EDUCATIONAL TOUR OF ISRAEL
Over the next month many people will be taking vacations, getting away from their normal work routine. I know that in some parts of the world, companies basically shut down for the whole month of August. But here at the office things seem to never slow down. For us, August will be another busy month.

I did want to highlight a couple of things that will take place this month, asking for your prayers for both of them. Several of our youth camps are scheduled for August, including our largest teen camp, here in Texas (running from July 28 to Aug. 4). This year we are using a new facility located just outside of Athens, Texas. Several have visited the camp and have come back with rave reviews.

Besides the teen camp in Texas, we have two other U.S. teen camps: Camp Fort Bluff in Tennessee, also July 28 to Aug. 4, and Camp Heritage in Pennsylvania (our last camp of the summer), Aug. 11-18. We also have a youth camp sponsored by the Church in Ghana during the month of August. These three camps will be well attended by youth and staff. Please pray for God's protection and that all goes well. We never want to take His blessing for granted.

Another major program of the Church is Foundation Institute. We will begin our eighth year, with orientation on Aug. 21 and classes beginning on Aug. 22. Youth camps and Foundation Institute demonstrate the Church's strong commitment to education. This has been true of the Church going back to the first century. The apostle Paul encouraged both Timothy and Titus to train leaders for the future, to teach individuals who would then teach others (2 Timothy 2:2). This commitment to education has also been part of our Church culture in modern times for more than 75 years.

Recently I was reviewing some old literature from the Church going back to the 1940s. Many of you may not be aware of this, but the Radio Church of God had a publication titled Our Co-Workers’ Bulletin for a number of years in the 1930s and 1940s. Here is the masthead of this publication from Nov. 29, 1946. The main article was about the beginning of Ambassador College and the importance of education. You may be aware that Herbert Armstrong planned to open Ambassador College in the fall of 1946, but ran into some financial issues that delayed the opening until the fall of 1947. For the next 50 years, until it closed for good in 1997, Ambassador College provided education for young people from around the world.

The Church has always been committed to the importance of right education, not just any education. By that, we mean education that is based on God's Word. There are many things that one can be educated about in our world today, but to ignore the true education based on the Word of God is to omit something of great significance.

Here are some quotes from this November 1946 publication that I find as timely today as they were then, some 70-plus years ago:

“No what is the basis, the foundation, of true education? We read the answer in the 111th Psalm: ‘The fear of the Eternal is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that do His commandments.’ … The very foundation of true education, then, is the Bible. And what is the Bible? Not very many know what it is. Listen! The Bible is a special revelation from the Creator God, by which He reveals to man those basic necessary truths man does not know naturally, and could never otherwise find out. It is a revelation, then, of basic, essential knowledge. It reveals what man is, how man came, why man is, the purpose of things, where we are going, what lies on beyond.”

The Church of God, a Worldwide Association, is committed to providing a true biblical education through its church services, Bible studies, youth camps, Foundation Institute, FI Online, booklets, LHT website, Discern magazine, One Accord, In Accord and many other programs. One could say that everything we do is education!

I will end with another quote from the article: “Real conversion and salvation is education. … God intended man to become educated. We never glorify God by ignorance, nor by neglecting to train and educate the mind!”

Our desire is to always do more in providing education for the people of God in a world that has rejected God and His Word.
Nine Ways to Make This a Family Feast
God is very clear that we are to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and we are to rejoice. He is also clear that the Feast is important family time.

How to Not Be Distracted at the Feast
With all those exciting attractions and activities, how can we make sure we have a spiritual Feast?

2018 Audit Shows Good Stewardship

2019 High School Graduates

FI Completes Second Educational Tour of Israel

Church Potluck

Announcements
Nine Ways to Make this a family feast

“You shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter” (Deuteronomy 16:14).

God is very clear that we are to keep the Feast of Tabernacles, and we are to rejoice. He is also clear that the Feast is important family time.

By Mike Blackwell

R ejoicing is pretty simple. The opportunity to travel is nice, but more important than where we keep the Feast is what we do as we keep it—rejoicing before God, worshipping, learning His way and fellowshipping as a family.

This year marks my 67th Feast, going back to the days of the tabernacle in Big Sandy. At that time most people camped together, so there was lots of family time for everyone. As time went on, the number of sites, as well as the number of activities, increased. There were softball, basketball and golf tournaments. There were a myriad of other things. Times have changed, but the need for family time at the Feast has not changed. It is a vital part of bringing up a child “in the way he should go.”

As we prepare for the Feast of Tabernacles, let’s look at nine ways we can make the 2019 Feast more of a family Feast.

1. Remember that children learn what they live
   As you go to the Feast, share with your children (on an age-appropriate level) why we keep God’s feasts and what they picture. Talk about topics from the messages that they can understand and help them see why we do what we do. It will help them to view it as their Feast, not merely Mom and Dad’s Feast.

2. Plan activities all can enjoy and participate in
   Try to spend most of your leisure time together, having fun and building memories. Get input from everyone in the family. When we do things together, it becomes “our church,” not merely “Dad and Mom’s church.”

