

OneAccord

February 2026



Sharpening Iron

Is Anything Too Hard for God?

Foundation Institute Perspectives

So Much More Than Studying the Bible

Winter Camp 2025

personal from the president

Tribute

The months of December and January were truly busy months for the Church-Ministerial Board of Directors meetings, Winter Family Weekend, Winter Camp, international travel, ministerial retirements and the beginning of a new fiscal year. *One Accord* was created as a communication tool to keep the members up to date on what is happening in the Church. This issue has a lot of news to pass on to all of you.

In 2 Timothy 3:14 the apostle Paul writes to the young evangelist Timothy: "But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, *knowing from whom you have learned them.*" Each year during the month of January, I am reminded of the anniversary of the death of Herbert Armstrong, who died on Jan. 16, 1986, at the age of 93. I was pastoring two congregations in New England when I received the news of Mr. Armstrong's death. That was 40 years ago. Today a large percentage of our members have no personal memory of Mr. Armstrong, but for many of us, he was truly a major influence in our lives. He was the one from whom we learned the truth.

But Mr. Armstrong was not the only one who influenced me. In this issue of *One Accord*, we have a tribute to Richard Thompson, one of our senior ministers who died of a stroke this past year. He was a special man and had a huge impact on the lives of many. He was a happy man, always upbeat, even during some of the Church's most serious trials. He was an instructor at Ambassador College, and he helped train young ministers as part of the Church's education program in the 1990s and early 2000s.

I first met Mr. Thompson and his wife, Onnie, during my freshman year at Ambassador College in Big Sandy, Texas. He had moved from Pasadena to Big Sandy to work in the business office and teach a few classes. He was an exceptional teacher and would bring to life whatever topic he was teaching. He had a down-to-earth approach that always left you knowing that you had learned something—even if unrelated to the subject!

At Ambassador College in Big Sandy I first worked on the ranch, which I very much enjoyed, but in my final two years of college, I took two courses taught by Mr. Thompson: Introduction to Business Administration and Business Statistics. Then during the summer between my junior and senior years, I was offered a job working for Mr. Thompson in the business office. I truly loved it! He was an exceptional administrator and teacher. Even when I made a mistake (and I made my share), he always corrected me in a gentle and caring manner.

I will never forget the confidence Mr. Thompson showed in me as a college student, no more than 21 years of age. My job was in accounts receivable, and I handled all the deposits for the college. Each day I drove to the bank in Tyler, Texas, with the deposits for that day. In advance of a payroll, I took an empty briefcase with me and returned with it full of cash. It is hard to believe these days that I regularly drove from the bank with \$30,000 or more in cash to pay the students their bimonthly salaries.

This is just one of many memories of Mr. Thompson over the years. He was unique and a big influence in my life and my ministry. He is deeply missed. Seeing the tribute in this issue of *One Accord* inspired me to write my own personal tribute to Mr. Thompson, who was truly one of a kind.

I remember Mr. Armstrong as the one who taught me the truth, and I remember Mr. Thompson as the one who taught me how to be a better minister and love the people of God. I am still working on both of these, but if I can follow Mr. Thompson's example, I know my ministry will be a success!



Jim Franks

President
Church of God, a Worldwide Association



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Doctrinal reviewers: Kevin Burt, Neil Hart, Steve Moody

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Is Anything Too Hard for God?

Sometimes we face seemingly impossible situations. When we do, let's remember what Sarah learned.

By Jason Hyde



There is quite a bit of bad news in the world these days. Destructive storms, earthquakes and other “natural” events fill much of the news reports. Meanwhile, man-made strife and conflict continue to rage in seemingly all corners of the globe.

On a personal level, we often face similar challenges that may seem insurmountable in the moment. Perhaps we face a difficult situation at work or even suffer persecution for keeping the Sabbath.

Through it all, God expects His people to live with an expectant hope and trust in God’s ability to deliver us and His capability to sustain us through difficulty.

The prophet Habakkuk declared simply, “The just shall live by his faith” (Habakkuk 2:4). This theme is echoed in the New Testament as well (Romans 1:17; Hebrews 10:38-39).

This is nothing new. The Bible is replete with examples of real people who lived much of their lives enduring conflict, trial and persecution and through their experiences learned to lean on God with faith and trust (Hebrews 11).

At times God allows His people to experience situations that seem impossible to manage. It is in these moments that God can and does teach us to trust and lean on Him fully.

Sarah’s great adventure

One such example involves Sarah, the wife of Abraham. Sarah’s story is one of love, heartache, adventure and intervention. With her husband, she left her homeland and struck out on what must have been quite an adventure. Sarah must have known God’s promise that their descendants would be “a great nation” (Genesis 12:2).

Their journey took them into the powerful nation of Egypt. Sarah witnessed firsthand the consequences of practicing deceit (verses 10-20). She also

experienced family strife (Genesis 13). Sarah would be reminded at regular intervals of God’s promises that Abraham’s descendants would be numbered “as the dust of the earth” (Genesis 13:16).

