



United News Canada

NEWS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF GOD - CANADA

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Spring 2023

Seven Days

By Anthony Wasilkoff

The Daily Bible Reading Program on the United Church of God – Canada website is carefully laid out so that a person can read the entire Bible once a year. It is a highly effective way to become acquainted with the contents of the Scriptures and continue to enhance your learning. If you have been following the program (and I highly endorse it!), you would have read Exodus 29 on Tuesday, January 23.

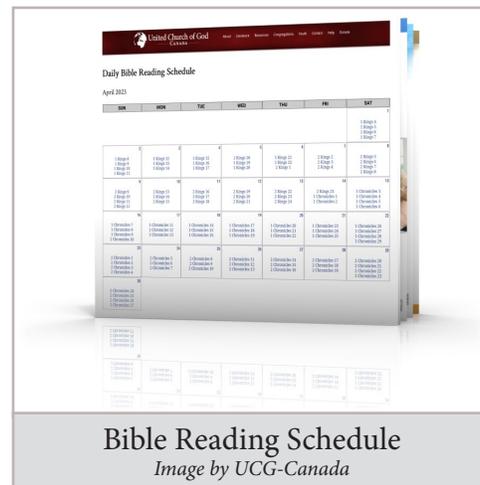
During the week the schedule typically prescribes three chapters a day and then four chapters each day on the weekend. It presumes that the average person has more time for reading on the weekend.

Back to Exodus chapter 29. In this chapter the reader is provided with a detailed description of how Aaron and his sons were consecrated. In verse 35 we read, “Thus shall you do to Aaron and his sons, according to all I have commanded you. Seven days you shall consecrate them.”

For this verse the *Nelson Study Bible* provides a very insightful footnote. It states, “The rites of consecration lasted seven days. The repetition of these actions, day after day, dramatically emphasized the need for holiness and faithfulness in worship.”

How long does it take to form a new habit or acquire a new behaviour? The answer varies considerably and

depends on the individual, the situation and the objective. According to one study, it can take anywhere from 18 to 254 days for a person to establish a new habit or behaviour.



What then can be accomplished in only seven days? Is seven days sufficient to achieve anything significant? As Christians who annually observe God’s Holy Days including the Feast of Tabernacles and Feast of Unleavened Bread, we know the Creator God has prescribed seven days twice a year for his people to acquire new behaviours and to reinforce established behaviours.

At the Feast of Tabernacles we are together with fellow believers several times every day for an entire week. This experience is highly transformative in so many ways. For those, who have not yet observed an in-person, on-site Feast of Tabernacles, you have a lot to look forward to. And if you ask Him, God can

provide a way for you to do so.

But much sooner is the wonderful Feast of Unleavened Bread, also seven days long and also transformative in its own way. A day in advance of the Feast is the highly meaningful and strikingly sobering Passover service. It depicts the all-encompassing suffering and death of our Saviour Jesus Christ. The very next evening is the Night to Be Much Observed which begins the seven remarkable Days of Unleavened Bread. These days reinforce the new life we are to be living after we accept the sacrifice of the Son of God and are cleansed by His shed blood.

For seven days we avoid consuming anything leavened and for seven days we consume unleavened food to depict the importance of living an unleavened life. We enjoy extra time together on each of the High Days and on the weekly Sabbath. These seven days emphasize in a very special way the need for holiness and faithfulness in worship and daily living. How very special, meaningful and transformative seven days can be! 🌍

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House Rules

By Linda Wasilkoff

Dr. Laura Schlessinger is a well-known radio personality who specializes in marriage and family challenges. She gives advice to callers on a wide range of difficulties people find themselves in.

On one program she was discussing how a mother should handle the situation of a son who at 18 announced that he was quitting school. The Mom didn't approve of his decision but didn't know what to do. Dr. Laura confirmed that once the child reached 18, the mother had no power to force him to continue school, but she did have a creative suggestion.

That suggestion centered around house rules. For instance, in this case, the rule could be "You can live in this house rent-free as long as you are in school." Thus, if the son quits school, he needs to move out, get a job and start supporting himself. In other words, the objective is that if you want to be treated like an adult you need to behave like an adult.

Do you have house rules? When our children were young and still living with their parents, they knew there were some definite rules such as no smoking or doing drugs in the house. Another rule was that while they lived in our home they would observe the Sabbath

and attend church with us. The house rules that were most important were not negotiable, but some less important house rules such as curfews could at times be adjusted to fit the need.