3. Give each family member some second tithe to spend rejoicing before God
   God gives us second tithe to spend on “whatever your heart desires,” and children need to experience this as well. It will help them realize that God makes it possible for us to rejoice. It also teaches them about budgeting their second tithe. I remember being a teenager and having $25 for the whole Feast (lots of money to me at that time) and having to be careful so I didn’t have “too much Feast at the end of my money.”

4. Plan to spend some family time rejoicing before God in nature
   Most of our Feast sites are in places of natural beauty. Time at zoos, aquariums and nature parks can help draw the family together as you reflect on the wonders of God’s creation, which we will one day rule over and work with.
5. Get together with other families

Family time doesn't mean just your family. Doing things with another family with children of similar ages to yours can help everyone. Adults enjoy adult company, while the children can make friends in a safe environment. Don't be in a hurry to run off and do your thing. Share the time!

6. Let your kids choose the meal occasionally

They may want tacos or pizza at a pizza and games place. And remember—two hours in a restaurant may be fun for you, but it can be agony for kids who just spent several hours being quiet and contained at church. Let them run off some steam before asking them to go to a fancy restaurant.

7. Schedule some downtime, especially for preteens

We all go faster than usual at the Feast and can get tired. If you are tired by the middle of the Feast, chances are your kids are even more tired. When you get too tired, it is hard to rejoice. This might be a good time to let your teens get together with other teens, especially at the teen activity and the teen hostipalities before services.

8. Include serving others in your family time at the Feast

As I was growing up in the Church, my mom helped serve meals every day at the Big Sandy dining hall. I got to help serve as well, first putting a pat of butter on each plate, then later in other ways. I got hooked on serving at the Feast. “My job” helped make it “my Feast” and “my church.” Opportunities to serve are plentiful: helping the elderly and mothers with small children, parking lot (for teens), picking up after services, serving at the senior citizens’ luncheon, collecting hymnals after services, or giving an elderly lady a flower. Getting children involved with serving others at the Feast will do two things: It will help them own the Feast, and it will teach them the importance of thinking of others.

9. Remember why we are at the Feast

This last point for making this Feast a family Feast is the most important! We keep the Feast to learn to fear God, worship Him, rejoice, and fellowship with our brothers and sisters, sons and daughters. Our main reason for going is to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. At times some act as if they’re going on vacation and hope to catch the Feast while they’re there. Skipping services to take in entertainment is counter to the purpose of the Feast. Doing so can have a negative impact on your family as far as respect and honor for God’s Feast and His way.

God’s Feast of Tabernacles is only about two months away. Plan now to make it a family Feast—to rejoice before the Lord, “you and your son and your daughter.” It will pay big dividends in the long run, and your family will have a wonderful, fulfilling Feast of Tabernacles. 📚

—Jon Pinelli

Are We Forgetting Somebody?

As we make our plans for the Feast—as we anticipate packing our suitcases and our cars—we dutifully make sure we have not forgotten anything. We make our checklists and make sure everything is covered. We might even make a list of things we want to do at the Feast.

But is it possible, when we make that list, that we are forgetting not something, but somebody?

The Feast is a very special time. As such, we want to make it special for our physical families. But in taking care of our physical families, are we forgetting our spiritual family? In particular, are we forgetting a few specific people in our spiritual family?

God speaks very clearly and succinctly about making sure the widows and fatherless have their needs met. He told Israel that they were not to mistreat the widows and fatherless (Exodus 22:22).

We know that God is building a family. Our spiritual family has a variety of different people from various walks of life. We must not forget anybody in that spiritual family!

Give some thought now—before the Feast—to what you can do to enhance the Feast for a widow or single-parent family. Can you invite them to join you for a meal or for an activity? You might extend the invitation even before the Feast—or you might wait until the Feast and look for those who might benefit from some special attention.

Either way, as we make our checklists for the Feast and think about what we want to do, let’s make sure we remember to care for everyone in the spiritual family. Let’s make sure we include the widows and the fatherless.

—Jon Pinelli
How to Not Be Distracted at the Feast

There are so many great places to attend the Feast of Tabernacles! With all those exciting attractions and activities, how can we make sure we have a spiritual Feast?

By Gary Black
Last year over 300 brethren attended the Feast in Cortona, Italy. Cortona, like many other sites, offers so much to see and do that you can easily find yourself sidetracked and focused on sightseeing and “once in a lifetime” experiences.

Personally, while making plans to attend the Feast in Italy, my wife and I found ourselves researching all the things we could see and do while there. It quickly became apparent that we could easily be drawn away from keeping the Feast. The trip could easily turn into more of a vacation than the Feast! We didn’t want that. But neither did we want to be holed up in our room all day, every day, doing little else.

Perhaps you’ve had a similar experience.

And perhaps, like us, you’ve found yourself asking, How can we keep a spiritual Feast, even though there are so many other things to see and do?

What are some ways to keep the Feast without being distracted by … well, all the things that can cause us to wander away from the Feast?

Obviously, some sights or activities are better for either before or after the Feast. But what about those things that are appropriate during the Feast? Here are four considerations that might help.

