One Accord
March/April 2020

Journeys and Reflections
Jim and Judy Servidio

Sharpening Iron
The Battle Box

CYC 2019
WINTER CAMP

2020 SITE DESCRIPTIONS
PAGE 18
In my 46 years of being in the ministry, I have used the term “holy convocation” in sermons and Bible studies hundreds, if not thousands, of times. Having been involved with the Church of God all my life, these two words come out naturally when I am thinking about the holy days and when I am writing about them.

As I was reviewing the articles for this edition of One Accord, where we highlight the Festival sites and the need to observe the Feast, I was struck by how few people speak this way today. When was the last time you heard someone refer to a church service as a convocation? We don’t normally say, “We are going to the convocation today.” Or “We are going to keep the holy convocation today.”

Sometimes we can be so familiar with words or a phrase that we forget where it came from originally or even what it means. This is a real concern for our young people, who have grown up in a society that disdains anything called “holy.” Even those who observe another day, Sunday, for example, have no clue what it means for a day to be holy.

So, what does “holy convocation” mean, and why is it important to us? I learned something myself in looking into the word convocation. There is actually a computer program that will do a survey of all the words used in books and report exactly how often a particular word appears in all books published over a specific period of time. If you take the word convocation, you will find that it was most widely used in 1850. And when you compare that year to the year 2008, you discover convocation was used 100 times more in 1850 than it is today.

The word convocation is from the Middle English and was first used around the 14th century. That is why today it is an archaic word that is mostly ignored. Its meaning is quite simple—a group of people called to a meeting or an assembly. That gives us insight into what Scripture means when it speaks of a holy convocation. It is a “called” meeting that has been set apart, made holy. That is, it is an assembly called together for a spiritual purpose.

In the Hebrew Scriptures the term is found solely in the Pentateuch. It appears in 15 verses as “holy convocation” in the New King James Version. And it is first found in Exodus 12:16: “On the first day there shall be a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but that which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you.”

Other translations have “holy meeting” (Bible in Basic English), “holy gathering” (Modern King James Version) and “holy assembly” (Revised Standard Version).

The Hebrew word for “holy” is qodesh. It means “apartness, holiness, sacredness, separateness, of God” (Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Definitions). And the word for convocation is miqra. It means “sacred assembly” (Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Definitions) or “an assembly called by proclamation for a religious solemnity” (Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible). In addition, the Hebrew miqra has the meaning of a “rehearsal” or a “reading” (Strong’s Concordance).

Even though “holy convocation” is a bit old and maybe strange-sounding, the phrase is rich in meaning. As we make our plans for this year’s Feast, we should keep in mind what it is really all about. We gather on the annual festivals for a very important reason. These days are holy, and the assemblies are declared to be holy by God and should not be ignored. We meet together to worship God and to rehearse one more time the plan of God that is symbolized in these special days. What could be more important in our worship of God than a “holy convocation”?

Jim Franks
President
Church of God, a Worldwide Association
March/April 2020

One Accord

Contents

4 CYC 2019 Winter Camp
6 Sharpening Iron
The Battle Box
8 Firmly Anchored
Holding Fast What Is Good
9 News of the Work
10 Journeys and Reflections
Jim and Judy Servidio
12 Church Potluck
16 Announcements
18 Feast of Tabernacles
2020 Site Descriptions

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March/April 2020 3
Winter Camp draws campers and staff from all over the country, giving many teens a chance to meet new friends from other regions. This year there were 71 campers and 31 staff gathered from Dec. 30 to Jan. 5.

This was a special year, being the 25th consecutive year of Winter Camp. Those who had attended for over 10 years were honored at the end of camp.

The theme of this year’s camp was “Discernment: Training Your Heart.” Campers heard Compass Checks each morning, along with many additional spiritual presentations to help them appreciate and practice discernment.

It was wet and sloppy before camp, with a lot of rain and several inches of mud in places. But on the first day of camp, about 6 inches of fresh snow fell throughout the day and night. The snow remained throughout camp, but slowly melted due to the above-average temperatures.

God blessed us with a very healthy camp, with very few colds and no flu.

We all enjoyed another amazing year at Winter Camp! 😊

Gary Black
This morning, Feb. 13, 2020, I landed in Singapore at around 12:30 a.m. After spending more than 29 hours traveling from North Carolina to Singapore, I am trying to adjust my body clock 13 hours forward.

So I begin this article fighting the urge to sleep, since my body thinks it is 12:30 a.m. Typically I arrive in Asia from the U.S. in the early morning hours. I take a shower and go to bed, trying to get a few hours of sleep before forcing myself to get up around 8 or 9 a.m. I spend the day trying to keep moving for 8 to 10 hours before crashing into bed in the early evening.

Singapore is a great place to force oneself to stay awake for those hours. I can walk in a beautiful, clean, efficient and safe city, visit some of our members and visit historic places of interest. One place that I have enjoyed visiting is the Battle Box, located in Fort Canning. The tour is fascinating and very educational.

History of the Battle Box

Today Fort Canning is a small hilltop in the central area of Singapore Island. It is a peaceful area with beautiful gardens, museums, restaurants and a five-star hotel that was once a former British military administration building. But during World War II, Fort Canning was far from peaceful. It was the headquarters for the British forces. The Battle Box, constructed under Fort Canning, was an emergency, bombproof command center.

It was in the Battle Box on the morning of Feb. 15, 1942, that Lt. Gen. Arthur Percival made the decision to surrender Singapore—once considered the “Gibraltar of the East.”

Singapore was the major British military base in Southeast Asia and was the keystone of British imperial defense planning for Southeast Asia, as well as the Southwest Pacific. How could such an important base or sea gate be conquered?

On the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. One hour before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Japanese invaded northern Malaya and Thailand by amphibious assault on Dec. 8, 1941 (Singapore is 18 hours ahead of Hawaii). Their objective was to drive the British forces out of Malaya and capture Singapore.

Gen. Tomoyuki Yamashita, commanding the Japanese 25th Army, had just over 30,000 men. The British had more than 50,000 troops in Malaya and more than 80,000 troops in Singapore. They outnumbered the Japanese invaders 4 to 1.

Underestimating the enemy

Unfortunately, the British were ill-prepared to face the battle-hardened Japanese soldiers. While the war was raging in Europe, the British defenses in Asia were a secondary consideration and were often inadequately supplied. Japanese commanders concentrated their forces and were superior in close air support, armor, coordination, tactics and experience.

Not only were the British poorly prepared and equipped, they also made a number of wrong decisions in terms of defenses. While conventional British military thinking characterized the Malayan jungles as “impassable,” the Japanese were repeatedly able to use this faulty thinking to their advantage to outflank hastily established defensive lines.
The Allies thought the terrain made tanks impractical. The Japanese invaded with over 200 tanks, while the British Army in Malaya did not have a single tank and only a few armored vehicles. Lightly armed infantry was no match for the Japanese tanks.