And yet, despite the repeated encouragement from God, Sarah was barren. As the years passed, this must have added layers of worry, frustration and confusion to her life. Sarah even took matters into her own hand in a futile attempt to bring resolution to the matter (Genesis 16).

Months turned into years that grew into decades. A quarter of a century passed—Abraham was approaching 100 years of age and Sarah was 90 (Genesis 17:17). Again, God renewed His promise, telling Abraham, “Sarah your wife shall have a son” (Genesis 18:10).

Sarah seemed unable to believe such a promise—after all, she was beyond the age of childbearing. After 25 years of working with this couple, God brought them to this teaching moment. God asked an intensely simple question: “Is anything too hard for the LORD?” (verse 14).

Too hard for God?

Imagine this moment. God in His patience and love had brought Abraham and Sarah to a point where they could recognize, without any doubt, that it is God who can and does deliver His people. “And the LORD visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had spoken. For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him—whom Sarah bore to him—Isaac” (Genesis 21:1-3).

Isaac’s birth provided the simple answer that nothing is too hard for God.

We would do well to remember this poignant question and the revealed answer. As we walk through this life, we will undoubtedly face challenging situations and even persecution. We may face situations where our faith in God’s ability to deliver and comfort will be stretched.

As Christians, we must learn to operate from a platform of faith. Notice this encouraging passage, “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession . . . Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:14, 16).

On occasion God may ask us, “Is anything too hard for the LORD?” Let us boldly answer with resounding, living faith: Nothing is too hard for God! ☺

Locking Arms at WFW

By Jason Hyde



On Tuesday, Dec. 23, brethren from numerous locations arrived in Louisville, Kentucky, for the 2025 Winter Family Weekend. This annual five-day “weekend” at the Galt House Hotel provides an uplifting environment for fellowship, activity and education. The enthusiasm of over 1,000 attendees was encouraging and unmistakable.

This year’s WFW theme, “Locking Arms: The Strength of Brotherhood,” served as a positive frame of reference throughout the event. Derived from Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, the theme was woven into seminars, Bible studies and the Sabbath sermon.

The whirlwind of activities began on Tuesday evening with games, cornhole and karaoke.

Beginning Wednesday morning, Foundation Institute instructors presented continuing education seminars. Three seminars were available each weekday, providing attendees with opportunities to explore biblical topics in depth.



In addition to the educational opportunities, many attendees engaged in a variety of sports each day. Basketball, volleyball and pickleball were popular and competitive. Organized preteen games ensured that all family members could participate, and this year a "Sparkle Squad" cheer group presented yet another option.

Each day also offered other special activities. Old favorites included preteen arts and crafts, Main Event arcade and bowling, and an expanded art show. Some new WFW 2025 activities also proved popular: an exquisite ladies' tea, a Topgolf session, swing and ballroom dance lessons, and an outing to the Kentucky Science Center.

Evenings offered a full slate of activities, including pizza, table and card games, cornhole, a trivia night and karaoke. Additionally, there were two FOI service projects and an EEI "Make It, Take It, Teach It" workshop.

The family dance included a favorite book character costume challenge. Among the exceptional cast of characters was the evening's winner: Hercule Poirot.

On the Sabbath, everyone enjoyed a rich diet of spiritual edification. Friday evening included both a



teen and general Bible study. On Sabbath morning, teen and adult seminars—along with Sabbath school for the preteens—provided opportunities to consider how to better *lock arms* to ensure spiritual health and survival.

Numerous congregations joined the webcast of Sabbath services, which included a beautiful array of special music and a sermon that drove home the need to lock arms by fellowshiping *with* each other, providing service *to* each other and offering prayer *for* each other.

Following the Sabbath, both young and young at heart enjoyed the Family Fun Fair. The Grand Ballroom was restaged with numerous inflatables, a mechanical bull and multiple carnival games. The fair was well attended and full of fun.

The strength of brotherhood was on display throughout the 2025 WFW, as numerous volunteers locked arms to help organize and staff each activity. Special thanks go to Nathan and Amanda Willoughby for coordinating another successful WFW.

The 2026 WFW is scheduled for Dec. 22-26 in Louisville. We hope to see you there! ☺ ☺



So Much More Than Studying the Bible

By David Johnson, FI instructor

Most people arrive at Foundation Institute prepared to spend a lot of time studying the Bible. What they don't always expect is how much else happens along the way.

The young adults who come here are not "nerdy Bible students." They are energetic, curious and eager to learn how Scripture applies to real life—not just how to quote it. They bring that same enthusiasm into the classroom every day, and as one of the instructors, I can say without hesitation that their energy is contagious.

Because FI shares a building with the Church's headquarters offices, students regularly come in contact with people deeply involved in the work. Just before the Thanksgiving break, the Festival coordinators arrived for their annual meetings, giving students an opportunity to ask questions, hear experiences and better understand what goes into organizing the Feast around the world.

December quickly filled with activity again. Regional directors and senior pastors serving in international areas met together, followed immediately by the annual Ministerial Board

of Directors meetings. As they do each year, the MBOD hosted a lunch with the FI students. Sitting across the table from these men, and the wives who could attend, gave students a personal look at the responsibilities, challenges and dedication involved in leading the Church today.

