

# OneAccord

November 2017



## Feast of Tabernacles 2017

Preteen Camp Reports  
Malawi Youth Camp

Feast Photo Contest Winners  
Announcements

# personal from the president

## Stories From the Feast

Even though there are seven annual festivals, there is really only one that can be identified by the words “the Feast!” The most commonly asked question these days is, “How was your Feast?” I hope your answer is that it was great!

My wife and I visited two sites this year—Branson, Missouri, and Estes Park, Colorado. These are two very different sites, and we enjoyed them both. I have to admit, it was a bit difficult to adjust from the warm weather of Branson to the brisk weather, with a bit of snow, in Estes Park. Branson has its own beauty as part of the Ozark Mountains, and Estes Park has a majesty all its own, sitting high up in the Rockies.

For me this year, the Feast wasn't about scenery or even location. It was about the people we met! I love stories, and I brought dozens home with me. There is nothing more exciting than talking with God's people—young and old; newly baptized and longtime members.

In Branson we met both brand-new people and true veterans. We met one lady who was baptized during the Feast of Tabernacles in Big Sandy, Texas, in 1953. That was 64 years ago! She may not be our oldest baptized member, but I doubt if we have too many members who have been baptized more than 64 years. She was a teenager when baptized and today is in her early to mid-80s. She told some delightful stories about the early Feasts, back in the days of the Radio Church of God.

Another story that stood out in my mind was from a lady who was attending the Feast in Estes Park. She is a schoolteacher and works with a homeschool association. She is currently teaching a class on the major religions of the world. She began her class by discussing Christianity. She asked her students to write a research paper on the 10 lost tribes of Israel. She covered in class that Israel and Judah became two separate nations after the death of Solomon.

While there is today a nation called Israel, history records that the 10 tribes that formed the ancient nation of Israel have been lost. One young boy finished his paper and turned it in. The paper correctly identified the United States as descended from the tribe of Manasseh and Great Britain as descended from the tribe of Ephraim. She was so excited to see this work that she asked him, “Where did you find this information?” His response was, “A website called Life, Hope and Truth.” The teacher couldn't contain herself. “That's my church!” she exclaimed.

The stories I heard during this year's Feast corroborated the fact that the message is getting out there, and people are beginning to find us in increasing numbers. After a lull that began back in the spring, the number of monthly unique visitors is once again approaching 1 million. In September we reached 950,000 unique visitors, and October is tracking in a similar manner and should reach well over 900,000.

These are just a couple of the stories I brought home from the Feast. It is always good to see old friends and meet new friends. One minister described the Feast as a big family reunion. It certainly did feel as though we were with family in both Branson and Estes Park. I hope you had a great Feast and that you are already planning for next year!



**Jim Franks**

President  
Church of God, a Worldwide Association  
@jimfranks



**CHURCH of GOD**  
A WORLDWIDE ASSOCIATION, INC.

© 2017 Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc. All rights Reserved.

**Ministerial Board of Directors:** David Baker, Arnold Hampton, Joel Meeker, Richard Pinelli, Larry Salyer, Richard Thompson and Leon Walker

**President:** Jim Franks; **Media operation manager:** Clyde Kilough; **Managing editor:** David Hicks; **Copy editor:** Becky Bennett

**Doctrinal reviewers:** Neil Hart, Jack Hendren, Steve Moody, Frank Pierce

**One Accord** is published monthly, except April and October, online at [members.cogwa.org](http://members.cogwa.org) by the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc.

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the New King James Version (© 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.). Used by permission. All rights reserved.

By submitting photographs or articles to the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc. ("Church") or to *One Accord*, a contributor gives the Church permission and a nonexclusive license to use or publish any such submissions without any compensation to the contributor. The contributor further agrees that any such submission will be construed in the broadest possible terms, including, but not limited to, the right to edit, crop or otherwise manipulate the submission.

**In This Issue of One Accord:**

- 4 | 2017 Preteen Camp Reports
- 8 | Malawi Youth Camp Report
- 9 | Feast Photo Contest Winners
- 10 | Feast of Tabernacles 2017
- 24 | Church Potluck
- 26 | Announcements

Cover Photo: Mary Lallier

# 2017



## PRETEEN CAMP REPORTS

### Camp Sequoia

By Paul Carter

Starting on Father's Day, 19 campers, 31 staff and four mini campers enjoyed four days in the mountains of Central California.

This year we only had seven girls and 12 boys as campers. The numbers were down more than half from last year, due to families moving out of the West, as well as snow days in the Northwest that ran schools through the end of June. We still had 31 staff, including 14 teenagers who really served well this year in various capacities.

Due to our prior years of service projects, including Hilltop, the camp manager gave us an unexpected discount even though we did not do a service project in 2017. The projects that the local church areas have done over the years have really helped this camp and have been a benefit not only for us, but for all who use it.



Camp began with a half day of activities and then the novelty Olympics. There were plenty of water events, which was nice since the first day of camp was an unusual 100 degrees. The temperatures dropped only into the 90s during the week, but the campers didn't seem to mind. There was always a nice breeze to cool off in the shade. At night the temperatures dropped to around 68 or 70 degrees, making it a great time to have campfire.

Campfire consisted of sing-alongs, jokes, dorm skits and singing hymns that were fitting for the theme, such as "Be Thou My Vision."

Camp began each morning with a Compass Check after breakfast, and later all dorms joined once per day at the outdoor amphitheater for Christian Living. The theme was one that could be approached from several angles. The campers participated and enjoyed the discussions that arose from the topics that were covered. It is clear that parents are working with their children and laying a foundation for future growth in their children's development.

Overall, it was another wonderful camp year and one that will leave those who attended with some fond memories.



# Camp Cherokee

By Isaac Clark (with Mary Clark)

My name is Isaac, and I was a camper at Camp Cherokee. Camp was awesome this year! My counselor, Mr. Fultz, was very nice, and I really liked my dorm.

The weather wasn't that hot, and it made the activities more fun. I thought it was cool that we had exactly 100 staff and campers this year. We had six sets of twins and a set of triplets at camp. Sometimes it was hard to know who you were talking to!

My favorite activity was swimming. Mrs. Freije was a great teacher. I also really enjoyed gaga ball. Mrs. Everman reminded us of the theme by covering up the gaga ball pit while we were playing and showing us that we need to have vision in everything we do. At challenge games Mr. Mann helped us learn to listen to the right voice so we would know which way to go on the obstacle course. It reminded us to listen to God's instructions so we know which way to go in life.

The nature hike was fun. Mr. White showed us some things that we could



eat along the trail. He also showed us some things that we shouldn't touch. At canoeing Mr. Willoughby asked for some campers to volunteer to wear goggles while they were on the lake. The goggles were blacked out. He used that to teach us that we need vision as we go through life—otherwise, we won't know the way to go and we could run into things. Don't worry, though. There were staff members right there to keep us safe.

Monday night, Mr. Provence came to talk to us. He is a wildlife manager for the state of Arkansas, and he works near the camp. He showed us some animal skulls and pelts and talked to us about the many animals in the area. He also brought some owl pellets that he let us take apart and examine. I didn't touch it because I didn't want to have to wash my hands, but some of my friends did.

There were bones and feathers and all kinds of stuff like that in the pellets.

Tuesday night we had novelty Olympics. Our dorm won the hula hoop contest, thanks to my friend Eric! Wednesday evening we had our fun show. Every dorm got to do a skit. Our skit was about seeing clearly in a clouded world. The funniest skit was the midget skit by some of the staff. My grandpa ended up with shaving cream all over him!

The theme for camp this year was "Vision: Seeing Clearly in a Clouded World." I am amazed that we are a part of God's special Church, the Bride of Christ. We have an important meaning to God, and so He has given us that vision. Camp was a great way to learn more about God and that special vision.

I can't wait for next year!



# Camp Arrowhead

By Zach Smith

A total of 73 campers and 62 staff gathered in Dalton, Ohio, for another excellent year of Camp Arrowhead! Four nations were represented, with campers and staff from the United States, Trinidad, Canada and St. Kitts. It was truly an international camp, and the energy of our visitors added an extra flare of excitement this year.



Campers enjoyed days packed full of activities such as archery, arts and crafts, field games, gaga ball, dodgeball, cooking and swimming.



Facing their fears and enjoying the thrill of adventure, the oldest dorms also spent two evenings on the zip line and bouldering wall.

The annual sing-along took on a woodsier feel as we gathered round the campfire for some silly songs and was highlighted by an appearance of the infamous “Chief Runamok.”



The campers really seemed to catch the vision of this year’s theme with interactive Christian Living classes that delved into just what really clouds our spiritual sight and how to gain clarity—by viewing life



through the lens of God’s Word.

God’s blessing on the camp program was obvious once again, and we look forward to reporting the same from Camp Arrowhead in 2018!



## Camp Lone Star

By Ken Giese

Camp Lone Star got underway on Sabbath, June 10, with an on-site Sabbath service followed by an evening of orientation and instruction as over 80 staff members prepared to welcome approximately 75 campers to four days of learning and fun!

Our weather was pleasant, with rain showers on Tuesday morning that served to cool things down without interfering with any of our activities. Our campers enjoyed daily Compass Checks and Christian Living classes as well as swimming, canoeing, riflery, archery, recreation, arts and crafts, and fishing. Evening activities included novelty Olympics, a campwide sing-along, a gaga ball tournament for our older campers, and our end-of-camp talent show. Along with happy memories, each of our campers took home a beautiful birdhouse and a souvenir picture frame with a photo of their dorm.

This year COGWA was able to contribute some equipment upgrades to our camp facility, including a wooden gaga ball pit constructed by Aaron West,



our program director, and some shooting benches, stools and a storage table for the camp’s new rifle range, built by our riflery activity coordinator, Blake Lynch. These improvements added a great deal of enjoyment for both our campers and staff this year.

Our treehouse dorms were very popular with our male campers, with our oldest boys staying in the two-story portion of the complex.

