emily Lorraine Moss on Aug. 26 at 9:30 a.m. Emily is the first grandchild of Scott and Peggy Moss of Bluffton, Indiana, the second grandchild of Delores Haley of Corydon, Indiana, and she is the 21st great-grandchild of Lloyd and Norma Nelson of Rochester, Minnesota. Emily is happy, healthy, and well-loved.

### Elizabeth Lilian White

Reuben and Loralyn White of the Richmond, Virginia congregation are delighted to announce the birth of their daughter, Elizabeth Lilian White. She was born in the early hours of Oct. 20, 2015, weighing 5 lbs., 14 oz., and was 18.75 in. long. Elizabeth is the third grandchild of Sixto and Jocelyn Yap of Toronto, Ontario, and

the fifth grandchild of James White and the late Keiko White of Portsmouth, Virginia. The first time parents are grateful for their precious gift from God.

## Weddings

### Giorgio and Alison Renee Cecala

Mr. and Mrs. Salvatore Cecala would like to announce the marriage of their son, Giorgio Cecala, to Alison Rene Moore on Sep. 6, 2015.

The ceremony took place at the White Pines Golf Course and was performed by Bill Bradford. Guest reception followed at Manzo's Banquets in Des Plaines, Illinois.

The couple now resides in Schaumburg, Illinois.

## Anniversaries

### Stafford and Lois Bell

Stafford and Lois Bell of the Defuniak Springs, Florida, congregation celebrated their 50th anniversary on July 4, 2015. Friends and family celebrated the event with cake and punch after services to honor them. The Bells have shared great memories of their love story through the years. The local congregation is blessed to have their cheerful and serving contributions.

### Melvin and Diane Rhodes

Melvin and Diane Rhodes celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on Oct.

12, 2015. Their wedding took place in the Music Hall of the Bricket Wood campus of Ambassador College in 1975. The college had closed the previous year.

Melvin and Diane met five years earlier at the Gate pub just off campus. Melvin was born in England, but Diane came from Detroit.

After college, they settled in Rhodesia, where Melvin and Diane both worked for the government. Soon after the birth of their eldest daughter, Alexandra (now Kubik), they moved to Salisbury (Harare) to work for the Church. One year later, they were transferred to Ghana in West Africa, a complete different country.

The five years they spent in Ghana were difficult but very rewarding.

They survived malaria, famine, political and economic upheavals, while at the same time as raising their three children, Alix, Kurt and Pallas.

Following five years of serving in Ghana, they moved to England for another five years. Then it was back to Ghana for two years. In 1990, they moved to Michigan where they have lived since.

They are now retired and enjoying the company of their eight grandchildren, four girls and four boys.

## Obituaries

### Gordon Earl Barr

Gordon Earl Barr, a faithful member of God's Church since 1968, died at home from severe health complications after

breaking his hip. He died on the Eighth Day (Monday, Oct. 5, 2015) in the presence of his wife of 61 years, Jessie, and his daughter Deborah.

Gordon was born Jan. 5, 1933, in Port Arthur (now known as Thunderbay), Ontario, Canada, the youngest son of Agnes (Sanderson) and Earl Barr. After a wonderful childhood, he met the love of his life, Jessie Young, and married her on June 18, 1954. In 1955, the couple welcomed their first child, Deborah, and in 1960 they completed their family with their son, Derek.

In April 1955, Gordon began working for Air Canada and in 1962, he had the opportunity to move to Cleveland, Ohio, to begin working in Air Canada's reservations department.

It was while living in Cleveland Gordon first heard *The World Tomorrow*. He was convinced of the truth of the message and began attending Sabbath services with his family in early 1968.

As Gordon advanced into Air Canada management, the family moved first to the East Coast and then the West Coast where he became Air Canada's West Coast Reservations Manager. In 1986, he retired from Air Canada. In the early 1990s, he embarked on a second career as a travel agent working for WCG's travel department in Pasadena. In the mid-2000s, Gordon retired for a second time.

In June 1991, Gordon was ordained an elder and served in the Garden Grove and Redlands, California, congregations. Gordon preferred talking one-on-one with his fellow brethren. He counseled many through difficulties, phoned the widows, and was always a listening ear.

Gordon was a godly man, placing his life firmly in God's hands. He loved reading the Psalms for inspiration. He did not fear death but looked forward to the Kingdom of God and the restoration of all things. His family awaits the day when they will be together again.

He is survived by his wife Jessie, daughter Deborah, son Derek, daughter-in-law Julie and two grandsons, Alec and Cameron.

# Announcements



**Rethia (Baker) Bunting**

July 8, 1929-Sep. 13, 2015



**Evelyn J. Marquardsen**

Feb. 17, 1937 - Oct. 1, 2015



**Peggy Stolley**

July 29, 1935 - Oct. 8, 2015



**Francis Taylor**

March 30, 1958 - Aug. 15, 2015

## Rethia (Baker) Bunting

Rethia (Baker) Bunting, 86, of the York, Pennsylvania, congregation, died Sunday, Sep. 13, 2015. She was preceded in death by her husbands, Joe Lester and Robert Bunting. Rethia was a member of the Church of God since the late 1960s, and she served as a deaconess in Tampa, Florida, and Baltimore, Maryland, before moving to Hanover, Pennsylvania, to be near her only son, Leslie Lester.

Rethia was born July 8, 1929, the youngest of seven children, and raised on a farm in Hurley, Virginia. She began cooking at a young age and worked more than 30 years in a school cafeteria. Rethia looked forward to the Feast of Tabernacles, and this last year begged her doctor to give her permission to attend—she never missed a Feast. She was always eager to get together with Church brethren, no matter the pain or distance travel to services might bring.

Not one to complain, her sense of humor and contentment brought joy and encouragement to others. She is greatly missed as a faithful servant of God.

## Melvin I. Helmuth

Melvin I. Helmuth, of San Marcos, California, died on Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2015. He was 84-years-old. He had attended the San Diego, California, congregation for many years.

Mel was born on Dec. 1, 1930, in Arthur, Illinois, the heart of Illinois Amish country. One of his favorite stories to tell was that his first “car” was a horse and buggy. In 1951, he received his military draft notice but was granted alternative service because of his family’s Amish/Mennonite beliefs. As part of his service, he served in Germany with the Mennonite Central Committee building houses for East German refugees.

Upon his return to the U.S., he married Elsie Borkholder on Nov. 9, 1952. The couple resided in Indiana for several years. The first of their three children (Anna, Ruth and Jon) were born in Indiana. In 1963, the family moved to the Los Angeles area in search of a warmer climate, after which their fourth child

(Philip) was born.

In December of 1963, the family started attending the Church of God in El Monte, California. Mel and Elsie were baptized on July 24, 1964. He was ordained a deacon on the First Day of Unleavened Bread in April 1999.

Mel worked a number of years in the accounting department for the Worldwide Church of God in Pasadena, California. In 1975, Mel moved his family to Vista, California, and the following year started his own bookkeeping and income tax business, Melco Business Service.

Mel is survived by Elsie, his wife of nearly 63 years, his four children and their spouses: Anna (Richard) Dunlap; Ruth (Matt) Faulkner; Jon (Lana) Helmuth; and Philip (Stephanie) Helmuth. He is also survived by five grandchildren: Christopher Dunlap, Scott Dunlap, Janelle Dunlap, David Faulkner and Ashley Faulkner, and by two great grandchildren: Kirah Dunlap and Lily Dunlap. In addition, Mel is survived by a younger brother, Reuben, of LaGrange, Indiana, along with many nieces and nephews.

## Evelyn J. Marquardsen

Evelyn Jeanette Marquardsen, 78, of Moorhead, Minnesota, died in her home on Thursday, Oct. 1, 2015, under the care of Hospice of the Red River Valley after struggling for several years with deteriorating heart functioning and cancer.

Evie, as she was often called, was born in Moorhead on Feb. 17, 1937, to Emil and Myrtle (Eckheart) Marquardsen. She grew up on the family farm near Glyndon, Minnesota, attended rural School District 115 for eight years and graduated from Glyndon High School in 1955. She attended Interstate Business College in Fargo, North Dakota, and worked for New York Life for two years. Evelyn then worked for Equitable Life until her retirement in 1990. She continued to live at the rural farm home until moving to Moorhead in 2008. In later years she returned to working full-time and worked for Belton Hearing Service.