At the same time, one of the most anticipated classes of the year began: Modern Church History, taught by Doug Johnson. What might have sounded like a list of dates and names quickly became something much richer. Mr. Johnson has the ability to bring people

and events to life, sharing his insights to enhance our appreciation for the past. In the process, this class helps students see how Jesus Christ has faithfully guided His Church through generations of real people facing real challenges. And Janel Johnson shares her warmth and talents as well, often providing beautiful piano music to begin our day. By the end of the class, students were already eager for the Johnsons' return later in the year to finish the story.

All too quickly, the first semester came to an end. The semester break gave students time to travel, reconnect and recharge. One couple, Paul and Tiffany Hamilton, even managed a whirlwind tour of Egypt and Turkey. Others returned home or attended the Winter Family Weekend in Louisville.

The second semester is already underway, and it promises to be filled with new experiences and insights. Students are wrapping up the Survey of the Gospels module with Dave Myers, preparing group presentations for Comparative Religion, and once again hosting young adults from surrounding areas for monthly Friday night dinners and Bible studies. And all of this

only describes the "official" activities. Students often gather on their own for group dinners, informal study sessions, and just relaxing and enjoying each other's company in an atmosphere of acceptance and encouragement.

For those of you considering FI, applications are now being accepted for the 2026-2027 academic year. If you're looking for more than information—if you want growth, challenge and experiences that stay with you—Foundation Institute offers far more than you might expect. ☺





Winter Camp 2025

A Winter Wonderland

By Larry Solomon

A total of 29 campers, 22 staff and two mini campers enjoyed Winter Camp 2025 in a winter wonderland. Big fluffy snow was the daily background for outdoor activities, which included snow tubing, capture the flag, broomball and Amazing Race. The weather was perfect for Winter Camp—lots of fluffy snow and temperatures warm enough for us to be outside and enjoy its beauty.

Indoor activities featured a new escape room, volleyball, FOI projects, leadership class, team building and dance. Each activity helped the campers focus on this year's theme of "Seek First the Kingdom." Compass Checks every morning brought the entirety of camp together to learn more about God's way.

Since many of the activities include all of the campers at once, a family-like atmosphere pervades Winter

Camp. Many campers say this is one of their favorite things about it. The camp was blessed with very little sickness and very few injuries this year.

Outdoor fires were enjoyed during evening fellowship time. Other evening activities featured mixer games, bunco, all-camp volleyball or games at the newly built hitching post, a mid-week Western dance that had campers donning their plaid shirts and kicking up their heels, and a variety show that was enjoyable and entertaining. Friday night a special charcuterie board made fellowshiping and writing Sabbath notes an elevated bonding experience for all.

Friday night Bible studies for male and female campers and staff and a final dance and slideshow tied up this enjoyable weeklong camp with unity and newly formed connections. ☺☺

NEWS OF THE WORK

Education Center Building Update



Construction of the Church's education center is progressing. Concrete will soon be poured for the building's slab foundation and the parking lot. When that's complete, we'll start to see progress on the building's superstructure.

Jim Franks

Stats & Facts

A recent *Life, Hope & Truth Presents* episode has become one of our top three videos for number of views. "Christmas Is Pagan: Does Jesus Care?" which was posted on Dec. 11, 2025, quickly drew attention on YouTube and has had 107,000 views and received 2,694 comments as of Jan. 13.

Our top two episodes, which were both part of season 1, are "Who Changed the Sabbath to Sunday?" (349,000 views) and "How Passover Became Easter" (313,000 views).

At this time, *Life, Hope & Truth Presents* has 50 episodes that can be viewed within the LHT Video Archive or on YouTube. There are currently seven more episodes recorded and in the process of being edited and finalized for posting over the next few months.

International Work

Assistant regional directors have been selected for the Spanish-speaking region and the Caribbean region. Phil Sandilands and his wife, Marlys, have begun assisting Leon Walker, who has served as regional director for the Spanish work since 1979.

Kevin Epps and his wife, Belinda, have begun assisting Arnold Hampton, who has served in the Caribbean for almost 35 years and as regional director for the last 14 years. For now, Mr. Epps will continue pastoring his three congregations in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.

14th Focused Mentoring Program Begins

The 2026 Focused Mentoring Program kicked off on Sunday, Jan. 11. The program, which began in 2013, provides select couples in local congregations with leadership training and exposure to the pastoral ministry.

This year's participants are:

- Corey and Ashley Maker (Tulsa, Oklahoma).
- Brent and Brittany Martin (Columbia, Missouri).
- James and Cassie Richards (East Texas).
- Mitchell and Kait Sinon (Tampa, Florida).

Participants will have a weekend of classes in McKinney March 14-15.

Upcoming Travel

Jim and Sharron Franks
Doug and Tanya Horchak

- Jan. 28 to Feb. 12, Australia, New Zealand and Fiji, to visit brethren and ministry and hold ILP classes.

Dave and Pam Myers

- Feb. 7, Cincinnati-Dayton, Ohio, and Indianapolis, Indiana, for church visit.

