

OneAccord

July 2016



Trip to Israel

Kenya FOI Report: | 2016 High School
Hakuna Matata | Graduates

personal from the president

A Worldwide Association

I am writing this while on a pastoral trip through Asia with David Baker to visit scattered members. We began our trip in the Philippines, and from there we traveled to Singapore, India and Sri Lanka. We spent Pentecost in Manila with a group of 50 or so. Our Church attendance in the Philippines is normally around 220, with 250 expected for the Feast, which will include about 20 from the United States. But after leaving the Philippines the groups were much smaller. We visited and conducted services and Bible studies for groups as small as five and as large as 17. Dave Baker visits all the members in this region of the world at least once and often twice per year. In addition to Singapore, India and Sri Lanka, he visits members in Abu Dhabi (one member), Myanmar (three) and Kuwait (one).

While on this trip I was struck by the connection these members feel with the Church and especially the office in Allen. Rather than feeling left out as you would think, they feel connected through technology. They don't miss an *In Accord* or a member letter. In each area, I was asked about the decision to locate new office space in the Dallas area for our headquarters. It surprised me that they were so up-to-date on the news and that they had thought through the options and came up with what they felt would be the best solution. I assured each group that we planned to take our time and consider all options before we conclude which is the best. But they are clearly watching what we are doing!

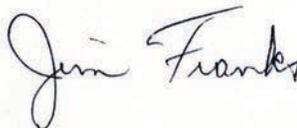
When we filed the paperwork for the new organization, Church of God, a Worldwide Association, on Dec. 23, 2010, it was unclear if we would even be a "worldwide association." On that day we had a name, a bank account and a post office box in the Orlando area. Our attorney, Jason Ranew, took care of the paperwork, and Richard Thompson, the local pastor in Ocala, assisted with signing the various documents. We wanted to have a worldwide association, but would it be possible?

We knew that our name would be "Church of God" since that is clearly the biblical name found in numerous New Testament scriptures. After a prolonged discussion, it was agreed to add "a Worldwide Association." It fit our desire to reach the world with the gospel and to care for the brethren in all parts of the world. But was it realistic?

This visit has shown me that indeed it is realistic. The fact that you claim the name *Church of God* doesn't make you the Church of God any more than claiming

the title of a Christian makes you a Christian. There is much more to being the Church of God than a name. The same is true of "a worldwide association." Claiming to exist around the world doesn't make you worldwide. But seeing the scattered members in the Philippines, Singapore, India and Sri Lanka made me realize that it is a reality. There are dedicated members in all of these countries. Many are alone, but connected in every case through technology and regular visits.

So what's in a name? A lot! The Church of God has been around since the Day of Pentecost in A.D. 31. The apostles were told to be "witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Our desire is to continue that work. We are committed to taking the gospel to the "end of the earth" and to caring for the brethren in each of these areas. Our desire is to live up to our name. And if you could see the members scattered in Asia, I believe you would agree that it is happening. The Church of God, a Worldwide Association, was an ambitious name for an organization that began with few resources in December of 2010. Today, 2016, it is indeed a reality.



Jim Franks

President
Church of God, a Worldwide Association
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CHURCH of GOD

A WORLDWIDE ASSOCIATION, INC.

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One Accord is published monthly, except April and October, online at members.cogwa.org by the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc.

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FI Travel Education Tour to Israel: When Can We Go Again?

A group of 91 brethren from four countries explored Israel in Foundation Institute's first-ever education tour.

By David Johnson



Holy days are always special, but what could be more special than observing the Feast of Pentecost in the birthplace of the Church of God? That is exactly what 91 brethren were able to do this year as part of our first Foundation Institute travel education tour. The opportunity for a group tour of Israel was announced just before the Feast of Tabernacles last fall. Initially, we planned for 40 to 45 people to take the trip, but in just a few weeks, over 130 people had written to us asking to be a part of the group. By the end of 2015 we had solid commitments from over 90 members from four countries and more than 30 different congregations around the United States.

We were able to work with a local travel agency with over four decades of experience to iron out the details of transportation, lodging, meals, etc. Once those details were established, there were two factors that were crucial to having a successful trip: having the proper guides and establishing the right itinerary. Many travel agencies offer prepackaged trips to Israel, but most of those trips involve extensive touring of typical “religious” sites, monuments, and churches, which often have little or nothing to do with actual biblical events. In a place like Israel with literally millennia of important historical events, some tours spend a great deal of time touring Crusader ruins, Byzantine churches and Muslim shrines instead of the places described in the Bible. While those sites can be interesting, we wanted to focus on the biblical locations instead.

With the help of Eric Copperman, an experienced Jewish guide we had used on two previous trips, we put together an extensive itinerary to many key sites from both the Old and New Testaments. Eric had researched our group so he would have a better understanding of what we wanted. As a result, he referred to us as “kosher Christians,” a designation we thought was funny but reasonably accurate. We knew in advance it would be challenging and tiring to visit all of these locations, but we also knew that for most people this would be a once in a lifetime trip. No one wanted to invest that much time and expense into a trip and then fail to see every site possible.

In the months leading up to our departure, we distributed a great deal of material, including a 106-page booklet giving information about the trip and the various sites we would be visiting. Time and tensions in the area did not allow us to visit every venue we wanted to see, but the experience of seeing first-hand the places described in the Bible had a profound effect on us. Many times as we read through the Bible, we don't even realize specific locations are named; they really mean nothing to us. But once a person has seen them and walked over the places where prophets and kings and apostles walked, those places come alive. As my wife described it the first time we visited Israel, it is like getting up each morning and stepping into the Bible.



In that sense, a tour like this is unlike touring anywhere else on earth. People commonly refer to this as the “Holy Land,” but it is actually God who gave it that name (Zechariah 2:12). God further says His eyes are always upon this land (Deuteronomy 11:12). Being in Israel involves much more than touring historic ruins and famous locales. It brings God’s Word to life in a way that nothing else can. Rather than spend a great deal of time giving the physical details of this trip, the words of those who made this journey can express the impact it had on them.

As you can see, trips like this can have a profound effect on those who are able to participate. At this point, we have no specific plans for future Travel Education tours, but if there is adequate interest, we will be happy to consider additional tours to biblically significant places. ©A

Travelers’ Comments

“The FI Israel trip was amazing! I was able to see and walk where Jesus Christ and the apostles walked along with so many others written about in the Bible. I did this with other believers who were just as excited as I was.” — *Annette Epperson, Tennessee*

“Standing on the Mount of Olives made me cry. Just to be standing where I know that Jesus Christ will someday return to is just so moving. It makes the Bible seem so real.” — *Pam Rehm, Arkansas*

“Visiting Israel provided a deeper, wider and more detailed perspective of the Bible and God’s unyielding love for all mankind than I could have ever imagined. Yet, in this historically rich land, peace is so fragile; the status quo is razor thin; relative cooperation seems ready at any moment to explode. I desperately desire Jesus Christ to return soon!” — *David Jackson, Maryland*

“This trip has changed the way I see Israel. When I read the Bible now, I can relate to what I am reading with more clarity.” — *Peter Griffith, Barbados*