The British had massive 15-inch guns with the ability to fire shells weighing almost one ton for a distance of 19 miles. These guns pointed out to sea with armor-piercing rounds that could destroy the hulls of enemy ships. That was their strength, which led many to believe that Singapore was impregnable.

But the Japanese attacked from the Malay Peninsula rather than the sea. And even though the guns could be turned, the British had very few exploding rounds for the guns. Armor-piercing rounds had little effect on the ground troops.

The Japanese moved down the Malay Peninsula—650 miles—within two months, averaging 9 miles per day. Retreating troops and fleeing civilians began arriving in Singapore with the advance of the Japanese. Their arrival clogged streets and put an additional strain on resources. A similar story could be told of the Battle of Corregidor and the fall of the Philippines.

The Battle for Singapore, the “Gibraltar of the East,” lasted only eight days. After a week of fighting, the British were faced with little to no gasoline for their military vehicles, few rounds of ammunition, a water system badly damaged, and food running very low. British military commanders concluded that continuing the battle would lead to the unnecessary destruction of many innocent civilians and ill-equipped soldiers.

At 5:15 p.m. on Feb. 15, 1942, Lt. Gen. Percival unconditionally surrendered to the Japanese. Yamashita, the Japanese commander, laid the blame for the loss of Singapore on the British for “underestimating Japanese military capabilities.”

Later in the war, Yamashita became known as the tiger of Malaya and the beast of Bataan. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill called the ignominious fall of Singapore to the Japanese as the “worst disaster” and “largest capitulation” in British military history.

Our spiritual warfare

As I reflect upon the historic events that surround the Battle Box, I am reminded that we have an enemy that is often referred to as a beast. The apostle Peter writes to the Church: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith” (1 Peter 5:8-9). Our adversary Satan the devil would love to destroy us. He knows our weaknesses, as well as our strengths.

As we continue to wage spiritual warfare, let’s not focus on our strengths and overlook or make excuses for our weaknesses. Satan has a way of attacking us in an area where we least expect attack or temptation. In a passage that we often read during the Passover season, the apostle Paul warns members, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (1 Corinthians 10:12).

This is just one of the lessons I am reminded of as I reflect upon the history of the Battle Box. Now I must be out the door to visit a couple of our Singaporean brethren.

March/April 2020
The combination of the summer sunshine, a warm breeze and the tranquility of being out on the water alone makes it almost inevitable. You know you’ll be dozing off before you know it, especially the way the fish are avoiding your hook like the plague. So, you tip your hat over your eyes and give in to the maternal rocking motion of the waves.

As you open your eyes, refreshed, you realize you didn’t just drift off to sleep—you drifted so far out to sea that the shore is no longer in sight! That warm breeze has become a stirring wind, and the dark clouds above warn you of the storm you’ll experience if you don’t find your way back to shore soon.

How did this happen? You’re absolutely sure you lowered the anchor before you made your first cast. Indeed you did. But an anchor superficially gliding across the top of the sand was no match for the strong pull of the winds. Worse yet, you realize your knot-tying skills were apparently not worthy of a Boy Scout patch. When the anchor did eventually find a solid hold, the loose knot was not strong enough to keep the boat attached.

An anchor lowered but never firmly attached may slow down drift, but it won’t prevent it. Likewise, a firm anchor serves no purpose if it is not held fast—tightly connected to what it is supposed to secure.

The Bible warns: “We must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away” (Hebrews 2:1). The potential for spiritual drift is ever increasing. We live in a world that encourages cutting the cord that attaches us to absolutes about truth, morals and unchanging definitions of what is good. For the Christian, such rock-solid absolutes can come from only one place—the Word of God. They are not shackles that bind us, but a safety line that keeps us from drifting away from God, His standards and the future He has planned for us.

God inspired the apostle Paul to tell the Church, including young Christians today, “Test all things; hold fast what is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). To test is not to sample every way of life to see which we prefer, but rather “to test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing is genuine or not) ... to recognize as genuine after examination” (Thayer’s Greek Lexicon). We’re to prove what is good—not according to our own opinions, but by comparing what we hear to God’s Word—and then cling to that which is good and never let go. In other words, we must secure the anchor and hold the line.

The 2020 theme for our CYC program is “Firmly Anchored: Holding Fast What Is Good.” As the youth of God’s Church face the winds of this world’s ever-shifting morality, it’s more important than ever to personally prove what God calls good and to hold fast to it. Young people have the blessing of setting their spiritual anchor early in life—and it must be set firmly in what is solid and dependable, with a determination to never abandon the line and give in to the spiritual drift around us.

What does it mean to be anchored? Is that different from being firmly anchored? What is good, anyway? How do you hold fast without getting weary? You won’t find the answers to these questions drifting at sea ... but the answers will be awaiting those who attend one of our COGWA Youth Camps this year! Apply! ☑️
News of the Work…

International Travel

- Tom Clark, senior pastor for Ghana and Nigeria, and Cody Kitts, a deacon in the Cincinnati-Dayton, Ohio, congregation, traveled to Ghana and Nigeria Jan. 20 to Feb. 4. A link to Mr. Clark’s travel blog can be found at members.cogwa.org/news/travel-blogs/.

- Tim Waddle, senior pastor for Kenya, traveled with his wife, Valerie, to Kenya Feb. 2-11. They were joined by Mr. Kitts, who had been in West Africa with Mr. Clark. In addition to congregational visits, they visited Lake Nakuru, a national park and potential Feast site for 2020. A link to Mr. Waddle’s travel blog can be found at members.cogwa.org/news/travel-blogs/.

- Joel Meeker, regional director for the French-speaking areas, and Lee Page (recently hired in the French-speaking ministry) left on a trip to Africa Feb. 20. With plans to visit Côte d’Ivoire and Togo, Messrs. Meeker and Page will return March 8. A link to Mr. Meeker’s travel blog can also be found at members.cogwa.org/news/travel-blogs/.

- Jim Franks, Doug Horchak and Ralph Levy traveled to Guatemala for the International Leadership Program Feb. 27-29. This is the second of the 10 regions that will be visited this year under phase two of this program.

- Ralph Levy will be going to the Dominican Republic for a pastoral visit April 5-12. This visit for Passover and the first holy day of Unleavened Bread is the first of his two-yearly visits to the little group there. He hopes to go again later in the year, probably for the Feast of Trumpets.

Neville Smith Reports on Zimbabwe Trip

My brief trip to Zimbabwe commenced on Thursday morning, Feb. 6, as I flew from Durban to Harare (via Johannesburg), arriving in the early afternoon. Harris and Patricia Hlazo met me at the airport, and we drove to a venue in central Harare, where I gave a Bible study and enjoyed a few hours of fellowship with the brethren from Harare and the surrounding areas.