Britton and Donna Taylor

- Feb. 13-16, Branson, Missouri, for Presidents' Day Family Weekend.

Jim and Sharron Franks

Dave and Pam Myers

- Feb. 21, Colorado for Greg Sargent's retirement.

Ministerial Transfers

Field Minister	Current Assignment	New Assignment
Chris Moen	Associate pastor West Michigan	Retirement from full-time ministry, January 2026
Michael Hanisko	Pastor Beloit, WI; West Michigan	Retirement from full-time ministry, June 2026
Eric Evans	Pastor Knoxville, TN; London, KY; Asheville, NC	Pastor Beloit, WI; West Michigan; July 2026
Marty Miller	Associate pastor Akron-Canton & Columbus-Cambridge, OH	Pastor Knoxville, TN; London, KY; Asheville, NC; July 2026
Greg Sargent	Pastor Castle Rock & North Front Range, CO	Retirement from full-time ministry, January 2026
David Gatley	Pastor Grand Junction, CO; Salt Lake City, UT	Pastor Grand Junction, Castle Rock & North Front Range, CO; Salt Lake City, UT
David Treybig	Pastor Austin & Temple, TX	Retirement from full-time ministry, April 2026
Nick Slaughter	Associate pastor Austin & Temple, TX	Pastor Austin & Temple, TX, April 2026
Phil Sandilands	Pastor Phoenix, Tucson & Prescott Valley, AZ	Assistant regional director of Spanish- speaking region
Andy Burnett	Pastor Dallas & Sherman, TX	Pastor Phoenix, Tucson & Prescott Valley, AZ; summer 2026
Dennis Fultz	Pastor Springfield & Joplin, MO; Harrison, AR	Pastor Dallas & Sherman, TX, summer 2026
Nathan Willoughby	Pastor Louisville, KY; Nashville, TN; Evansville, IN	Pastor Springfield & Joplin, MO; Harrison, AR; summer 2026
Jason Hyde	Associate pastor Louisville, KY; Nashville, TN; Evansville, IN	Pastor Louisville, KY; Nashville, TN; Evansville, IN; summer 2026
Don Henson	Pastor Akron-Canton & Columbus-Cambridge, OH	Retirement from full-time ministry, July 2026
Chad Messerly	Pastor Buffalo, NY; associate pastor, Akron-Canton & Columbus-Cambridge, OH	Pastor Akron-Canton & Columbus-Cambridge, OH; Buffalo, NY; July 2026
David Register	Pastor Redding & Stockton, CA; Reno, NV	Retirement from full-time ministry, October 2026
Michael Lindenberg	Assistant pastor Redding & Stockton, CA; Reno, NV	Pastor Redding & Stockton, CA; Reno, NV

Joplin Enjoys Second Annual Picnic



On a warm summer morning, brethren in the Joplin, Missouri, congregation, along with friends from Springfield, Missouri, and Bentonville, Arkansas, gathered at the home of Clifford and Linda Beal for a picnic brunch on July 20, 2025.

The tables overflowed with food, but it was the fellowship that filled the day with joy. Brethren enjoyed the shade of the trees, encouraging many to linger in conversation. Laughter—from the children swimming and splashing in the pool—was carried across the yard. It was a truly refreshing day.

Brittni Dozier

Tulsa Cookout and Ice Cream Social



On July 20, 2025, the Tulsa, Oklahoma, congregation held this year's cookout and ice cream social at the property of Jim and Marilyn Burnette. The congregation, along with a few visitors

from Fort Worth and Dallas, Texas, enjoyed grilled hamburgers and hot dogs with all the fixings.

It was a hot day, putting a strain on the ice cream maker, but the results were worth the wait and a welcome treat. The kids played in the waterslide inflatable nearly all day, while the adults socialized in the shade and played cornhole.

Greg Mann

Houston Preteen Bible Bowl Event



On Aug. 16, 2025, preteens in the Houston North, Texas, congregation held their annual back-to-school event—this year an all-American potluck. Younger preteens made Feast chain necklaces out of pasta, while six teams of older preteens participated in a Bible quiz bowl.

It was a very close game, but team Bible Brainiacs (Blair Webber, Sam Cook, Jeffery Jenney and Bianca Czepizak) came out on top.

Prizes included ribbons for first-through third-place winners and a trip to the treasure box for all. Thanks to everyone involved for making this night such great fun!

Christi Wasdin

Hickory FOI Project Supports School

During July and August 2025, the FOI coordinators for the Hickory,

North Carolina, congregation (Amanda Shaver and Diane O'Brien) organized a collection drive to sponsor a small school system in the Catawba community. Members



supplied school supplies for students of low-income families at Shuford Elementary.

The school system was very appreciative and sent the congregation this thank you message: "Thank you so much for your generous donation of school supplies to Shuford Elementary. We are grateful for your support, and the teachers and students are excited to be prepared for the new school year."

Martha Roark

Houston North Celebrates 50th Anniversaries



On Aug. 16, 2025, the Houston North, Texas, congregation honored five couples in the congregation who celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 2025.