She was preceded in death by her par-

ents; a brother, Melvin; her brother-in-law, Glenn Beall; and a sister, Dorothy Beall. She is survived by a niece, Donna (Peter) Goomes of Stewart Island, New Zealand; and a nephew, Kenneth (Susan) Beall of Moorhead.

Evie enjoyed caring for her lawn and grew huge gardens. She felt blessed to live there, surrounded by many wonderful neighbors. She also greatly enjoyed her Church family and had many great times with them. She was respected for her many acts of service, especially to older members of her family and brethren of the congregation. She would pick them up to take them shopping, attend Sabbath services and serve them in many other ways.

A celebration of her life was held on Thursday, Oct. 8, 2015, in Moorhead, Minnesota. A touching eulogy was presented by her niece Donna Goomes, with pastor Herb Teitgen officiating. She was buried at the family plot at the cemetery in Sabin, Minnesota, not far from the farm where she had lived for a number of years. Donna and her brother Kenneth and spouses wish to extend their thanks and appreciation for the many cards and messages of condolence and encouragement that were sent to them.

## Peggy Stolley

Peggy Stolley, of Big Sandy, Texas, died Oct. 8, 2015, after a lengthy hospitalization and brief hospice in East Texas.

Mrs. Stolley had lived in Big Sandy since 1981 and had been a member of the Church of God since 1964, along with her husband Lee. Both were baptized while living in the Rio Grande Valley in South Texas. The Stolleys attended services from 1964 through 1981 in Corpus Christi.

Lee and Peggy moved from the Corpus Christi area in 1981 when Mr. Stolley assumed the role of director of security at Ambassador College in Big Sandy.

Lee and Peggy celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in 2015.

Peggy is survived by her husband Lee, daughter Terri (Buchanan), son Daniel

Stolley, and daughter Vicki (Ditto). In addition to their children, there are seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, all who affectionately referred to Peggy as Bobbo.

A Memorial service was conducted on Sunday, Oct. 11, 2015, at the United Church of God hall in Big Sandy, and Peggy was remembered for her devotion to the Church and her family.

## Francis Taylor

Francis Taylor died on Aug. 15, 2015, from complications related to ovarian cancer. Francis was born on March 30, 1958, in Carlsbad, New Mexico, to Millie and Clifto Dean. She graduated from high school in Dell City, Texas, as valedictorian of her class.

Francis wrote a syndicated column for King Features for many years and was manager of the Quality Control Department at West Star Bank in El Paso, Texas.

She was baptized into God’s Church in 1984 and was a member of the El Paso congregation. One of her favorite times was to decorate the room and table and prepare food for the Night to Be Much Observed. Francis was known for her outpouring love, kindness, and sense of humor.

Her faith in God’s plan and His love for us was very inspiring. Some of her last words were, “I win.”

Francis is survived by her husband, Bruce Taylor; and her children Quint Cantrell, Quee (Siemeon) Williams, Dani Shrum, Carye Shrum, and Tammy Taylor.

**Announcements:** Send us announcements from your local congregation! Check with your pastor and have him forward what you write. We’re looking for 100- to 300-word articles and photos. Please include a self-addressed envelope if you’d like photos returned. Please double-check the spelling of names. Please **e-mail (preferred) or give the material to your local pastor** to forward to *United News*.



## Local Church UPDATES

### Little Rock Hosts Auction for Good Works



The Little Rock congregation enjoying the auction to raise money for Good Works.

On Saturday evening, Dec. 5, the Little Rock, Arkansas, United Church of God congregation participated in a fundraising auction for a donation to the Good Works program. We designated the funds (\$1,400) be used for a project in Maloca de Moscou, Brazil. It will help pay for materials to be used in constructing the buildings for the UCG summer camp. Our

auctioneer, Jim Simkins, kept the mood light and the evening fun. Before the auction, we enjoyed a variety of homemade chili and the trimmings with various soft drinks. It was an enjoyable night for good food, fellowship and for supporting the Church and summer camp.

*Barry Howdeshell*



### Up and Coming

#### Cincinnati Family Dance Weekend

Please come and join us as the Cincinnati East Church hosts its annual Family Dance Weekend Feb. 12-14, 2016.

To kick off the weekend they'll be a Friday night 7:00 pm Bible Study followed by a Dessert Social at the Home Office.

All of the Sabbath and Saturday evening activities will take place at the Holiday Inn Eastgate, 4501 Eastgate Blvd. Cincinnati, Ohio 45245. There will be one Sabbath service at 2:30 pm. After services you won't need to rush out to find a meal, we will have the opportunity to be served a two entree catered meal for \$20 per person. Then, following our meal will be the family dance at 7:30 pm.

Dress for the evening is dressy Sabbath to semi-formal/formal. A cash bar will be available to anyone 21 years of age and over.

Please contact Roy and Barb Fouch with any questions at fouchbarb@gmail.com

Sunday morning, February 14, 2016 at 10:00 am, we are planning a Snow Tubing/Ski/Snowboard Activity at Perfect North Slopes, weather permitting. Perfect North Slopes is located in Lawrenceburg, Indi-

ana which is an one hour drive from the east side of Cincinnati.

<http://perfectnorth.com/>

Address: 19074 Perfect Lane, Lawrenceburg, IN 47025

Phone: 812-537-3754 or 513-381-7517

For those who want to Snow Tube, the cost is \$20 for a two hour tubing ticket and \$25 for a three hour tubing ticket.

For those who would like to Ski or Snowboard, the cost for an eight hour lift ticket is \$35 that includes an introductory lesson if needed. Snow Tubing is also included as part of the eight hour lift ticket. Ski/Snowboard Rental is \$17 and you can switch back and forth between the two if desired. Helmet rental is \$5 and is strongly recommended for those who are snowboarding.

For anyone who pre-registers by Feb. 6 and pays for either Snow Tubing/Ski/Snowboard by February 13th (by the end of the dance) will be entered into a drawing for a \$20 credit towards the price of the activity. For anyone who does not pre-register/pay prior to the activity will need to arrive by 9:30 AM to register and pay to be included in group discount.

Please contact Duane Phelps at [phelpsd20@me.com](mailto:phelpsd20@me.com) or 513-633-8825 with any questions and to pre-register for the Snow Tubing/Ski/Board Activity.

### Dayton, Celebrates 50th Anniversary



Left to right, standing: Joan Bornhorst, John Ragland, Mary Ann Ragland, Sheryl Carey, Charles Frantz.

Seated: Vina McLaughlin, Betty Barnhart, Susan Lockwood, Darlene Frakes, Renee Wenger.

Not in photo: Earl Barnhart, Marcia McClure, Nancy Morrison, Vic and Vickie Wagle, Carolyn Walters.

For centuries, the conclusion of a 50-year time period has been considered a significant event: the Jubilee year of Leviticus 25, a birthday, wedding anniversary, length of employment, etc. And so it was on the Sabbath of Oct. 31, 2015, when members and guests of the Dayton, Ohio, congregation celebrated the Church's 50th anniversary at the Fairborn Senior Citizens Center, the present meeting facility.

Services began with current pastor Frank McCrady conducting the hymns. Then the first of two sermons was delivered by Matt Fenchel, who had served as Dayton pastor just before Mr. McCrady assumed the role in 2002. Mr. Fenchel's sermon, titled "Running With Horses," referenced several famous women of the Bible as examples of leadership.

Next, during the announcements, Mr. McCrady and local elder Ron Barker presented commemorative plaques to those who were at the inaugural service. Following the presentation, Angie Joseph and daughters Elizabeth and Meaghann sang "Dream Big," a song that gave hope for the future.

The second sermon was from former Dayton elder Bart Bornhorst, who currently pastors in Indianapolis and Fort Wayne, Indiana. Speaking on "The Tie That Binds," Mr. Bornhorst emphasized three points of love.

Following services, Mr. Barker recalled the church's history with an accompanying slide show. The Dayton church began on Feb. 27, 1965, when its first pastor, Carn Catherwood, delivered the inaugural sermon to 183 people at the Oak

Hill Ballroom. Over the years, the church grew in size, requiring an a.m. and p.m. service. Later, to better serve those to the North of Dayton, the Tipp City church was formed.