While I listened to the Dr. Laura program that day, it occurred to me that God has house rules as well. Some are hard and fast (Holy Days, Sabbath, tithing, etc.). Others might be a bit more flexible – we see that David was allowed to eat the bread reserved for the priests during a very specific time of need.

Other house rules that add to the orderliness of church include those that are administrative set out by the church and might include how tithes are collected, the format for Sabbath services and where the Feast days are observed.

Each January the Daily Bible Reading Program starts anew in Genesis. By the end of January we were reading about the Exodus and I was again struck by the command (rule) to the children of Israel about how to eat



Do you have house rules?

Photo by Anthony D. Wasilkoff

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the lamb on the night of Passover. They were to be prepared to leave in a hurry – with their shoes on their feet! Often when I get home from a day’s work, the first thing I want to do is take my shoes off. I wonder if any of them had tired, achy feet and got caught without shoes that evening?

In the early 1990s I heard a lot of people – especially women – complaining about having to clean their home in preparation for the Feast of Unleavened

Bread. They were thrilled when men told them they no longer needed to. But, did those men have the authority to negate those “house rules”? Not when they are God’s rules!

It can be daunting to clean for Unleavened Bread especially when a person is working outside the home full-time. It takes a lot of planning and hard work. And then, there is also the “rule” that requires us to eat unleavened bread. You either have to find some to buy or

have the ingredients (and recipe) available to make it.

As our children discovered, our house rules were not made on a whim, but were there so that we could have a safe and happy household. At times our rules were also a teaching tool. Likewise, God’s house rules are very instructive. There is much to learn by obeying them.

Happy cleaning and preparing for the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread! 🌍

Grief

By Jo-Anne Read

When my husband Patrick passed away, the Sabbath day was not the same anymore. My husband of fifty years was a pastor and as any pastor and pastor’s wife can attest to, the Sabbath is usually his busiest day. Unfortunately, the Sabbath was no longer a delight, and I found myself aimlessly wandering around the house asking myself “what do I do now?”

What came with feelings, was also a distinct depression coupled with feelings of guilt. God sanctified the Sabbath and set it apart from all of the other days. A time to rest, focus on our Creator God and a time to worship and fellowship with the brethren. We need to be spiritually fed and uplifted and encouraged to truly live God’s way of life.

It was a very difficult and lonely time for me. My daughter, Judy, and her husband, Rudy, in-

vited me to come to Cincinnati, Ohio, to stay with them for an extended period of time. Their invitation couldn’t have come at a better time. It was time to spend precious family moments with my beloved grandchildren, Edie and Harry, make new friends and get reacquainted with old ones. I played ball with Harry and walked

him to school. I eagerly looked forward to our walks. I had wonderful sleepovers with my granddaughter.

Usually every Sabbath morning my two grandchildren would come into my beautiful room and have lengthy talks about God and His way of life. There was much



There is a road to recovery from grief.

Photo by Liza Summer on Pexels.com

laughter and cherished special moments and quality time spent with my grandchildren, whom I adore.

The visit also provided necessary and quality time with my daughter. That time proved to be what we both needed for our healing and road to recovery from grief enabling us to move forward. Judy and I spent time together. There was laughter and there were tears. We encouraged one another. God knew, in his great wisdom, that we both needed that special time together as mother and daughter. My wonderful son-in-law and I spent time together talking about God and that gave me the spiritual conversation that I was desperately missing since Patrick's death.

The Sabbath was miraculously a delight to me again. Attending the Cincinnati East congregation was indeed a blessing! At home, living in a rural community, I had a long distance to travel to services, especially in inclement weather. The Cincinnati congregation lovingly and warmly welcomed me. Both brethren and ministers alike treated me with a special kindness.

The pastor's wife was also an aide in helping me to heal. After talking with Mrs. Myers about the loss of my husband and how I was feeling like I had lost my identity, she so willingly and graciously listened and included me in all aspects of the congregation's activities including asking me to help with food for the Leadership Weekend that takes place annually in Cincinnati. There I met and got acquainted or reacquainted with many friends. I learned a lot,

and I am sure the other attendees did as well.

During my time in Cincinnati, I was also able to spend precious time with Gary and Barb Antion. Mr. Antion was our pastor in Toronto many years ago. Being in Cincinnati for four months enabled the three of us to rekindle a most wonderful friendship. It was like we had never been away from each other.

I was also able to attend a get together with some of the ABC students. It was indeed a highlight of my visit, talking and getting to know those students.