1. Remember that we keep the Feast in the presence of God

   God wants us to enjoy physical blessings at the Feast and to do so “before the Lord your God.” Notice in Deuteronomy 14, He instructs us to save a tithe for the express purpose of keeping His Feasts. In verse 26 He tells us, “You shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the Lord your God, and you shall rejoice, you and your household.”

   We learn from Leviticus 23:41 that we should “keep it as a feast to the Lord for seven days in the year.” Always remembering that we keep the Feast “to the Lord,” and “before the Lord,” helps us keep the Feast in a way that pleases God.

2. Keep in mind the spiritual reasons we are there

   We are keeping a spiritual Feast. Getting proper rest can help make sure we can make it to services every day and listen attentively to the messages. The messages draw attention to many spiritual lessons to consider during the Feast.

   We are commemorating the time when Christ will rule the world—anticipating the changes and blessings that will come when He is in charge.

   The physical things we do can remind us of the reasons we are at the Feast. For example, as we enjoy a wonderful meal, we can consider what it will be like when all the world will enjoy that kind of bounty.

3. Include spiritual topics in our fellowship

   It’s helpful to think about the spiritual reasons we are there, but it’s even better to talk about those spiritual things with others. Good spiritual fellowship is an important part of the Feast.

   When eating with family and friends, we can ask others about what they learned from the messages at services that day and what they look forward to most during the Millennium.

   There are so many spiritual topics that can be fun and helpful to talk about during the Feast. Doing this will help keep us spiritually focused. We can talk about nonspiritual things too, but including some spiritual topics is important.

   And we can remember the shut-ins. Making a call or sending a note to them can mean a lot to them—and remind us of its meaning.

4. Put sights and activities in the context of the Feast

   Even something as seemingly insignificant as our physical accommodations can offer the opportunity to think and talk about spiritual lessons. We can consider what God said to the Israelites in Leviticus 23:42-43: “You shall dwell in booths for seven days. All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt.”

   Our temporary dwellings remind us of the temporary nature of this physical life (2 Peter 1:13-15). They help us focus on things that are eternal (2 Peter 3:10-13), like the Kingdom of God.

   We often visit nearby attractions. This can be good, especially when we do so while keeping the meaning of the Feast in mind.

   For example, standing on a beach and looking over the vast ocean can remind us of God’s glory and the beauty of His creation. We can think and talk about the future, when all of God’s creation is made beautiful again, and everyone appreciates the glory of God and His way.

   Or perhaps we choose to visit a Feast site that has historical significance. In doing so, we might consider how that history might be similar to or different from the Millennium—and why.

   We visited the Colosseum in Rome after the Feast last year. It brought to mind many spiritual lessons, some of which were directly related to the Feast. The Colosseum was a marvel of the ancient world, symbolizing the great power and magnificence of the Roman Empire. Yet the fact that it stands in partial ruins today shows that no kingdom of this world will last. Only the Kingdom of God will be forever (Daniel 2:44).

   It can be fun and spiritually rewarding to connect the things we do and the places we see with the Millennium—how things may be similar or different when Christ returns.

Try using these keys at the Feast this year and see how much you—and those around you—enjoy and benefit from the Feast. ✝️
As we share the results of our annual independent audit, we give thanks to God for His blessing and to members for their generosity.

By Britton M. Taylor

We are pleased to share the audited financial statement of the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc. This year’s report is for the years ending Dec. 31, 2018, and 2017.

The 2018 audit was recently completed in May, and we received a confirmation letter from our auditors dated May 23. The Church received a favorable opinion that the financial statements accurately present the Church’s financial position and results of operations for 2018 and, by comparison, for 2017.

Our independent auditing firm, Henry & Peters, P.C., of Tyler, Texas, gave us an “unqualified” opinion on the financial statements. The unqualified opinion reflects our independent auditor’s judgment that, without any identified exceptions, our financial records and statements are fairly and appropriately presented and are in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

These results not only positively reflect the performance of the financial operations of the Church of God, a Worldwide Association, Inc., but the entire organization’s approach to its fiscal responsibilities. The Ministerial Board of Directors and administration are committed to continuously improving the Church’s operations and being the best stewards we can be of the financial resources God provides us to do His work. An unqualified opinion is just one indication of that commitment.

We are very thankful to report that income received for 2018 was just under $12.7 million—the highest in our history. This was a 6 percent increase over 2017, which was a strong year with income close to $12 million. Total expenses for 2018 and 2017 were about $11.8 million and $11.3 million respectively. In spite of having to spend additional funds on the new building for change orders, upgrades and mandated additions, our bank balance at the end of 2018 was sufficient to fund the bank reserves necessary for 2019.

We acknowledge that our blessings come from God the Father and Jesus Christ, who continue to bless our income. We recognize that it is only by God’s grace, mercy and continued blessing that we will continue to experience the sound financial health with which God has blessed us these past eight years.

We extend our deepest thanks and appreciation for the continuing generosity and faithfulness of the brethren and others who support the Church by giving tithes and offerings. We ask that you continue to pray for us to have wisdom and discretion as we follow Christ’s lead in our stewardship of the resources He provides.