In 1980, and for the next 10 years, Dayton was blessed with hosting the Feast of Tabernacles at Hara Arena. Even though the facility has permanent seating of 5,500, and room for an additional 1,500 chairs, attendees came close to filling the hall to capacity!

Another exciting opportunity for Dayton occurred in the fall of 1995. Then-pastor Dale Schurter and several members took part in producing the first issue of *The Good News*, now the United Church of God's main publication called *Beyond Today*.

After the slideshow, the church enjoyed a spaghetti dinner and enjoyed each other's company on into the evening.

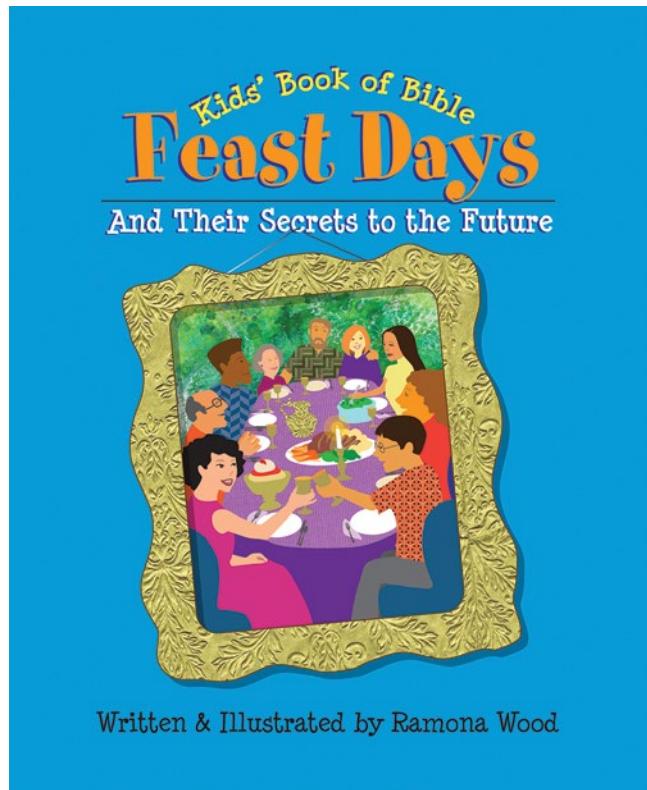
In a recent sermon, Mr. McCrady encouraged the Dayton congregation to "Keep on keepin' on." The brethren who received their 50-year plaque showed that, with God's help, we can!

*Nicolas Nick*

**Local Church Updates:** Send us news and events from your local congregation! Check with your pastor and have him forward what you write. We're looking for 100- to 300-word articles and photos with captions. Please include a self-addressed envelope if you'd like photos returned. Include the author's and photographer's names. Please double-check the spelling of names. Please **e-mail (preferred) or give the material to your local pastor** to forward to *United News*.

# A Colorful Description of God's Plan

by Linda Merrick



Want a colorful, visual way to help your child learn about the holy days? A member of the United Church of God created a children's book to show the wonderful plan of God that He portrays through His holy days. The book is titled *Kids' Book of Bible Feast Days and Their Secrets to the Future* by Ramona Wood. The book was recently published through ABC Press and a review was recently written for *El Dorado News* about the book.

Joan Hershberger who wrote the article for *El Darado News* described the book with this colorful description, "The Feast days show God's plan for a large and beautiful kingdom, according to Wood. Bursting with colorful paintings, this book outlines specific ways the family can connect with the Creator. Challenging topics are simplified and embellished with relevant scriptural sidebars."

Ramona goes through God's plan step-by-step starting with a quick overview of the lineage of Abraham and the connection to Jesus Christ. She then goes into the holy days and describes each one in a few pages. There are brightly colored graphics and pictures to help show what each holy day is all about. Throughout the book she does a wonderful job of citing scripture to further describe

each holy day and its meaning for all mankind. She also shares activities and a recipe for families to share.

Ramona said she saw a need for more children's books that cover this topic in a way that is visual. "Growing up in the Church, I saw a need for colorful books that 'paint a bright picture' for kids—about the days we keep and the future they portray."

After 30 years of creating children's material, Ramona decided to take on the challenge of creating a book that would "simplify the advanced concepts for children to relate to and understand." She said, "I knew it had to be attractive with an up-to-date feel. And I knew it would take a lot of time and energy reworking things until they meshed together smoothly, covering the serious aspects while giving kids an overall sense of hope and joy. [This book] was produced with the goal of getting kids—and adults—excited about our legacy in the holy days."

These goals are achieved through the book by how harmoniously Wood threads together simple words, colorful artwork, and God's plan for our future.

Ramona Wood has also written a few other children's books that are available through her website [www.ramonawoodbooks.com](http://www.ramonawoodbooks.com) and through [amazon.com](http://amazon.com). **UN**

## Traveling With a Passport

by Stella Helterbrand

Traveling is something that adds so much to life in so many ways. This world is full of some amazing, awe inspiring, life-changing places. One of the best opportunities to travel is for the Feast of Tabernacles, an opportunity I took advantage of the first time I traveled outside of the States. There are a few logistical items that may appear to make traveling internationally difficult, but don't let that be daunting.

A few of the ways that traveling can add to life is experiencing new cultures, cuisines, and history firsthand. Experiencing new cultures is a unique opportunity to see how our brethren in other countries live and get to know them in their environment. Not only is experiencing new cultures amazing, but local cuisine can be a fun and delicious way to learn more. History is another exciting part about traveling internationally, and there is so much to learn from traveling.

Yes, the USA has many amazing, awe inspiring, life-changing places and there are plenty of them to get to. However, getting outside of the States can provide a greater appreciation for how blessed we are in this country. What better way to appreciate the great creation of God than to do so during one of His wonderful Holy Days?!

Now the fun part to consider—logistics! The logistics will change depending on the country traveling to, but one requirement remains the same—a passport. A passport

is required for all countries and they are easier to get than one may think. There is a fee, and some planning will need to take place due to the time involved in the application process, but it's all worth it! One other thing to keep in mind is that some countries will also require visas which can be obtained at the airport or in advance, depending on the country.

Traveling for the Feast of Tabernacles has led me to some great places. I've been able to explore ancient ruins in countries such as Jordan, Italy, and Guatemala; as well as historical sites in France. Seeing how little others have, but how faithful and strong they are is the best sight I've seen. In Jordan and Guatemala the people live very differently, many in these countries have so much less than Americans. One of the most rewarding experiences was when I sponsored to take a family out to a special dinner at the Feast in Guatemala. For me, it was so inexpensive, but for them it was a special meal they would not have been able to afford otherwise. Being able to travel internationally has helped me to truly see how blessed the United States of America is.

Having a passport has opened up a whole new world. Each place, culture, and thing around the world is unique to the location they are in. Having traveled to 19 countries—including a December 2015 trip to Brazil—getting familiar with the world around has been quite eye opening. Why not get out there and see some more of God's great creation? **UN**



Top Photo: Wadi Rum in Jordan at the Feast of Tabernacles 2010. In this photo Stella is (at the right wearing a hat) riding a camel with friends Alyssa Diggins and Mary Miller.

Bottom: Stella at the Feast of Tabernacles in Antigua, Guatemala in 2008, enjoying a traditional Guatemalan dinner with new and old friends.

# Return

Continued from page 3

follow Him.

We put out of our lives, with the help of God's Holy Spirit, sin and the "sins that do so easily beset," such as pride, weaknesses, attitudes, entertainment choices, and proclivities that can lead us off the spiritual road to eternal life. We make the choice to walk with God, and to develop a relationship with Him on His terms. We feel true joy.

Inevitably in our Christian lives, we are tempted to deviate from that pattern, maybe "just a little." Something comes up and we may start asking ourselves: Does it really matter if we miss a few Sabbath services when we're really tired or "just don't feel up to it?" Will it really matter if we miss a day or two of prayer or Bible study

when we are really busy at work and "just can't find the time?" Does it really matter if we watch that movie, read that book, go to that nightclub, or spend time on that internet site we know we shouldn't?" Does it really matter if we yield to our old desires, just a little?

After all, we may think, we are converted, we know God's way, and we would *never* fall back into our old ways. It is precisely at that moment we are in danger.

Satan is always looking for the opportunity to disrupt our patterns of obedience to God. He knows if we will open that door "just a little," he can use that against us. "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:12).