The brethren in God's church have prayed for me and my family. They have sent heartfelt and encouraging words that have meant so much to me and have helped whole-heartedly with the grieving process. I appreciated the phone calls and Sabbath Greetings. I am eternally grateful to my family and my friends for taking the time to visit and share special moments with me as we reminisce and remember the wonderful times we had together when Patrick was alive.

One of my friends recently sent this quote to me, "grieving really never stops; it just gets better with time." I hope I can help someone in some way who has lost a loved one by sharing my circumstance with you. I thank God every day for the selfless acts of care, help, and kindness I received when my beloved Patrick passed away and, although I miss him terribly, I look forward to a glorious resurrection when I can see him again when there will be no more pain and no more sorrow. 🍁

The following is an excerpt from the booklet, *What Happens After Death?*

There are practical ways we can help friends and loved ones who are grieving. Here are a few:

Listen carefully. A heavy burden lies on the hearts and minds of those who are grieving. They need to know that they can grieve without being criticized or judged by anyone, especially someone with whom they share their deepest thoughts.

Show compassion. We show our compassion for others by recognizing their suffering and desiring to relieve them of it. We can be compassionate people by helping them with the tasks at hand. How do we know what to do? We can simply ask. We might help notify family and friends of the death. We might prepare the home to receive the many visitors who may arrive. We could organize the collection of food that others will bring.

Stay close after the funeral. After the funeral we should not immediately forget about those grieving. They will realize a great deal of support in the hours and days immediately after the death of their loved one, but will anyone be there to listen and be compassionate a week later, a month later, several months later? It's at times like those, when we go back to our routines, that those who are grieving remember that their loved one isn't in their routine any longer.

Those are the times the grieving most need our support. 🍁

December National Council Meeting

By Edwin van Pelt

The National Council held the last meeting of the calendar year on December 19, 2022. The meeting was via videoconference with all Council members present along with several guests.

After the opening prayer, the minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed and approved with a few edits. Then Jim Lucas, Chair of the Governance Committee, read the National Council Code of Ethics.

Ministerial Services Team Coordinator, Rainer Salomaa, was invited to give a report on what the Team has been working on over the past few months. Feast of Tabernacles plans for 2023 were discussed; contracts have been signed for two Feast sites. A Ministerial Conference, to be held at or in the vicinity of the National Office, is being planned for mid-June 2023 following the Council meetings. Two guests from the United States have been invited to speak at the Conference. The Team will work on a survey to help determine the conditions and the needs of the congregations across Canada.

Paul Wasilkoff, a member of the Council of Elders, had also been invited to give a report on the COE meetings held earlier in the month. Of particular note were the subjects of purchasing church buildings, a website redesign update, a new logo and edits to the Hebrew Calendar

paper. “Light of Hope” is a new service for members of the United Church of God who are struggling with addictions or mental health issues. (Reports with more details of these items can be found on the Council of Elders website.)

Director of Operations Anthony Wasilkoff followed with an update from the National Office. We currently have over 18,000 *Beyond Today* magazine subscribers. Over 2.4 million copies of the *Good News/Beyond Today* magazines have been distributed. There are over 1,100 current subscribers to *Pour L’Avenir* magazine in Canada. The most popular booklets are prophecy-themed. Several staff members were registered for the annual Church and Charity Law webinar that takes place each November. The 2023 National Office Planning meeting occurred earlier in December when the plans for the office were laid out for the coming year. The annual employee reviews will once again take place in January.

Dennis O’Neill gave an update on the most recent work of the Media Team. A new member who brings the perspective of a younger person was added to the Team. “Think short” is one of the guiding principles of the Team; short articles, sentences and words. A large number of articles from the Profiles of Faith series have been rewritten. Other concepts the Team is working on include a Bible word

of the week and God’s creature of the month.

Anthony Wasilkoff then presented the 2023-2024 Operations Plan to the Council. It is essentially the same as the 2022-2023 Plan. One amendment to include congregational surveys was made. The Council approved the amended Plan to be sent to the National Conference for ratification.

* 3. Please rate your satisfaction in the following categories.

	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied
Overall pastoral care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Doctrinal integrity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sensitivity of the elder(s) to your concerns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Helpfulness of the elder(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visiting by the elder(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall effectiveness of the sermons	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Screenshot of the Survey
Image by UCG-Canada

Treasurer Bill Dimovski presented the 2023-2024 Budget. Some changes were made from the current Budget to reflect economic conditions. With COVID-related travel restrictions being lifted, pastors are able to visit their congregations more frequently in person. One item was added to the Budget Notes; it was included in the Budget itself. The Budget and amended Notes were unanimously approved to be sent to the National Conference for ratification.