“Being present in Israel and having the opportunity to experience and see the history and geography of the land firsthand has given me a better understanding of the circumstances present in biblical times. This greatly enriches my biblical studies both in its historical references and with scriptures foretelling future events in the region.” — *Elizabeth Rule, Texas*

“This was a tremendous trip. I found I gained a deeper appreciation for the history and geography of the Holy Land, in particular the northern parts of Israel like Tel Dan and Banias, but also the places in and around the beautiful city of Jerusalem.” — *Ralph Levy, Texas*

“Seeing the Jezreel Valley from Tel Megiddo will forever stay in my mind, and sights like that have motivated me to pray and study



more. Traveling the land drove home the need for the Prince of Peace to come to the City of Peace and bring rest to the land and to the entire world.” — *Scott Lord, New York*

“On the Sabbath I knew we were heading to the Mount of Olives when I stepped onto the bus and left our hotel, and I knew it would be pretty neat. But nothing could have prepared me for the feelings that flooded me when the bus turned that final corner and my eyes fell on the Mount for the first time. It was so much more than I had prepared myself for!” — *Patrick Scarborough, North Carolina*

“Superlative! Every day I thought, ‘Amazing! How can it get any better than this?’ And the next day, it was incredible in a different way, so that each day became outstanding in its own right. Seeing where biblical/historical events occurred and envisioning our ultimate future here through the eyes of truth is life-changing.” — *Rebecca Norrod, New York*

“This trip brought life and form to the people, places and events of the Bible for me. To actually stand and walk in many of the same places where Christ walked and completed His work was an amazing experience. As a result I now have a framework, a three-dimensional view and map in my head of places and events that took place in the Holy Land, especially Jerusalem. This has brought God’s Word and plan and my understanding of the Scriptures together in a way that I have never experienced before. This was one of the most moving and meaningful experiences of my life.” — *Glenn Doig, Texas*

“I do know, without a doubt, that this experience affected my faith for the better. The simple fact that I got to stand on ground that meant so much in the past and will mean so much more in the future is something that I will never forget.” — *Erinn Moore, Florida*

“When can we go again? It’s hard to find the right word: awesome, wonderful, inspiring, emotional, exciting. Where do you stop?” — *Gay Oren, Texas*

“We spend a lifetime reading, studying and probing our teachers regarding this land called Israel and then, all at once there we are in the picture. How can a land so small possibly contain such an oversized history?” — *Lois Krulc, Texas*





Kenya FOI Report: Hakuna Matata

A Foundation Outreach International volunteer reflects on her experiences and lessons learned while serving in Kenya.

By Tatiana Meeker

When I first told my college friends I wasn't walking at my graduation because I was going to Kenya, they weren't entirely surprised. They're used to me going to the Feast each year and taking other trips when I can. But they were worried I would regret not walking at my own graduation. Now, looking back at the trip I took in December, I realize I would've regretted not going to Kenya much more. Serving at the youth camp in Kenya was such a tremendous experience, and I am so thankful to have had the opportunity to go.

The project was led by Tim Waddle, and there were three other American participants besides me: Emily Buchanan, Kristin Sanders and Andrew Travers. Mr. Waddle went out of his way to make sure that we all dealt with the cultural differences well and that we had breaks when we needed them throughout the camp.

A few challenges

Camp in Africa is quite different from the youth camps in the United States, in large part due to cultural differences. The camp in Kenya was held at a boarding school that was on holiday, so we had one big dorm for all the girls and one for the boys. The Kenyan staff slept in the dorms with them, and we slept in tents on the property with cows and chickens as our neighbors. Some of those poor chickens ended up as dinner later in the week. There were "bathrooms," which I've put in quotes because they didn't

have actual baths or showers. The toilet stalls were just holes in the ground, and the washroom consisted of empty stalls. The idea is to take a bucket of water and wash yourself in the empty stall. For us Americans, this may sound slightly uncomfortable, but for our Kenyan brethren these were very normal conditions.

Mr. Waddle was kind enough to take us off-site for showers a few times in the week, and we used several packets of baby wipes during the camp. Emily and I shared a tent and often had a competition of whose feet smelled worse at the end of the day. In situations like that, humor is the best medicine. We also slept in mosquito nets at night and made sure to lather on the sunscreen every day. Everyone had a positive attitude despite the different accommodations.

Another big difference from American camps was the time schedule. We joked about being on Kenyan time because, despite having a schedule, things were often late. The meal times were a rough estimate, and there were sometimes unforeseen circumstances that caused more delay. Patience is a virtue, right?

Many joys

We had a plethora of activities at the camp, including volleyball, ultimate Frisbee, badminton, first aid and hygiene, arts and crafts, team building, field games, dodgeball, kickball, flag football, dance and soccer (by far the favorite for both girls and boys). At the end of each day, the staff would regroup to talk about how well



activities went and what we might change for the next day. We also had Compass Checks every morning, as we do at many camps in the States. One of the things that struck me was how much the brethren—children and adults alike—enjoyed singing hymns. It made me consider the words more thoughtfully when I sang them afterwards.

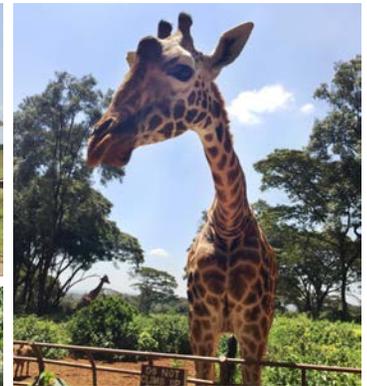
It was truly a joy to work with the kids and teens there. We had campers aged 5 to 17 at the camp. Even though the campers were at different levels of understanding and knowledge, they all enjoyed the camp and hopefully learned quite a bit. Most were shy at the beginning, especially because of the language difference, but by the end of the week you couldn't get some to stop talking! I really enjoyed connecting with many of the campers, and they asked us many questions about the United States and how things were different. Having the chance to get to know our brethren in another part of the world is an inspiring and eye-opening experience. They may live in different environments and lead different lives, but we're all striving for the same goal—and one day we will all be together.

A foretaste of the Kingdom

One of the perks of serving on this project was the opportunity to experience a safari. I cannot express my gratitude enough to those who made that experience possible. We spent about two days after the camp ended at a safari park, where we experienced the beautiful wildlife Kenya has to offer. Among the animals we saw were lions, elephants, Cape buffalo, wildebeests, many types of antelope, warthogs, hippos, a cheetah and—my personal favorite—giraffes. Being able to get so close to these wild animals was a wonderful foretaste of the Kingdom. God's creation is something we can take for granted on a daily basis—sunrises and sunsets, lakes, flowers blooming—but seeing how diverse His creation truly is and watching these animals roam free on the savannah really made an impact.

Having the opportunity to serve on this project was a tremendous blessing. I learned so much, made connections with our brethren in Kenya, became wonderful friends with the other participants, experienced God's creation in different ways, and fed my love of adventure and travel. I'm extremely thankful to those who organized this project and the congregations that held fund-raisers to help with the costs. I know this project has impacted me as a person, and I would recommend it to any young person interested.