The facility we rent offers us the opportunity to prepare and serve our own food, and our kitchen staff, led by Arnold and Leigha Mendez, did an outstanding job keeping us all well-fed again this year!

Bryan and Rhonda Waddle provided topics for our daily Compass Checks and Christian Living classes that really brought our theme to life this year for our campers. In one class, optical illusions were used to



illustrate how difficult it really is to see clearly in our clouded world. Our campers learned that the light of God’s Word is a lamp that illuminates their path and enables them to see clearly as they journey through life.

On the organizational side, we were able to expedite our check-in and check-out procedures this year, making things much easier for campers and parents. Overall, our staff did an excellent job in serving our campers. In addition, we implemented some new teen staff guidelines to increase the effective use of our teen staffers, and we learned some important lessons that will help us improve this aspect of camp next year.

We have reserved our current camp facility for 2018 and 2019, and we look forward to further refining our programs and administration to make next year’s Camp Lone Star even better!



# Camp Wood Lake

By Cory Erickson

We completed four very successful days of our seventh preteen camp at Wood Lake Bible Camp in Grantsburg, Wisconsin, from July 23-26. For all four days, the campers and staff enjoyed sunny Wisconsin summer days in the 80s, with beautiful natural surroundings and wildlife. The camp had 27 campers and mini-campers and 25 staff members who enjoyed many wonderful and fun activities.

The camp kicked off on Sunday, July 23, with orientation and activities in the afternoon and a fun game night for the whole camp Sunday evening. Monday and Wednesday were filled with fun and safe activities, including



team challenge and climbing wall, field games, fishing, arts and crafts, nature and exploring, and our first year of archery! Tuesday, July 25, was fully dedicated to lakefront water activities, including swimming, canoeing, pontoon rides and a brand-new blob.

Monday evening we had our very popular novelty Olympics event, and Tuesday ended with a challenging and fun treasure hunt. As we took tours around the lake with all of the campers, sightings of bald eagles and



common loons were commonplace and close-up.

The Christian Living classes were true to the theme of “Vision: Seeing Clearly in a Clouded World.” We also emphasized the theme throughout all the activities, and we were able to use the beautiful nature around us to draw many lessons that campers responded positively to. God blessed the camp in all aspects, with no serious injuries, many fun activities, camaraderie and spiritual focus in the campers.



# Camp Chattahoochee

By Eric and Jeannie Evans

And what a camp it was! The seventh year of Camp Chattahoochee was one of the best ever!

The North Georgia mountains are known for cooler temperatures, and this year there was a scramble to find extra blankets! But the cooler mornings also led to very comfortable afternoons, and the absence of afternoon thunderstorms was welcomed.

Once again, our experienced staff raised the bar to help instill our overall theme—“Vision: Seeing Clearly in a Clouded World”—within the 56 campers.

Some of our regular activities, such



as arts and crafts, are always directed toward the theme of camp. But this year the canoeing staff reinforced the theme by having races where campers only used one eye to navigate the course. One of our ministerial staff, Ron Kelley, presented a new team-building skill this year with a Frisbee golf course that challenged each dorm to advance together by answering specific Bible questions. Our third year of riflery was certainly instrumental with our other ministerial staff member, Daniel



Harper, incorporating the theme with “hitting the mark.”

For quite a few years now, our food service has been under the supervision of Lewis Bryant and his wife, Annette. The importance of tasty and nutritious meals is quite a challenge and takes extra work and effort. We appreciate the Bryants and all of the voluntary staff who sacrifice many hours to ensure our children get the meals needed to sustain them through the busy days of camp.

My wonderful assistant Jeannie and I wish there was a way that we could express our deep appreciation for all those who serve so selflessly. There are quite a few

who will be moving on to serve at the teen camps, and quite a few who have been serving at both camps for a number of years! We hope that all of God's brethren will

realize the value of our camp programs in helping our children to capture the vision of our God and Creator! And we thank you for your prayers and support!



# MALAWI YOUTH CAMP REPORT

By Tielmans Chirwa



Half London Lodge in Salima and Senga Bay Lakeshore Resort were the sites for four days of youth camp activities in Malawi, from Sunday to Thursday, Aug. 27-31, 2017.

Previously, we had arranged to have the camp at the lakeshore site. Nine months down the line—just about two weeks before the camp—we discovered that the lodge facility costs had been raised by 44 percent—without notification. We promptly went back to the drawing board. Shuttling between the township and lakeshore resort, a distance of 22 kilometers, was more viable for the budget.

We had 18 boys, 10 girls and five counselors. Godly character for the youths, who are the leaders of tomorrow, was the focus of the camp. We covered obedience to God and parents, humility,

having a loving heart, being servants to others, daily prayer and Bible study, and how to overcome the peer pressure of the world. Campers also learned how to take care of plumbing and electrical facilities in their homes and were taught skills in cake baking.

Activities like beach soccer, sack races, swimming, concentration, and video shows were the order of the day. Delicious meals—breakfast, lunch and dinner—spiced the daily activities.

The camp had its own amazements. A young 12-year-old girl with asthma problems, who had never participated in physical activities, ended up being one of the most active participants in games. This was her first time to be at the youth camp.

Then, just as we were about to leave, one of the workers, the chef, rushed to one of

the counselors. At first, we thought that something had gone wrong with our youths. But later we learned that he was pleading for more information about us—the Church. He had overheard our youths discussing God's plan of salvation the day before, and it had impressed him. The youths had advised him to see one of the counselors.

The best girl campers were Hanna Thambo, Ellina Salawila and Jacqueline Msosa. The best boy campers were Kelvin Thambo, Harris Luwanja and Oscar Chauma.

The youths cried for more days of camp, but our resources decided the limit. We are all grateful for the Church's assistance, and credits go to our Heavenly Father who allowed us to have one of the best youth camps in Malawi, despite the poverty challenges we face in our country.



*Feast*

# PHOTO CONTEST

## WINNERS



*Friends and Family*

Photographer:  
Keri Sanders  
Columbus-Cambridge, Ohio

Adam and Keri Sanders and family take a selfie at the Burg in Bruges, Belgium.



*Serving*

Photographer:  
Mary Lallier  
Sherman, Texas

Wyatt Johnson serves as an usher in Estes Park, Colorado.



*Scenic and Landscape*

Photographer:  
Keri Sanders  
Columbus-Cambridge, Ohio

A member flies a kite along the English Channel on Family Day.

# FEAST OF TABERNACLES 2017

By Doug Horchak

The Feast of Tabernacles 2017 was very memorable and inspiring for thousands of God's people around the world. Our total attendance figures this year broke our record attendance for COGWA set just last year!

Many brethren have expressed how appreciative they were for the spiritual food they received in sermons and Bible studies during the Feast. And the evidence of God's saving hand was manifest when many brethren around the world were praying for the safety of our members in Orange Beach, Alabama, as Hurricane Nate headed for the Gulf Coast near the Feast site. The result was a powerful storm that hit the coast only to fizzle and lose its destructive winds and rain in a matter of hours!

God's inspiration and involvement in His Feast is clearly visible in so many ways. As we read through these reports from around the world, let's all give thanks to our God for a wonderful and inspiring Feast of Tabernacles 2017!



Photo: Mary Lallier

## VILLA LA MERCED, ARGENTINA

We had a wonderful time in Villa la Merced, a private resort at the shores of a beautiful lake. Services were held in the main building, which was only a short walking distance from the houses where the brethren stayed. We had wonderful messages that filled us with spiritual food.

Throughout the Feast, the 164 brethren invited each other for dinner to promote the Christian love and fellowship. Each house had its own stationary grill so members could enjoy the famous Argentinian grill. The summer houses had original and beautiful wooden façades of the time,

but with today's amenities of air-conditioning, heating and so forth.

The touristic touch was noted by the house built for Evita Peron and the house built for the government to accommodate top officials of President Peron, which are part of the resort. The administration provided a special tour to these homes at no cost out of courtesy to the Church. We saw original paintings, fine glassware, a grand radio and furniture with the unique decor of its time.

Another great attraction was the German village of Villa Belgrano, about 20 minutes away. This village seemed to be from Germany itself. It had houses with German architecture, wooden artifacts and locals dressed in German outfits.

Time was short, but we would love to

come back and visit with the brethren again in such a beautiful retreat where God placed His name for the Feast of Tabernacles 2017.

**Javier Riquelme**

## COFFS HARBOUR, AUSTRALIA

Again the brethren met in the seaside community of Coffs Harbour for the Feast of Tabernacles 2017. Not only did God bless the Feast with glorious weather, the brethren also received a rich banquet of spiritual messages focusing everyone on our future and the fantastic plan of God for all of mankind.



Lake Harmony, Pennsylvania



Kochi, India



Estes Park, Colorado

The Feast activities were once again enthusiastically attended by everyone, making it a close, family-oriented Feast for brethren. All of the visitors were warmly embraced into their new Aussie family, as are all who make the journey to Down Under.

We left the Feast looking forward and reenergized, ready for our return in 2018 and the soon-coming Kingdom of God.

**David Maczek**

---

## BARBADOS

The Feast of Tabernacles in Barbados was held at the picturesque Infinity on the Beach Hotel, which is located in Dover in the parish of Christ Church. The beautiful hall was ideal for the Feast and accommodated the members perfectly. The high attendance was 83.

We were privileged to have Ken Treybig and Mike Machin as visiting elders here for the Feast. On Friday night Mr. Treybig presented the Bible study, followed by a question-and-answer segment that was appreciated by all in attendance.

The two elders gave very inspiring and thought-provoking sermons that generated intense discussions after services. Although all the special music was enjoyed, the highlight was the children's choir performance. The children's choir was assisted and conducted by the older teens.

The hall was the venue for the Saturday night social event. The members were given the opportunity to display their talent. There was also a karaoke segment followed by dancing. The night was thoroughly enjoyed by all. An island tour, two moonlight beach picnics,

golfing and archery were some of the other activities enjoyed by the members.