Pictured from left to right are Dan and Helen Casey, John and Jan Williams, Cindy Ingle (Ted not present), Becky Palmer (Larry not present), and Pam and Dan Weitzel.

Gary Black

Louisville Seniors Enjoy Social



Sunday, Aug. 17, 2025, the Louisville, Kentucky, church hall rang with conversation and laughter as the congregation's senior members gathered for the annual senior social.

After enjoying a delicious lunch of grilled chicken, sweet potato fries and salads, plus peach cobbler and ice cream for dessert, we launched into several fun games. Anyone for cow pie toss or pool noodle hockey? We laughed so hard that some of us went home with sore sides but happy memories we will not soon forget.

Carolyn Winner

Harrison Picnics on Gaither Mountain



On Sunday, Aug. 24, 2025, the Harrison, Arkansas, congregation gathered together on the top of beautiful Gaither Mountain, minutes away from the Buffalo National River.

In a beautiful prelude to Feast weather (and completely unexpected for the hot days of August in Northwest Arkansas), the day was

filled with a gorgeous breeze and temperatures in the 70s. Best of all was the opportunity for the Harrison brethren to gather together over a potluck picnic meal and spend the day enjoying each other's company.

Lyndi Fultz

Houston South FOI Outreach Project



On Sunday, Aug. 31, 2025, 16 members of the Houston South, Texas, congregation served residents of the Ballard House, a nonprofit that provides free housing for patients (and family members) being treated at the Texas Medical Center in Houston.

As part of an FOI Hilltop Outreach project, our members provided 46 residents with a taco dinner. The atmosphere was enhanced by decorations with a fiesta flair!

Volunteers appreciated the opportunity to dine and visit with the residents; residents appreciated having a hot meal after treatments and appointments.

Monica Koerner and Kathy Welch

Akron-Canton Holds Regional Campout



The weekend of Sept. 5, 2025, the Akron-Canton, Ohio, congregation held its annual regional campout in the beautiful Doughty Valley Park. Cool nights and an early morning rain shower couldn't dampen the warmth of the fellowship of 80-plus campers.

Friday evening we played "Name That Hymn." Additional brethren joined the campers for services the next day, giving us a total of 106. Afterward, we enjoyed marinated beef tenderloin, chicken breasts, a potluck of sides and ice cream.

Coffee, campfire, companionship and creek walks continued on Sunday morning until it was time to pack up.

Joel Taylor

Williamsburg Enjoys Annual Campout



Members from the Williamsburg, Virginia, congregation gathered for a weekend of camping Sept. 5-7, 2025. Days were warm, and evenings cool—perfect weather for fellowship and outdoor fun.

Sabbath began with a hearty breakfast followed by services. The sermon was about the third day of creation, a fitting theme. Many more brethren joined us for Sabbath services and a delicious meal.

That evening members assembled snack bags for children at a homeless shelter.

After breakfast on Sunday morning, we packed up, grateful for the time spent together.

Mary Jordan and Tom Burrows

Roanoke Member Becomes U.S. Citizen



Susie Riquelme, a member of the Williamsburg, Virginia, congregation, was one of 30 men and women who became U.S. citizens on Sept. 17, 2025, at Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest in Lynchburg, Virginia.

Susie came to the U.S. in 2014 and married Javier Riquelme. She became a permanent resident in 2016. On May 4, 2025, she applied for U.S. citizenship and started studying for the test on U.S. history, geography and civics.

On July 30, she took the test and passed. Her final step was the Sept. 17 naturalization ceremony.

Tom Burrows

Nashville Art Night



The Nashville, Tennessee, congregation enjoyed a potluck and art night on Sept. 13, 2025. Guests were encouraged to bring an art project in progress or consider taking an art workshop, taught by an art teacher in the congregation. Everyone was encouraged to create

something, and every member left with handmade artwork.

Guests had many art mediums to choose from, including still life drawing with pencil, needle felting and crocheting! Children enjoyed watercolor and play dough stations, taught by a few parent volunteers.

Nashville members of all ages were grateful to make things alongside God's people.

Amy Duncan

Akron-Canton Honors Seniors



On Sabbath, Sept. 20, 2025, seniors in the Akron-Canton, Ohio, congregation gathered for a luncheon honoring them for their wisdom, faith and commitment.

What made the luncheon especially memorable was the involvement of our children in serving the seniors. It was a touching reminder of the importance of bridging generations within the Church and teaching our young people the value of serving others.

Seniors expressed appreciation for the meal—and the kindness and respect shown them. The children, in turn, were blessed to learn from those who have been faithful for many years.

Kami Purdy

Dallas and Sherman Campout

Over the weekend of Nov. 1, 2025, 150 members from the Dallas and

Sherman, Texas, congregations came together for their annual campout. The weather was beautiful, and the setting was great for mingling and eating!



Those that didn't want to camp but still wanted to enjoy time with brethren came up for Sabbath services and a delicious Sabbath meal.

We're thankful for God's wonderful creation and this incredible family to share it with.

Elena Salyer

Fort Worth Members Share Feast Stories



Almost as enjoyable as celebrating the eight days of the Feast is sharing the stories of our Feast experiences afterward. Members of the Fort Worth, Texas, congregation did just that with an abundant potluck spread after Sabbath services on Nov. 1, 2025.