It's a powerful lesson we all must learn. Once we break the pattern of commitment, obedience, discipline, and complete submission to God, it can be difficult to

return to that pattern.

The dieter who finds himself back in a pattern of unhealthy eating day after day has a choice to make. If he doesn't exercise the discipline to *return* to the healthy lifestyle pattern, he will return to the weight and state of health he had hoped to leave behind.

*But return we must, with all our hearts, minds, and souls.*

Spiritually, if we stray, take liberty with God's clear commands, or give into our natural desires, it can be difficult to *return* to the correct course and pattern of obedience, good works, and total submission to God.

But *return* we must, with all our hearts, minds, and souls, because the consequences of not returning are much more

serious than weight regain. "Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?" (Romans 6:16).

If you have drifted, slipped back into old patterns, or find yourself feeling "distant" from God and His people, you have a choice to make. God, who wants to give us eternal life, implores us to *return* to Him and the life He called us to:

"The LORD has been very angry with your fathers. Therefore, say to them, 'return to Me, and I will return to you,' (Zechariah 1:2-3); 'Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why would you die, O house of Israel?' (Ezekiel 18:31-32). **UN**

## He Got on the Boat

Continued from page 3

I've been to a number of cities that Paul visited—Jerusalem, Rome, Ephesus, Caesarea Maritima and Puteoli—but none of them had the emotional impact of standing on this spot in Miletus. Why? Because of what happened here and the example it leaves for us.

### Paul's visit to Miletus

Paul's visit to Miletus took place near the end of his third and final missionary journey. Now his trip was nearing its end, and he "decided to sail past Ephesus . . . for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost" (Acts 20:16).

Paul knew time was tight, so he skipped Ephesus, where he had stayed for two years earlier on that same journey (Acts 19:10). No doubt he had forged many dear friendships there, and had he put into port at Ephesus he would have spent days with those friends and would not have had enough time to make it to Jerusalem for Pentecost.

So he did the next best thing. He stopped at the next major port south of Ephesus and sent word for the elders in Ephesus to come meet him there (Acts 20:17).

It had to be an emotional reunion, for they had not seen each other for months. No doubt there were tears of joy as they met there in Miletus.

But soon their joy would be replaced by other emotions, with the tears of deep sorrow.

### The suffering of a servant

Paul's path since his miraculous conversion more than 20 years earlier had not been an easy one. He had gone through the school of hard knocks—literally—and graduated, then gone back for more.

Having grown tired of having to defend himself against enemies and false ministers who had boasted about how great they were in comparison to him, Paul let his record speak for itself:

"I have worked harder, been put in prison more often, been whipped times without number, and faced death again and again. Five different times the Jewish leaders gave me thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I was shipwrecked. Once I spent a whole night and a day adrift at sea.

"I have traveled on many long journeys. I have faced danger from rivers and from robbers . . . I have faced danger in the cities, in the deserts, and on the seas. And I have faced danger from men who claim to be believers but are not.

"I have worked long and hard, enduring many sleepless nights. I have been hungry and thirsty and have often gone without food. I have shivered in the cold, without enough clothing to keep me warm. Then, besides all this, I have the daily burden of my concern for all the churches" (2 Corinthians 11:23-28, New Living Translation 2015).

Paul had suffered a great deal. People hated him and had tried to kill him. They would keep trying, and he knew it. And because of that fact, Paul needed to leave these elders a sobering message.

### Paul's last words to the Ephesian elders

That sobering message echoed in my mind as I stood there at the harbor of Miletus and thought about Paul's last meeting with his fellow-workers and friends. I reflected on his last words to them:

"You know that from the day I set foot in the province of Asia until now I have done the Lord's work humbly and with many tears . . . I never shrank back from

telling you what you needed to hear, either publicly or in your homes. I have had one message for Jews and Gentiles alike—the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus.

"And now I am bound by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. I don't know what awaits me, except that the Holy Spirit tells me in city after city that jail and suffering lie ahead. But my life is worth nothing to me unless I use it for finishing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus—the work of telling others the Good News about the wonderful grace of God. And now I know that none of you to whom I have preached the Kingdom will ever see me again" (Acts 20:18-25, NLT 2015).

Paul then gave them both a work and a warning. First he told them to feed and care for God's flock entrusted to their care. Then he warned some among them would rise up to steal God's sheep for themselves—a pattern that, tragically, has been repeated all too often within the Church of God to the shame of men who loved power more than they loved God's beloved flock.

Guided by God's Spirit, Paul knew his time of serving God as he had was nearing an end. Instead of being able to freely travel and teach God's Word, suffering and imprisonment now awaited him. And he knew that he would never see these dear friends again.

### Echoes of One who had gone before

In many ways Paul's words to his friends at Miletus remind us of the words of another Teacher who had earlier gathered His friends to leave them with a last, impassioned message. This had taken place in Jerusalem, where Paul would now go to meet his fate as he followed in the footsteps of His Master.

Life is all about choices. Jesus of Nazareth faced many choices in the last jour-

ney of His life as "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51). He knew what lay ahead—suffering, imprisonment and death. He could've turned aside at any point, but He didn't. Why? For you and me. He chose us, not Himself.

Paul, when it came time to make a choice, took the same path. He likewise knew where it would ultimately take him—to suffering, imprisonment and in the end death. He never wavered, for he knew he had been bought and paid for with a price, and his life was no longer his own (1 Corinthians 6:20; Galatians 2:20).

### He got on the boat anyway

Acts 20:36-38 records the end of Paul's visit with his beloved friends at Miletus: "And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. Then they all wept freely, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship."

It's a deeply moving and heartbreaking scene, one that in many ways sums up the life of a deeply motivated and converted man. Knowing what lay ahead, he got on the boat anyway.

He could've turned around. He could've gone with them back to Ephesus and continued his work there. The whole of Asia Minor lay before him, where he could've gone. But he didn't. Paul followed the example of Jesus Christ, who took that final, fatal trip to Jerusalem anyway, knowing the price He would pay.

Life is about choices. Perhaps none is so great as who we will ultimately serve—God or ourselves. God's Word tells us that as time grows harder and as the days grow darker, the consequences of our choices will grow ever more serious.

When the ships are down, knowing what lies ahead, will we get on the boat anyway? **UN**

# Independent Auditors Give Financial Statements Clean Bill of Health

by Rick Shabi

Included on the next few pages are the audited financial statements of the United Church of God, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015, along with the auditors' report.

The Cincinnati-based audit firm of Clark, Schaefer, Hackett and Co. once again performed the audit, and once again issued an "unqualified" opinion, noting that the financial statements "present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of [the Church] as of June 30, 2015 and 2014, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."

These statements reflect another year of operations in which God has blessed the Church with an increase in income.

Below are some of the highlights of the financial statements:

Due to the continued generosity and faith of Church members, coworkers, and other donors, revenue increased by more than \$1 million over the prior year.

As a result of increased income and prudent expenditures, cash balances increased by more than \$2 million.

Supporting the Church's mission to "preach the gospel and prepare a people," 50 percent of revenues this year was expended in the areas of congregational care around the world, while 25 percent of revenue was spent in public proclamation.

During the year, the Denton, Texas, property was sold, resulting in a loss on the sale of the land. Despite this loss, net assets of the Church increased by more than \$1 million over the prior year.

We are grateful to God the Father and the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, giver of all good gifts, for providing these increases and results. We look to Him to provide continual guidance and direction that "His will be done" and that all we do will bring glory to His name.

Our gratitude and appreciation, of course, also extends to the faithful members of the Church and others who support its work through their faithfulness in giving tithes and offerings. We solicit the prayers of all who support the Church, that God would give wisdom in the management of its financial and other affairs.