Overall, we in Barbados were once again truly blessed at God's Feast of Tabernacles.

**Wesley Holland**

---

## SANTA CRUZ DE LA SIERRA, BOLIVIA

As the sun went down, the crickets chirped in loud unison, as if welcoming the first holy day and the Sabbath at the Los Cedros Resort and Conference Center outside of Santa Cruz de la Sierra in Bolivia. This beautiful ecological resort was the temporary dwelling of some 53 of God's people keeping the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day. Giant colorful butterflies and refreshing swimming pools added to the beauty and enjoyment of the Feast. Most of the brethren stayed on-site in the cabañas (bungalows), preparing some meals in their cabins, as well as enjoying many meals together in the restaurant.

Brethren came from Bolivia, Chile, Peru and the United States. We heard a recorded sermon from Santiago, Chile-based pastor Saul Langarica and two messages by Church President Jim Franks with a Spanish voice-over. Visiting minister Ralph Levy, an instructor at the Church's Foundation Institute, gave several messages.

The weather was windy, but warm and comfortable, with just a few raindrops during the Feast. A strong storm blew through just after the Last Great Day, as brethren were leaving by bus for Santa Cruz and the airport.

Activities included group meals, a family dance, a movie night, a party for the young people, a talent night, a children's party and an afternoon tea for the senior citizens.

We left inspired by the message of the Kingdom of God, and a few tears were shed after the Last Great Day. It was a wonderful Feast.

**Ralph Levy**

---

## ESÉKA, CAMEROON

For the third consecutive year in Cameroon, the Feast of Tabernacles 2017 was held in the village of Eséka. Twenty-five members were present, coming from seven different cities and villages around the country. Attendees lodged at the Ndjigui Mpec hotel complex, and meals were prepared by teams of ladies under the lead of Melanie Nyemeck. Eating good meals each day was the greatest physical blessing of the Feast.

Sermon videos prerecorded in French were viewed each service, with supplemental sermonettes given by local members. The videos were much appreciated, since we could see as well as hear the speakers. Each evening, roundtable Bible discussions were organized, with one Bible quiz game held as well.

The Feast of Tabernacles this year was a pure success thanks to God. All present rejoiced as we do at each Feast, and we dreamed of the Kingdom of God to come. Our thanks to all, near and far, who contributed to making this Feast celebration possible in Cameroon.

**Armel Pierre Ngom**



Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia



Orange Beach, Alabama



Orford, Québec, Canada

## ORFORD, QUÉBEC, CANADA

Thirty-six enthusiastic English-speaking and French-speaking participants from Québec, several Canadian provinces and the U.S. celebrated God’s Feast at the Chéribourg Resort in the scenic region of Mont Orford in French Canada. Fall displayed a gorgeous array of colors under a generally sunny sky and pleasant temperatures.

Elders Paul Suckling (from Boston, Massachusetts) and Bernard Hongerloot (from Dallas, Texas) shared the messages in what has been called “a truly spiritual and meaty diet” of sermons to the small group that was closely knit and where brotherly love was apparent.

Some excellent sermons were given by Ray Blouin from Boston and Cody Schafers from Edmonton, Alberta. The site was bilingual, with services held alternately in French and English, with translations provided by Jeremy and Bernard Hongerloot. Inspiring special music pieces were performed almost daily.

The group had the opportunity to share three excellent lunches together at the resort. There was plenty of fellowship and laughter at the very successful talent show.

In the evening after the Last Great Day, everyone gathered in one chalet for a last get-together with mixed beverages, snacks and delicacies. The presence of the Spirit of our Heavenly Father and His Son was palpable. It truly was an inspiring and magnificent Feast and for many—if not all—the best Feast ever!

**Bernard Hongerloot**

## LICAN RAY, CHILE

This year 387 attendees from five countries gathered to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles at the southernmost Feast site in the world, Lican Ray, Chile.

Before the first day, the manager of our hotel lamented the forecast of heavy rains for the next 10 days. But God had other plans for His people. The weather was beautifully balanced, with rain some nights but radiant sunshine during the days, allowing all of the planned activities to take place.

One of the highlights of this year was how inclusive the activities were in terms of the ages of the participants. Children, teens, adults and elders all enjoyed the Feast activities together.

We had a wide variety of speakers explain the significance of the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day with messages that motivated us to grow in our relationship with God. Our pastor, Saúl Langarica, and his wife, Carmen, were with us for the first half of the Feast and then traveled to visit our brethren in Argentina for the second half.

At the end of the Feast, three new members in our area were baptized into the family of God: Constanza Llanquilef, from Osorno, Chile; Jamillette Jaramillo, from Talca, Chile; and Gissel Díaz, from Cartagena, Chile.

Once again, God blessed us with a peaceful and inclusive Feast where brethren enjoyed the blessing of dwelling together in unity (Psalm 133:1).

**Jaime Guiñez**

## EL RODADERO, SANTA MARTA, COLOMBIA

In accordance with God’s law, 112 of God’s people gathered at El Rodadero, Santa Marta, Colombia, to observe the Feast of Tabernacles, looking forward to the time of peace that will be brought by God’s Kingdom for 1,000 years.

With wonderful and warm scenery and weather, brethren rejoiced in the Feast to the Eternal for eight days. The spiritual nourishment focused on the preparation for the Kingdom, love for our neighbor and the importance of holiness.

We had fun activities—like the night of beards and wigs, in which we ate pizza and enjoyed giving awards for the most creative and fun beards. For our little ones, there was a pool party; and for families, a trip to Parque Nacional Tayrona to see the amazing landscape sculpted by God.

Two activities helped us focus on the real purpose of the Feast of Tabernacles: the Bible study on the weekly Sabbath and the leadership seminar, both led by Eduardo Hernández.

With simplicity and love, our brethren from Colombia reminded us of the important points of our celebration: love for the ministry, empathy with those who are suffering, service for the little ones, study of God’s Word, joy sharing our bread, and how important it is to pray for our neighbor.

Without a doubt, everybody went back home not only spiritually reloaded, but very grateful for all the blessings God gave us.

**Jorge Ivan Garduño**



Uvongo, South Africa



Coffs Harbour, Australia



San Diego, California

## KINSHASA AND MWEKA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

A total of 160 people attended the Feast of Tabernacles in the Church's rented complex in the Burumba quarter of Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Services were held every morning, and each afternoon a Q&A Bible discussion was held to allow fellowship and a deeper understanding of the Bible. Sermon videos in French were played each service, with explanatory comments given in Lingala to promote full understanding.

Forty members lodged at the complex; others commuted from their homes. Breakfast and dinner was served every day to those staying on-site. Others made personal arrangements. Lunchtime snacks were provided after each morning service.

An outing for children brought them to the Congolaisirs children's park, which offers a wonderful playground, the only one of its kind in Kinshasa.

In addition, another group of 68 people who are new to the Church kept the Feast for the first time in Mweka in the province of Western Kasai in central DRC. This is about 800 miles by road from Kinshasa.

We are thankful that by God's grace we were able to spend all eight days without incident or difficulty. We are thankful that the Feast strengthens our confidence in the return of Christ and the time when we will reign with Him. May God continue to bless His Church.

**Victor Amsini Mapoli**

## DOUÉLÉ, CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Sixty-nine brethren celebrated the 2017 Feast of Tabernacles in the rural village of Douélé near Man in the Tonkpi region of Côte d'Ivoire. Due to several deaths among Church families and the attendant funeral ceremonies, a number of brethren were unable to attend the Feast this year.

Sermons were presented by Lee Page from Orlando, Florida, who, with his wife, Robyn, spent the Feast in Douélé on behalf of the Church. Sermons were translated phrase by phrase into the local Yacouba language for those who did not understand French. The Pages' presence was a special blessing at the Feast since we rarely have visitors. We much appreciated their kindness and their example.

A high point of the Feast was eating three good meals every day. We are thankful for the financial assistance sent by our brethren in the United States, which supplemented our Festival tithe and allowed us to buy a cow that we had slaughtered to provide beef, which we ate during the whole Feast. It is rare to eat meat in our region of Côte d'Ivoire, so these meals were a great blessing.

The Feast of Tabernacles 2017 was a great success!

**Séoussié Bleu**

## PACIFIC HARBOUR, FIJI

For the fourth year in succession, the tropical Pacific islands of Fiji hosted the Feast and the Last Great Day. Services

were held on the main island of Viti Levu at the Pearl resort in the village of Pacific Harbour, about 40 kilometers west of Fiji's capital city, Suva. The area is home to several indigenous villages and beautiful beaches. Thirty-six attendees, including visitors from the United States, Australia and New Zealand, enjoyed this wonderful Pacific archipelago experience. Services were held in the resort's "wedding chapel," an all-white, superbly decorated venue, situated on the beachfront of the Pacific Ocean.

The activities included a bus tour to Suva, a boat trip to Beqa, a tranquil island where participants snorkeled and enjoyed a lovo lunch. The Fijian members organized two dinners at the temporary dwelling of the Toloi family, after which the Fijian brethren entertained the attendees with typical Fijian songs, including the beautiful Fijian farewell song "Isa Lei."

All the messages strongly focused on the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day and their respective realization by contrasting our present evil world with the perfect world to come prophesied in the Scriptures.

**Art Verschoor**

## CALAIS, FRANCE

A total of 260 Festival attendees from around the world gathered in Calais, France, for the Feast of Tabernacles 2017. Almost all those present lodged and took their meals at the all-inclusive vacation colony VVF



Pacific Harbour, Fiji



New Braunfels, Texas



San Miguel de Allende, Mexico

Blériot Plage, located on the beach where, in 1909, Louis Blériot took off for the first successful flight across the English Channel. On clear days the white cliffs of Dover were visible.