Members submitted photos of their Feast celebrations and were able to enjoy seeing each other's visual mementos projected on a large screen.

John Payne

Ocala Enjoys Fall Picnic



The Ocala, Florida, congregation held its annual fall picnic Sunday, Nov. 2, 2025, at the beautiful Silver Springs State Park. The picnic was attended by members of Ocala and our sister congregation, Orlando.

It was a delightful day for grilling hot dogs and hamburgers, and we also enjoyed an old-fashioned chili cook-off with many tasty side dishes and desserts.

The joy of fellowship was enhanced by live guitar music, a raffle and the joy of watching the children on the playground equipment.

We enjoyed perfect weather and are already looking forward to our spring picnic!

Cheryl Koontz

Birmingham Holds Hot Dog and Chili Night



On the evening of Nov. 8, 2025, brethren from the Birmingham, Alabama, and Trenton, Georgia, congregations met at the country home of George and Drea Allen for our annual hot dog and chili social.

As brethren began to arrive, they watched a beautiful sunset and enjoyed the warmth of a pleasant bonfire. A delicious meal of hot dogs, grilled cheese sandwiches and homemade chili was followed by s'mores and other desserts.

Later, adults and children enjoyed a hayride through the woods and a slideshow of members' Feast photos.

Chuck Nichols

Tulsa Holds Post-Feast Social



The Tulsa, Oklahoma, congregation held a post-Feast social after services on Nov. 8, 2025. Everyone shared a delicious potluck meal and desserts with much fellowship and stories from the Feast.

A highlight was the slideshow of everyone's Feast photos, including their Squishmallow images. After sunset, the congregation split into teams and competed in a friendly post-Feast game, full of fun and laughter and not a little bewilderment.

Thanks to Jim and Debbie Hudson for planning the event and to the volunteers who made it special.

Greg Mann

Akron-Canton Gathers for Post-Feast Potluck

On Nov. 15, 2025, the Akron-Canton, Ohio, congregation gathered for its annual post-Feast slideshow and potluck. The evening began with

fellowship, delicious dishes and a joyful look at Feast memories.

Once the lights came up and the plates were cleared, the fun continued. We picked up the



microphone and turned the rest of the night into a lively karaoke party. Laughter, music and enthusiastic performances from all ages made it an evening to remember.

It was a wonderful night of food, fellowship and fun—one that truly captured the spirit of our community.

Kami Purdy

Austin Hosts Regional Volleyball Weekend



Fantastic weekend! That's one way to describe the Austin Regional Volleyball Weekend held Nov. 15-16, 2025.

It started with almost 300 people at church services. Later that evening, 38 teens enjoyed an evening of pizza, laser tag, bowling and video games. Fourteen adult teams played Saturday night and Sunday, while five teen teams played on Sunday. The stands were full of spectators enjoying the games.

Overall, everyone was treated to a weekend of fun and fellowship!

Ardith Weiss

Columbus-Cambridge Cook-Off and Bake-Off



The Columbus-Cambridge, Ohio, congregation enjoyed its fourth annual men's chili cook-off and women's bake-off the evening of Nov. 22, 2025. Organized by Patrick and Breanna Bruske, the friendly competition had 12 chili entries and 10 dessert entries. Everything was delicious, making it difficult to pick winners.

Teens and preteens made impressive showings. Chili winners were Sam Ramsey (11), first place; Kaden Ramsey (16), second; and Kylar Meyer, third. Bake-off winners were Chloe Bruske (13), first place; Keri Sanders, second; and Abigail Bruske (7), third.

Such a fun night of delicious food and fellowship!

Denise Hadley

Hickory Enjoys Fellowship and Auction



After Sabbath services on Dec. 27, 2025, the Hickory, North Carolina, congregation gathered for a special evening of fellowship. Members enjoyed sharing a pizza meal together, strengthening bonds.

The evening also included a silent auction, with items generously

provided by the brethren, representing their experiences at the Feast. The silent auction proved to be a success, raising a total of \$610. All proceeds from the event will directly support the 2026 CYC teen camp in South Carolina.

Martha Roark

Mindanao Gathers for Year-End Outing



From Dec. 26 to 29, 2025, 71 members from the six Mindanao congregations gathered at a resort in central Mindanao of the Philippines.

On the first night, the brethren enjoyed a "boodle fight"—a feast served on banana leaves—followed by a Bible study by Elbert Gargar. Sabbath services the next day included messages by Paul Cebrian and Mr. Gargar. In the evening, brethren enjoyed games, snacks and karaoke.

The last day offered workshops on ham radio, egg incubation and basic house wiring in the morning and flower making, baking and snack preparation in the afternoon. Teens and young adults enjoyed a swim that night, and the event concluded after breakfast the following morning.

Golda Mae and Prescilla Baylon

Knoxville Holds "Souper" Bingo Social

Members of the Knoxville, Tennessee, congregation enjoyed their second annual "Souper" Bingo social. The themed meal featured a wide variety of soups that were tasted and ranked by everyone

before a best soup was chosen.