Below we have presented several statements related to the Church’s operations for the year ending Dec. 31, 2018. ©

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>REVENUES, GAINS AND OTHER SUPPORT</th>
<th>Without Donor Restrictions</th>
<th>With Donor Restrictions</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>Tithes and offerings, individuals</td>
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<td>$ 9,174,346</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Other income</td>
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<td>Total revenues, gains and other support</td>
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<td>12,679,910</td>
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<tr>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Public proclamation</td>
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<td>1,216,976</td>
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<tr>
<td>Congregational care</td>
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<td>5,081,457</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>346,449</td>
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<tr>
<td>Festivals</td>
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<th>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</th>
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<td>End of year</td>
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**CHURCH OF GOD, A WORLDWIDE ASSOCIATION, INC.**
**STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES**
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2018**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPENSES</th>
<th>Public Proclamation</th>
<th>Congregational Care</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Festivals</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>International subsidies</td>
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<td>22,847</td>
<td>13,339</td>
<td>1,798</td>
<td>129,917</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total expenses</td>
<td>$ 1,216,876</td>
<td>$ 3,081,457</td>
<td>$ 346,449</td>
<td>$ 554,309</td>
<td>$ 2,023,908</td>
<td>$ 11,783,227</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Program Services**

**Public**

**Proclamation Care**

**Education**

**Festivals**

**International**

**General and Administrative**

**Headquarters Office,**

**Management and Administrative**

**Board of Directors**

**Insurance and Related:**

**Total**

$ 52,416 $ - $ 7,208 $ 1,683,986 $ 11,783,227

Go to the following link to view the audited financial statements and related unqualified opinion online:

[members.cogwa.org/uploads/Church_of_God_a_Worldwide_Association_2018_Audit.pdf](members.cogwa.org/uploads/Church_of_God_a_Worldwide_Association_2018_Audit.pdf)

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**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES 2019**

**Keanna Berry**

**High school accomplishments:**
Keanna participated in marching band.

**Church activities/hobbies/interests:**
Keanna enjoys reading, writing, working, playing clarinet, music, spending time with friends and family, and volunteer work.

**Plans after graduation:**
Keanna will be attending Grace College in Winona Lake, Indiana.

---

**Steven Howell**

**High school accomplishments:**
Steven graduated in June 2019 from Howell Academy, after being homeschooled his entire academic career.

**Church activities/hobbies/interests:**
Steven serves on sound setup and greeting in the Indianapolis congregation. He has served as a counselor at Camp Arrowhead and this summer will be attending his fourth year as a camper at Camp Heritage. In his spare time Steven enjoys gaming with friends, drawing and writing.

**Plans after graduation:**
Steven has been accepted to Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis and Ivy Tech Community College for the fall 2019 semester. He will possibly pursue a career in the creative arts.

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**Parents’ or guardians’ names:**
Denita and Henry Miles

**Congregation:**
Henderson, Kentucky

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**Parents’ names:**
Steve and Jada Howell

**Congregation:**
Indianapolis, Indiana

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**KEANNA BERRY**

**STEVEN HOWELL**
This past June, Foundation Institute completed its second educational tour of Israel. The tour took place from June 4-11 and included 101 participants.

We were excited to have a significant number of international members join us this year! We had nine from South Africa, three from New Zealand, one from the United Kingdom and one from Barbados.

Since this was a biblical educational tour, we focused on sites of biblical and historical significance. This photo spread will show some of the major sites we visited during our eight-day trek through the Holy Land.

Though we haven’t begun planning our next FI educational trip, if you are interested in participating in a tour like this in the future, we encourage you to start saving now. The trip usually costs a little over $3,000 per person for double occupancy and a little over $3,800 for single occupancy.

If you haven’t seen it yet, be sure to watch the recent special In Accord program titled, “Stepping Into the Bible,” to learn more about the trip.

Erik Jones
Participants enjoy the boat ride on the Sea of Galilee.

Participants explore ruins at Tel Beit She’an.

Participants from South Africa and the United States stand on the Mount of Olives.

Participants enjoy each other’s company and relax at a shop in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Photos: Kelly Cunningham; Erik Jones
MCCULLY BARN BASH AND BARBECUE

Cliff and Ellen McCully hosted a social for the Jefferson, Georgia, congregation on Sunday, May 5, 2019. It was such a perfect day in terms of weather—upper 70s, low humidity, a good breeze and beautiful skies. Approximately 90 Church members, including several from Atlanta, enjoyed a delicious barbecue chicken boxed meal with all the fixings.

Children’s games, cornhole, horseshoes and volleyball provided fun for many. Others enjoyed fellowship under the shade of a great old pecan tree. The McCully farm and barn provided lots of room for youngsters to run, play and explore.

The day was so peaceful and enjoyable, it was hard for the guests to leave.

Donna Quintana

Houston South Holds Graduation Celebration

June 1 was a beautiful, warm Sabbath to celebrate some special graduations. In addition to our normal Sabbath school graduation, we also honored high school, college and nursing school graduates.