The last item of business was to approve Council meeting dates for 2023. March 20, June 8-9, September 10 and December 18 were all approved. 🍁

2022 Audit

For many people, budgeting is a dreaded task. But it is one that is very important for household finances. For the church, budgeting is equally important. Additionally, since a charity's income comes from money freely given, it is important to ensure that those funds are appropriately used. Thus, each year the United Church of God – Canada hires an outside firm to audit the books according to established and acceptable account-

ing standards. This report is then sent to the National Conference for their approval.

When United Church of God - Canada began, a determination was made to be transparent. Even though anyone can go online to check on any charity's finances, the church wrote the Bylaws to require that the annual audit of the church's finances be published and made available to all

congregations of UCG-Canada. Originally hard copies were made available for all congregations. More recently, the report is published in the *United News Canada*. However, if you are a person who enjoys carefully going through financial statements and would like to see the complete printed version of the report, please contact your local pastor who would be able to obtain a copy for you to see. 🌐

UNITED CHURCH OF GOD - CANADA Statement of Operations and Changes in Fund Balances

For the year Ended March 31st, 2022

	Operating Fund	Festival Fund	Assistance Fund	Building Fund	Other Funds	2022	2021
Revenue							
Tithes and offerings	\$ 1,644,778	\$ 32,283	\$ 20,549	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,697,610	\$ 1,765,646
Interest income	1,964	-	-	-	-	1,964	3,925
Government assistance - (Note 6)	-	-	-	-	-	-	29,517
	<u>1,646,742</u>	<u>32,283</u>	<u>20,549</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,699,574</u>	<u>1,799,088</u>
Expenditure							
Salaries and benefits	977,535	-	-	-	-	977,535	918,725
Travel	67,105	-	-	-	-	67,105	41,405
Festival costs	-	22,166	-	-	-	22,166	30,465
National conferences	-	-	-	-	-	-	211
Office and general	106,009	-	-	-	-	106,009	155,621
Insurance	25,239	-	-	-	-	25,239	22,147
Telephone	5,755	-	-	-	-	5,755	7,458
Advertising	151,305	-	-	-	-	151,305	153,123
Professional fees	13,908	-	-	-	-	13,908	10,134
Hall rentals	111,506	-	-	-	-	111,506	92,369
Church supplies	21,843	-	-	-	-	21,843	13,961
Tape duplication	-	-	-	-	-	-	265
Rent	48,551	-	-	-	-	48,551	46,542
Equipment rental	13,487	-	-	-	-	13,487	14,871
Assistance	-	-	4,560	-	-	4,560	9,233
Bank and interest charges	2,943	-	-	-	-	2,943	1,609
Exchange loss	(123)	-	-	-	-	(123)	2,098
Amortization - (Notes 2(b) and 3)	4,341	-	-	-	-	4,341	4,497
	<u>1,549,404</u>	<u>22,166</u>	<u>4,560</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,576,130</u>	<u>1,524,734</u>
Revenue over Expenditure for the Year	97,338	10,117	15,989	-	-	123,444	274,354
Fund balance at beginning of year	1,690,724	25,059	71,568	38,607	1,898	1,827,856	1,553,502
Fund Balance at End of Year	<u>\$ 1,788,062</u>	<u>\$ 35,176</u>	<u>\$ 87,557</u>	<u>\$ 38,607</u>	<u>\$ 1,898</u>	<u>\$ 1,951,300</u>	<u>\$ 1,827,856</u>

UNITED CHURCH OF GOD - CANADA

Statement of Financial Position

As at March 31st, 2022

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Assets		
Current Assets	\$ 1,593,514	\$ 1,458,262
Cash and cash equivalents	305,210	306,003
Term deposit	654	17,376
Amounts receivable	33,938	18,621
Harmonized sales tax recoverable	5,799	7,554
Supplies inventory	<u>38,633</u>	<u>35,859</u>
Prepaid expenses and deposits	1,977,748	1,843,675
	<u>13,714</u>	<u>16,339</u>
Capital Assets - (Note 3)	\$ 1,991,462	\$ 1,860,014
Liabilities and Fund Balance		
Current Liabilities	\$ 40,162	\$ 32,158
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	<u>40,162</u>	<u>32,158</u>
Total Liabilities	1,951,300	1,827,856
Fund Balance	\$ 1,991,462	\$ 1,860,014