After struggling to find fuel, which is in short supply, we headed for Kadoma, arriving at the Kadoma Rainbow Hotel around 8:45 p.m. We checked in just in time for a meal before the hotel restaurant closed for the night.

After breakfast the next morning, we drove north beyond the town of Sanyati, to a relatively new congregation, which I visited for the first time.

The road to Sanyati is being reconstructed and is in very poor condition. A journey that should take 1½ hours took closer to 4 hours, and we traveled much of the way at 40 kilometers (25 miles) per hour.

The average Sabbath attendance is in the 30s, but this Friday afternoon the attendance was 54. Everyone was excited to see us, and we met for the afternoon Bible study in the shade of a large tree on the property of Emanuel Muchechetere.

While we were there, we discussed plans to build a thatched gazebo for a meeting place protected from the heat and rain. The major cost for this project will be in transporting the required material from either Harare or Kadoma.

We spent the night back at the hotel in Kadoma, and after a good night’s rest we traveled to Bulawayo for Sabbath services at the home of Steve and Vetina Tshabalala. After sharing a most welcome meal with the small group, including three men from Gokwe, I gave a sermon followed by a question-and-answer session.

Our accommodations for the next two nights were at the Rainbow Hotel Bulawayo, where I regularly stay when visiting Bulawayo. On Sunday morning we were joined at the hotel by the Tshabalalas, the three men from Gokwe, and Peter Musekiwe from Gweru.

The morning was spent discussing many things, including the International Leadership Program, and its next phase, Focused Mentoring. I also spent time with Mr. Tshabalala and Mr. Hlazo discussing finances and the challenges being faced due to the failing economy and the introduction of a new Zimbabwean currency. After the morning meeting, we enjoyed lunch and fellowship at the hotel.

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March/April 2020
“Being a church pastor affords a man and his wife with countless rewarding experiences and inspiring occasions. The most rewarding is when you feel as though your efforts were appreciated and considered beneficial by those with whom you interacted. Whether it was conducting a marriage ceremony, helping someone through a trial of faith, comforting the bereaved, blessing little children, working with and watching teens grow and mature, conducting the Passover, or just explaining the truth of God, the ministry is like no other profession.”

—Jim Servidio, upon reflection.

Jim Servidio grew up in Erie, Pennsylvania, one of seven children in a Catholic family. As a young man, he had not planned to be a minister but a teacher. With that goal in mind, he attended Edinboro State College for two years on a football scholarship. During his time at college, he came in contact with the teachings of the Church of God. A Church member talked with Jim’s older brother about some interesting religious perspectives. He, in turn, shared these ideas with Jim and their mother. The three of them began reading the Bible, studying church literature and listening to the broadcast. After a ministerial visit from Ivan Sell and Greg Sargent, they all attended church for the first time in 1968. After that initial Sabbath, they regularly drove an hour and a half to Buffalo, New York, to attend services.

Ministry and family
In 1969 Mr. Servidio met his future wife, Judy Bishop, at Ambassador College when they both were freshmen. Judy came to college directly out of high school in Little Rock, Arkansas. While they were at Ambassador, he served as student body president his senior year, and Judy served as the overall women’s monitor. They married in 1973, two days after their graduation.

Mr. Servidio recalled their honeymoon as “a beautiful, picturesque drive through the northwestern United States to our first assignment in Eugene, Oregon. We thoroughly enjoyed our 1½-year stay in the pristine state of Oregon. Being a ministerial trainee in the mother church of Eugene, where Mr. Armstrong began, was a unique, rewarding experience.”

The Servidios’ first son, Jeff, was born there. Their second son, Judd, was born later in Mount Vernon, Illinois. The Servidios had several short assignments before they were given longer pastorates in New Orleans, Louisiana; Baltimore, Maryland; and Minneapolis, Minnesota. They lived in Baltimore eight years—long enough for Jeff to graduate from high school and for Judd to complete his sophomore year.
When asked about the impact of the ministry on the family, Mr. Servidio stated that a pastoral ministry presents challenges for any family, and it can be stressful at times. “But,” he added, “the numerous, positive benefits far outweigh any tests or trials.”

Traveling is something the whole family enjoys. “We have traveled extensively and that has taught us all a great deal about the world and how God’s Spirit works in the lives of His people everywhere.” Jim and Judy Servidio have been to Italy, France, Ireland, England, Jamaica, Grenada, Philippines, Singapore, Ghana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Jordan and Jerusalem. They kept the Feast in the Philippines in 1964 at three different sites; in Ghana in 2004 and 2013; and in Zambia and Zimbabwe in 2016. In Ghana, Zambia and Zimbabwe, Mr. Servidio experienced the challenge of delivering his Feast sermons by way of sentence-to-sentence translation.

Learning
One of the biggest lessons the Servidios have learned in their ministry is that “you do not always know how God is working in the lives of people by what you see on the outside. There is an inner conviction and strength that is not always evident until tested. We learned not to be too judgmental too quickly. Time and testing prove who has God’s truth in their heart.”

They take pleasure in the relationships they’ve developed over the past 46 years with people in their pastorates, at Challenger camps, and at Feast sites around the world. “The most rewarding,” Mr. Servidio said, “is when you feel as though your efforts were appreciated and considered beneficial by those with whom you interacted.”

Retirement
After 46 years of dedicated service, Mr. Servidio retired from the full-time ministry in July of 2019. He and Judy live in the Houston North church area, where he pastored for the last 14 years. Their sons, daughters-in-law and three of their grandchildren attend the Austin, Texas, congregation—not far away. Two other grandchildren attend in the Houston South and Dallas, Texas, congregations.
Pizza and Care Bear Patrol Night

Pizza night for the Knoxville, Tennessee, congregation on Dec. 21, 2019, had a motivation and purpose! It was to help out with the Care Bear Patrol program that our deacon Peter Holmes put together for the Tennessee Highway Patrol (THP).

The Care Bear Patrol is a volunteer program developed, managed and sponsored by Peter Holmes through the trucking company Fraley & Schilling. Over the past two years, Mr. Holmes has developed a unique partnership with the THP, through which the Care Bear Patrol service project was born.

Mr. Holmes explains, “The purpose is to assist the Highway Patrol men and women by providing them with stuffed animals to present to small children identified at the scene of a highway accident or highway incident. If a small child is found under stress, a stuffed animal will then be presented to calm and comfort the child.”

Each stuffed animal has a card secured around the animal’s neck showing this partnership and also providing a space for the patrol person to name the stuffed animal. This card also allows the parent or guardian to know where the stuffed animal came from.

This community service program is made possible by volunteers who donate new stuffed animals, tag them and deliver them to the THP for distribution, and this volunteer activity has now become an annual event. Brethren checked each stuffed animal to make certain the tags and ribbons were safe and secure for the children who would be receiving them.