Larry Salyer and Lizzie and Aaron West presented the graduates with certificates and gifts between the sermonette and sermon.

Zach Smith gave an inspiring sermon about how we must tap into the power of the Holy Spirit after it is given to us. We must be proactive in using it in our walk to the Kingdom. How better to inspire the congregation and these graduates onto their next adventure?

Services were followed by a reception in the fellowship hall, where the graduates were congratulated by our congregation and enjoyed light snacks, cake and drinks.

Susan Scott Smith
JEFFERSON HOLDS SENIOR PICNIC

Sunday, March 17, 2019, was a beautiful day for an indoor picnic, so 30 seniors gathered at the COGWA church hall in Jefferson, Georgia, and were served a delicious lunch of grilled chicken with sides and desserts.

While relishing the lunch, the seniors also enjoyed lots of laughter and fellowship. Following the meal, the guests participated in a trivia activity with questions from categories that included vintage music, history and the Bible. Pastor Mark Winner was the master of ceremonies asking the questions.

It was soon clear that the “old memory” is not what it used to be. But it was fun trying to answer—often hilarious!

Donna Quintana

BUFFALO YCC CELEBRATES ONE YEAR WITH GRADUATION

April 26, the last day of Unleavened Bread, was a little more special when the Young Christians Club celebrated one year of classes with a graduation ceremony. The Young Christians Club was started in March 2018 to fill a need to do something for the youngest members of the Church.

At that time it was decided to have the teen and young adult group put together lessons to teach the children of the congregation. Each lesson was unique and covered a biblical event or theme. Lessons included Israel and the city of Jericho, the 10 plagues on Egypt, the holy days, and many others.

Each student received a children’s Bible and a certificate of completion for his or her effort and attendance. As well, the teens and young adults were each given a pin with Proverbs 22:6 on it, to symbolize their service to the children of the Church.

The 2019-2020 YCC classes will focus on the theme of godly behavior.

Stephan Koenig

CONGREGATIONS BID FAREWELL TO MESSERLYS

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.”

With these words lovingly inscribed on a beautiful handmade wood tray, Chad Messerly, along with his wife, Jennifer, and daughters Abby and Anna, closed the chapter on his story as associate pastor for the Cincinnati-Dayton, Ohio; Columbus-Cambridge, Ohio; and Indianapolis, Indiana, congregations.

Each congregation said their good-byes in April and May. Many hugs, many tears and much love was showered on the family at each service.

The Messerlys’ last Sabbath in the area, May 25, was spent in Columbus-Cambridge, their home church for many years. The Messerlys begin their next chapter serving in New York and Ontario, Canada.

Denise Hadley
Hickory Holds Housewarming for Shut-Ins

Members of the Hickory, North Carolina, congregation had a housewarming gathering after Sabbath services on May 25 at the new nursing home residence in Statesville, North Carolina, of our shut-in members Willie and Gloria Williams.

We enjoyed food and fellowship throughout the afternoon. The Williams were thrilled to have so many Church brethren visit them at one time and really enjoyed the fellowship that made their Sabbath very special.

Ron Kelley

Walkers in Peru

From Tuesday, April 23, to Sunday, April 28, we had the pleasure of receiving a visit from our regional director, Leon Walker, and his wife, Reba. They spent the second half of the Feast of Unleavened Bread with us, and the brethren in Lima, Peru, were delighted to see them again.

We were very inspired and encouraged by their visit and the time that we shared with them. On Friday (the last day of Unleavened Bread) and the Sabbath that followed, the members attending services in Lima, Peru, took full advantage of the opportunity to speak with and listen to the Walkers. We hope they come back soon!

Carlos Saavedra

Jefferson and Atlanta Say Farewell to the Harper Family

Saying farewell and Godspeed was hard for our local congregations. We are sad to have our Daniel Harper and his family leave us, but happy for the brethren in Canada who will now have a pastor. On the Sabbath of June 22, 2019, the Jefferson, Georgia, congregation honored them with a taco bar luncheon and a special cake. On the following Sabbath, June 29, Atlanta had an outdoor service with a garden-theme luncheon.

Both congregations presented the family with several gifts, including University of Georgia shirts. Mr. Harper gave his parting message to both congregations, encouraging us to use our days to learn and change—“redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

The Harper family has been transferred to Montreal, Quebec, in Canada. Mr. Harper will serve as pastor while continuing to expand his duties in the French department of God’s Church.

The Harper family—Daniel, Cindy (Gore), Charity, Faith and William—will be a blessing to their new congregation, as they have been to Atlanta, Jefferson and Macon. Both Mr. and Mrs. Harper speak French, a must for their new assignment, and are also teaching their children the language. Mr. Harper has spent the last two years obtaining a bachelor’s degree in French and a master’s degree in French literature from the University of Georgia.

All three of the congregations will miss the closeness we share and are grateful for the time God gave us with them.

Chant’a Collier
Roanoke Men Honor Mothers

After services on the Sabbath of May 11, the men of the Roanoke, Virginia, congregation hosted our annual potluck meal in honor of all of our mothers for Mother’s Day. There were soups, salads, spaghetti, fried chicken, casseroles and many other varied types of dishes. There was also a plethora of desserts—although they didn’t appear to last very long.