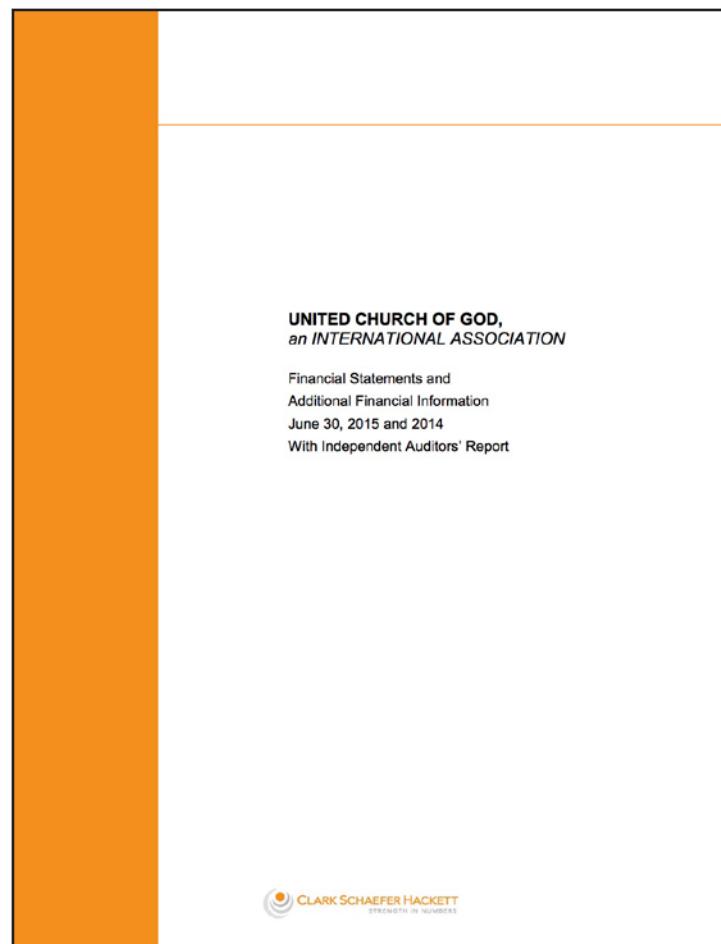
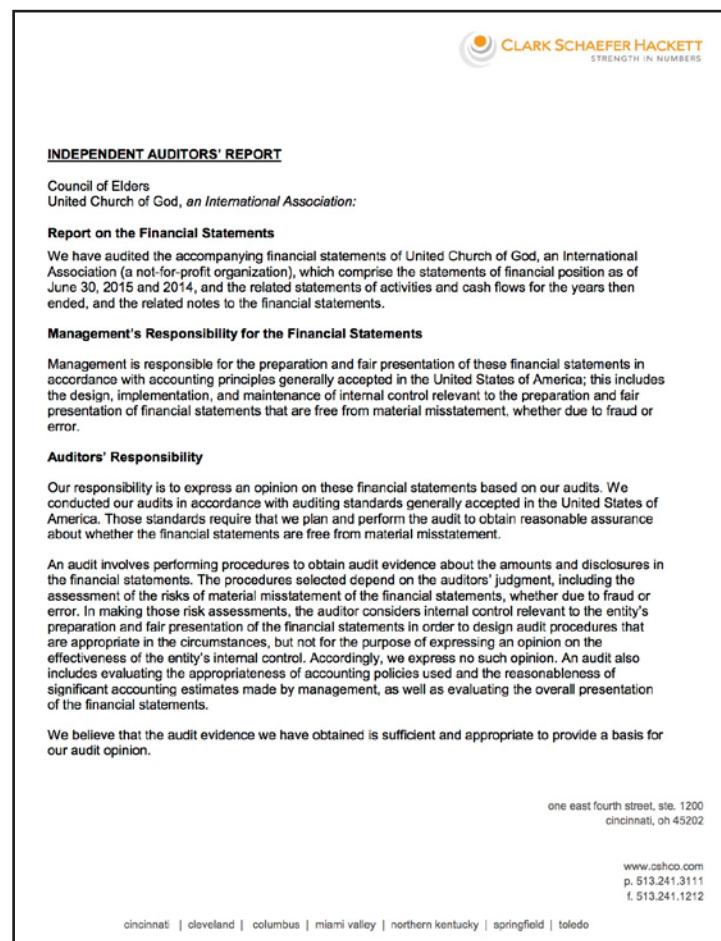


TABLE OF CONTENTS	
Independent Auditors' Report.....	1-2
Financial Statements:	
Statements of Financial Position .....	3
Statements of Activities .....	4
Statements of Cash Flows.....	5
Notes to Financial Statements.....	6 - 11
Additional Financial Information:	
Schedules of Functional Expenses.....	12 - 13



**Opinion**

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of United Church of God, an International Association as of June 30, 2015 and 2014, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

**Other Matter**

Our audits were conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. The Schedules of Functional Expenses on pages 12 and 13 are presented for purposes of additional analysis and are not a required part of the financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audit of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. In our opinion, the Schedules of Functional Expenses are fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

*Clark, Schaefer, Hackett & Co.*

Cincinnati, Ohio  
October 13, 2015

**UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an International Association**  
Statements of Financial Position  
June 30, 2015 and 2014

	2015	2014
<b>Assets:</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 6,881,720	4,119,009
Prepaid expenses	375,774	309,876
Property and equipment, net	<u>3,819,242</u>	<u>5,347,292</u>
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>\$ 11,076,736</b>	<b>9,776,177</b>
<b>Liabilities and net assets:</b>		
<b>Liabilities:</b>		
Accounts payable	\$ 161,353	152,895
Accrued payroll and vacation pay	410,433	378,717
Accrued insurance obligations	57,194	63,527
Accrued other	7,475	14,300
Mortgage payable	<u>381,699</u>	<u>324,323</u>
<b>Total liabilities</b>	<b>1,018,154</b>	<b>933,762</b>
<b>Net assets:</b>		
Unrestricted	9,953,338	8,765,192
Temporarily restricted	<u>105,244</u>	<u>77,223</u>
<b>Total net assets</b>	<b>10,058,582</b>	<b>8,842,415</b>
<b>Total liabilities and net assets</b>	<b>\$ 11,076,736</b>	<b>9,776,177</b>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.  
3

**UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an International Association**  
Statements of Activities  
Years Ended June 30, 2015 and 2014

	2015	2014
<b>Unrestricted net assets:</b>		
<b>Revenues, gains and other support:</b>		
Contributions - individuals	\$ 12,698,964	11,922,785
Contributions - local congregations	538,128	327,998
Holy day offerings and festival fund contributions	4,689,286	4,495,043
Estate/personal property donations	388,179	186,337
Dividend and interest income	15,936	2,852
Other income	159,398	183,223
<b>Net assets released from restrictions:</b>		
Satisfaction of restrictions	<u>77,223</u>	<u>16,304</u>
<b>Total revenues, gains and other support</b>	<b>18,567,114</b>	<b>17,134,542</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>		
<b>Program services:</b>		
Field Ministry / Local Congregations	7,342,668	7,036,956
Festivals	377,358	471,236
International	1,580,183	1,427,721
Public Proclamation	<u>4,562,013</u>	<u>5,025,222</u>
<b>Total program services</b>	<b>13,862,222</b>	<b>13,961,135</b>
<b>Management and general:</b>		
Council of Elders / Home Office / Insurance & Benefit Plans	2,516,145	2,200,521
General Conference	33,120	30,944
Executive Reserve	<u>346,995</u>	<u>145,000</u>
<b>Total management and general</b>	<b>2,896,260</b>	<b>2,376,465</b>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>16,758,482</b>	<b>16,337,600</b>
<b>Loss on sale of land</b>	<b>(620,486)</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Increase in unrestricted net assets</b>	<b>1,188,146</b>	<b>796,942</b>
<b>Temporarily restricted net assets:</b>		
Contributions	105,244	77,223
<b>Net assets released from restrictions:</b>		
Satisfaction of restrictions	<u>(77,223)</u>	<u>(16,304)</u>
<b>Increase in temporarily restricted net assets</b>	<b>28,021</b>	<b>60,919</b>
<b>Change in net assets</b>	<b>1,216,167</b>	<b>857,861</b>
<b>Net assets at the beginning of period</b>	<b>8,842,415</b>	<b>7,984,554</b>
<b>Net assets at the end of period</b>	<b>\$ 10,058,582</b>	<b>8,842,415</b>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.  
4

**UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an International Association**  
Statements of Cash Flows  
Years Ended June 30, 2015 and 2014