Weather during the Feast was breezy but not cold and included welcome days of sunshine. Services alternated between English and French with simultaneous translation available through FM headsets. The translation team included bilingual young adults whose service was much appreciated. The messages were encouraging and motivating. Varied special music provided by the many musicians present was another highlight of the services.

Family Day activities included kite flying and other activities on the beach, as well as a delicious sampling of specialties from Martinique, provided by members from that French Caribbean island. Excursions included visits to the seaport of Boulogne-sur-Mer, to a gigantic German bunker built during World War II for assembly and launch of V-2 rockets, to the beautiful and ancient Belgian city of Bruges, and to the museum and beaches at Dunkirk, famous for the miraculous evacuation of allied troops there in 1940, a turning point of the war. Several of the Feast sermons and sermonettes referenced the history of the region while underlining lessons to be learned.

The fun show highlighted musical talents, skits and jokes to round off an enjoyable evening. On the evening of the first day and the Last Great Day a predinner cocktail or fruit juice was served to the entire group, which allowed for enthusiastic fellowship. Several members commented that this had truly been the best Feast yet!

**Joel Meeker**

## KUMASI, GHANA

Nearly 600 brethren enjoyed the Feast together in Kumasi, Ghana, this year. While a few heavy thunderstorms rolled through during the early part of the Feast, no services or activities had to be altered or canceled. Since in the world tomorrow rain will be withheld from those who will not obey God by keeping the Feast (Zechariah 14:17-18), rain during the Feast here is considered a great blessing of favor from God.

The Feast was conducted at the Christian Village Conference Center in Kumasi. While it is in the city, it is a surprisingly remote and quiet location. All of the members and pastors stay at the facility—some in small rooms, some in larger bunkhouses, and many more in large open rooms with camp mattresses spread out on the floor. The women’s and children’s dormitories had a large concrete courtyard in between them where most families did their cooking on small charcoal fires.

One young child was taken to the hospital after accidentally stepping on a scorpion and being stung, but recovered quickly—evidence of God’s blessing. In addition to services, activities such as the adult talent night, children’s talent night, and football rounded out the week.

**Dave Myers**

## PETITE CALIVIGNY, GRENADA

Nine brethren from four countries gathered together in a secluded

Mediterranean-styled villa located in Petite Calivigny, Grenada (the Spice Isle) to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. Every day provided delightful opportunities to observe God’s hand in creation as the Feast site was located in a sheltered bay mere steps away from the invitingly calm, tropical ocean. The verdant hills and surroundings, filled with lush vegetation and beautiful flowers, added to the millennial setting.

The inaugural message was delivered by the Feast coordinator, one of our Caribbean elders, Osmonde Douglas, and by the end of the Feast we were all satiated with spiritual food as the brethren were inspired by both live and streamed messages.

As in previous years, there was an island tour with its much-anticipated stop at the Diamond Chocolate Factory, where the visiting brethren usually stock up on Grenada’s delicious dark chocolate bars and spice-infused cocoa. The brethren also enjoyed a picnic on the villa’s grounds with some opting for a leisurely swim afterward.

Despite the small size of our group, the fellowship and activities were thoroughly enjoyed by all. Every meal was spent together, and both the young and not so young participated eagerly in a Bible quiz on Jerusalem.

**Marsha Basant**

## ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA

The city of Santiago de los Caballeros de Guatemala, better known as Antigua, was once again the location where over 500 people came to observe the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day in



Santa Marta, Colombia



Fort Myers, Florida



Antigua, Guatemala

Guatemala. Brethren from Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, El Salvador, England, Chile and the United States were able to enjoy eight wonderful days together.

The message from the opening night service, given by the pastor of Guatemala, Luis Mundo, reminded us why we attend the Feast, emphasizing that this is God’s invitation to celebrate His Feast and review His promises about His coming Kingdom.

Despite the rain present during almost the entire Feast, all the scheduled activities were able to be successfully carried out. We had a youth dance, a welcome activity for the international visitors, the traditional ladies’ night hosted by the Spokesman Club, a family day, a seniors’ breakfast, Bible studies and a talent night. And a large number participated in a karaoke night organized by two of our U.S. brethren—even though the activity wasn’t in the program.

On the Last Great Day the sad part began: the good-byes. But we were grateful to have been able to meet and fellowship with new brethren. God’s protection and blessings were evident in each of the days we were at this Feast site where He placed His name.

**Cony Méndez**

## AWAREWAUNAU, GUYANA

Faithful members assembled to observe the Feast this year in the remote village of Awarewaunau in the deep south of Rupununi Guyana.

For the opening night service there were 10 adults and 6 children. The following day we had 20 adults and 16 children. The toshao (leader) of the

village is a member, and she told me the people were curious as to what we were having, so she told them if they wanted to see, “just come.” And they did.

Visitors came every day, so that on the Last Great Day we had 23 adults and 28 children for service in the morning—the highest attendance.

Fair weather prevailed throughout the Feast. There were some serious threats of storms, but all passed away. The sermon messages were well-received, as all were projected on a screen. We all enjoyed cooking and eating together, and the fellowship was nonending. The highlight was a picnic at a small creek just outside the village, and everyone had a most enjoyable time.

All in all, we thoroughly enjoyed the days together as a family. We do give thanks for all the assistance we received.

**Gary Atkinson**

## KOCHI, INDIA

Lodging in cottages of the Cherai Beach Resorts, 25 kilometers from Cochin International Airport, 29 members joyfully celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day in Kochi, India. Because we were a small group, members had the special opportunity to feel a close bond, particularly during meal times and fellowship.

Two ministers, Mike Bennett and Doug Horchak, served the main spiritual table. Inspiring sermons and sermonettes throughout the Feast focused on the soon-coming Kingdom of God and our

personal responsibilities to make the inheritance of the Kingdom our ultimate goal in life.

Every day members enjoyed special music, mostly live, including one performed by the Ghosh family in their Indian language, which was also translated into English. Another highlight was “The Lord’s My Shepherd,” performed by the Festival choir.

A Bible study was conducted in an interactive way called Bible Baseball, which was both fun and educational. Members were divided into two groups and each one in the group was offered questions to be answered on four levels of difficulty: easy, medium, hard and very hard.

Two fascinating games were played during the Family Day: Bible Jeopardy and a group game in which members became prophets, judges, Philistines and Israelites, based on the cards they drew.

Another highlight was a tour of Fort Kochi, where we visited the Kerala Jewish Synagogue. Afterward, members enjoyed shopping for souvenirs and spices.

Rod Freije, from Mandan, North Dakota, said, “Being at the Feast in Kochi and being with the brethren is like being at the family reunion with aunts, uncles and cousins that you haven’t seen in a long time. With the Feast site being small, it gives each individual the opportunity to serve in ways that are just not possible at a large Feast site. The brethren are forgiving, hospitable and supportive of one another, and the feelings of joy and thankfulness permeates the days of the Feast. ... We are happy we came to the Feast in Kochi.”

**Edward Simanjuntak**



Bacolod City, Philippines



Redmond, Oregon



Kohala Coast, Hawaii

## RUNAWAY BAY, JAMAICA

As dusk gave way to darkness and the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles began, 300 brethren gathered at the site that would be home and meeting place for the next eight days.

Arnold Hampton, the regional director for the Caribbean, introduced one of the threads running through the messages: that of holding on to the pearl of great price and never losing sight of the goal. Richard Pinelli unfolded “the awesome truth of Acts 3:20,” explaining the restoration of God’s rule on earth, executed by kingly priests who are even now being prepared for their roles. President Jim Franks’ address was well-received.

The Feast has a clear connection to the Kingdom, when God will tabernacle with man as He did with Israel. Messages espoused godly principles like obedience, saying “no” (even to the disappointment of a loved one) in order to keep one’s word. Admonitions reinforced by parables urged us to keep our minds on the future and view the Promised Land through eyes of faith, not fear.

The children’s choir was delightful. Three soloists blessed us with excellent selections, while the Festival choir sang some old songs.

Brethren visited the Green Grotto Caves and the Dunn’s River Falls, thus sharing in a little of Jamaica’s history. The family fun show and indoor games were thoroughly enjoyed and helped make this the best Feast ever.

**Madge Thompson**

## FLIC-EN-FLAC, MAURITIUS

Eleven people from three countries attended the Feast of Tabernacles 2017 in Flic-en-Flac, on the beautiful Indian Ocean island of Mauritius. Services were held in a bungalow a few hundred meters from one of the most beautiful beaches on the island. We very much appreciated the prerecorded French sermons and sermonettes that were sent to us from the French Department.

Three group meals were prepared by three different ladies, one each in European, Réunionnais and Mauritian style. There were excursions, including a catamaran outing on the ocean, an outing to a nature park and an idyllic dinner soirée at a grand, waterfront hotel. We also enjoyed the serene, convivial atmosphere of our picnic lunch on the beach for Family Day.

After the Last Great Day, we parted company with intense emotion and, most of all, a desire to prepare for the next Feast of Tabernacles.

**Laval Prodigue**

## SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE, MEXICO

This year the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico. The brethren enjoyed a variety of very inspiring messages, which expanded our views about our exciting future in the Kingdom of God, how to have

more zeal for the work, our anticipation of a better world, the promises for the wonderful world tomorrow, God’s promises for His people and God’s plan of salvation for the whole world, to name just a few. Other highlights at the Feast were the baptisms of three young women and one gentleman, whom we all welcomed warmly.

The 300 brethren from Mexico, Chile, Germany, Perú, Ecuador, Guatemala and the United States enjoyed a large range of activities, which gave them ample opportunities for fellowship and fun together: a welcoming activity for the visiting brethren from international areas, a family dance, a luncheon for the elderly, a children’s day and Family Day, to name just a few.

We are anticipating the Feast will be held again in San Miguel de Allende next year. We thank God and the leadership of the Church for giving us such a wonderful and inspiring Feast.