We greatly love and appreciate our mothers and all of the work they do and sacrifices they make for their families, both at home and as a congregation. This Sabbath truly was a day of feasting—both spiritually and physically—and was a day truly enjoyed by all in attendance.

Robert Worsham

Houston South Holds Welcome Barbecue

On May 4, 2019, the Houston South congregation welcomed Zach Smith with his wife, Emily, and their three children—Sophia, Eliza and Hannah—to the area. As its new associate pastor, Mr. Smith introduced himself to the members and gave his first sermon to the congregation. Using the subject of moving as an introduction, Mr. Smith compared the faith of the Israelites walking through the Red Sea to members’ faith in knowing that whatever the situation, God walks with His people. In between messages, special music was brought by Allie Rochelle and Ozzie Soto.

Following the sermon, the congregation treated the Smith family to a catered barbecue meal of brisket, chicken, salad and roasted potatoes. There was also no shortage of banana pudding and strawberry shortcake to be enjoyed after the main meal. Long after the meal, members continued to fellowship while the children enjoyed listening to some light strumming from a guitar. Though there was some bad weather just the night before, the Sabbath proved to be a very beautiful and fulfilling day!

Ruth Ramos

Louisville Says Good-Bye to Two Families

The Louisville, Kentucky, congregation reluctantly said farewell to two families who recently relocated to other areas.

On May 25 we wished Brandon and Nicole Bartkowiak and their sons, Isaac and Benjamin, a warm farewell with a reception where we shared not only food but lots of hugs, laughter and memories of their time with us. The Bartkowiaks have moved to Michigan to be near family.

The following Sabbath, June 1, we said good-bye to Jaime and Lyda Castro and their children, Sara, Isaac and Danna. The Castro family is moving to Puerto Rico, where Jaime will continue his studies in oral surgery.

We wish both families well and will miss them. They leave a hole in our local church family.

Carolyn Winner
BUFFALO BIDS LORDS FAREWELL

On Pentecost, June 9, the Buffalo, New York, congregation bid farewell to its longtime pastor Scott Lord and his wife, Monica.

Mr. Lord served the Buffalo area in many ways and in various roles over the last 25 years. He became the pastor for Buffalo and Central New York in 2006, when he succeeded David Baker. Mr. Lord was instrumental in getting the Canadian work of COGWA up and running in its early years and added Toronto and North Bay, Ontario, to his circuit in 2014.

Mr. Lord will now serve congregations in Maryland and southern Pennsylvania, as well as remain the camp director of Camp Heritage, a role he has served in for the last four years.

The local congregation presented the Lords with a basketful of different favorite items, including a set of rare Steuben crystal sculptures of a buffalo and a dove. The presentation was given by elder Lanrik Kester.

Chad Messerly will now serve the area as pastor.

FAREWELL TOUR

After almost 17 years, Gary and Gale Black are being transferred to Houston, Texas, leaving behind their pastorate in the Twin Cities and St. Cloud, Minnesota; Eau Claire, Wisconsin; and Fargo, North Dakota.

Their June “farewell tour” began in Fargo on June 1. The sermon Mr. Black gave in each congregation was about the state of the Church, locally and organizationally. He reflected on where we’ve been, where we are and where we are going.

After a potluck meal and cake, the Blacks were presented with a watercolor painting depicting Minnesota, South Dakota and North Dakota, states represented in the Fargo congregation. A scripture taken from John 12:26 was written on the painting to depict the Blacks’ serving attitude and example.

The next stop was the St. Cloud congregation on June 8. Their send-off for the Blacks was a very nice potluck, cards signed by the congregation and a painting by local member Joyce Mayer of purple lilacs from their yard.

The Twin Cities farewell took place June 22. Special music was a flute solo with the title “Adieu.” (Where words aren’t enough, the music speaks.) A potluck was followed by passing the mic and a slideshow, followed by “May the Road Rise Up to Meet You.” The Blacks were presented with a crystal loon with an inscription from 1 Peter 5:2.

The Blacks completed their tour in Eau Claire on June 29. After Sabbath services, the congregation enjoyed a potluck and cake and shared favorite stories.

We will miss the Blacks very much—and may visit them in Houston when our winters get long!

Barbara Lee
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.

Anniversaries

Leon and Caryl Sturch
Members of the Berthoud, Colorado, congregation celebrated the 65th wedding anniversary of Leon and Caryl Sturch after services on Saturday, Dec. 22, 2018.

While 65 years is always an inspiring milestone, the Sturches have been an especially amazing testament to love and dedication, both to God and each other! They were married Dec. 20, 1953, in St. Francis, Kansas. Over the years, they have lived in Colorado, Arkansas, Michigan and Nebraska. They have three children, seven grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren.

One of their great adventures began after their children were grown, in 1982. They bought a semitruck and were able to travel the U.S. and Canada together. In total, they have been to 46 states and five Canadian provinces! Leon retired in 2010 and sold the truck, but they have plenty of memories and stories—and a flair for telling them.