Vivian Odom Turns 100

Vivian Odom from the Ruston, Louisiana, congregation turned 100 years old on Dec. 16, 2019. The congregation honored Mrs. Odom with a small reception the Sabbath before her birthday. She attributes her long life to good genes, hard work and eating homegrown food.

Sydney Brethren Gather

The weekend of Jan. 18, brethren in the area of Sydney, Australia, had the opportunity to be together on the weekly Sabbath. We enjoyed services together, followed by wonderful discussions and fellowship afterwards. The day ended with all of us gathering around the table to enjoy a beautiful meal together.

Judy Swanson

Johna Barnette

Tracy Archer
Chili Cook-Off Results Are In!

The Grand Junction, Colorado; Calgary, Alberta; and Salt Lake City, Utah, congregations, pastored by Mark Whynaught, held chili cook-offs, respectively, on the Sabbaths of Dec. 7, 14 and 21, 2019. The festivities were attended by those with their best chili recipe, others who love to eat but not cook, and even a few who don’t consider chili to be their thing, but love to watch the competition.

The cook-offs were a huge success as several very talented members vied for the honor of “top chef” of each congregation. The winning chili from each congregation then vied against the others for the title of grand champion. The delicious chili was enjoyed by all.

Congratulations to all our winners! Grand Junction: first place, Lonnie Pierce; second place, Brooke Hahn; and third place, Cheryl Reece. Calgary: first place, Anne Poffenroth; second place, Donna Jones; and third place, Cheryl Whynaught. Salt Lake City: first place, Cheryl Whynaught; second place, Dick Kennedy; and third place, Lynn Fox. And kudos to the grand champion, Cheryl Whynaught!

Families and Teens Gather for Dancing and Gym Night

On the Sabbath of Jan. 25, 2020 the Columbus-Cambridge, Ohio, congregation hosted an evening of active fun, with families from six different congregations in the region joining in.

After services and a potluck meal together, the teens participated in a couple of hours of dancing instruction to gain confidence in the popular line dances and basic swing. Those not dancing enjoyed playing their favorite card games through the evening.

Afterward, the adjoining gym was divided for some half-court basketball games—and for gaga ball, using the largest ball pit ever to accommodate all the players.

Many hours, laughs and moves later, all of the attendees reluctantly went their separate ways, looking forward to the next time!

West Palm Beach Ladies Have Tea

The West Palm Beach, Florida, congregation held its third annual Ladies’ Tea on Sunday, Jan. 26, at 1 p.m.

The ladies met in the home of Leslie Brice, and each lady brought her favorite teacup. The lively fellowship, along with the wonderful foods served, made for a most enjoyable afternoon for all.

Kathy Cochrane

Leanna Mangels

Keri Sanders
Dallas Brethren Hit the Slopes

On Thursday, Feb. 13, a group of 42 members from Dallas, Texas, and one person from Colorado met in Angel Fire, New Mexico, for a five-day ski outing. Most of the group skied or snowboarded on Friday and then returned to their four individual homes for the Sabbath evening.

On the Sabbath day everyone gathered together in one home for a service that included singing hymns and a sermon given by Joel Meeker on the subject of joy, followed by fellowship and pizza, as well as a brief interruption by a family of mule deer strolling through the yard!

On Sunday and Monday those skiing and snowboarding hit the slopes again for two more full days of snow sports, while others took the opportunity to explore the historical and cultural sites around the area. At the end of each day everyone went back to his or her home for great meals and hours of warm conversation by the fireplace. Then on Tuesday morning, Feb. 18, everyone headed home.

The weather was fantastic, the snow plentiful, and the fellowship priceless. We couldn’t have anticipated a better trip.

David Hicks

Congregations Bid Farewell to the Kirkpatricks

On the Sabbath of Jan. 11, 2020, the Birmingham, Alabama, and Trenton, Georgia, congregations bade farewell to their beloved pastor, Tom Kirkpatrick, and his wife, Sarah, acknowledging their retirement from the ministry.

Both congregations were very happy to welcome Jim and Sharron Franks to be with us for the occasion. Mr. Franks outlined the Kirkpatricks’ employment and ministry in the Church of God and read letters of appreciation and best wishes from several colleagues and friends. Next, Mr. Franks delivered a sermon covering scriptures about the qualifications for elders in the Church and their duties in shepherding the flock of God. Elders are to guide, direct and lead. He discussed four loves a pastor should have: 1) love for God and His way, 2) love for his family, 3) love for God’s people and 4) love for serving.

Following services in each congregation, gifts of appreciation were presented to Dr. and Mrs. Kirkpatrick. In the Trenton congregation, a handmade cutting board in the shape of the state of Alabama was given to them, reminding the Kirkpatricks of our hope that they are leaving a piece of their hearts in this area. In addition, each of the children presented the Kirkpatricks with a handmade card. Thereafter, a finger foods reception, including cake, coffee and hot tea, was served.

In the Birmingham congregation, a crystal vase along with gifts from the congregation were given to Dr. and Mrs. Kirkpatrick. Afterward, everyone enjoyed a delicious barbecue dinner and fellowship.

The Trenton and Birmingham congregations greatly appreciate the wonderful service the Kirkpatricks provided during their 11 years in this area—as well as the love and friendship they have shown us. A dedicated shepherd, we know Dr. Kirkpatrick’s sermons were prayerfully prepared with our specific needs in mind. We will miss the Kirkpatricks. We wish them the best in their retirement, and we look forward to their return visits.

Annette Epperson and Chuck Nichols
Meadville Enjoys
Pizza and Bowling

The Meadville, Pennsylvania, congregation had its annual pizza and bowling outing following services on Feb. 8. Not everyone was able to stay for all of the evening’s activities, but those who were able to attend had a wonderful time filled with plenty of fun, fellowship and a whole lot of laughter! No one bowled a perfect 300 game, but there’s always next year!

Dave Tobin

Foundation Institute Students Serve in Support of COGWA Youth Camps

On Friday, Feb. 7, a group of Foundation Institute students traveled to Grapevine, Texas, to help set up for the annual Boot Scoot & BBQ dinner and auction benefiting COGWA Youth Camps. Event organizer Kelli Hogg was very thankful for their many hands making light work.

Students assisted in unloading a trailer full of donated items and also set up the auction tables in preparation for the next evening’s activities. Because of the additional help, the setup was completed by 4:30 p.m.—much earlier than in previous years.

During the Boot Scoot itself, students also volunteered at the new “Kiddie Corral.” The students facilitated the games and distributed prizes.

This was many of the students’ first time to attend the Boot Scoot & BBQ. The FI students were able to get the full experience of enjoying the event and also gained an understanding of the work and organizational skills required for lending a hand to the charitable cause.