**Lauro Roybal**

## TAUPO, NEW ZEALAND

Picturesque and scenic Lake Taupo provided temporary dwellings for 73 brethren (and four additional members connected via the webcast) who rejoiced in the mood and spirit that attendance at the Feast generated. Sermons and sermonettes focused on the prophecies of peace, happiness and prosperity that will spring from living God’s way of life.

Members are presently in training for positions of service in the government of God. Those who remain faithful and endure to the end will be presented the



Mapoko, Zambia



Calais, France



Petite Calivigny, Grenada

opportunity to serve with Jesus Christ while teaching and administrating His way of life throughout the Millennium.

Greg Sargent, accompanied by his wife, Marian, was our guest speaker for the last half of the Feast. They also visited Fiji for Atonement and Australia for the first half of the Feast. Our visitors from the U.S. were an outstanding example of a willingness to serve, especially with speaking assignments. Dave West, an elder from the U.S. arranged and supervised the special music, producing surprising and pleasing results.

Activities included a welcome and fellowship evening, an over-50s luncheon, group barbecue social, youth outing, a Feast dinner followed by a talent show, and other activities in and around Taupo.

We are thankful to God for His bountiful blessings at His Feast.

**André van Belkum**

---

## BENIN CITY, NIGERIA

Thirty-five brethren gathered to keep the Feast in Benin City, Nigeria. Services and activities were held at the Randekhi Royal Hotel, located near the city's airport. All of the brethren stayed together at the hotel, and we ate all our meals together.

Dishes such as croaker (a fins-and-scales fish so named because it makes a croaking sound!), rice, *àmàlà* (a boiled dish made from dried yam flour), *fufu* (made from cassava) and *moimoi* (a Nigerian steamed bean pudding) were enjoyed by all—well, by most, as the Westerners there had a different taste palate not used to a few of these foods! Popular West African drinks of Maltina

and Malta accented the final meal together on the Last Great Day.

Cincinnati, Ohio, deacon Cody Kitts and his wife, Bobbi, oversaw the organization of the Feast here and did a wonderful job. We enjoyed a pool swim activity early in the Feast—a real treat for everyone. Later, a first-time sports and games afternoon featured a few relay races, along with jump rope, table tennis, cards and board games. Many offered music, riddles or dramas (skits) during the talent show evening to round out a wonderful Feast of Tabernacles.

**Dave Myers**

---

## HUANCHACO, PERU

Once again, the beautiful resort in Huanchaco, 10 minutes from the city of Trujillo, was the place chosen by God for His 182 sons and daughters to keep the Feast of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day. As the Feast was about to begin, brethren from various places started to arrive, and from the first day on, the place was filled with the genuine joy of reuniting—an unparalleled sense of brotherhood that only the Spirit of God can make possible.

This year brethren from Chile, Bolivia, Argentina and, of course, Peru, shared God's blessing of spending eight days together, bonding and learning many lessons from the Bible.

Other activities that added to our joy were the dance nights, a young adults' evening, a children's party, the talent show, an evening for the elderly, a sports afternoon and, for the first time, an activity for married couples

with presentations to help strengthen marriages within the Church.

Due to the unexpected death of our pastor, Manuel Quijano, only some months ago, Alvaro Matamala, a minister for the Church in Chile, and his wife, Fabiola, visited and helped us throughout the Feast, sharing some very gratifying moments of conversation and joy with the brethren.

Thanks be to God for His Feasts, for the Church and for His wonderful plan.

**Carlos Saavedra**

---

## BACOLOD CITY, PHILIPPINES

Preparation for the Feast started in early January when, after hearing reports that Baguio would not be available due to a planned renovation of the service hall, we began to consider Bacolod as a Feast site for 2017.

A package deal was worked out with Middle Town Inn for a budget of P500 per person per day with three meals and an air-conditioned room for lodging. More than half of the Festival attendees stayed in the Middle Town Inn, which is located in the middle of the city only a kilometer away from Benjamin Hall, the venue for the daily services.

Activities included an entertainment night, showcasing local dances, and a festive Family Day with games and *sorbetes* (Filipino ice cream) that ended with a fellowship dinner of a roasted calf. Singles' activities included a mountain resort outing at the foot of Mount Kanlaon. Children's bowling was a first-time experience for the kids. A health lecture was presented by Dr. Robin



Villa la Merced, Argentina



Kinshasa, Congo



Pigeon Forge, Tennessee

Navarro for the seniors, and a Bible study for the singles and the youth was held after the Sabbath service.

Messages focused on Christian living, the Kingdom of God, the world tomorrow, and the new heavens and earth.

Florante and Lina Siopan were honored for their 19 years of dedicated and faithful service to the Church. Mr. Siopan retired from the full-time ministry just before the Feast, and Mr. Norman Julag-ay is the new pastor for the Visayas region.

Also one baptism was conducted during the Feast: Vincent Moreno of the Tacloban congregation.

Our highest attendance was 239, with a daily average of 230.

We were blessed with excellent weather and rich fellowship among the Feastgoers. They are looking forward to having a venue where services, church activities, food and lodging can all be accommodated in one place.

**Norman Julag-ay**

---

## GITI, RWANDA

In the rural village of Giti in Rwanda the Festival season went very well. High attendance during the Feast was 71 people. The weather was good, with lots of sunshine during most days. All present ate well.

The encouraging teaching of the messages centered on the wonderful age to come. These included translations of sermons by Mr. Meeker and other messages by Mr. Mundeli, the area elder, and Mr. Sibobugingo, the area deacon.

Some afternoons we had presentations on how to effectively teach our children,

how to avoid misunderstandings between mates, and how to care for our teeth.

These presentations were made by people knowledgeable in the subjects. Evenings were spent in recreational activities and discussions animated both by young people and by adults.

We thank God that the Feast was characterized by edifying sermons, which made us dream of the wonderful Millennium to come, as well as by brotherhood and service to each other.

**Jean-Marie Mundeli**

---

## UVONGO, SOUTH AFRICA

Once again, the Feast of Tabernacles was held at Uvongo on the east coast of South Africa. We were blessed with beautifully mild weather for most of the Feast, except for a day and night of heavy rain and strong wind. The average attendance was 116, and the highest was 123. From all accounts, it definitely was a time of rejoicing for all present. We were also blessed to have visitors from the United States: Don and Rannie Henson and the Griswold family, who returned to keep the Feast in South Africa for the third time.

The sermons and sermonettes contained encouraging messages of inspiration and hope, focusing on the millennial rule of Jesus Christ and our future role in His ruling government.

Mr. Henson, our guest speaker, highlighted the importance of learning lessons at the Feast and building on each experience. He gave an encouraging sermon to our youth titled “Growing Up in the Millennium: What Will It Be Like?” He also presented the final

message on the Eighth Day, titled “The Last Last Great Day.” Sermons were also given by Morgen Kriedemann, Neil Becker and Neville Smith.

There were also four scheduled activities—a family afternoon, youth beach activity, seniors’ lunch and a family dance.

As always, the eight days passed by far too quickly, but it was an exceptional time of fun, fellowship and spiritual nourishment that was enjoyed by all who rejoiced before God at His Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day.

**Neville Smith**

---

## ST. KITTS

God’s presence was here! Eleven Kittitian brethren gathered in the beautiful hills of the Olivees Mountain to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles this year.

We truly appreciated the opportunity to join the webcast from Orange Beach, Alabama, and we thoroughly enjoyed the many messages and special music that were presented. Of course, the message from our president, Jim Franks, is always one of the highlights of the Feast, and we pray for God’s continued blessing on him, the ministers and their families.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to our having a most wonderful Feast. Kudos to Mr. Sandilands and the Orange Beach technical staff for a job well-done. Hopefully, knowing that so many of us benefited from the webcast each day added to the joy you felt as well.

God’s holy days are powerful reminders of His commitment to mankind. Our attendance and attentiveness demonstrate our commitment to Him and His Son, Jesus the Christ.

**Don Simpson**



Douélé, Côte d'Ivoire



Awarewaunau, Guyana



Barbados

## BRANSON, MISSOURI, UNITED STATES

The hills were alive with the sound of God's people rejoicing together before God as Branson's White House Theatre hosted over 600 brethren worshipping God at the 2017 Feast of Tabernacles. Spirits were high as members came together for the opening service to hear Jim Franks explain why we are commanded to keep God's Feast. Inspiring messages and warm fellowship were appreciated by everyone as we celebrated the future reign of Jesus Christ on earth. Beautiful weather, great special music and spectacular scenery added a millennial touch to the enjoyment. This year there were many attending the Feast in the Ozarks for the first time, and many of them expressed their enjoyment of the area, as well as the messages. One highlight this year was Family Day at the Promised Land Zoo, which specializes in young animals that you can get up close to and even feed, hold and pet. It truly added to the scene of a world where the animals are tame and live in harmony with man.

There were several present who had attended the Feast since the early 1950s in Big Sandy, Texas, while others were attending their very first Feast of Tabernacles. Many stated this was their "best Feast ever."

Whether it was dancing at the family dance, visiting together at the senior citizens' lunch or simply fellowshiping together in the afternoon, the Spirit of God was obvious to all. Eighty stayed over for the Sabbath following the Feast, wanting to wring just a little more from the Feast atmosphere before returning home.

**Mike Blackwell**

## ESTES PARK, COLORADO, UNITED STATES

Feastgoers came from all over the United States: Florida, New England, Minnesota, the West Coast and, of course, Texas! A spirit of cooperation, support, involvement and appreciation was quite evident. Spiritual food was excellent, including two messages each from Jim Franks and Britt Taylor, who both spent half the Feast in Estes. The high attendance was 369 on Tuesday. Special music, certainly including the children's choir, was quite well done and inspired us.

On Sunday night, as predicted, about 4 inches of snow fell. The forecast had caused us to look for an indoor venue for the Family Day meal, scheduled for 5 p.m. Monday. Thankfully, one was available and the turnout for the beef brisket dinner was excellent! The weather cleared up Monday, and over 30 brave brethren went horseback riding that afternoon!