	2015	2014
<b>Cash flows from operating activities:</b>		
Change in net assets	\$ 1,216,167	857,861
Adjustment to reconcile change in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation	163,356	151,814
Loss on sale of land	620,486	-
Effect of change in operating assets and liabilities:		
Prepaid expenses	(85,898)	(140,826)
Accounts payable	8,458	(52,835)
Accrued payroll and vacation pay	31,716	39,940
Accrued insurance obligations	(6,333)	25,421
Accrued other	<u>(6,825)</u>	<u>14,300</u>
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	<b>1,961,127</b>	<b>895,675</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities:</b>		
Proceeds from sale of land	979,971	-
Purchases of property and equipment	<u>(235,763)</u>	<u>(154,649)</u>
<b>Net cash provided (used) by investing activities</b>	<b>744,208</b>	<b>(154,649)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities:</b>		
Proceeds from mortgage payable	100,000	325,000
Principal payments on mortgage payable	<u>(42,624)</u>	<u>(277,125)</u>
<b>Net cash provided by financing activities</b>	<b>57,376</b>	<b>47,875</b>
<b>Net increase in cash and cash equivalents</b>	<b>2,762,711</b>	<b>788,901</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year</b>	<b>4,119,009</b>	<b>3,330,108</b>
<b>Cash and cash equivalents, end of year</b>	<b>\$ 6,881,720</b>	<b>4,119,009</b>
<b>Supplemental Cash Flow Disclosures:</b>		
Interest paid	\$ 8,541	17,575

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.  
5

**UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an International Association**  
Notes to the Financial Statements  
June 30, 2015 and 2014

**1. CHURCH AND ACTIVITIES:**

The United Church of God, an International Association, (herein referred as the "Church") is a worldwide religious association. In the United States of America, the Church is a California Nonprofit Religious Corporation (Incorporated on May 10, 1995). Affairs of the Church are coordinated through the Home Office located in Milford, Ohio, where the state of Ohio has the Church officially registered.

The Church is not affiliated with other religious churches, nor does it publicly appeal for funds or involve itself in politics. The mission of the United Church of God, an International Association, is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God in all the world, make disciples in all nations and care for those disciples.

The Church is overseen by a General Conference of Elders, which, in turn, appoints a 12-member Council of Elders to function as a board of directors that establishes operations policies for the Church. The officers and employees of the Church are responsible for operation of the Church in conformance with Council policies.

**2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES:**

**Basis of presentation**

The accompanying financial statements include only the activity of the Home Office for the Church.

The Church has associated organizations, operating in other countries, which have resources that are principally derived and expended locally. The Church provides grants-in-aid and other services to some of these organizations. The accounts of these organizations are not included in the accompanying financial statements.

The financial statements have been prepared on the accrual basis in accordance with the AICPA Audit and Accounting Guide, "Not-for-Profit Organizations." The significant accounting policies followed are described below.

**Revenue recognition**

Unrestricted net assets represent those resources of the Church that are not subject to donor-imposed stipulations. Unrestricted net assets may be designated for specific purposes by actions of the Council of Elders or may otherwise be limited by contractual agreements with outside parties.

Temporarily restricted net assets represent contributions that are subject to donor-imposed restrictions that can be fulfilled by actions of the Church pursuant to those stipulations or that expire by the passage of time. Temporarily restricted contributions received and expended in the same fiscal year are recorded as unrestricted revenues.

**Church support**

Members of the Church practice tithing (which is the donation of ten percent of one's "net" income for the Church's unrestricted use). The majority of Church support and revenue consist of such unrestricted donations, whether from individuals directly to the Home Office or from monies received by local congregations and subsequently given to the Home Office.

Members also save an additional ten percent of their annual "net" income for personal use in attending biblically mandated festivals or holy days. This is commonly referred to as the second tithe. Members also contribute to the Church a portion of the second tithe that they save for use at the annual festivals. These contributions, known as the "Festival Fund," are used to pay for expenses involved in festival operations and to assist needy members and their families so they can attend the Feast of Tabernacles. Funds are also sent internationally to assist members.

Those members who are financially able contribute to the "Assistance Fund." Monies contributed to the fund are used to assist the needy.

Members may designate that their contributions be used to support the Church internationally. This fund is known as the "International Fund."

**Use of estimates**

The financial statements are prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles which require management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts of assets and liabilities, the disclosure of contingent liabilities as of the financial statement date, and the amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

**Income taxes**

The Church is exempt from Federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(3). Donations to the Church are, therefore, tax-deductible under IRC Section 170(b)(1)(A). However, income from certain activities not directly related to the Church's tax-exempt purpose would be subject to taxation as unrelated business income. The Church has been granted tax-exempt status in the states in which it operates that provide exemptions from taxes.

The Church follows Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) guidance related to accounting for uncertainty in income taxes. These provisions clarify the accounting and recognition for income tax positions taken or expected to be taken in the Church's income tax returns. The Church is not required to file an annual information return due to its religious origins but would be subject to tax on any unrelated business income. The Church believes it has not earned any unrelated business income and has estimated no tax is due based on current facts and circumstances. Thus, the Church has determined that an accrual for taxes is not needed for the year ended June 30, 2015.

**Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents consist of cash and investments with initial maturities of three months or less.

7

**Concentration of credit risk**

The Church maintains its cash and certificates of deposit at several commercial and savings banks which, at times, exceed federally insured limits. The Church has not experienced any losses in such accounts and believes it is not exposed to any significant credit risk.

**Property and equipment**

Purchased property and equipment are recorded at cost. Donations of property and equipment are recorded as support at their estimated fair value on the date of donation. Such donations are reported as unrestricted support unless the donor has restricted the donated asset to be used for a specific purpose. Major improvements to real property are capitalized and normal repair and maintenance costs are expensed as incurred.

Property and equipment owned by the Church are depreciated using the straight-line method over their estimated useful life as follows:

Computer/Information Systems	3 years
Office Equipment	5 years
Office Furniture and Fixtures	7 years
Land Improvements	10 years
Buildings	40 years

**Components of programs and supporting services**

**Field Ministry/Local Congregations:** This function includes expenses pertaining to the field ministry, local congregations and youth camps.

**International:** This function includes expenses pertaining to the support of international congregations and offices.

**Public Proclamation:** This area contains all media related expenses.

**Festivals:** This function includes costs that are directly involved in the fall Festival of Tabernacles and the other annual festivals.

**Home Office:** This function includes administrative and other expenses for the Home Office.

**Council of Elders:** The expenses in this function are those that pertain to the Council of Elders, including phone and face-to-face conferences.

**General Conference:** Expenses in this function include any expenses relating to the Cincinnati, Ohio, General Conference held in May.

**Executive Reserve:** This function includes funds set aside for special projects, capital expenditures, employee benefits, or other expenditures that may occur during the year.

8

**Subsequent events**

The Church evaluates events and transactions occurring subsequent to the date of the financial statements for matters requiring recognition or disclosure in the financial statements. The accompanying financial statements consider events through October 13, 2015, the date on which the financial statements were available to be issued.

**3. PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT:**

Property and equipment consisted of the following at June 30:

	2015	2014
Buildings	\$ 4,447,695	4,286,142
Land	402,952	402,936
Land held for resale	-	1,600,457
Land improvements	396,551	396,551
Furniture and fixtures	16,125	16,125
Office equipment	587,880	553,225
Vehicles	58,973	28,438
Total property and equipment	5,910,176	7,285,874
Less: accumulated depreciation	2,090,934	1,938,582
	\$ 3,819,242	5,347,292

During the year ended June 30, 2015, the land held for resale was sold at a loss of \$620,486.

**4. OBLIGATIONS UNDER OPERATING LEASES:**

The Church leases automobiles pursuant to operating lease agreements. The Church's future minimum lease payments for all non-cancelable operating leases are as follows:

Years Ending June 30,	
2016	\$ 152,937
2017	101,582
2018	61,990
2019	10,354
Total future minimum lease payments	\$ 327,263

Rent and lease expenses for the years ended June 30, 2015 and 2014 were \$449,084 and \$477,142, respectively.

**5. DEFINED CONTRIBUTION PENSION PLAN:**

Effective April 1, 1999 the Church established a 403(b) thrift plan for all full time employees. In February 2011, the Church elected to suspend contributions to the plan for the year ended June 30, 2012. A matching contribution was reinstated for the year ended June 30, 2015. The matching expense was \$41,284 at June 30, 2015.

9

**6. MORTGAGE PAYABLE:**

In November 2008, the Church signed a \$350,000 mortgage with Prosperity Bank, secured by a church building. The mortgage was to be repaid in monthly installments over fifteen years, with an interest rate at 6.526%. In June 2014, the note with Prosperity Bank was refinanced and a new mortgage was issued through a member of the church. The new note has a principal amount of \$260,000 and will be repaid in monthly installments over 8 years, with an interest rate of 3.00%. The balance at June 30, 2015 was \$230,805.