Madison Yost
One Accord
cogwa.org

Erica Lake counseled for baptism, she requested that she be immersed outdoors in a natural godly setting. Her wish was granted, and it was even better than she expected. She was baptized in a lake on Oct. 18, 2019, during the Feast of Tabernacles in Branson, Missouri.

Also special to the ceremony was the fact that her baptism was witnessed by two generations past, whose baptisms go as far back as 1971.

Erica has faithfully attended the Columbia, Missouri, congregation virtually all her life, and with her sweet demeanor, she has served the congregation weekly in the audiovisual area.

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**Baptisms**

**Susan Knowlen**

On Oct. 31, 2019, Susan Knowlen from Rapid City, South Dakota, was baptized by pastor Larry Solomon. It was a joyous occasion with her sister Jeanne Walton from Georgia being able to come and be with her.

Susan is our only member in Rapid City, and the closest congregation is eight hours away. Even though she cannot attend weekly services, she continues to faithfully tune into the webcast each week.

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**Weddings**

**Dallas and Susan Reed**

Dallas Reed of the Cincinnati-Dayton, Ohio, congregation and Susan Griffith of the Parkersburg, West Virginia, congregation were united in marriage on Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2020. The quiet ceremony, held in their new home in Ohio, was performed by Bill Jahns (pastor of the Parkersburg congregation) and attended by family.

After services on Jan. 25, 2020, the Cincinnati-Dayton congregation presented the newlyweds with a basket full of goodies for the beginning of their lives together and hosted a small reception for them.

**Anniversaries**

**Kaye and Charles Haughee**

Early in the spring of 1954, Charles Haughee was introduced to (Evelyn) Kaye Robertson by his mother at the A&P Grocery in Chesterton, Indiana. That meeting blossomed into love, and on Jan. 1, 1955, Charles and Kaye were married at the Brunswick United Presbyterian Church in Gary, Indiana.

Their marriage produced four children: Joan Mason of Mabank, Texas; Gordon of Anna, Texas; Beth Garrett of Irving, Texas; and Richard of Cypress, Texas. They have nine grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

They were both baptized on June 15, 1968, by Roger Foster, while attending the Worldwide Church of God in Fayetteville, North Carolina. Charles was ordained an elder by John Ogwyn of the Global Church of God on Feb. 5, 1994. They served in various congregations, literally from coast to coast, until settling in the St.
Obituaries

Blanche Smith

After dealing for many years with numerous health issues, including autoimmune disorders, Blanche Smith, 75, died early on Jan. 2, 2020. Her husband, David (an elder in St. John’s, Newfoundland), and their younger daughter, Karen Dixon, were with her at the time of her death. Church members, numerous other friends and family members—including the couple’s older daughter, Carmel Smith; Blanche’s three surviving sisters and her three surviving brothers—were also in St. John’s for her funeral Jan. 8. The service was conducted by Doug Johnson, senior pastor for Canada.

As an elder’s wife, Blanche Smith served the Church in Newfoundland alongside her husband, David. Their service goes back many years, across many different times in the history of God’s people here. Several will recall her care and help during Feast of Tabernacles observances held in St. John’s in past years.

Because of her long health trial, many brethren will recall prayer requests made over the years for the Smiths. They, and the rest of the family, greatly value the many cards, phone calls and, most of all, prayers, given on their behalf in such a persistent trial. Blanche firmly held to her convictions and determination despite the frequent setbacks and struggles she endured. As is always the case, your prayers for the family are still needed and appreciated.

Greg Sargent

Velma Willson

The youngest of eight children, Velma Mae Willson was born at home in Russell, Kansas, to David and Amelia Pope on April 25, 1929. Beloved wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother, her family meant everything to her. She enjoyed gardening, sewing, crocheting, making dolls and spending time with her family. An avid puzzler, she decorated her home with many puzzles, which she framed when completed.

Velma was baptized in 1994. She loved and was cherished by her church family and rarely missed a service or church function. In the face of tragedy—the deaths of her husband, Donald, and son Rod—her faith never wavered. When neuropathy put her in increasing, continual pain, she still put great effort into attending services, especially on holy days, until she became fully housebound. She died Jan. 30, 2020, at the age of 90.

Lynda Wassar

Ordinations

Delvin Mellerup

On the Feast of Trumpets, Sept. 30, 2019, the Columbia, Missouri, congregation was encouraged and uplifted by the ordination of Delvin Mellerup as a deacon. The occasion was a special time for his 92-year-old father, Dale Mellerup, who was baptized in 1957 and is the oldest male member of the congregation.

Delvin was born into the Church and was baptized in 1985. He married Carrie (St. Charles) in 1991. They have two adult children, Shalynn and Skyla, who are also members of God’s Church.

Delvin and Carrie have served God’s people diligently throughout the years and remain zealous and energetic, hoping to continue serving for years to come.

Mike McTiernan

Blanche Smith

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Lynda Wassar
Where Will You Attend the Feast This Year?

By Jim Franks

Yes, it is that time of year again! But didn’t we just get back from the Feast last month? Is it already time to talk about another Feast?

Time does have a way of rushing by, and it is easy for days, weeks and months to all run together. In fact, it was almost four months ago that we returned from an outstanding Feast of Tabernacles.

Sharron and I attended the Feast in San Diego and Hawaii last year. But now it is time to begin the process of choosing a site for 2020. My selection will be based on a number of factors that won’t be known for a few more months, but for everyone else, the time to begin that planning process is now!

The first step is to determine where you would like to go or, possibly, where you can afford to go! Some sites will certainly be more expensive than others.

This year we have a preregistration for the two new international sites. The preregistration took place in late February, just before this issue of One Accord was published. We truly expected our site in Greece would fill up quickly and a waiting list would need to be established. We have fewer spaces in Jordan, but we anticipated filling the spaces at this site as well. Our reason for the preregistration was to gauge the number of interested people, since we have a minimum that we must reach in both of these new sites, and we also have a maximum that we can accommodate in both sites.

Take a look at all the sites available this year, and choose the one you believe you and your family would enjoy the most, but keep in mind the true purpose of the Feast and the need to serve during the Feast. The command to attend the Feast is first and foremost spiritual (Deuteronomy 14:22-26). We are there to worship God in a holy convocation (Leviticus 23:34-43).

I hope your Feast planning goes well, and I look forward to seeing some of you at the Feast somewhere this year! ☺️
Branson, Missouri

Branson, Missouri, will once again welcome the Church of God by hosting the Feast of Tabernacles for the 25th year in a row. The site is popular for all ages.

The Branson area, in the midst of the beautiful, hardwood-forested hills of the Ozarks, is an excellent setting for God’s fall Feast. The fall scenery can be spectacular at this time of year. The hills, lakes, forests and streams give the area an almost millennial setting. Wildlife can be seen in many areas nearby. (I saw a doe and two fawns peacefully cropping grass only a block off the “Strip,” and I have frequently seen other wildlife in the immediate area of housing establishments.)