After the soup, everyone played bingo together while listening to a musical-themed playlist. Between stamping bingo cards and guessing



the Broadway song and musical, the congregation had a memorable evening. We can't wait for next year's "Souper Bingo"!

Amberly Walton Groves

Algonquin Canoe Challenge



Both participants and staff triumphed over physical and spiritual challenges during the 2025 Algonquin Canoe Challenge, which took place Aug. 17-24, 2025. This year's route required 30+ miles of canoeing and portaging across rugged terrain.

Participants faced their own individual challenges, whether through intense physical exertion or learning to work as a team, and found support and opportunities for growth along the way. Daily Christian living discussions set the tone, while evenings ended with fellowship.

If you're ready to deepen your dependence on God, form special bonds and experience the beauty of Canada's Algonquin Park, join us in 2026! For more information, contact Daniel Harper at daniel.harper@cogwa.org.

Karen Claunch



Births



Asher Bennett Golden

Jacob and Erica Golden of the Sherman, Texas, congregation are overjoyed to announce the birth of their son, Asher Bennett Golden, on Oct. 16, 2025. He weighed 8 pounds 5 ounces and was 21½ inches long.

Big sister Kacie is thrilled to have him in the family as are grandparents Mike and Becky Bennett of the Dallas, Texas, congregation and great-granddad Roy Dove of the Fort Worth, Texas, congregation.

Becky Bennett

Weddings



Averie and Jacob Bornhorst

Jacob Bornhorst and Averie Hoyer were married on Nov. 30, 2025,

We encourage members to send announcements to be featured in *One Accord*. We feature events in members' lives, including births, weddings, significant anniversaries (25, 40, 50, 60, etc.), baptisms, ordinations and obituaries. Entries should run between 50-100 words with obituaries being 100-250 words. Please submit a high-resolution color photo along with the written copy to your congregation's reporter.

in La Vernia, Texas. The bride's grandfather, Randal Rapp, officiated the ceremony with the help of the groom's father, Bart Bornhorst, who gave the prayer.

Averie and Jacob returned to their congregation of Homer, Alaska, and celebrated with a reception up there as well. Family and friends wish the happy couple a beautiful life together!

Rashele Hoyer

Baptisms



Joshua and Lauren Rule

On Friday evening, Dec. 12, 2025, parents and friends gathered to witness the baptisms of Joshua and Lauren Rule by Andy Burnett, pastor of the Dallas, Texas, congregation.

Josh and Lauren are brother and sister, and had each begun counseling for baptism without the other knowing it. They ended up completing their counseling sessions at about the same time, so everything worked out perfectly!

Their parents, Tim and Elizabeth Rule, along with Josh, attend the Dallas congregation. Lauren's home congregation is Dallas as well, but currently she's a student at Texas A&M in College Station, Texas.

Andy Burnett



Tristin Ryan McIntyre

Surrounded by his family, Tristin Ryan McIntyre was baptized into the Body of Christ on the sunny fall afternoon of Nov. 16, 2025. The baptism ceremony was performed at his family's home in Utica, Ohio, by Jason Hyde, assistant pastor of the Louisville, Kentucky, congregation. The Columbus-Cambridge, Ohio, congregation is very happy to welcome Tristin into the Body of Christ.

Jason Hyde



Peyton Elizabeth McIntyre

On the brisk snowy afternoon of Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025, Peyton Elizabeth McIntyre was surrounded by family and friends as she was baptized into the Body of Jesus Christ.

The baptism ceremony was performed by Chad Messerly, pastor of Buffalo, New York, and Don Henson, pastor of the Columbus-Cambridge and Akron-Canton, Ohio, congregations.

Peyton's parents, Travis and Kelly McIntyre, and her brother, Tristin McIntyre, along with all of the Columbus-Cambridge congregation are very happy to welcome her into the family of God.

Kelly McIntyre



Aja Hampton

On the evening of Nov. 26, 2025, surrounded by family as the sun was setting, Aja Josefina Lauren Hampton was baptized into the Body of Christ by her grandfather, Arnold Hampton, regional director of the Caribbean. Her uncles—Mark Hampton, an elder in Massachusetts, and David Jackson, pastor of the Miami and West Palm Beach, Florida, churches—assisted in the laying on of hands.

Ann Hampton



Sarah Sanders

On Dec. 21, 2025, Sarah Sanders of the Columbus-Cambridge, Ohio, congregation was baptized into the family of God at the home of Adam and Keri Sanders. Surrounded by family and friends on a brisk but sunny afternoon, Sarah was thankful for warm water and that the laying on of hands was done in the house, just steps away.

Chad Messerly performed the baptism, and Don Henson and Sarah's grandfather Gary McConaughey joined in the laying on of hands.

Sarah's father, Adam Sanders, gave a beautiful toast, and everyone enjoyed wonderful fellowship to celebrate the joyous occasion!