By the way, Timon and Pumbaa in *The Lion King* were right. *Hakuna matata* really does mean "no worries" in Swahili. See? You already know the language. ☺☺



2016 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



Jadea Blencowe

JADEA BLENCOWE

Parents' names: Donn and Maria Blencowe

Congregation: Atlanta, Georgia

High school accomplishments: Jadea graduated from Georgia Cyber Academy High School. Her extracurricular activities included volleyball and volunteering at school events and local food banks.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Jadea loves working with young children and has served on staff at COGWA preteen camps each summer since the age of 13. She also regularly assists with Sabbath school.

Plans after graduation: After graduation, she will pursue a degree in early childhood education with the goal of becoming a teacher for grades K-3. To get a jump start on her college degree, Jadea took



Christie Burnett

advantage of her state's dual enrollment program and graduated high school with 12 college credits.

CHRISTIE MICHELLE BURNETT

Parents' names: Andy and Lisa Burnett

Congregation: Dallas and Sherman, Texas

High school accomplishments: Christie graduated in May from A Beka Academy, Pensacola, Florida, receiving the Academic Achievement Award for maintaining a 4.0 GPA throughout high school. She was baptized last fall.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Christie has enjoyed participating in teen camps and serving at preteen camp. Her hobbies include piano, acoustic guitar and baking.

Plans after graduation: Christie plans to pursue a



Rhianna Cartwright

degree/certification in culinary arts.

RHIANNA CARTWRIGHT

Parents' names: Dennis and Donna Cartwright

Congregation: Austin, Texas

High school accomplishments: Rhianna graduated from Cedar Ridge High School in Round Rock, Texas, with a 4.0 GPA. Rhianna was in choir all four years of high school and was a member of her school's varsity and show choirs her senior year. She volunteered as a library aide at Gattis Elementary School her junior year and received the "Youth Volunteer of the Year" award.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Rhianna has a passion for music. She sings in the Austin congregation's choir and has performed special music. She has recently



Gabi Caudle

started studying piano. She has attended various church camps for the past eight years and has also served as staff at preteen camp for the past two years. She also enjoys studying French, drawing, watching movies, drinking coffee and spending time with her family.

Plans after graduation: Rhianna's future plans are to attend Austin Community College to complete her basics before attending Foundation Institute. After that, she plans to transfer to a university to complete her bachelor's degree in music.

GABRIELLE ALYSSA CAUDLE

Parents' names: Jeff Caudle and Lisa Roe Brown

Congregation: Dallas, Texas

High school accomplishments: Gabrielle attended school in Auckland, New Zealand,

from age 5 to 18 and graduated from high school in December 2015. Throughout her high school years, Gabrielle studied Cambridge, a curriculum formed by the University of Cambridge, (U.K.). She was particularly interested in studying geography, business studies, graphic design and English. While in high school, Gabrielle was an active member of the glee club and liked to help run activities in the primary school.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Gabrielle has attended a range of summer and winter COGWA Youth Camps as a camper from the age of 12. She was involved in jazz dance for 10 years, participating in stage performances and the Jazz Dance New Zealand examinations. Her hobbies include singing, watercolor painting, interior decorating, hanging out with friends and traveling all over the world.

Plans after graduation: Gabrielle is now living in Dallas and plans to attend Collin College in the fall. She has an interest in photography and graphic design, which she hopes will lead her to a career in the world of magazine publication.

DANIEL JAMES CLARK

Parents' names: Tom and Mary Clark

Congregation: Van Buren, Bentonville and Mena, Arkansas

High school accomplishments: Daniel spent his junior and senior years in concurrent enrollment with the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith through their Western Arkansas Technical College. He was named outstanding pre-engineering student of the year and received a book scholarship for that honor. He graduated with a robotics

certification and a head start on college credits. He was a member of the National Honor Society and Mu Alpha Theta. He participated in the science fair and went to the state science fair three out of four years. Daniel received the Academic Challenge Scholarship from the State of Arkansas. He was also awarded a prestigious engineering scholarship by the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Daniel enjoys serving in the congregations that he attends. He leads songs in two congregations and serves on the greeters' crew, sound system and setup/takedown crews. He has attended camp every year since before he was born. This will be his sixth year serving on staff at preteen camp.

Plans after graduation: Daniel will be attending the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith, pursuing a degree in mechanical engineering.

DEREK MICHAEL DEMAREST

Parents' names: Cliff and Susan Demarest

Congregation: Dallas, Texas

High school accomplishments: Derek graduated from Plano East Senior High School with an AP/Honors diploma. He played JV and varsity soccer.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Derek enjoys travel, soccer, music and playing video games with friends. A self-taught musician, he plays both acoustic and electric guitar. Derek participated in Christian Leadership Workshop in the Dallas congregation and played church basketball and volleyball throughout his teen years. He has attended many preteen camps, as well as Camp Carter, Camp Sequoia and



Daniel Clark



Derek Demarest



Will Ditto



Trevor Fitts

Strong Rock Camp. Derek founded his own consulting firm, Consultants United, which works on social media and mentoring projects.

Plans after graduation: Derek will attend the University of Texas at Dallas to study business.

WILL DITTO

Parents' names: James and Nanette Ditto

Congregation: East Texas

High school accomplishments: Will is graduating with honors from Big Sandy High School and ranks eighth in his class. He has been very active in the school's sports program. He participated in football, cross-country, basketball, tennis and track and field. He was a two-time tennis MVP and was on the basketball second team all-district and Texas High School Coaches Association academic all-state team.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Will grew up as a third-generation Sabbath-keeper. He is active in church activities, including participating in youth summer camps as a camper and lifeguard and at Winter Family Weekend events in basketball and volleyball. In his spare time, Will enjoys motorcycles, paintball and relaxing at home.

Plans after graduation: Future plans include attending college this fall. His major field of study and professional goals are not yet settled.

MALCOLM TREVOR SCOTT FITTS

Parents' names: Lee and Lisa Fitts

Congregation: Nashville, Tennessee

High school accomplishments: Trevor has been homeschooled his entire life.



Westley Horne



Lynda Howell



Sofia Iturra



Mackenzie Jennings



Mackenzie Kobernat

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Trevor is the fourth of nine children. He enjoys learning anything that will get him out of the house and away from a textbook. Trevor loves being outdoors, and that love has led him to attend many of the Church's teen and preteen camps as a camper and a worker. This has created a large following of friends in the Church around the world. Everybody knows Trevor!

Plans after graduation: Trevor is a hard worker and has learned many aspects of the construction industry, having worked with his uncles and father over the years. Trevor's name means "prudent," which was a great choice of a name for him. Trevor researches every option, gathers all of the important information and then makes his decisions. He is still gathering information on what he plans to do after graduation, but for now, he plans to work in the construction field until he figures it out.

WESTLEY ALLEN HORNE

Parents' names: Tim and Miranda Horne

Congregation: Hickory, North Carolina

High school accomplishments: Westley graduated from Johnson County High School. While in high school, he completed all of his college math requirements through dual enrollment.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Westley has attended Strong Rock Camp for two years. He has also volunteered for several years as a coach for a youth fitness program at an elementary school.