For those who want to be more active, Branson has something for you—ranging from first-class shopping and amusement parks to live music shows, Sight & Sound Theatre’s production of Noah, golf courses, museums and Promised Land Zoo. Two brand-new attractions this year are WonderWorks (an educational amusement park) and Aquarium at the Boardwalk.

Housing in Branson is some of the most economical of any Festival site. Establishments range from first-class hotels, condominiums, houses and cabins to more economical motels (all with fridges and microwaves).

Services will again be held at the first-class White House Theatre. This location offers several unusual but appreciated conveniences, including a large lobby for visiting before and after services and the West Wing for other activities.

Fragrance-controlled room available: Yes.
Tax rate for accommodations: 7.5 to 11.8 percent, depending on location.

Closest airport: Springfield-Branson (SGF), 55 miles.

Mike Blackwell

Cincinnati, Ohio/Northern Kentucky (Satellite)

This year a new satellite site will be located in Northern Kentucky in the greater Cincinnati, Ohio, area. Services will be held at the lovely Holiday Inn Cincinnati Airport Hotel located at 1717 Airport Exchange Blvd. in Erlanger, Kentucky. A block of rooms has been reserved at the hotel, making it possible for brethren to stay on-site. Because this is a “satellite site,” services will be a combination of webcasts from one of the other Feast sites and live speakers.

The hotel will provide a complimentary deluxe continental breakfast buffet, which includes scrambled eggs, turkey bacon, pastries, assorted breads/spreads, fruit medley, coffee, tea and water. There is an on-site full-service restaurant that serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. A wide variety of other restaurants are within a 15-minute drive of the hotel.

Other hotel amenities include free Wi-Fi, an indoor pool, sauna and hot tub, an on-site laundry, 24-hour fitness and business centers, and free parking. In addition, there is a complimentary airport shuttle service.

Area attractions include the Newport Aquarium, the Cincinnati Museum Center, the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, and the Ark Encounter (described as “an authentic replica of Noah’s ark, where the biblical account of Noah’s ark comes to life”). If you enjoy shopping, parks and various historical sites, those opportunities are also available in the greater Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky area.

Fragrance-controlled room available: No.
Tax rate for accommodations: 12.36 percent.

Closest airport: Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky (CVG), 3.6 miles.

Lyle Welty

Fort Myers, Florida (Satellite)

Fort Myers, Florida, is a satellite site and has been primarily secured for Florida members who find traveling to the site in Orange Beach to be too expensive or too time-consuming.

This coming year, however, Fort Myers will be open to any non-Floridians who wish to attend. We have set the capacity at 220 for 2020.

The beauty of the Gulf Coast of Florida, the many attractions for brethren to visit, and the excellent venue for accommodations and services made this a clear choice again for 2020.

Services will be held at the Holiday Inn at the Gulf Coast Town Center, which is a beautiful property located on a lake. There are over 30 top-of-the-line restaurants at the Town Center for brethren to choose from. Most people may wish to stay at the Holiday Inn, where a buffet breakfast comes free with your room.

This area of southwest Florida offers many attractions. The Edison and Ford Winter Estates, which include the Edison Botanic Research Laboratory and the Estates Museum, are open daily for tours. The causeway to Sanibel and Captiva Islands is 30 minutes away and so is the bridge to the island and city of Fort Myers Beach. All have beautiful white-sand beaches. The very popular Naples Zoo is 35 minutes away. Boat tours of the many millionaires’ homes in Naples and guided boat tours in the western Everglades National Park’s Ten Thousand Islands are just one hour away.

The temperatures in October should be from the mid- to the upper-80s.

Fragrance-controlled room available: Yes.
Tax rate for accommodations: 11 percent.

Closest airport: Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW), 5 miles.

Jim Haeffele
Kerrville, Texas

The Feast of Tabernacles in Kerrville, Texas, will be held at the Inn of the Hills Hotel and Conference Center. We used this same facility last year. The property is well-maintained, and once again, the property’s famous breakfast buffet will be included in the price of the rooms.

The city of Kerrville is located 58 miles northwest of San Antonio and 85 miles west of Austin in the Texas Hill Country. It is named after James Kerr, who was a major in the Texas Revolution and a friend of the settler-founder Joshua Brown, who settled in the area to start a shingle-making camp.

Kerrville is known for its parks that are located along the Guadalupe River and for nearby hunting ranches and Schreiner University. It is also the home of the Museum of Western Art, which features paintings and sculptures of living artists of the American West who follow in the tradition of Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell.

For those who wish to tour, Fredericksburg, a small town famous for its German heritage, wineries and the National Museum of the Pacific War, is just 24 miles northeast of Kerrville.

Average temperatures in October in Kerrville are 79 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and 54 degrees at night.

Kerrville is a great location for the Feast of Tabernacles. Expected attendance is about 350. If you come, I’m sure you’ll receive a warm Texas welcome.

Fragrance-controlled room available: Yes.

Tax rate for accommodations: 13 percent.

Closest airport: San Antonio (SAT), 66 miles.

David Treybig

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

We’re happy to be returning to Lancaster’s No. 1 resort—Eden Resort & Suites. Church services will be held in the luxurious Crystal Ballroom.

For housing, we’ll have rooms with two queen beds and suites with two separate rooms, among other options. All rooms have one bathroom, refrigerator, microwave and coffeemaker. Some rooms have full kitchens. (The Festival housing brochure will list the specific room types in our reservation block.)

Resort dining includes Garfield’s Food & Spirits (family-friendly atmosphere), Arthur’s Terrace (casual and fine dining) and the Encore Lounge (full range of drinks). Additionally, there’s an award-winning champagne Sunday brunch in the beautiful setting of The Courtyard.

Off-site dining options include traditional Pennsylvania Dutch restaurants, such as the Bird-in-Hand, Shady Maple Smorgasbord (200 feet of food) and Good ‘N Plenty (family-style dining).

For more, see the 2020 Lancaster Visitor’s Guide.

For a group activity, we’re pleased to announce that a block of tickets have been reserved at the Sight & Sound Theatre for a new show in 2020—Queen Esther!

Additional nearby attractions are the Biblical Tabernacle Reproduction, Civil War History and the Underground Railroad, Lancaster Central Market (food and music), The Green Dragon (farmers’ market, Fridays only), Strasburg Rail Road, Amish Farm and House, Turkey Hill Experience (ice cream!), Bounce Kraze, Dutch Wonderland (family theme park, ages 3+, Hersheypark (with Boardwalk/Splash! and ZooAmerica), Sky Zone Trampoline Park and more.

Fragrance-controlled room available: No.

Tax rate for accommodations: 11 percent.