Caryl is a deaconess in the Berthoud area, and both serve the brethren there with great care and dedication.

Sera Grabowski

Pam and Sam Shrauner
The Orlando, Florida, congregation was honored to recognize the 50th anniversary of Sam and Pam Shrauner in April. The congregation gave them a nice cake reception with a special toast and gift.

Sam and Pam (McLaughin) Shrauner met in Kahoka, Missouri, where Pam lived. When Sam drove to visit Pam, he could only get two radio stations. One was the hog report, and the other was The World Tomorrow. He chose The World Tomorrow, and some seeds were planted.

Sam and Pam were married April 12, 1969. They lived in Iowa and Missouri and eventually Belleville, Illinois, where Sam worked for 27 years as a civilian at Scott Air Force Base. Pam stayed at home with their daughters, but eventually finished a degree in accounting and worked in an investment firm.

Sam was baptized Feb. 2, 1975; Pam, on March 13, 1976. Sam was ordained a deacon in 1986 and an elder in 1994 while attending the Belleville, Illinois, congregation. In 2008 they became snowbirds, dividing their time between St. Louis and Orlando. In 2011 they decided to reside in Florida full-time and are always excited to have St. Louis visitors.

The Shrauners have three daughters: Molly Shrauner; Sameta Sosa, M.D.; and Katy Thompson. They have five grandchildren in Texas and Arizona and love to visit them often.

To celebrate their 50th anniversary, they are taking a 3½-month world cruise in early January. They love to travel and are looking forward to this journey.

Jennifer Demarest

Weddings

Manuel and Annika Sánchez
We are happy to announce the marriage of Annika Peters from Germany and Manuel Sánchez Vereau from the Trujillo, Peru, congregation.

The ceremony took place on Feb. 24, 2019. The ceremony and reception were held at the Villa Adolfo II Manor in Huanchaco, Trujillo. The ceremony was performed by Saúl Langarica, pastor of the congregations in Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil and Uruguay.

After a wonderful honeymoon, Manuel and Annika returned to Peru to start their new life together.

Carlos Saavedra

Alan and Nola Crankshaw
Alan and Nola Crankshaw celebrated 60 years of marriage on March 28. They live in the town of Ladismith in South Africa, which is approximately 200 miles from the nearest congregation in Cape Town. But they still manage to attend most holy day services. Both Alan and Nola have been faithful members of God’s Church since the early 1970s.

Neville Smith
Francisco Loarte Chauca

Francisco Loarte Chauca was born on April 2, 1927, in the Áncash department of Peru. He married Zenaida Cribillero Granados on March 28, 1947, and they had nine children.

Mr. Loarte came into the Church in November of 1983, and he was baptized in 1985. Over the course of several years, he served as the principal cook for the members at the Feast of Tabernacles. He was an elderly man who managed to connect with all age groups, joking with Emira Erickson, Roy Holdsworth, Shyamapada Bag, Nimai Dolui, Rekha Bag, Ranajit Gure, and Sunita Gure.

The Twin Cities, Minnesota, congregation is pleased to welcome Emmy Erickson into the Body of Christ with her baptism on April 6. Emmy's parents are Cory and Colene Erickson.

Emmy is a third-generation Christian who also graduated from high school this year. She plans to attend college in the fall and continue serving in her local congregation.

Colene Erickson

On June 21 I had the privilege of baptizing five new members in Kolkata, India. They learned about the Church and what we believe through our member in Kolkata, Tarun Ghosh, whom I baptized in January 2008.

For a number of years, Tarun has been working with a not-for-profit organization helping to educate underprivileged people in the Sundarbans, a group of low-lying islands in the Bay of Bengal, about three hours from Tarun's home.

Tarun has a passion for God's way of life, and as he worked with these people, some of them began asking him about his beliefs. They noticed that though he is a Christian, he didn't observe Christmas.

Tarun explained some of his beliefs, and they wanted to know more. After talking with me about what to do, Tarun began downloading articles from the Life, Hope & Truth website, translating them into the Bengali language, and systematically teaching these people for more than 3 ½ years.

I met the group for the first time in July 2018, and in September several asked to be associated with COGWA. I provided Tarun with lots of material on baptism, and he translated it into the Bengali language for these interested people to study.

Meanwhile, the Ghosh family was also having an influence on others closer to home.

After Tarun's wife, Seema, had a stroke in 2012 while being treated for cancer, she was left paralyzed on her right side. (Seema was baptized by David Jackson in 2015 at the Feast in Kolkata.) Tarun had to hire helpers to look after her while he continued his job as a teacher at a private school in Kolkata.

One of those helpers, Sunita Gure, observed Tarun and Seema's way of life and began to inquire about their beliefs, so very different from those she held as a Roman Catholic. As Sunita got to know the Ghoshes, she became more interested in the Church. While caring for Seema, she attended the Feast of Tabernacles with the Ghoshes. That led to more questions and more explanation, and Sunita began to accept those beliefs.

Then about a year ago, Sunita's son, Ranajit Gure, became interested in the Church because of discussions he had with his mother. Both Sunita and Ranajit wanted to be baptized, so after consulting with me, Tarun began covering the material on baptism with them.