In June 2014, the Church signed a \$65,000 mortgage with Church of Christ, secured by a church building. The mortgage will be repaid in monthly installments over 8 years, with an interest rate of 0.00%. The balance at June 30, 2015 was \$56,196.

In December 2014, the Church signed a \$25,000 mortgage with United Church of God, Fort Wayne, secured by a church building. The mortgage will be repaid in monthly installments over 10 years, with an interest rate of 0.50%. The balance at June 30, 2015 was \$23,576.

In December 2014, the Church signed a \$75,000 mortgage with United Church of God, Indianapolis, secured by a church building. The mortgage will be repaid in monthly installments over 10 years, with an interest rate of 2.50%. The balance at June 30, 2015 was \$71,120.

The future minimum payments on the mortgage payables are as follows:

Years Ending June 30,	
2016	\$ 45,990
2017	48,527
2018	49,657
2019	50,822
2020	52,019
Thereafter	134,684
Total	\$ 381,699

**7. COMMITMENTS AND CONTINGENCIES:**

The Church is currently making discretionary payments to certain individuals. The payments totaled approximately \$749,000 and \$778,000 for the years ended June 30, 2015 and 2014, respectively. These discretionary payments are provided, in part, based upon the individual's needs and, accordingly, could be discontinued in the future. No amounts have been accrued in the accompanying financial statements for future payments relating to these arrangements.

The Church is self-insured for medical and dental insurance and maintains a stop-loss coverage policy covering individual claims in excess of predetermined amounts. Aggregate annual claims are also capped at a fixed rate. Self-insurance costs are accrued based upon the aggregate of the liability for reported claims and an estimated liability for claims incurred but not reported.

10

**8. TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED NET ASSETS:**

Temporarily restricted net assets are available for the following purposes at June 30:

	2015	2014
Good Works Program	\$ 80,744	77,223
Building Fund	24,500	-
	\$ 105,244	77,223

Net assets of \$77,223 and \$16,304 were released during 2015 and 2014, respectively, from donor restrictions by incurring expenses satisfying the restricted purposes specified by the donors within the Good Works Program.

11

**UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an International Association**  
Schedule of Functional Expenses  
Year Ended June 30, 2015

	Program Services				Management and General			Totals
	Ministerial Services/Field Ministry/Local Congregations	Festivals	International	Public Proclamation	Council of Elders/Home Office/Insurance & Benefit Plans	Executive Reserve	General Conference	
Salaries and related benefits	\$ 4,368,265	-	-	1,377,821	746,847	244,600	-	6,737,533
Contracted services and fees	43,051	1,579	-	250,143	150,781	31,000	6,803	483,357
Broadcast media and advertising	-	-	-	1,155,188	-	-	-	1,155,188
Print media and advertising	10,567	15,503	-	610,398	15,177	-	2,514	654,159
Postage and shipping	16,116	11,285	-	749,836	42,348	47	3,428	823,060
Building and equipment lease/rental	11,959	162,426	-	795	4,472	-	-	179,652
Telephone and utilities	35,434	884	1,427	2,415	93,631	-	-	133,791
Supplies	44,961	11,131	-	21,707	48,675	7,772	3,841	138,087
Travel, mileage, meals, and lodging	777,278	24,149	129,590	7,061	91,493	18,276	16,534	1,064,381
Depreciation	-	-	-	-	163,356	-	-	163,356
Grants and charitable support:								
International support	-	3,480	1,447,693	383,291	559	-	-	1,835,023
Domestic support:								
Assistance to the needy	566,685	146,246	-	-	35,737	-	-	748,668
Allocations to local congregations	1,442,859	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,442,859
Insurance and health care	-	-	-	-	1,077,743	-	-	1,077,743
Other	25,493	675	1,473	3,358	45,326	45,300	-	121,625
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$ 7,342,668</b>	<b>377,358</b>	<b>1,580,183</b>	<b>4,562,013</b>	<b>2,516,145</b>	<b>346,995</b>	<b>33,120</b>	<b>16,758,482</b>

12

**UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an International Association**  
Schedule of Functional Expenses  
Year Ended June 30, 2014

	Program Services				Management and General			Totals
	Ministerial Services/Field Ministry/Local Congregations	Festivals	International	Public Proclamation	Council of Elders/ Home Office/Insurance & Benefit Plans	Executive Reserve	General Conference	
Salaries and related benefits	\$ 4,099,885	91,626	-	1,425,148	721,593	145,000	-	6,483,252
Contracted services and fees	33,059	67	232	226,223	151,211	-	5,963	416,755
Broadcast media and advertising	-	-	-	1,317,106	-	-	-	1,317,106
Print media and advertising	5,358	12,968	-	721,466	7,379	-	1,838	749,009
Postage and shipping	12,903	9,582	-	788,340	7,013	-	2,338	820,176
Building and equipment lease/rental	18,775	164,997	-	2,276	14,164	-	-	200,212
Telephone and utilities	38,849	844	986	2,142	88,420	-	-	131,241
Supplies	38,146	12,049	-	27,024	59,843	-	2,407	139,469
Travel, mileage, meals, and lodging	786,259	30,020	88,710	7,087	80,376	-	18,382	1,010,834
Depreciation	-	-	-	-	151,814	-	-	151,814
Grants and charitable support:								
International support	-	4,030	1,337,463	487,648	493	-	-	1,829,634
Domestic support:								
Assistance to the needy	569,174	141,139	-	-	49,909	-	-	760,222
Allocations to local congregations	1,406,181	-	-	280	-	-	-	1,406,461
Insurance and health care	-	-	-	-	827,571	-	-	827,571
Other	28,367	3,914	330	20,482	40,735	-	16	93,844
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$ 7,036,956</b>	<b>471,236</b>	<b>1,427,721</b>	<b>5,025,222</b>	<b>2,200,521</b>	<b>145,000</b>	<b>30,944</b>	<b>16,337,600</b>

13

**DOWNLOAD**

**Download a full PDF of the financial audit online**

[www.ucg.org/members/news/independent-auditors-give-financial-statements-clean-bill-of-health](http://www.ucg.org/members/news/independent-auditors-give-financial-statements-clean-bill-of-health)

# Winter Family Weekend 2015

by Frank Dunkle

The Winter Family Weekend lived up to its well-established tradition. The full schedule included three days of basketball and volleyball, three days of educational seminars, and an evening schedule of varied activities designed to make sure that no one was left out.

This year more than 1,000 people joined in the fun. The Great Wolf Lodge of Mason, Ohio, provided lodging and a conference facility where many of the activities occurred, beginning with a family dance on the evening of Wednesday, Dec. 23. During the days, our members were able to participate in or watch the athletics at a nearby gymnasium, seminars in the conference center, or visit the on-site indoor waterpark.

Evening activities included dances for teens and adults, karaoke, family games, an acoustic jam session, a performing arts show, and a live appearance by Jelly. The Sabbath began with a Friday evening group hymn-sing, followed by a Bible study. During the next morning, the conference center bustled as children attended youth instruction sessions, and teens and adults chose from several seminars presented concurrently. Finally, for Sab-

bath services the hall was filled to overflowing, and more than three hundred Internet connections allowed congregations and individuals to listen to extended special music and a sermon by Victor Kubik.

The one thing common to every activity and every event during the Winter Family Weekend—not to mention time between activities—was fellowship among the brethren. Whether a person is athletic or not, part of a large family or single, old or young, spending time with our spiritual family is greatest reason for having this event. That is the reason so many volunteers devote hundreds of hours to organizing and running such a complex event. It is why many families devote considerable resources to it—as does the church. The weekend seems to exemplify what we read in Psalm 133:1, that, it is good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity!

Plans are already in place for next year's Winter Family Weekend in Cincinnati. The Great Wolf Lodge will again provide our base, and we will use the same sports facilities. Mark Dec. 23–27 on your calendar for 2016 and plan to join us for a very special time! **UN**



Top: Basketball teams Old School and Chattanooga play in the championship game. Old School won the championship.

Bottom: Brothers and sisters give Jelly a group hug!

Photos by Aly Johnson



A group photo of the congregation in Zambia.