Closest airports: Harrisburg (HIA), 30 miles; Philadelphia (PHL), 65 miles; Lehigh Valley (ABE), 68 miles; Baltimore-Washington (BWI), 85 miles.

Kevin Epps

Mont-Sainte-Anne, Québec

We will be returning to Mont-Sainte-Anne, Québec, for the Feast this year, meeting at the Château Mont-Sainte-Anne resort, only half an hour northeast of historic Québec City. Fall colors, expansive mountain vistas and deep canyons make this a beautiful place to keep God’s Feast.

For a group activity, we’re pleased to announce that a block of tickets have been reserved at the Sight & Sound Theatre for a new show in 2020—Queen Esther!

Additional nearby attractions are the Biblical Tabernacle Reproduction, Civil War History and the Underground Railroad, Lancaster Central Market (food and music), The Green Dragon (farmers’ market, Fridays only), Strasburg Rail Road, Amish Farm and House, Turkey Hill Experience (ice cream!), Bounce Kraze, Dutch Wonderland (family theme park, ages 3+, Hersheypark (with Boardwalk/Splash! and ZooAmerica), Sky Zone Trampoline Park and more.

Fragrance-controlled room available: No.

Tax rate for accommodations: 13 percent.

Closest airport: Québec City (YQB), 36 miles.

Daniel Harper
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

We are excited to once again have the Feast in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Now a thriving metropolis, Myrtle Beach began as a getaway for employees of the lumber industry in Conway, South Carolina, who would take the train to “New Town” on their free weekends. The area continued to grow, and it was finally incorporated as a town in 1957. A contest to name it resulted in “Myrtle Beach,” after the area’s southern wax myrtle shrubs.

Today Myrtle Beach is known as the golf capital. Currently, there are 87 premier golf courses throughout the area. It is also considered to be one of America’s most popular vacation destinations. The area boasts a wide variety of motel and condo units as well as limitless restaurants and shopping adventures.

The biggest draw to the area is miles of coastline along the Atlantic Ocean. With that come opportunities to play in the sand, collect seashells and catch some waves.

Myrtle Beach is also a large draw for those who enjoy a variety of entertainment venues, such as the oceanfront Myrtle Beach Boardwalk, a new SkyWheel, Ripley’s Aquarium, several live shows in theaters, miniature golf courses, jet skiing and parasailing. There are 350 acres of shopping, restaurants and other attractions at Broadway at the Beach.

Services will be held at the Crown Reef Beach Resort and Convention Center (2913 S. Ocean Blvd., Myrtle Beach, SC). This facility includes an on-site hotel with kitchenettes for those who need or desire that.

**Fragrance-controlled room available: No.**

**Tax rate for accommodations:** 7 percent.

**Closest airport:** Myrtle Beach (MYR), 3 miles.

**Mark Winner**

Orange Beach, Alabama

Serving the southeastern area of the United States, this year’s Feast of Tabernacles will be held in beautiful Orange Beach, Alabama. Services will be held in the Orange Beach Event Center, located in The Wharf district. The Wharf has many fine restaurants, shopping, a marina and lots of activities for the whole family, including an escape room, Ferris wheel and a newly added zipline. For more information on The Wharf, visit alwharf.com.

In addition to our regular services, we are scheduling teen and young adult drop-ins, a golf scramble, Family Day activities at the Orange Beach Sportsplex and a teen outing.

There are multiple beach locations—stretching across several miles—that allow for parasailing, diving, deep-sea fishing, glass-bottom boat tours, dolphin tours, beach volleyball and a host of other Gulf-related activities.

Volunteering—and the Law of the Harvest

How can you get the most out of the Feast of Tabernacles? The answer may surprise you.

We are coming to another exciting year at the Feast, and we can hardly ask for volunteers without conveying an enthusiastic and heartfelt thank-you to all those who served last year—and the year before and the year before that—in so many varying and meaningful ways. There are those who have served for years and would love to do so this year, but can no longer do so because of age or deteriorating health.

Regrettably, in times past I have also occasionally observed some people proclaim, “This year I am going to take a year off. I’m going to concentrate on myself and on fulfilling my own needs. I am not going to sign up for anything—I am just going to concentrate on me.”

Perhaps you have heard someone make a similar statement.

It is instructive to observe how these individuals fare after the fact. When people do not serve at all, the Feast typically helps them grow very little, if at all. It is one of those paradoxes where you have to expend in order to take in. If one’s aim is only to take in, the actual amount that is subsequently taken is nearly negligible.

Why is that? How can that be? It is called the law of the harvest. We can only reap what we sow. If we don’t sow very much, we don’t reap very much. It is as simple as that. In 2 Corinthians 9:6 we read, “But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”

Furthermore, Galatians 6:9-10 adds, “And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

It is absolutely true that many hands make light work. The more people who are available to tackle a task, the better the whole project goes. It doesn’t overburden any one person. There is a synergy that usually takes place. There is the benefit of harmony and teamwork. Enthusiasm results in improved quality of workmanship and greater enjoyment of the task.

To provide for the needs of the brethren, each and every Feast site requires an assortment of volunteers throughout the Festival week.

Take the time to carefully read about the site where you are planning to attend. Then please take time when you register to volunteer to help out as you are able. The result will be that the Feast you attend will function that much better—and you yourself will be blessed with commensurate spiritual benefits.

—Mark Whynaught
If your interest isn’t beautiful white sand, then just minutes from the beach are several theme parks, a zoo and Wade Ward Nature Park with its scenic wetlands boardwalk.

We encourage you to visit gulfshores.com for more information on the attractions, restaurants and things to do in this coastal paradise. If your plans call for a beach venue for this year’s Feast of Tabernacles, we welcome you to Orange Beach, Alabama!

**Fragrance-controlled room available:** No.

**Tax rate for accommodations:** 13 percent.

(Be sure to read details on each property listed in the housing information. Some Orange Beach accommodations include taxes and fees in their rates.)

**Closest airport:** Pensacola, Florida (PNS) 30 miles.

**Phillip Sandilands**

**Park City, Utah**

We will once again be in the beautiful mountains of Park City, Utah, for the Feast in 2020. The rise in elevation from Salt Lake City to Park City is around 2,500 feet, bringing it in at 7,000 feet (not too high for most mountain lovers). Church services will again be at the Prospector Lodge and Conference Center.

We will be sponsoring a number of activities this year, such as a two-hour ride on a historic steam engine from the Heber Valley Railway Station in Heber City, about 20 minutes from Park City.

There are a number of activities for all age groups. Families with children can enjoy the Swaner Preserve and EcoCenter, which is open year-round. Those aged 9 and up can choose from four different rooms at the Park City Escape Room. And kids and adults can experience a number of art activities at Kimball Art Center.

If you love the outdoors, rent a bike and cruise one of Park City’s paved paths or the Historic Union Pacific Rail Trail. You can also enjoy the beautiful fall scenery by horseback or by hiking one of the many trails in the area.