Statement of Cash Flows

For the year Ended March 31st, 2022

	<u>2022</u>	<u>2021</u>
Cash Provided By		
(a) Operating activities	\$ 136,175	\$ 261,145
(b) Investing activities	(923)	(111,607)
Increase in Cash	<u>135,252</u>	<u>149,538</u>
Cash, beginning of year	<u>1,458,262</u>	<u>1,308,724</u>
Cash, End of Year	\$ 1,593,514	\$ 1,458,262
(a) Operating Activities		
Excess of revenues over expenses	\$ 123,444	\$ 274,354
Amortization of capital assets	4,341	4,497
Change in non-cash working capital	8,390	(17,706)
Cash from operations	<u>\$ 136,175</u>	<u>\$ 261,145</u>
(b) Investing Activities		
Proceeds from sale of (purchase of) investments	\$ 793	\$ (106,003)
Purchase of other assets	(1,716)	(5,604)
	<u>\$ (923)</u>	<u>\$ (111,607)</u>

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Members of United Church of God - Canada:

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of United Church of God - Canada (the Organization), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31st, 2022, and the statements of operations and changes in fund balances, and changes in cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Organization as at March 31, 2022, and the results of its operations changes in fund balances, and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Accounting Standards for Not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO).

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Organization in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with ASNPO, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing Organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Organization's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Organization's to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

July 18th, 2022
North York, Ontario



CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS
(Licensed Public Accountants)

News From Across Canada

Edmonton Social

It has been an annual tradition for many years for the Edmonton congregation and brethren from around Alberta and British Columbia, to get together in December for a barbeque and outdoor winter fun social. After a two-year break due to the COVID pandemic, the Davis family were once again able to host this event.

Arriving around noon, 66 people gathered at Owen and Susan's home. Many headed down to the lake located at the back of the property for ice skating and hockey. Temperatures were mild after an extreme cold snap and the opportunity to be outdoors was appreciated. Others gathered indoors to play games and fellowship. Meanwhile, the barbeque crew was busy grilling the delicious meat selections for dinner - moose, venison, bison and lamb.

As the sun went down, the skaters returned and dinner was served. Desserts, side dishes, appetizers

and salads were brought in potluck style, while the grillers carved up the wild meat. There was a tremendous amount of food and selection!

After dinner, people had a chance to relax and fellowship with one another. The children and teens gathered in the family room to play with the toys, air hockey table and group games.

It was wonderful to be able to fellowship and enjoy some fun in the winter season! God willing, the tradition will continue next year!

Susan Davis

Vancouver Farewell

Vancouver, given its beauty and temperate climate, is a popular location for visitors. Certainly, Australian brethren think so. Most recently, we had the pleasure of welcoming an Australian couple Orian and Maddison Bastian. They arrived in June, 2022, and immediately began attending in the Surrey and Abbots-

ford locations. We were delighted!

The young Australian couple planned to spend a year or two working here in the greater Vancouver area. While here they could explore and sightsee in this scenic part of the world. While they did so, it seems God had other plans for shortening the visit. In May, 2022, Maddison found she was with child -- make that two! She was expecting twins with an estimated time of arrival of late in January 2023! Wonderful!

Orian and Maddison thus decided to return home to Melbourne in late November. We gave them a special Sabbath send off with our best wishes, while enjoying a farewell meal at a local restaurant. There was warm fellowship, good conversation and lots of joy! Though we will miss them, we wish Orian and Maddison all the best in their future endeavors. Farewell mates!

Dale Craniford

Salva Birth Announcement

Introducing Remington Maverick Salva, who was born on January 18, 2023, at 1:37 p.m. at the Winchester District Memorial Hospital in Winchester, Ontario. Remington weighed in at a tiny six pounds, two ounces and was 19 inches long from head to his cute tip toes. His parents, Anthony and Heidi Salva are overjoyed with this new great blessing from God and have fallen in love with their son in a way that they have never known.

The Salva family reside in Kemptville, Ontario, and attend



Edmonton brethren gathering indoors for a BBQ potluck

Photo provided by Angelina Chrestenson



Remington Salva
Photo provided by Heidi Salva

the Ottawa congregation. Anthony was born in Massachusetts and moved to Canada after marrying Heidi in 2019. It has truly taken a village of prayers to bring Remington into this world.