## Broadcast

Continued from page 1

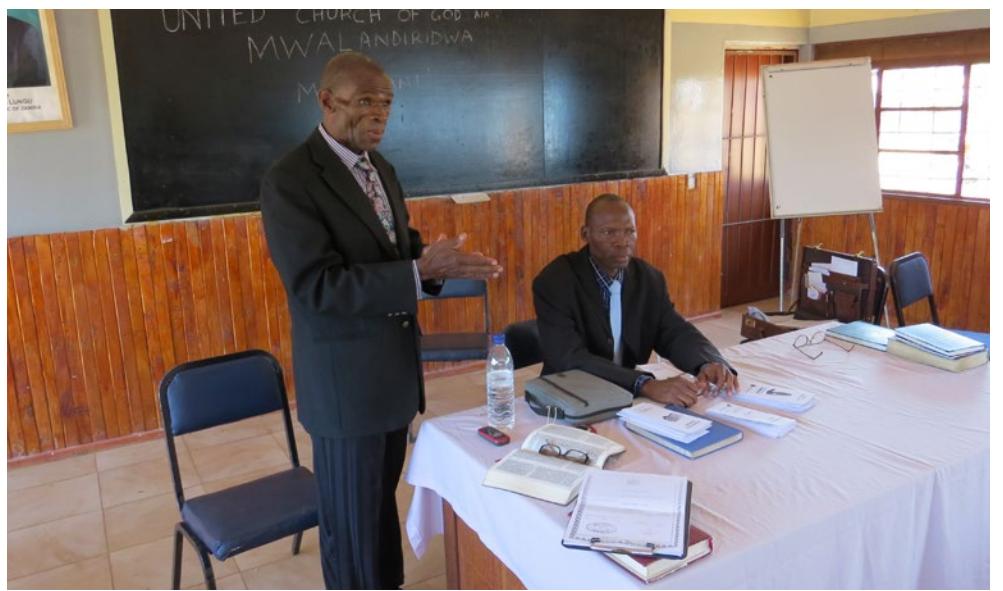
Zambia, with a large contingent in this area. Derrick Pringle stated, "This visit came at the right time and it was gratifying to experience the eagerness and interest that the people, mostly new, showed in wanting to know the truth and what the Church is all about." Mr. Talama had only recently recovered from a major bout of malaria.

With this visit, Mr. Pringle and Mr. Talama were able to establish a new branch of the Church in the far east of Zambia,

leaving a copy of the Certificate of Registration of UCG with the deacon Filius Jere should any questions arise from local authorities about the legitimacy of UCG.

In the short time since the interview program, Mr. Jere has informed us that two Pentecostal pastors have resigned and are advocating UCG. Also a Muslim has decided the gospel message made sense and is changing religion. Please pray for the safety of those choosing such a different path.

Mr. Jere, with his deep, resonating voice, served the station for a number of years before retiring and remains in an agri-



Filius Jere speaks while Nawa Talama sits and listens.

cultural advisory capacity with them. He now helps explain the doctrines of UCG in their vernacular. He downloads *Beyond Today* and also broadcasts them in the local language. The studio has now asked us for this to be also done in English. A half hour costs Zambian kwacha 357 (\$28). Mr. Pringle tried negotiating, but they would not come down in price but offered an additional 10 minutes.

Twice a month Mr. Jere travels to outlying areas using his own resources to visit people concerning the Church. We are examining the budget to see if we can help him in his service and with the broadcast.

Along with his zeal for God's Word, Mr. Jere has an agricultural technique allowing production of up to three times more maize per acre than normal. Through him Mr. Pringle and Mr. Talama hope to select a farmer from Mufulira, Solwezi and Mufumbwe to send to him for training in his methods in January in conjunction with *Good Works* or *LifeNets*. Should this come about, in about April or May Mr. Jere will visit these farmers to monitor their progress. Mr. Talama is looking for appropriate farmers from his areas who would be willing to change from their traditional farming methods. **UN**

# BEYOND TODAY

## Television Airing Schedule

Title	Host	Literature	Airing Period
<i>Kingdoms at War: The Spirit of Hate</i>	Darris McNeely	<i>Are We Living in the Time of the End?</i>	Jan. 3-9
<i>Is There a Real Spirit World?</i>	Steve Myers	<i>Is There Really a Devil?</i>	Jan. 10-16
<i>Why Study Bible Prophecy?</i>	Gary Petty	<i>You Can Understand Bible Prophecy</i>	Jan. 17-23
<i>Why Were You Born?</i>	Gary Petty	<i>What Is Your Destiny?</i>	Jan. 24-30
<i>Who Are the Two Witnesses?</i>	Steve Myers	<i>The Book of Revelation Unveiled</i>	Jan. 31-Feb. 6
<i>Angels: Agents of God</i>	Darris McNeely	<i>Does God Exist?</i>	Feb. 7-13
<i>Unforgivable: The Michaela Diemer Story</i>	Steve Myers	<i>Forgiveness is Possible</i>	Feb. 14-20
<i>Christ Our Passover</i>	Gary Petty	<i>God's Holy Day Plan</i>	Feb. 21-27

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY POSITION

Human resources and information technology have announced an opening for a help desk/junior programmer analyst.

The help desk/junior programmer analyst is present at the home office each workday. He or she is responsible for providing technical assistance and support related to computer systems, hardware, and/or software. He or she works with personnel in multiple departments at the home office, ministers in the field, as well as with external vendors when needed. The incumbent also provides support for international offices when needed. An additional duty of the applicant is using postal software to prepare mailings for others to print and deliver to the post office.

Skills include: excellent customer service, troubleshooting and communication skills. A good understanding of Microsoft Office, e-mail, Microsoft Windows, anti-

virus software and PC hardware are a must. Consistent customer care and quality standards are core competencies of the position. Experience in programming and Web development, especially in Microsoft Access or .NET and Drupal/PHP are a plus.

A college degree or equivalent and two years related experience and training in computer skills are required.

Potential employees must be baptized members of the United Church of God. Applicants must be biblically literate and possess a thorough working knowledge of the doctrines, beliefs and practices of the United Church of God. The deadline for submission of an application is Dec. 30, 2015. The Church does not keep submissions or applications that do not result in the applicant being hired. For more information about the position and to submit a resume, please contact [human\\_resources@ucg.org](mailto:human_resources@ucg.org).



Periodicals Postage Paid at Milford, Ohio, and at additional mailing offices

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Jan. 16-18:** Salt Lake City Ski Weekend, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Feb. 12-15:** Minnesota young adult weekend, Stewartville, Minnesota
- Feb. 12-15:** Cincinnati Family Dance Weekend, Cincinnati, Ohio
- March 5-6:** Atlanta Singles Weekend, Atlanta, Georgia
- March 26:** Southwest Regional Formal, Lebanon, Tennessee
- April 22:** Passover
- April 23-29:** Feast of Unleavened Bread

## WEB DEVELOPER JOB POSITION STILL OPEN

The United Church of God still has an opening for the Web developer position. The position has the following requirements:

- Custom programming and Web application development for Church websites.
- Testing, maintenance and troubleshooting of existing Church sites.
- Contributing ideas and efforts towards internal projects and working as part of a team to find solutions for various problems.
- Other duties as assigned.

### Required skills for this position.

- A solid understanding of PHP, AJAX, HTML, Javascript, and CSS.
- Familiarity with source control systems such as

Git.

- Ability to communicate technical ideas to business users and other teams (design, QA).
- Ability to both collaborate with team members and to work independently.
- Eager to embrace current and emerging Web technologies.

### The following experience would give an applicant preference:

- Knowledge of SEO coding best practices.
- Proficient in Drupal, including custom module development, key contributed modules and core API.
- Two-plus years of Drupal hands-on development experience.

- Experience integrating open source and third-party applications into existing systems.

A bachelors degree (B.A.) is preferred. An equivalent combination of education and experience may be considered. Strong language, logic and communication skills, and algebra/geometry level math skills are required. Those applying for consideration and invited for an interview must supply a resume of their education and/or experience.

Potential employees must be baptized members (in good standing) of the United Church of God. Applicants must be biblically literate and possess a thorough working knowledge of the doctrines, beliefs and practices of the United Church of God.

For more information about the position, please contact [human\\_resources@ucg.org](mailto:human_resources@ucg.org).