The history of the 2002 Winter Olympics is reflected very well, especially at Olympic Park, one of the great places to visit in the area. Recreational opportunities abound, and restaurants are abundant. A visit to historic Main Street is a must. Many of the buildings originated during the 19th-century silver mining boom.

**Note:** This may become a restricted site due to limited capacity.

**Fragrance-controlled room available:** Yes.

**Tax rate for accommodations:** 13.02 percent plus a 9.7 percent reservation fee, which is standard.

**Closest airport:** Salt Lake City (SLC), 35 miles.

**Mark Whynaught**

**Tucson, Arizona**

The Southwest has a new location for the Feast!

We are headed back to a popular site from the days of the Worldwide Church of God—Tucson, Arizona.

We’ll be meeting at Loews Ventana Canyon Resort, a beautiful four-star resort nestled up against Ventana Canyon. The Loews offers not only a wonderful meeting space, but beautifully appointed rooms, four restaurants on premises, outdoor pools, an on-site spa, tennis courts, walking and hiking trails with waterfalls, and two manicured golf courses.

Daily services will be on-site at the Loews Ventana Canyon Ballroom, so those staying at the resort will not only get a great room at an incredible discount, but will also be on-site for daily services. Since the Loews is on the outskirts of Tucson, this will add to the number staying on-site. We would like to encourage as many brethren as possible to take advantage of the tremendous arrangement the resort has offered our members.

Tucson offers many options in entertainment. Tombstone, Arizona, where many western movies were filmed, is a short distance to the south. Tucson also hosts jeep or Hummer desert tours, the famous Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, hikes and horseback riding and Mount Lemmon. Family day this year will be on-site at the Loews.

Tucson has many dining choices, including the well-known Pinnacle Peak Steakhouse, fine dining and chain restaurants, to mention only a few.

Tucson is a Western Feast site from the past that will come to life again with those celebrating as the family of God in 2020!

**Fragrance-controlled room available:** No.

**Tax rate for accommodations:** 12.05 percent.

**Closest airport:** Tucson (TUS), 18.7 miles.

**Paul Carter**

**Victoria, British Columbia**

In 2020 the Feast site for the Pacific Northwest will return to Victoria, British Columbia. In previous years, it has proved to be a popular site.

We will be holding our services at the Mary Winspear Centre in nearby Sidney, a short 20-minute drive from downtown Victoria, the provincial capital. The center seats up to 700 people comfortably, and there are a number of housing establishments within four blocks of it.

The climate in Victoria is considered cool Mediterranean. That means that during the Feast you can expect daytime highs in the 60s, with lows in the 40s. There is always a chance of showers in the fall, so bring a rain jacket.

A variety of activities are in abundance in the Victoria area. We will once again have whale-watching tours, which were most enjoyable in previous years. Victoria also has a number of historic sites. Visit world-renowned Butchart Gardens, which has existed for over 100 years and is visited by over a million people annually. Travel...
to downtown Victoria and enjoy high tea at the Empress Hotel. Rich in history, the buildings in the downtown have a distinct English flair.

Victoria is home to a number of unique shops and boutiques, in addition to plenty of big box stores. Americans coming to Canada will also enjoy a favorable exchange rate. The U.S. dollar is currently worth $1.31 in Canadian dollars.

Victoria also has a variety of food options for all budgets—from elegant steakhouses to casual English pubs to ethnic cuisine. If you have never been to Victoria, we encourage you to spend this Feast with your brethren north of the border. You won’t be disappointed!

**Fragrance-controlled room available:** No.

**Tax rate for accommodations:** 13 percent

**Closest airport:** Victoria (YYJ), 2 miles.

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**Jon Pinelli**

Woodbury, Minnesota (Satellite)

This year the satellite site for the Wisconsin and Minnesota area will be in Woodbury, Minnesota, an eastern suburb of St. Paul and only 13 miles from the Wisconsin border. “Satellite site” means that services will be provided via webcast from one of the other Feast sites. While we will be a small site, there will be plenty of good fellowship.

Services will be held at the Residence Inn (205 Radio Drive, Woodbury, MN), and we have a block of rooms set aside so that brethren can stay on-site.

This Residence Inn is an extended-stay hotel and is a short drive from historic downtown Stillwater. It offers a free shuttle service, Monday to Friday, within a 5-mile radius. Local attractions include Lake Elmo Park Reserve, many good restaurants and retailers. Cub Foods, Whole Foods and Trader Joe’s are a short distance away. There are many attractions in the greater Twin Cities area as well, including Como Zoo and the Mall of America.

A complimentary breakfast buffet is provided each morning, and each room includes an in-suite kitchen so you can prepare your own meals.

The hotel includes a business center, free Wi-Fi and on-site laundry. Pets are allowed. You may also enjoy the outdoor fire pit and the patio grill.

Monday to Wednesday you are invited to enjoy the Residence Inn Mix social hour for snacks, drinks and good conversation.

**Fragrance-controlled room available:** No.

**Tax rate for accommodations:** 7.125 percent.

**Closest airport:** Minneapolis-St. Paul (MSP), 20 miles.

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**Larry Solomon**

Online Registration

**April 5-26**

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**ATTENTION THOSE WITH FRAGRANCE-SENSITIVITY ISSUES**

We are aware that some of our members suffer from sensitivities to fragrances. We try to address this issue at the Feast sites where we can do so. We cannot control all the issues necessary to make an area truly fragrance-free, so we cannot guarantee a “fragrance-free” room. But certain sites are able to provide a “fragrance-controlled” room or “fragrance-sensitive” area, where we try to control the area to ensure, to the best of our ability, that those who have fragrance issues will generally find this area to be an aid in dealing with their sensitivities.
Teens—you are invited to the Pittsburgh Teen Prom

“Bella Notte”

April 25-26, 2020

The price of the prom is $35 per person.

Activities include Sabbath services, a recognition ceremony for graduating seniors, a buffet dinner, the dance (after sunset), and an after-prom brunch on Sunday morning.

The venue for the prom and brunch is the Hilton Garden Inn Southpointe, 1000 Corporate Drive, Canonsburg, PA 15317.

To reserve a room at a reduced rate of $107.67 per night, call 724-743-5000 by April 17 and mention COGWA Prom 2020.

Important: The after-prom brunch on Sunday is free to families who are staying at the Hilton and have registered their teens for the prom. Cost of the brunch if you do not stay at the Hilton or if you do not register is $13.36 per person to be paid on Sunday. The firm deadline to register is April 16.

Sabbath services on April 25 will be at 2 p.m. at Chartiers Township Community Center, 2013 Community Center Drive, Houston, PA 15342.

Please visit pitt-prom.com for information about registration, to sign up for the brunch and for all other details about the weekend.