Unfortunately, Trail Ridge Road, which soars to over 12,000 feet in elevation and is the highlight of Rocky Mountain National Park, was closed for much of the Feast due to weather. However, some of the brethren picked the right time and were able to make the drive.

Around town elk were everywhere, and we all saw a number of these majestic animals. They virtually own Estes Park and frequently cross busy streets, causing traffic delays. It was mating season, and the largest, strongest bulls commanded harems of 20 or more cows.

All in all, the Feast in Estes Park turned out to be wonderful and memorable. Some asked when we will be there again!

**Larry Neff**

## FORT MYERS, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES

The Fort Myers satellite Feast site experienced good Florida weather following Hurricane Irma's destructive path just two weeks before the Feast. The hurricane did not stop 238 brethren from attending, which was an increase of 50 over 2016.

The brethren enjoyed very uplifting and encouraging messages throughout the Feast. They appreciated Mr. Franks' sermon "Is It a Commandment or a Tradition?" It was very fitting for the beginning of the Feast. We were given an excellent menu of sermon topics and sermonettes throughout the Feast this year. Our small choir of 20 added much joy to the Feast with a variety of traditional Feast music.

Feast activities this year began with a family social that included a karaoke session and a dance following the first holy day. The seniors enjoyed a delicious brunch with background piano music on the weekly Sabbath. Family Day was spent at the Shell Factory and Nature Park in North Fort Myers. With museums, seashell displays, 300-plus animals in the nature center, a fun park, a miniature golf course and several restaurants, this location provided something for everyone. It was truly a wonderful Feast, both physically and spiritually, for everyone.

**Jim Haeffele**



Kumasi, Ghana



Benin City, Nigeria



Runaway Bay, Jamaica

## GREEN LAKE, WISCONSIN, UNITED STATES

The Feast in Green Lake was all about inspiring services and fellowship. This was our first year at the Green Lake Conference Center, and it was very conducive to fellowship. Most people stayed on-site in the same building where services were held. The Green Lake Conference Center had a nice cafeteria with good food, and we had most of our meals together in a private dining room.

As this was a satellite site, we had transmissions every day from Orange Beach, and all came through without problem. We averaged 25 in attendance, with visitors on the Sabbath pushing attendance to 31.

You might wonder what it's like to have a Feast site that small. We can easily say it was wonderful! The atmosphere was happy, peaceful, with lots of cooperation and people looking for ways to help others.

We enjoyed lovely fall foliage and a very nice setting on Green Lake, the deepest lake in Wisconsin, with deer and other wildlife. Weather was in the 70s for the first half and 60s for the rest, with some light rain but no real storms.

We had three activities: a visit to an apple orchard, a winery and Larson's Famous Clydesdales. But by far the most enjoyable activities were our times together in fellowship.

**Mary Burke**

## KOHALA COAST, HAWAII, UNITED STATES

Over 300 people celebrated the Feast at the luxurious Fairmont Orchid Hotel on the Kohala Coast of Hawaii. Attendees reported that strolling to services, a choice of five restaurants, fellowshiping opportunities and sharing meals spiritually enhanced their Feast.

Activities included a welcome sunset buffet dinner, young adult kayaking/snorkeling, teen beach party, teen and young adult hospitality, Family Day beach party, and holy day buffets. Families swam and snorkeled in the private resort bay, the gigantic resort pool and other nearby beaches. They found Volcanoes National Park, the Mauna Kea Observatory, sailing, dramatic waterfalls and black sand beaches, and shops and restaurants nearby.

The Big Island is a unique venue, because it is a main producer of the freshest beef, fruit and vegetables eaten in the award-winning restaurants. Home to powerful Mauna Kea telescopes, its darkness offers some of the world's best stargazing. Larger than all the other Hawaiian islands combined, it has once-in-a-lifetime views of volcanoes and new land generation with lava and black sand beaches. Feastgoers' surveys said the beautiful setting manifested God's creation and was spiritually uplifting.

The Fairmont was pleased with our group—especially our well-mannered children and nicely dressed attendees. They invited us back, and we are reviewing the proposal to return in 2019.

**Dave Register**

## LAKE HARMONY, PENNSYLVANIA, UNITED STATES

About 470 attendees—over 100 more than last year—kept the Feast at the Split Rock Resort in Lake Harmony, Pennsylvania. Feastgoers were edified by the sermons, special music, fellowship, restaurants, activities and surroundings. Here are just some of the activities attendees enjoyed:

A line dancing class and a ballroom dancing class had about 30 participants for each session.

The family dance, with about 160 participants, was enthusiastically enjoyed by Feastgoers of all ages.

The teen ice cream social was enjoyed by about 25 teens before the teen bowling night.

The senior luncheon was served to about 120 participants, who enjoyed a plated meal while being entertained by adults and teenagers. Lyle Welty shared a few words of wisdom that everyone appreciated.

The NYC tour had 112 attendees, who visited several sights from downtown to midtown (9/11 Memorial, Freedom Tower, Times Square, Empire State Building and much more).

For the *Jonah* show, 112 participants traveled to the Sight & Sound Millennium Theatre in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. An outstanding meal was served beforehand at the Shady Maple Smorgasbord. One bus driver said that he's never had such a large group that seemed to enjoy each other's company and get along so well.

**Kevin Epps**



St. Kitts



Green Lake, Wisconsin



Flic-en-Flac, Mauritius

## NEW BRAUNFELS, TEXAS, UNITED STATES

For the third year in a row, New Braunfels served as our Texas site for the Feast of Tabernacles and Last Great Day. We had a high attendance of 369 brethren on both the first holy day and on the weekly Sabbath. The New Braunfels Convention Center is a beautiful, spacious venue for keeping the Feast, and the center allowed us to bring in our own food and drink. So we enjoyed coffee, tea and treats before and after all of the morning services—something that added to the warm fellowship we enjoyed.

A few changes in activities from previous years added special interest. The teens and their families spent an afternoon spelunking the Natural Bridge Caverns; Family Day consisted of a Texas-style safari to view exotic animals; and we had a fun show featuring 17 acts. A repeat feature of last year's Feast was to have a designated photographer who took photos of everyone fellowshiping and at the various activities. The photos were shown most days before services via a PowerPoint presentation.

Many remarked on the inspiring messages given throughout the Feast. In addition to playing the video sermon by COGWA President Jim Franks, we also enjoyed sermons given by Jim D. Chapman, Al Garrett, Steve Moody, Larry Salyer, Jim Servidio and David Treybig.

With its scenic beauty, abundant housing and wide variety of restaurants, New Braunfels is an outstanding location to observe the Feast. We look forward

to returning to this historic German community for the Feast again next year!

**David Treybig**

## ORANGE BEACH, ALABAMA, UNITED STATES

With 1,168 people in Orange Beach, Alabama, the Feast of Tabernacles started off with the usual excitement you would expect for God's annual fall festival season. The beauty of this beach setting and the full moon on the opening night as we were exiting after the opening service were poignant reminders of God's promises to His people.

By the end of the first holy day, news of an impending storm in the Gulf started to fill the local news, and by Friday evening the realization hit that we would have a storm come ashore somewhere in the Gulf by late Saturday evening. But the collective prayers of God's people worldwide proved too much for Hurricane Nate, and we witnessed "half a hurricane" as the meteorologists called it.

The rest of the Feast was calm and beautiful. We had a fantastic Family Day with carnival games, soccer, face painting and much more. The teen beach outing and the golf tournament were witness of God's power over the weather, as all of our planned outdoor activities were held on schedule. The Church again sponsored a food drive for the local community this year, and the results were astounding to the city of Orange Beach.

By the end of the Feast, those who attended in Orange Beach knew of God's power, and we were all in awe of

His protection over His people and His Festival sites!

**Phillip Sandilands**

## PIGEON FORGE, TENNESSEE, UNITED STATES

Almost 600 attendees enjoyed warmer than usual weather this year in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Although it was warm and muggy, smiles were aplenty, fellowship was abundant, and the spiritual diet consistently pointed us toward the future with a specific focus on preparing now. Each day we enjoyed beautiful special music as well, from a gorgeously decorated stage.

Activities ranged from a family dance on Saturday night and Family Day in the park on Monday to a barbecue lunch for the seniors while being entertained by "Kenny and Dolly," "George and Tammy," and "Sonny and Cher," followed by a round of "Name That Tune," in which the winning team received prizes.

Some of the other highlights were the children's choir, wonderful meals out with friends and family, and alpine coaster riding. As is the case each year in Pigeon Forge, multiple generations in many families stayed together in condos or chalets, which makes the Feast experience that much more special. It is wonderful to see children, parents, grandparents and even great-grandparents spending quality time together focusing on God's future Kingdom.

Everyone left with pictures and memories to look back on while inspired to look forward to what lies ahead.

**Mark Winner**



Branson, Missouri



Mweka, Congo



Kumasi, Ghana

## REDMOND, OREGON, UNITED STATES

Located in the high desert area of Central Oregon, the town of Redmond hosted 255 of God's people at the beautiful Eagle Crest Resort for the Feast of Tabernacles. The weather throughout the Feast was very pleasant, with daytime highs in the 60s and 70s and lows at night in the 30s and 40s. We did wake up to frost a few mornings, but the days quickly warmed up.

Nearby snow-capped mountains and the rugged beauty of the area provided an inspiring backdrop to what the Feast of Tabernacles pictures. Many visited the beautiful points of interest in the area, including Smith Rock, Cline Falls and world-renowned Crater Lake. Families also enjoyed visiting the quaint Western-themed town of Sisters, located 20 minutes west of Redmond, for an afternoon of shopping, great food and fun.

A highlight of the Feast was Family Day, which was held at Sam Johnson Park in Redmond. Activities included a variety of games for all ages, kite flying, an extensive playground area and a delicious barbecue dinner provided by a local caterer. More than half of our attendees enjoyed the beautiful day, fellowship and delicious food.