Plans after graduation: Westley plans to attend East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee, this fall.

LYNDA HOWELL

Parents' names: Steve and Jada Howell

Congregation: Indianapolis, Indiana

High school accomplishments: Lynda graduated from Howell Academy—that is, she was homeschooled for the entirety of her academic career.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Lynda loves to design and create anything involving fashion or crafts. One of her other hobbies is studying languages.

Plans after graduation: She has been accepted to Indiana University/Purdue University Indianapolis for the fall of 2016. She received the four-year Academic Excellence Scholarship from IUPUI.

SOFIA ITURRA

Parents' names: Manuel and Cecilia Iturra

Congregation: Dallas, Texas

High school accomplishments: Sofia graduated from Allen High School. She moved from Chile in January of 2015 and did not speak English. She learned English in her senior year of high school. She is also an accomplished folk dancer.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Sofia has attended two youth camps in the United States and five youth camps in Chile. She also

assisted in several church activities in Chile, especially fund-raising for camp.

Plans after graduation: Sofia wants to attend Collin College to get her associate's degree in science. She then wants to attend Texas Woman's University to get her postgraduate degree in occupational therapy.

MACKENZIE MIRANDA JENNINGS

Parents' names: Matthew and Dora Jennings

Congregation: Dallas, Texas

High school accomplishments: Kenzie completed her associate's degree in science during her last two years of high school. She was awarded the highest college honor scholar recognition. She received honors in all four years of high school as well as President Obama's Silver Volunteer Award and the Mentor Award. She played varsity basketball in her sophomore year.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Kenzie likes to play volleyball and basketball. She volunteers as a preteen Sabbath school assistant and has attended the Camp Sequoia Extended Session. Her favorite movie is *The Blind Side*.

Plans after graduation: Kenzie will be attending the University of Texas at Arlington, where she will be pursuing her bachelor's degree in forensic psychology.

MACKENZIE KOBERNAT

Parents' names: Brett and Deborah Kobernat

Congregation: Orlando, Florida

High school accomplishments: Mackenzie graduated from International Community School with high honors as

class salutatorian. She was a dual enrollment student at Valencia State College and earned over 30 college credit hours. She also contributed over 100 hours of community service through her high school years. While at ICS, Makenzie enjoyed playing soccer and basketball as well as attending basketball games where she and her friends cheered on her brother and fellow classmates.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Makenzie helped organize and prepare many of the games for the annual Orlando church carnival over the course of several years. She loves assisting youth Bible class and working with the little children in our church area. Makenzie attended Camp Strong Rock and Camp Carter and enjoyed playing volleyball at Winter Family Weekend this past year. Most important, Makenzie is very dedicated to walking with God through all that life may bring.

Plans after graduation: Makenzie will attend the University of Central Florida, where she plans to pursue an undergraduate degree in biology, and then hopes to attend optometry school for her doctoral degree.

HANNAH KROSKA

Parents' names: Al and Sheri Kroska

Congregation: St. Cloud and Twin Cities, Minnesota

High school accomplishments: Hannah was a part of Art Club, Peer Helping and the Pierz Chapter of National Honor Society. She was also a Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Alum. She completed over 350 service hours while taking dual credit courses at St. Cloud State University and earned a 3.94 GPA at

the college. She graduated as an honors student from her high school and with her associate's degree from St. Cloud State.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Hannah attended youth camps as a preteen and teen and has served as staff since 2011. She plays the trumpet in her congregation's musical ensemble. She has been on two canoe trips to the Boundary Waters and also a preteen trip to Voyageurs National Park. She enjoys cooking, shoe painting, cake decorating, working with her dad on their Jeep, writing letters to friends and volunteering in Mrs. Girtz's third grade classroom.

Plans after graduation: Hannah will attend St. Cloud State University for her bachelor of science in nursing degree to become a registered nurse. She will take a state certification test in early July to work as a certified nursing assistant through college.

MARIAH PARSON

Parent's name: Deborah Parson

Congregation: Queens, New York

High school accomplishments: Mariah graduated from Bronx Lighthouse College Prep Academy. She is an honor roll student and AP Scholar. Her favorite areas of study are world and American history and international relations. In addition, she was a member of the drama club and was a seminar adviser on the school's 2016 Black History Month Committee. She also participates on the Lighthouse varsity basketball team and the Bronx Dance Theatre dance team.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Mariah was in the



Hannah Kroska



Mariah Parson

children's choir from the age of 3 to 11, performing at the Feast every year. This summer will be her fourth year as a camper at Camp Heritage. She has attended the Virginia Beach Weekend twice, and this year she went to the spring prom in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Mariah volunteers weekly in our local congregation, serving on the food line. She enjoys cycling, track and dancing. Within the past year, she discovered a talent for acting, performing in her school's production of *Our Town*. Mariah donated blood to the Red Cross twice.

Plans after graduation: Upon graduation, Mariah hopes to attend Clark Atlanta University, majoring in biology in preparation for a premed degree. Her goal is to study at a college of dentistry to become a certified practitioner.

ASHLEY LAURÉN PEOPLES

Parents' names: Val and Greg Peoples

Congregation: Castle Rock, Colorado

High school accomplishments: During her four years at Castle View High School, she played tennis and lettered in rock climbing. Ashley also earned the principal's honor roll academic letter all four years, was a member of the



Ashley Peoples

National Honor Society and was president of the Spanish Honor Society. Additionally, she received a scholarship from the Academic Booster Club to apply toward a college of her choice.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Ashley has developed a love for adventure in the great outdoors, mountaineering and rock climbing with her friends and family. Aside from her outdoor endeavors, she is passionate about music and enjoys playing the piano. She currently performs special music in her local congregation. Involvement in CYC Camps has been important to Ashley, and she has served on the CYC staff.

Plans after graduation: Upon graduation, Ashley will be pursuing her general associate of arts degree at Arapahoe Community College before transferring to a four-year university.

AMANDA KATLYN PORTER

Parents' names: Keith and JoAnn Porter

Congregation: Little Rock, Arkansas

High school accomplishments: Amanda has been homeschooled her entire life.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Amanda started attending summer youth camps at the age of 10. She has attended summer and winter COGWA Youth Camps as a camper and has served as staff at Camp Bob White. Amanda serves the Little Rock congregation by helping set up the sound equipment for services. Amanda enjoyed playing basketball for seven years on her local homeschool basketball team. She played in several Homeschool National Basketball tournaments. After deciding to leave basketball, she turned her attention to music. She loves playing her guitar and has recently begun learning to play the trumpet.

Plans after graduation: Amanda plans to attend Henderson State University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas.

STEPHANIE MICHELE RUBIN

Parents' names: Louis and Patricia Rubin

Congregation: Houston South, Texas

High school accomplishments: Stephanie received the outstanding student award in government class. Her favorite subjects included government, history and psychology. Volleyball and basket-

ball were her favorite sports. *Church activities/hobbies/interests:* Stephanie participated in and enjoyed immensely her summer camp experiences. She enjoys traveling, shopping at thrift stores and hanging out with friends. A trip to Hawaii last year for the Feast was her favorite.