Keri Sanders



Meghan Ross

Just before entering the Sabbath at the Winter Family Weekend on Friday, Dec. 26, 2025, Meghan Ross was baptized by her uncle, Clyde Kilough. Around 20 family members, friends and others connected by video call were on hand to witness and share the joy of this wonderful ceremony. Andy Burnett (her pastor), David Johnson and Ralph Levy joined in the laying on of hands.

Meghan attends the Sherman, Texas, congregation.

Clyde Kilough



Nicole Terrell

Nicole Terrell was baptized Jan. 6, 2026, by Ken Giese, pastor of the Fort Worth, Texas, congregation. Nicole's parents, brother and a few friends were present.

Welcome to the Body of Christ, Nicole!

Rebekah Stolley

Obituaries



Lessie Desjardins

On Jan. 4, 2026, Lessie Desjardins of Bangor, Maine, was baptized in a private ceremony held in a spa in Portland, Maine. Her husband and my wife were present to witness her taking this meaningful step.

Lessie is the daughter of the late Charlotte Bickford, who was a longtime member of the Church of God in Maine. Over the years, Lessie diligently read the Bible, aided by the booklets her mother had left her. This led her to explore COGWA online and reach out to me for baptism counseling.

David Rand



Patrick Lynch

Patrick Lynch, age 84, died on Oct. 12, 2025, during the Feast of Tabernacles, surrounded by his immediate family.

Patrick spent his early years in Columbus, Ohio. He loved baseball and often recalled playing league ball against Pete Rose.

In 1961, he began a 47-year career at Lockheed, contributing to aeronautical advancements until his retirement in 2008. In 1966, he met the love of his life, Betty Wooten. Patrick introduced Betty to the truth shortly after their marriage

in 1967, and both were baptized March 7, 1971.

Patrick loved the mountains. They lived in the rural mountain town of Suches, Georgia, and later in life, moved to Florissant, Colorado.

Patrick was a devoted father and grandfather. He threw baseballs

with his son, rebounded basketballs for his daughter, and cheered them on in high school and college. Later in life, he was a joyful and engaged grandfather.

Throughout his life, Patrick remained active in the Church. He was ordained a deacon in 2019.

He led with quiet strength and a powerful example.

Patrick is survived by his wife, Betty; his daughter, Sherry Fuessel (Ryan) of Denver, Colorado; his son, Patrick R. Lynch Jr. (Michelle) of Marietta, Georgia; and six grandchildren.

Greg Sargent

TRIBUTE



Richard Thompson

Richard Thompson, a longtime church pastor and Bible instructor, died on the morning of May 16, 2025, in Eustis, Florida.

Dick was born Jan. 11, 1942, in Jackson, Mississippi. He was raised with two brothers and a sister in a close-knit and supportive family.

Dick attended Mississippi State University and received his bachelor's degree in mathematics in 1964. While at Mississippi State, he began listening to *The World Tomorrow* broadcast in the fall of 1963 and started attending church in early 1964.

He got his first job teaching eighth-grade mathematics at Avondale Estates, Georgia, and had that job for a year before he started attending Ambassador College in Big Sandy, Texas, in the fall of 1965. During his three years as a college student, Dick enjoyed

working on the plumbing crew, in the Science Department, and in the business office.

While attending Ambassador College, Dick dated and married Onnie Guarnieri on June 4, 1967. Dick and Onnie were married students for Dick's last year at college, and after graduation, he was hired as a ministerial trainee. They moved to Los Angeles, California, in the spring of 1968. After serving in Los Angeles for one year, Dick was ordained an elder in April 1969.

The Thompsons returned to Big Sandy, where Dick worked in the business office from 1969 until 1972. It was during this time that their sons, Scot and Brett, were born.

The Thompsons served as pastor and pastor's wife for the Baton Rouge and Alexandria, Louisiana, congregations from 1972 to 1976 and for the Dayton, Ohio, congregation from 1976 to 1983.

Then the Thompsons were asked to move back to Big Sandy, Texas, to serve on the faculty and administration of Ambassador College. Mr. Thompson had a profound impact on the student body and the character of Ambassador College during this time. As his good friend Mike Blackwell noted, "Dick was one of the best teachers of the past 40 years. He had a rare level of insight, which proved to be very beneficial."

During his tenure at Ambassador College, Mr. Thompson taught theology and speech classes and served as the dean of students, dean of student affairs and eventually acting provost.

Mr. Thompson returned to pastoring in 1992, when the Thompsons were transferred to Athens and Buford, Georgia. Over the next two-plus decades, until his retirement at the end of 2015, Mr. Thompson pastored multiple congregations in Georgia, North Carolina and Florida.

He served as a Festival coordinator for 13 years, supervising sites in Canada, Missouri, Ohio, Virginia, Mississippi and Florida. He served on the Ministerial Board of Directors for the Church of God, a Worldwide Association. He also taught at Foundation Institute and was a favorite instructor to many of the students. He was honored in May of 2019 for 50 years of service as a minister of Jesus Christ.

Dick was preceded in death by his beloved wife Onnie (2006) and is survived by his two sons, Scot and Brett.

Dick Thompson will be remembered as a wonderful teacher with great stories and as a serving and loving pastor who had the innate ability to put a smile on your face.

Tim Rickard

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