Fifty seniors enjoyed an afternoon luncheon, musical entertainment and fellowship. The young adults spent an afternoon hiking in spectacular Smith Rock State Park and invited families to join them for a short sunset hike later in the day. We appreciated the inspiring sermonettes and sermons and an especially interesting Bible study titled "The Sons of Zadok." We were truly well-fed, physically and especially spiritually, during the Feast in Redmond.

**Michael Hanisko**

## SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

Almost 230 Feastgoers enjoyed sunny weather with nice breezes throughout the Feast in San Diego. The weather remained in the upper 70s, and the nights had a very pleasant chill.

This year the venue was located at the Crowne Plaza hotel, and it served the members well. It was spacious and bright and had plenty of places for fellowship. The hotel is decorated with a Hawaiian theme, and beautiful plants cover the grounds and atrium areas of the hotel.

Members enjoyed being able to walk to services, Bible studies and a family dance, which were all held at the hotel. Morning hospitalities were also enjoyed by young adults and teens.

The young adults started the Feast off with an evening bonfire on the beach, and the following day teens enjoyed a beach party with volleyball, basketball, skimboarding and swimming.

Seniors from around the nation enjoyed a beautiful luncheon that was prepared by the hotel. Forty people attended, as Ken Giese hosted "Name That Tune!" and Doug Johnson talked about the work in Canada.

One evening during the Feast, members enjoyed the Hornblower dinner cruise around the San Diego Harbor. The meal of boneless beef ribs was delicious, and the downtown city lights reflected in the harbor were beautiful. The cruise lasted about three hours, and nearly one-third of the Festival attendees participated.

During the Feast, members contributed items to the San Diego Food Bank. By the end of the Feast, they were able to gather two large barrels full and an overflow of about the same amount. It was nice to see the generosity of God's people.

Several members made the comment that San Diego was a wonderful place to host the Feast of Tabernacles, representing a future time of beauty. We look forward to another great year in 2018.

**Paul Carter**

---

## MAPOKO, ZAMBIA

For the second year running, the Feast of Tabernacles was held in Mapoko, Mumbwa, in central Zambia, and 176 brethren were present. The highlight of the Feast, apart from messages and the special music, was members' seeing people they know in the *In Accord* video by Mr. Franks about his recent visit to Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi.

Activities included youth day, preteen games and a family sports day. The food from the communal kitchen was in abundance and well-prepared. There was almost no illness at our site, despite the fact that there was no running water.

The Feast was almost marred when a sweltering hot start to the Feast was followed by two days of light rain. We sent a prayer request midway through the Feast. Nonetheless, very dark clouds gathered Tuesday. Then heavy rains started, accompanied by lightning and loud thunder! To our relief, the rain died 3 kilometers north of our Feast site. All of the brethren agreed that God performed a miracle.

**Daniel Mwash**



# GWERU, ZIMBABWE

Having outgrown our previous Festival location, the brethren in Zimbabwe gathered at a new facility outside the town of Gweru, where 189 members celebrated the 2017 Feast of Tabernacles for a foretaste of the Kingdom in a spirit of unity, peace and celebration. All the members stayed together on the grounds of the Baptist Convention Center—eating, fellowshiping, and hearing inspiring messages.

For Family Day, members cleaned up a long-unused miniature golf course, played volleyball and football, and divided into teams for games and relays. Some of the other activities included a sing-along—with songs sung in English, as well as the Shona and Ndebele languages—and a special question-and-answer session with visiting pastor James Capo. Mr. Capo joined with the local Zimbabwe pastors, Harris Hlazo and Steve Tshabalala, after spending the first half of the Feast in Malawi. All messages were given in English, with translation into Shona.

A highlight came on the last day of the Feast, when eight new members were baptized into God’s Church. With insufficient water in the villages where members live, baptisms are generally held at the Passover season and the Feast of Tabernacles, when the members gather together and water is available.

A wonderful Feast concluded on the Last Great Day, with the Blessing of Little Children ceremony held for eight children.

We are thankful to God for the excellent weather throughout the Feast and for the truly millennial spirit enjoyed by all.

**James Capo**



Orange Beach, Alabama

Photo: Kelly Cunningham

# FEAST OF TABERNACLES ATTENDANCE

Along with the reports from our Feast sites around the world, we also receive their high attendance figures, which we’ve listed below. As well, we list the number of connections to daily webcasts via the Internet and the number of shut-ins who received DVDs of prerecorded messages. Consistent with our past reporting practices and member feedback, for attendance purposes we count an average of two viewers per DVD or webcast/Roku connection. Included in the statistics are the scattered members who kept the Feast off-site without an Internet connection or prerecorded sermons.

ARGENTINA	164	SOUTH AFRICA	149
AUSTRALIA	15	ST. KITTS	11
BARBADOS	83	TOGO	25
BOLIVIA	53	UNITED STATES	
BURUNDI	450	BIG SANDY	18
CAMEROON	25	BRANSON	626
CANADA	36	ESTES PARK	369
CHILE	387	FORT MYERS	238
COLOMBIA	112	GREEN LAKE	41
CONGO	228	KOHALA COAST	302
CÔTE D'IVOIRE	69	LAKE HARMONY	473
FIJI	36	NEW BRAUNFELS	369
FRANCE	260	ORANGE BEACH	1,168
GHANA	590	PIGEON FORGE	573
GRENADA	9	REDMOND	255
GUATEMALA	540	SAN DIEGO	227
GUYANA	51	ZAMBIA	176
INDIA	29	ZIMBABWE	189
JAMAICA	300	ENGLAND/EUROPE/AFRICA/ LATIN AMERICA SCATTERED	100
KENYA	128	<b>ON-SITE TOTAL</b>	<b>9,882</b>
MALAWI	93	U.S. SHUT-INS (DVD)	270
MAURITIUS	11	INTL. SHUT-INS (DVD)	100
MEXICO	300	U.S. & INTL. WEBCASTS	460
NEW ZEALAND	77	<b>AT-HOME TOTAL</b>	<b>830</b>
NIGERIA	35	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10,712</b>
PERU	182		
PHILIPPINES	239		
RWANDA	71		

To view more 2017 Feast of Tabernacles photos, go to the Feast photo album at

[facebook.com/cogwa](https://facebook.com/cogwa)



## YOUNG MEN'S CLUB PERFORMS SERVICE PROJECT FOR LOCAL WIDOW

On Sunday, June 11, 2017, the members of the Young Men's Leadership, Fellowship, Education and Service Club of the Birmingham, Alabama, and Trenton, Georgia, congregations donated their time to complete home repairs and extensive yard work for a widow in the Trenton, Georgia congregation.

The project was located at the home of Debra Doss in Chattanooga, Tennessee. It consisted of removing old gutters, repairing soffits, scraping and repainting trim and garage doors, plumbing, pressure washing, trimming and removing trees and shrubs, mowing and landscaping. The project took the crew of 11 club members plus two hard-working young helpers all day to complete.

The materials and supplies for this service project were partially provided through a proposal submitted by members of the club and approved through the generosity of the Hilltop Outreach Program.

The participating club members were George Allen III, Benjamin Bradford, Tracy Davidson, Tim Dickey, Kelly Finnegan, Charles Gilmer, Billy Hicks, Cody Ingram, Dylan Roemhild, Brandon Smith and Mike Summy. The two young helpers were Matthew Davidson and Will Hicks.

God blessed the efforts of those involved with a great spirit of cooperation and good weather. God's protection was also evident, as a giant tree limb spontaneously fell while one of the men was mowing underneath, barely missing him and knocking down power lines. Additional blessings occurred when utility workers quickly arrived on the scene to remove the limb and restore power.

Mrs. Doss expressed her heartfelt appreciation for their service performed at her home, knowing that she would never have been able to do all this work without their help.

**Debra Doss and Annette Epperson**

## PITTSBURGH CELEBRATES MEMBERS' LONGEVITY

On Jan. 14, 2017, members gathered after services for snacks and cake to celebrate two longtime members in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, congregation. Virginia Brians turned 91, and Bill Solinger turned 90!

Virginia was baptized in 1968 or 1969. Wherever she goes, people know what she believes. Bill Solinger was baptized in November of 1965. He thanks God for keeping him alive to see his son and daughter-in-law attend services.

Mrs. Brians and Mr. Solinger are continuing examples of God's truth, true ambassadors for God and longtime examples to our congregation!

**Joan Ball**



## DONALD AND BARBARA LOVELAND

On Saturday, Sept. 9, 2017, Donald and Barbara Loveland of the Rolla, Missouri, congregation celebrated 50 years of marriage. They were surprised with a visit of family from out of town, gifts and a cake by the Rolla congregation. After much fellowship and visiting, they went for a nice family dinner. Donald and Barbara are longtime deacon and deaconess in the Church of God.

**Karen Henke**





## COLUMBIA ENJOYS ANNUAL PICNIC

The Columbia, Missouri, church area's annual picnic was held June 11, 2017, at the Mellerups' house. The yard was full of games such as bean bag tosses, and a homemade disc golf course was set up around the yard. Picnic tables and food were set up under the shelter, giving us all a shady place to eat. For the kids, and any adults adventurous enough to join in, there was swimming, a rock climbing wall, and a bounty of bubble wands.

After lunch, two organized games were set up. First was a very wet version of a relay race. The race came down to the final runners, and both teams ended up happily wet. The second game was a doughnut-eating contest, the point being to see who could eat their dangling doughnut without using their hands or letting it fall to the ground. Contestants found the game to be far more challenging than it appeared. Carissa Caple came in first place, with Nathan Freeman runner-up.

It was a wonderful day full of laughter, fellowship and helpful people. We all enjoyed the friendly atmosphere and a cool breeze that went with the warm day and sunshine.

**Shalynn Mellerup**

## COLUMBIA CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

It all began 50 years ago. July 1967 was the beginning of the Worldwide Church of God in Columbia, South Carolina.