Plans after graduation: Stephanie will be attending San Jacinto Jr. College for basics before transferring to Sam Houston State University to study criminal justice. This is a broad major that will allow her to specialize in numerous careers. After more exploration of the subject, she will decide where it will take her.

BELLINDA FEMILIASTUTY SIMANJUNTAK

Parents' names: Edward and Lilik Simanjuntak

Congregation: Batam, Indonesia

High school accomplishments: Bellinda chose to homeschool for the sake of the Sabbath and holy days. Due to the lack of teachers, she mostly had to learn math and accounting on her own. She also had to learn English, Bahasa Indonesia, sociology and geography subjects entirely on her own for three years. She gratefully thanks God for His guidance and help, without which she would not have made it.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: As a member in Indonesia, she and her family join the Auckland, New Zealand, webcast every Sabbath. On high days, they attend services in Singapore.



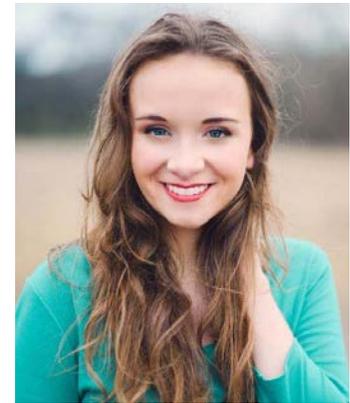
Amanda Porter



Stephanie Rubin



Bellinda Simanjuntak



Sarah Smith

She attended the summer camp in the Philippines in 2015 and is contemplating attending the Young Adult Leadership Weekend there as well. She has played the piano several times for special music. She loves reading, listening to music and playing with her cat, Dipsy. She is interested in scuba diving and learning history.

Plans after graduation: As she has been teaching English for children classes since junior high school, she is planning to major in English education at university.

SARAH CHRISTINE SMITH

Parents' names: Tim and Melodie Smith

Congregation: Dallas, Texas

High school accomplishments: Sarah attended Plano East Senior High School. She was a member of the National Honor Society and maintained a 4.0 or higher GPA.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Sarah was born in Pasadena, California, and moved to Texas in the third grade. She adjusted to life quickly by making great friends, many of whom she still has today. Her hobbies include hanging out with her friends, playing cello or ukulele, and watching Netflix.

Plans after graduation: Her future goals are to get baptized soon and to one day become a registered nurse working in intensive care. She plans to get





Mariah Solum



Kenny Varney



Lindsey Ware



Austin Whitley



Thomas Zoellner

her nursing degree at Collin College and then attend a larger university afterward.

MARIAH LIBERTY SOLUM

Parents' names: Wayne and Lela Solum

Congregation: Austin, Texas

High school accomplishments: Mariah was homeschooled from kindergarten and attended the same homeschool co-op for 11 years. During her senior year, she worked part-time while finishing her high school courses and completed college courses, all while maintaining a 4.0.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: She has a passion for music and participates often

in special music at church. She sings and plays piano, guitar and ukulele. Church preteen and teen camps have been an important part of her childhood through the years, and this summer she has plans to attend all of the COGWA teen camps in the United States.

Plans after graduation: In the fall Mariah will attend Austin Community College full time with plans to apply to Texas A&M in 2017 to study psychology. She is grateful for all of the amazing opportunities she has been given and looks forward to what lies ahead.

KENNY VARNEY

Parents' names: Ray and Shirley Varney

Congregation: Beloit, Wisconsin

High school accomplishments: Kenny graduated from high school.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Kenny enjoys playing basketball and running. He loves going to Winter Camp and has been going ever since the age of 12. Singing in the local choir is something he looks forward to every holy day. He hopes that one day he will have the confidence to perform special music on the piano.

Plans after graduation: Kenny plans to attend Rock Valley Community College and is interested in running a business and learning about entrepreneurship.

LINDSEY NATASHA WARE

Parents' names: Stephen and Donna Ware

Congregation: Van Buren, Arkansas

High school accomplishments: Lindsey was homeschooled.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Lindsey started

dancing in 2004 at the age of 4, doing ballet and tap. Later, she began to learn pointe/advanced ballet and advanced jazz at her Christian-based dance studio. This past year, Lindsey was asked by her instructor to assist in teaching the new students as well. Her other passions include makeup, special effects, drawing and painting.

Plans after graduation: Lindsey would like to take a break from schooling and enjoy life while making decisions about college. She intends to take online courses in interior decorating and design.

AUSTIN WHITLEY

Congregation: Bentonville, Arkansas

High school accomplishments: Austin graduated from Bentonville High School.

Church activities/hobbies/interests: Austin enjoys archery, painting and time with his family.

Plans after graduation: Austin plans to attend the University of Arkansas in the fall to pursue a degree in art.

THOMAS ZOELLNER

Parent's name: Jennifer Kosharek

Congregation: St. Petersburg, Florida

High school accomplishments: Tommy graduated from Lakewood High School in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Plans after graduation: Tommy is currently considering his future educational options.



Q

How do I overcome my sins? Every time I used to repent, I could stop sinning. But now, I cannot stop the sin. Things are not happening in my life because of my sin. Even when I pray, God does not answer my prayers. I am depressed.

Through this column, we want to provide you with a window on the work of the Personal Correspondence Department. Because we interact mostly with people new to God's truth, some topics might not seem directly applicable to you. But think how you would answer the question if someone asked it of you! And many answers will contain spiritual principles that you can apply in your life, even if the question isn't one you would ask.

A

You are right to expect that God would hear your prayers and that He would enable you to successfully resist the temptation to sin. Your description suggests that perhaps you do not have the power of the Holy Spirit working within you in the way you would like. Please don't take offense at this; many sincere people find themselves in the same situation. They don't have the spiritual power that a Christian should have. Have you thought about that? I'll come back to this, after discussing two other possible explanations.

The first is that God may be allowing you to experience strong temptations so that you will grow in spiritual strength by resisting them. That requires fighting them, sometimes for a period of time, with every possible effort. Some aspects of the spiritual character God is building within us come only by obeying His laws under great stress. Our article "[Why Am I Suffering?](#)" explains this from the Scriptures.

The second possibility is that you may be overlooking some sin that is blocking God's Spirit from helping you. Our sins can indeed cut us off from God. Consider the counsel of Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."

In one of King David's prayers of confession and repentance, he asked to be cleansed of "secret faults" and admitted that no person can understand his errors without God's help (Psalm 19:12). Pray as David did, asking God to show you any sin you have overlooked. Ask Him also to show you how

to repent of it. This study guide will help: [How to Pray](#). The title might imply only basic information. In fact, it is quite detailed, including little-known facts and instruction on prayer. You can obtain additional information in article form by going to "[Prayer, Fasting and Meditation: Relating to God](#)." Then, work your way through the related articles, which complete the picture.