After counseling with Sunita, Ranajit and several of the group in the Sundarbans, I performed five baptisms on June 21. Tarun assisted me, ensuring that we fully buried each person in his or her watery grave!

As I reflect upon the conversion of these five individuals, I am struck by the impact of personal example. Our members’ positive examples ultimately led to five new people being added to the Church. It is like a modern-day story from the book of Acts.

David Baker

The Buffalo, New York, congregation is pleased to welcome a longtime attendee into the Church. Roy Holdsworth was baptized on June 8 by pastor Scott Lord. It was the last baptism Mr. Lord performed before heading off to his new assignment in Maryland and southern Pennsylvania.

Roy grew up in God's Church, but gave himself time to make sure he was ready for the commitment in every way.

Stephan Koenig

Francisco Loarte Chauca was born on April 2, 1927, in the Áncash department of Peru. He married Zenaida Cribillero Granados on March 28, 1947, and they had nine children.

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Merle Bruce Smith

Merle Bruce Smith, 69, died Thursday, Dec. 20, 2018, after a 17-year battle with cancer. Bruce was born in April 1949 at the Meadville Medical Center to Merle and Florence Hauschel Smith. Bruce was preceded in death by his parents.

Baptized in November 1973, Bruce was faithful and never hesitated to speak of his beliefs with anyone. He commented regularly on running his race and would remind us to never underestimate God’s power despite the extensive health struggles he endured.

Bruce married Donna Schoonover March 2, 1974, and together they raised their children on the family farm located near Cochranton, Pennsylvania. He is survived by his wife, Donna; his brother Terry; his children, Wendy, Christopher, Jonathan and Crystal; and five grandchildren.

Bruce worked as an electrical engineer at Pine Instruments in Grove City for 33 years. He enjoyed hiking, being outdoors and spending time with his grandchildren.

Bruce Courtney

Carlos Saavedra

Bill Swanson passed away peacefully on Tuesday, April 9, after suffering a major heart attack in April 2018.

Bill was born on Dec. 21, 1936, to Riley Charles and Trudie Awn Swanson in Nacogdoches, Texas. His dream was to work on a ranch, so after quitting school in the eighth grade, he went to Wilcox, Arizona, and was offered a job as a foreman of a 6,000-acre ranch. In 1955 he enlisted in the Navy and served for 2½ years.

After learning about Mr. Armstrong and Ambassador College, he read the Bible through in five different versions and decided that he shouldn’t be in the military and by a miracle received an honorable discharge.

Bill knew he had to finish high school, so he attended Imperial Schools and served three years as student body president before entering Ambassador College in 1960, where he served as freshman class president and met Judith Marshall. Bill and Judy were married June 9, 1962, and in 1963 after his third year, they were sent to the Bay area for three years to assist the pastor in serving the local congregations in northern California and helping to start up new ones.

After being sent back to AC to graduate, in 1967 the Swansons were sent to pastor congregations in Knoxville, Tennessee, and Asheville, North Carolina—starting up the Kingsport and Chattanooga, Tennessee, congregations during their tenure. In the years that followed, Bill and Judy served numerous congregations around the U.S. and even, for a short time, in the Philippines.

Bill’s list of hobbies included music, carpentry, leatherwork and flying. He was a jack-of-all-trades. Whatever you needed done, he could do it!

The celebration of life service for Bill Swanson was performed April 14 in Knoxville. Pastor Eric Evans read the message prepared by Jim Franks, who, while scheduled to do the memorial, was unable to fly out of Dallas due to bad weather. Eulogies were given by daughter Jeannie and middle son Allen. The service also included a recorded duet of “How Great Thou Art” by granddaughter Jacqueline Myers and Jeannie, a duet of “Happy Trails” by Eric Evans and Skeeter (Ed) Starke (a professional musician and longtime friend), and a short slideshow of Bill’s life and family over the years.

The next morning the honor guard of the Civil Air Patrol paid tribute to Bill, and Eric Evans gave a short talk. Taps were played, and Bill Swanson was laid to rest in the national cemetery for veterans and their spouses.

Bill had the heart of a shepherd and loved the brethren. He was a wonderful husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather and will be greatly missed by all—especially by his loving wife.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents, brother Kenneth, and daughter-in-law Sharon. He is survived by his wife, Judy; daughter, Loma Jean (Jeannie) Evans (Eric); sons Richard (Kris), Allen (Michelle) and William; two brothers, James and Ray; two sisters, Ellen Bentley and Margie Lyman; 10 grandchildren; two great-grandchildren (and one on the way); and many nieces and nephews.

Judy Swanson
Marriage today is undergoing startling revisions.

Marriage has been a long-cherished building block of society. But changing beliefs about sexuality have led to redefinitions of marriage and to unstable relationships unmoored from the Bible.

Have we humans lost sight of the ancient wisdom that leads to happiness and stability in our relationships?

Learn more about this blessing from God.

Download your free copy of God’s Design for Marriage from the Learning Center on LifeHopeandTruth.com