On Sabbath, July 15, 2017, the Columbia congregation held special services in celebration of this momentous 50th anniversary. Approximately 78 guests from various church areas joined our congregation of 40 people, filling our hall and helping us celebrate and honor this wonderful occasion that began so many years ago.

Corsages and boutonnieres were given in special recognition to seven of our current members who were original to that beginning church. They are Steve and Linda Harper, Glen Frick, Leon and Caroline Frick, Nelson Bright and Mary Ashford. The first pastor in 1967 was Gary Arvidson (1967-71), followed by Joel Lillengreen (1971-75), John Ritenbaugh (1975-83), Keith Thomas (1983-85), Carlos Nieto (1985-86), George Elkins (1986-92), Otto Lochner (1992-2002), Don Waterhouse (2002-2016) and currently Tom Schultz.

Services were conducted by Mr. Schultz. We enjoyed split sermons, with Steve Ferenchiak, who was visiting from Asheville, North Carolina, with his wife, Judy, giving the first sermon and Mr. Schultz giving the second.

After services, food was set up, giving a new meaning to the word "feast." Main dishes, salads, and fruits were too numerous to take even a little spoonful of each item. One table was just for desserts, ranging from cheesecake and cookies to blondies, with the focal point being a beautiful cake professionally made by Shea Dreaden of the Asheville, North Carolina, congregation. The top read "Happy 50th Anniversary Columbia Congregation" and was beautifully decorated with handcrafted icing flowers starting from the top and cascading down one side with the Bible verses written around the circumference. The cake itself was a delicious yellow with lemon filling and was served with sherbet punch to top it off.

Tables were decorated with white tablecloths and a centerpiece of delightful sunflowers and baby's breath. An entertaining slide show, composed of many photos of Church members throughout the years, was shown that brought back many memories and several rounds of laughter. Did we really look like that?

A group photo of the current Columbia members had previously been taken. Prints were framed and presented to each household as a keepsake. Thanks to all those who made this anniversary so special.

It was a wonderful celebration and reminded us to be thankful to our great God that we are here to take part in it and to stay focused on the greatest future celebration of all ... the marriage supper of the Lamb!

**Jim Blount**



# 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



**Margaret Ashford**

Margaret Ashford of the Central New Jersey congregation was baptized on the unseasonably cool morning of Monday, Aug. 7, 2017. This journey began in 1957, when she was a teenager, via a parent who read *The Plain Truth* magazine and listened to the radio broadcast. But her family never became Church members. Margaret was baptized 60 years later, after decades of seeking a church that taught the truth she had been exposed to as a teenage girl.

**Kevin Epps**



**Brian Christopher Miller**

Brian Christopher Miller of the Hickory, North Carolina, congregation was baptized on Aug. 27, 2017. The baptism took place at the home of Ellis and Annie Lail, with other family and friends attending. Hickory pastor Ron Kelley conducted the baptism and the laying on of hands ceremony. A "welcome to the family" reception took place after the ceremony.

**Ron Kelley**

## BIRTHS



**Abigail Tranquada**

Drew and Amy Tranquada of the Roanoke, Virginia, congregation are delighted to announce the arrival of their daughter, Abigail Tranquada. Abby was born on the Friday afternoon of Aug. 4, 2017, at 8 pounds 6 ounces and 19½ inches long. She is the first daughter for the Tranquada parents and is adored by her three older brothers as well as the local congregation.

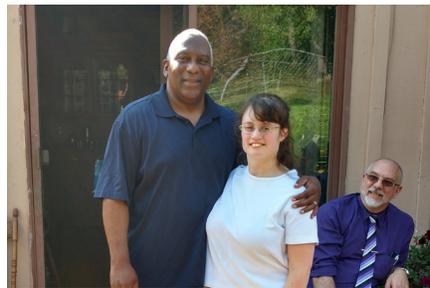
**Rosalynn Arnold**



**Gerard Martel**

Gerard Martel of the Central New Jersey congregation was baptized in the lake at Camp Heritage on Wednesday, Aug. 16. Scott Lord, pastor and camp director, joined Kevin Epps for the laying on of hands ceremony. Also in attendance were Gerard's mother, Christine Martinez; Monica Lord; Kayla Epps; and Mr. and Mrs. Chad Messerly. It's been great to see God at work in the life of Gerard, a young adult aged 26, at a time when many youths are challenged with making a complete commitment to God.

**Kevin Epps**



**Sarah Soltysiak**

Sarah Soltysiak, 24, of the Quakertown, Pennsylvania, congregation was baptized on Saturday, Sept. 16. It was a warm, sunny afternoon at the home of King and Ginny Finlay, with plenty in attendance: David and Vicki Soltysiak (Sarah's parents), Jeffrey (her brother), Jessi (her sister), Mr. and Mrs. Finlay, along with extended family and a host of local Church members. This was a perfect follow-up to an active Sabbath service, where Sarah sang in the choir and accompanied the closing hymn.

**Kevin Epps**



**Josué Torres Contreras**

Alejandro Torres and Yolanda Contreras, from the San Luis Potosí, Mexico, congregation, are pleased to announce the birth of their second son, Josué Torres Contreras, who was born on Sept. 18, 2016, at 3:15 p.m., weighing 3.5 kilograms. The family and their congregation are very pleased with the arrival of this new member, who makes his parents and his elder brother Saul very happy.

**Jorge Iván Garduño**

## WEDDINGS



**Danielle and Steven Duncan**

July 16, 2017, was a bright sunny day for the wedding of Steven Duncan and Danielle Rehor. Surrounded by their parents, John and Angie Duncan of Nashville, Tennessee, and Jerry and Tami Rehor of Louisville, Kentucky, and extended family and friends, Steven and Danielle were married in a ceremony conducted by Danielle's uncle, Mark Winner. The day included the lakeside ceremony, yard games and ice cream following the meal to combat the July heat. The happy couple now resides in Nashville, Tennessee.

**Danielle Duncan**



**Raquel and Israel Lopez**

Accompanied by the chords of the melody "A Thousand Years," the bride, Raquel Hernandez, looked radiant, happy and full of love. The guests watched her, smiling and excited, as she made her entrance around 8:30 p.m. on April 1, 2017. The ceremony took place in the church hall of the Mexico City congregation. Wearing a beautiful white dress, Raquel walked hand in hand with her father, Roberto Hernandez, to the stage, where Israel Lopez awaited.

Followed by the affectionate glances of more than 100 guests, Raquel went down the stairs to reach the central point, where Alfredo Lopez, a minister of the Church of God, who is also the father of the groom, started the religious ceremony.

Clearly excited, and somewhat nervous, Israel Lopez received the hand of his future wife from Mr. Hernandez, and while they exchanged joyous glances, Mr. Lopez began the union of these two young people.

As prayers and words were spoken about the purpose of marriage and why God established it as an essential way for humans to develop their amazing human potential, Israel and Rachel kept their hands intertwined, and at times their eyes seemed to water.

At 9 p.m. Mr. López addressed the bride and groom directly and asked them the question that everyone happily awaited. After affirmative answers from both, the exchange of the rings and a prayer by their pastor, Lauro Roybal, Mr. Lopez declared them husband and wife before God.

The food and the music, symbols of the wedding parties' joy, spread the couple's happiness to the guests. Their glances crossed all through the night, making it impossible to hide the excitement they felt at their wedding.

Around midnight, a group of traditional mariachis, a group of artists dressed in traditional attire playing Mexican music with wind and string instruments, burst into the event and amazed the audience with their voices as they started singing to the families of the bride and groom.

It was a beautiful wedding, but above all else, it was the union of two young people who fear God and who, with His blessing, will have a beautiful marriage. May God bless them both greatly! That is the wish of all their relatives, friends and brethren.

For their honeymoon, they traveled to the coasts of the Mexican Pacific.

**Jorge Iván Garduño**



**Yudith and Noé Hernandez**

Dressed in a beautiful white gown and holding her father's hand, Yudith Beltrán, the radiant bride, walked down the aisle to the altar, where Noé Hernandez, her future husband, was excitedly waiting for her.

More than 100 guests were waiting patiently for the moment when, with God's blessings and in the midst of a joyous setting, the bride and groom were joined in marriage at the ceremony officiated by Adán Langarica, a minister of the Church of God, on Sunday, April 30, 2017, in the church hall in Mexico City.

Surrounded by the unparalleled warmth of their guests during the religious ceremony, Noé Hernandez and Yudith Beltrán joined their lives in front of their family and friends, who, along with the now married couple, rejoiced in the happiness they exuded.

Once Mr. Langarica laid hands on them and declared them husband and wife, Noé and Yudith walked among the guests so that afterwards some snacks could be served while they took the traditional family photographs.

Finally, after sharing an excellent meal and a great dance, they bid their guests farewell, table by table, and left for their honeymoon on the beautiful Mexican beaches of Jalisco and Nayarit.

It should be noted that Noé Hernandez is originally from Mexico City, and Yudith Beltrán is from the city of San Luis Potosí. She moved to the Mexican capital to live with her now husband.

Congratulations, Noé and Yudith! May God always fill you with joy, peace and harmony in the bond of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Jorge Iván Garduño**

# 2017 WINTER FAMILY WEEKEND

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY  
DECEMBER 22-26, 2017

# WFW

Wouldn't it be great if our families could get together over the winter break this year? Well, you can! Come to Louisville, Kentucky, and join about a thousand of your fellow family members at the 2017 Winter Family Weekend.

The theme of the weekend—"By This Shall All Men Know"—will focus attendees on having love one for another. There will be dances, sports, seminars, the always popular family fun fair with inflatables and carnival games, and more!

It all begins on Friday evening, Dec. 22, and ends late Tuesday night, Dec. 26. Whether you are 2 or 92, you'll go home invigorated. For all the details and how to register, go to

[MEMBERS.COGWA.ORG/WFW](http://MEMBERS.COGWA.ORG/WFW)