Now, allow me to expand on the possibility of not having God's Spirit working in your life as you would like. This is a very important issue to understand, and it's also a large topic to cover. I encourage you to read the article, "[How Do You Know You Have the Holy Spirit?](#)" for help in determining whether you received the Holy Spirit. It will help you, as it has many others, review and "inspect" your spiritual foundation. If you have followed the biblical pathway to God's gift of the Holy Spirit, your confidence will be restored. If, however, you find that you skipped necessary elements of the process entirely, you will know what you must do.

Our booklet [Change Your Life!](#) and the articles in the section "[Change: Transforming Your Life to God's Way](#)" will also provide very helpful guidance. These are part of a major segment of our online library dedicated to this theme. As you go through the related articles, your understanding will greatly increase!

You should have every confidence of success in overcoming, *if you follow the specific process that God reveals*. We have prayed for God to show you the way out of your discouraging situation. Let us know if our ministers in this department can be of further help. ©

CHURCH POTLUCK

What's cooking in your congregation?



SPIDERMAN, THE THREE MUSKETEERS AND SEVERAL PRINCESSES MAKE APPEARANCE AT ROANOKE CHILDREN'S SOCIAL

The Roanoke, Virginia, congregation enjoyed its second annual children's social the evening of March 12.

After services that afternoon, we set up for a potluck geared especially for the kids. Everyone enjoyed corn dogs, fried and popcorn chicken, mac and cheese, tacos, nachos, corn on the cob, baked spaghetti and several different desserts and types of cookies. Although the food was geared toward kid favorites, quite a few adults made more than one trip through the buffet line. During the meal, a walk around the dining room revealed many smiles, much laughter and fellowship.

Following the potluck and subsequent cleanup, the fun really began. All of the kids (as well as some of the adults) hurriedly changed into some very creative costumes. Present for the evening (just to list a few) were a cowboy, a doctor, several princesses, a TMNT (which, apparently, is a teenage mutant ninja turtle), Spiderman, a couple of Jedi knights, Princess Leia, the Three Musketeers and even Minnie Mouse.

Then, once everyone and everything was ready, a couple of our dearest clowns ushered in the festivities for the rest of the evening. Various games were set up for the kids to enjoy, as well as a face-painting station that was a huge hit. Also, during the course of the evening, a raffle was held in order to raise money for our local Youth Camp fund. Almost \$200 was raised, and that money will be used to assist in the travel expenses of getting our youth to and from the various Church camps.

What a wonderful Sabbath and subsequent evening this day was. The messages we heard that afternoon at services were very inspiring, and the fellowship, food and fun enjoyed later on that afternoon and evening made for a truly joyous day for everyone—especially for the children.

Robert Worsham



Beloit, Wisconsin, congregation knits blankets for charity.

SHARING WARMTH

This winter, members of the Beloit, Wisconsin, congregation were busy with two projects related to warmth. In the first project Karla Kretsinger introduced us to the nonprofit organization "Warm Up America!" We knit or crocheted 7-by-9-inch sections to be used for blankets for charity. Several bags of handiwork have already been donated to the local Michaels store, which pieces them together.

Second, we took advantage of early sunsets and followed a pizza dinner in January with a work party to provide blankets for hospice patients of Home Health United in Janesville. Bonnie Strass organized the evening, while Joe and Jan Jacoby shared their system of making no-sew fleece blankets with all of us. Everyone was able to help out with the project. Our youngest members specialized in smiles, encouragement and scrap collecting, while those aged 8 to 88 were busy measuring, pinning, cutting and knot tying.

We plan to continue both projects as we positively fulfill James 2:16 and build our *esprit de corp*.

Heather Schwartzrock

TEENS HAVE A BLAST AT JAMPACKED SOUTHWEST WEEKEND

The Phoenix, Arizona, congregation hosted its first-ever Southwest Teen Weekend on March 26 and 27. A total of 22 teens were in attendance from Arizona, California and Oregon.

All of the teens and their families arrived by the evening of March 25 and stayed with local members. Sabbath morning started with doughnuts and coffee at the church hall before Bible study at 12:30. The Bible study was given by local pastor James Capo on the topic of King Saul and King David, and which king we should strive to be more like today. After the Bible study concluded, teens were able to fellowship for a while before services began at 2 p.m. After services, the Phoenix congregation held a taco bar potluck for everyone.

Once the sun set, the activities commenced. The night started off with glow-in-the-dark Capture the Flag with boys versus girls. Then teens battled in a powder paint war, wearing the white shirts that were provided for them. Messy Twister was played with shaving cream, and music was playing all night. As everyone started to get tired, cookies and milk were handed out as one last treat before all went home for the night.

On Sunday morning the teens gathered bright and early at the world-class Ben Avery Shooting Facility for some skeet shooting. After a couple hours of shooting clay targets, the teens headed over to nearby Lake Pleasant for a barbecue lunch beside the lake. Once everyone had their fill of food and fellowship, the teens and their families went home. It was a weekend filled with fun and friends.

The Phoenix congregation looks forward to making this an annual event and hopes to include more teens next year!

Jayde Cox

YOUNG ADULTS SPEND FOUR DAYS TREKKING IN THE GRAND CANYON

Stinky, blistered feet. Tired muscles. Eating dehydrated meals from pouches. Sound appealing?

For eight young adults and two pastors, it was the best way to spend a week in May. Led by pastors James Capo and Gary Black, eight young adults took on a challenging backpacking trek on the Hermit Trail in the Grand Canyon. The group included Justin Plagenza (Stockton, California), Emmanuel Gomez (Phoenix, Arizona), Ben Pedersen (Minneapolis, Minnesota), Kait Black (Cottage Grove, Minnesota), Kelsey Black (Cottage Grove, Minnesota), Glade Pennington (Corydon, Indiana), and Dustin and Liz Boyle (Woodville, Wisconsin).

For four days and three nights, we carried everything we needed—including tents, sleeping bags, cooking supplies, water filters and food—in our backpacks. We began hiking down the Hermit Trail at about 8 a.m. on Tuesday, May 24, 2016. About 7 miles down the trail and nearly 4,000 feet in elevation below the trailhead, we had the sobering opportunity to assist a sorely unprepared couple from Louisiana. As they were suffering from dehydration and signs of heat stroke, we provided them with water, electrolytes and food; helped them cool down; and stayed with them until they were stabilized and able to go on during the cooler part of the day. Using the emergency system Mr. Black had brought with us, we sent a message for help, and rangers met them part way up the trail to assist them out of the canyon. It made our afternoon and evening a bit more difficult, but we each learned important lessons from the experience.

On Wednesday we enjoyed exploring a small-scale slot canyon at Monument Creek before hiking to our campsite along the Colorado River. Many of us benefited from dipping our feet—and even dunking completely—in the icy river. It was a windy night to sleep on a sandy beach, and the next morning we were covered in sand.

On Thursday morning we watched a few rafters on the Colorado River and then hiked on to the scenic Hermit Creek Campground. Upon arriving at the campsite, we hastened to set up our tents as storm clouds headed our way. Thankfully, we only felt a few sprinkles and were able to explore waterfalls and pools and boulder rock faces.

On Friday at 5:16 a.m., we began our hike out of the canyon, carrying our packs up the equivalent of four Empire State Buildings. When we emerged at the South Rim around 2 p.m., we were a bit sad that the backpacking trip was complete, but we were filled with a great sense of accomplishment and gratitude for such an amazing opportunity.

Throughout the trip, we were blessed with favorable weather,



safe hiking, good health, fantastic group dynamics and meaningful Christian living discussions. After driving to Phoenix on Friday, we stayed with several host families from the Phoenix area. We enjoyed Sabbath services in Phoenix, and most of us returned to our homes on Sunday, May 29.

So, remember the stinky, blistered feet, tired muscles and dehydrated meals? For those of us who shared this trek, the unpleasant side effects of backpacking were quickly forgotten. The breathtaking views, corny jokes and even the opportunity to save a couple's lives will forever surpass the temporary discomforts of trail life. For us, it wasn't about the lack of plumbing and electricity. It was about adventure and admiring God's handiwork. It wasn't about sore feet and sleeping on the ground. It was about learning endurance and working toward a goal. In other words, we slept in a 5,000-star hotel and had a remarkable week together in God's great outdoors.

Liz Boyle



THE PHOENIX CHURCH BIDS THE ANDERSONS ADIEU

The Phoenix, Arizona, congregation said good-bye to a very special couple on the Sabbath following the Last Day of Unleavened Bread. John and Carolyn Anderson relocated to the Denver, Colorado, area.

The Andersons are very dear to the local congregation. They were the heart and soul of the Phoenix congregation's "food and beverage department." There was not a single high day or a special celebration they did not highlight in a unique and delicious manner. They were experts in organizing the ladies into groups to fulfill every facet of marvelous buffets for all to enjoy. The entire congregation wishes the Andersons the very best in their new home. They will be sorely missed.

Miranda Hale



HOUSTON SOUTH SENIORS RECEIVE UNLEAVENED BREAD TREAT BOXES

The Houston South, Texas, youth and their families were busy prior to Unleavened Bread. Every year, they prepare baskets and boxes of unleavened treats for our senior members. This year was no different. Two dozen boxes were prepared with great attention to detail and delivered at services on the first day of Unleavened Bread.

Not only did they include homemade unleavened brownies and other sweets, but also unleavened bread, crackers, cheeses, chocolates, fruit, wine, stylish journals and pens, coloring books and pencils. One box even included treats and a toy for the member's puppies at home.

Our seniors look forward to these treats every year and really appreciate the thoughtfulness and generosity of our youth and their families.

Susan Scott Smith



FORT WORTH TEENS TAKE OVER SABBATH SERVICES

As anyone who serves in a local congregation knows, there are many things that go into conducting a successful Sabbath service. On April 16, 2016, the Fort Worth, Texas, teens performed many of the duties that make the Sabbath day enjoyable for our brethren.

The teens assisted with various duties, such as opening and closing the hall (Ruben Rodriguez and Austin Berg), coffee room setup and takedown (Christopher Berg), ushering (Calvin Jones and Preston Stolley), door greeting (Courtney Houghton and Parker Anderson), stage decorations (Marley Anderson), hymn projection (Ruben Rodriguez), historian (Raquel Rodriguez) and technical operations (Parker Anderson). In addition to these duties, Calvin Jones delivered the opening prayer, Christopher Berg gave the closing prayer, Timothy Rickard led songs, and Seth Cooksey delivered an excellent sermonette titled "The Universe Through God's Eyes."

The Teen Service Sabbath has been an annual tradition in the Fort Worth congregation for over a decade. The teens consider it an opportunity to learn about the many duties required to make the weekly Sabbath service flow smoothly, and it is also a chance for them to actively serve God and His people. The teens have shown a servant's heart in their willingness to jump in and help whenever needed, and this also sets them on the path to be active servants in their congregation. As a result of performing these duties, the teens have expressed a sense of appreciation for all of the work that goes into conducting a Sabbath service, and many have continued their service roles throughout the year.

Rebel Jones

NORTHEAST OHIO EXPERIENCES BUMPER CROP OF MATZO BABIES

The Northeast Ohio congregations have enjoyed a bumper crop of babies in the last few months! Six newborns—four from Akron-Canton, one from Cleveland and one from Youngstown—enjoyed their first Days of Unleavened Bread this year. To mark the occasion, the parents provided each of the children with new matching outfits to wear on the last day of Unleavened Bread at our combined church services. Their onesies were white with the image of a matzo on the back and "My First Days of Unleavened Bread" with matzos on the front. All agreed this was the height of fashion for the babies! What a great way to celebrate their first spring holy days!



Left to right: Annabelle Poma, Heidi Haney, Ryan Summers, Joel Troyer, Haley Pavlik (not pictured, Eliza Smith, as she was napping!)

Erica Pavlik



HOUSTON SOUTH PICNIC GOERS BRAVE MARCH WIND

On March 20, 2016, a large, brave group of members from the Houston South, Texas, congregation converged on Tom Bass Park for our annual picnic. March can be a toss-up for weather in Texas.

This year the temperature was a little on the cool side, but the strong wind gave us a challenging wind-chill.

Besides an abundance of food, there were games for the children and adults, face painting for the kids and lots of fellowship.

Of course, we cannot have a picnic in Texas without barbecue beef and chicken with sauce! We also enjoyed coleslaw, potato salad, beans and all the sides (onions, jalapeños, pickles, etc.), as well as iced tea, lemonade and more. Dinner was rounded off with delicious homemade desserts.

We all enjoyed getting together for a great family event.

Susan Scott Smith

ANNOUNCEMENTS

We encourage members to send announcements to be featured in *One Accord*. We feature events in members' lives, including baptisms, births, engagements, weddings, significant anniversaries (25, 40, 50, 60, etc.), and obituaries. Typically they run between 50 and 100 words; however, we ask that all submissions stay under 250 words. Please submit a high-resolution color photo along with the written copy to your congregation's reporter.

BAPTISMS



Natasha Allwine

On the Sabbath afternoon of March 5, 2016, Natasha Allwine was baptized into the family of God with her family and Church family in attendance in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Natasha is currently attending Ivy Tech Community College in Indianapolis, pursuing preveterinary studies. She plans to transfer within the next few years to finish her veterinary degree. Natasha lives in Paragon, Indiana, with her parents, brother and sister.

Natasha is very involved with the Church camps and is a wonderful example in her local congregation.

Jada Howell



Shalynn Mellerup

Shalynn Mellerup was baptized Feb. 13, during the Presidents' Day Weekend at Branson, Missouri. Shalynn is a third-generation Church of God member.

Her grandfather Dale Mellerup was one of the original members of the Church of God congregation in Columbia, Missouri. Shalynn lives with her parents, Delvin and Carrie, and her sister, Skyla. All of them attend the Columbia congregation.

Pat Freeman

North Carolina. They now attend the COGWA congregation in Hickory, North Carolina. Mr. and Mrs. Bowman have a daughter and a son.

Mr. and Mrs. Bowman are treasured in the congregation. Mrs. Bowman has one of the sweetest smiles, and Mr. Bowman can brighten up your day like no one else can. The couple was grinning, giving off an aura of happiness, as the congregation celebrated their 65 years together with a cake, punch and a small gift of congratulations.

Haven Swanson



Jack and Bea Todd

In April 1956 a storybook wedding took place when actress Grace Kelly married Monaco's Prince Rainier. Jack and Bea Todd of Wichita, Kansas, were also married that same April. Recently, the brethren of the Wichita congregation celebrated the couple's 60th wedding anniversary with a cake and punch reception after services. The couple was honored with a lovely bouquet of flowers and an engraved silver photo frame.

As pastor Paul Luecke remarked, in 1956 gasoline was only 22 cents a gallon, coffee cost 85 cents a pound, and the average rent was only \$88 a month. Times have certainly changed since then. While the fairy tale didn't end happily ever after for the Hollywood princess, the Todds remain faithfully committed to God and faithfully committed to each other.

Lynda Wasser

cogwa.org

ANNIVERSARY



Robert and Nila Bowman

Sixty-five years ago on May 4, 1951, Nila Baker and Robert Bowman were united in marriage. Mr. and Mrs. Bowman met when he spotted her along the side of a racetrack, and six months later they were engaged. A sense of humor and paying attention to the little things keep their marriage interesting. "She can remember the socks I'm wearing—the color and everything," Mr. Bowman teased.

In 1972 they began attending the Worldwide Church of God in Lenoir,



Baptisms in Barbados

Allan Haynes and his wife, Margaret, were baptized on Jan. 24, 2016, in Barbados. Arnold Hampton and Osmonde Douglas officiated the ceremony, which was witnessed by several members of the local congregation.

On March 6, 2016, three more baptisms occurred in Barbados. Audley Alexander Howell, Shirleyann Marshall and Pamela Paulette Parris-Bellamy were baptized by Mr. Douglas and Mr. Hampton.

Osmonde Douglas

OBITUARIES



Dave LaRavia

Matthew David LaRavia was born in Phoenix, Arizona, on Sept. 19, 1965, to parents Ellis and Gwen LaRavia, the third of five children. He decided around age 7 that he no longer wanted to be called Matthew but Dave, and so it was. Dave spent the majority of his childhood and formative years growing up in Pasadena, California, where his father was employed by the Worldwide Church of God. Dave attended both Imperial Schools and Ambassador College and was grateful for an education with God's Word as the foundation. He went on to get a degree at the University of Wisconsin while his family oversaw the Wisconsin Dells Festival site in the late 1980s.

Dave had an incredible work ethic from a very early age, running a landscaping business before college with a friend. He worked in the cabinet shop on the Ambassador campus and learned woodworking skills that he would use throughout his lifetime, eventually allowing him to start a custom furniture business. After college, he worked as a catering supervisor, in pharmaceuticals, as a teacher/coach and as a shipping and inventory specialist. He was truly proud of starting the RaveXpress courier delivery business with his family in Tucson, Arizona.

Dave was baptized on July 30, 1989, while living in Wisconsin, and he was a faithful member of the Church throughout his life. God gave Dave a beautiful gift of song, and he loved to sing special music. He sang in the choir, both in school and at the Festival sites he attended, and found much comfort listening to inspirational music when he was unable to attend services. He also toured and performed with the Young Ambassadors.

Dave married Laura Cole on Sept. 17, 2006, and was a wonderful husband and father. We always enjoyed making both Father's and Mother's Day very special days in our family. He loved to compose poetry for special occasions, both for his wife

and children. He truly cared deeply about details and quality in everything he put his hand to do.

Having suffered throughout his life with chronic migraine pain, he was especially empathetic to others hurting and took the church prayer request lists very seriously. After suffering a breakdown in late 2014, Dave was diagnosed with bipolar I disorder. Even with medical supervision, it was a tough battle, though he fought it with great determination. At the age of 50, on Friday, April 22, 2016, Dave succumbed to the complications of bipolar depression and died. We know we will see him raised to serve the living God and pray that time comes as soon as may be.

Dave is survived by his wife, Laura LaRavia, of Fort Smith, Arkansas; two children, Dakota and Hunter LaRavia; two stepchildren, Jedd (Heather) and Codi Cole; parents, Ellis and Gwen LaRavia; two brothers, Glen (Molly) and Jeff (Becky) LaRavia; and two sisters, Romney (Jim) Chapman and Vivian (Christopher) Doyle.

Laura LaRavia



Alonzo Tull

Alonzo Tull, a faithful deacon and member of the Delmar, Delaware, congregation, died May 4, 2016. The memorial service was performed by his pastor, Todd Carey. Alonzo was born on May 15, 1931, and was one of nine children born to Lenn Tull and Janie Estella Collins in Accomack County, Virginia. Leaving home and Accomack County at an early age, he relocated to Chester, Pennsylvania, where he completed his studies and received his high school diploma. Shortly after graduating high school, he joined the United States Air Force and served for four years.

In 1958, a few years after receiving an honorable discharge from the Air Force, Alonzo met his wife of 55 years, Clara Mae Wright, in Brooklyn, New York. They were married on Sept. 24, 1960, and had three sons, Tanhai, Jonathan and Derrick.

Al and Kim (his nickname for Clara) were called by God together and were baptized while attending the Worldwide

Church of God on Feb. 19, 1966. Al was ordained a deacon in 1999 and served faithfully in the Church until his death. His wife continues to serve as a deaconess in the Delmar congregation. His hobbies were hunting, gardening and working with his hands fixing things.

Al was no stranger to physical adversity. He survived stomach cancer, kidney failure, colon cancer and double heart valve replacement over the past 40 plus years while relying on God's healing and his wife's nursing care. He is survived by his wife, three sons, one brother, Leonard Tull, seven grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews and a host of friends. While he sleeps now, we look forward to seeing him again in the Kingdom of God.

Tim Walsh

Bruce Stafford Williams

Bruce Stafford Williams died on Feb. 27, 2016, at the age of 71, following a long illness. He was born on April 19, 1944, in Lynn, Massachusetts. He was the oldest of four siblings, which included his two sisters, Sharon and Cheryl, and a deceased brother, Dale. Bruce and his wife, Anne, raised a stepson, Scott, and a daughter, Jacqui.

Bruce was baptized in 1972 and was a faithful, supportive member for over 40 years. He attended the Leicester, Massachusetts, congregation and helped a great deal with church activities of various kinds. He was appreciated for his honesty, forthrightness and personal diligence. He held very strong beliefs on why we are here on the earth and what the future holds, and had personal faith and trust in the promises of God. Bruce was also a highly valued employee at both Polaroid and Lotus Notes 123.

Bruce is survived by his son, Scott (Kerry), and his children, Justin and Tyler; his daughter, Jacqui, and her children, Brittany, Tearre and TeeJay; one great-grandchild, Iris; and several nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held for Bruce on April 2, 2016, by his family and members of the Leicester congregation. A large number of visitors and other family members were in attendance. Tributes were read out by Brit Railston, and the service was led by Paul Suckling.

Bruce Williams lived a life that mattered. He had a way of brightening our mood with his quick wit! We never knew what he was going to come out with to make us laugh. We will all cherish the moments and friendship we had together.

Lorraine Daudelin

LIFE After DEATH



The end is just the beginning.



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