Heidi Salva

Susan Wells Obituary

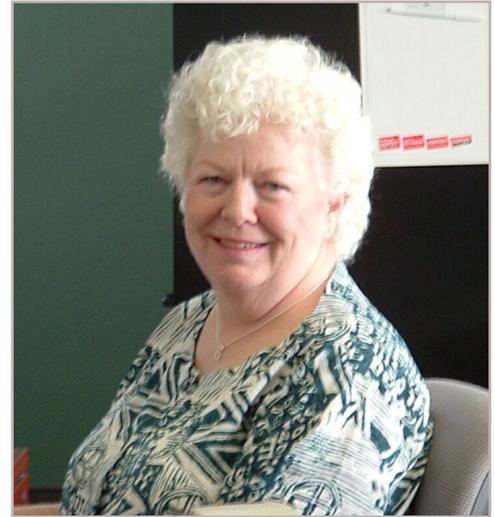
Patricia Susan Wells passed away peacefully at the age of 77 in Brampton Civic Hospital, with her daughter and granddaughter by her side, following a three-year battle with Pulmonary Fibrosis.

Born in Toronto in 1945 to Jean Waddell and Frances Wells, as a child, she enjoyed summers spent with cousins, aunts and her beloved grandmother in Port Elgin and Warton, Ontario.

After raising her two children in North York, she moved to Lakefield, Ontario, where she was active in the arts, learning to paint in watercolours. She was inspired by her natural surroundings and her paintings earned her awards.

Patricia loved spending time with her granddaughter, Cyeira, decorating her apartment, sharing photos of nature, thrifting, and connecting with friends and family. Friends on social media could count on a Sabbath message every Friday, without fail, and it was her faith in God and the promise of the resurrection that comforted her to the end.

She was known for her positive outlook, humour and courage, even as she struggled with her disease. Patricia leaves her daughter Wendy, son Michael (and wife Marilyn), her grandchildren Cyeira, Eleanna and



Susan Wells
Photo provided by United News Canada

Evan, as well as other family members and many friends, including her close friend, Della. Her memory will continue to live on in the hearts of those who loved her.

Patricia, fondly known as Susan, attended the UCG Toronto congregation and volunteered at the Canadian National Office for about twelve years. Thus, many from across Canada may have spoken to her when calling the office.

Wendy Greene

“Giver” from page 12.

hard to say “no” to anyone in need or seemingly in need. But, we know that a tithe and some offerings are holy to God and need to go to His work even when there are many hands reaching out and we are limited in what we can do.

The solution is that our instruction from Christ and the Father is to preach the gospel and live according to His word. We send our tithes and offerings to where the Truth is preached. From that point onward, Almighty God is in charge. Our

work is done once we have diligently tried to do what is pleasing to God – and then He takes over. The use of the monies fall under His judgment and anyone being wicked will come under His hand. God watches over people and especially His people. He does not ask for that which we do not have and He sees if our gifts are from the heart and according to our ability. Those areas are in our hands and reflect our love for God and mankind. Jesus gave His life as a sacrifice. His sacrifice is still directly according to the command of God. We are to follow His example and in the end God completes the work He

has begun. We are blessed to be part of that work.

I can say that after over 60 years of giving tithes and offerings using discretion, ability and at times prayers when my income was meager or a dilemma appeared – I and my family have never been hungry, homeless or without any of the needs of life. We have been blessed and the greatest blessings are still to come. There is a great lesson to be learned, but for eternity we are to be wise, generous givers – children of the Great Giver. 🍁

God: The Great Giver

By Robert Berendt

I have studied the Bible most of my life. However, it was not until I was about 25 years old that suddenly the words began to take on a huge meaning. I began to learn that Almighty God is almighty in every way. Job 38 and 39 along with other Scriptures inform us that He created the universe and all that is in it. I realized that the air I breathe is His and that every atom in my body and my heart that pumps blood is from Him. It became clear to me that humans are powerless, and we depend on His graciousness for everything. That makes Almighty God the great Giver with no equal. Scriptures also tell us that He so loved the world (humans and all His creation) that He gave His only begotten Son with the hope that we could become a godly offspring. He offers eternal life to all who learn to love and obey Him (Romans 6:23).

God's love is shown through His giving. He has created humans in such a way that we can learn to be givers as He is. Our learning begins when we are part of a family and learn to love our parents and siblings. We love our parents and others because they first loved us. We are able to give to others through our conduct, time and care for them and through sharing this great hope of eternal life. We know that we cannot give that which we do not have – nor can we give if we are destitute ourselves.

God set up a way that humans could pass the good news on to others. God had given laws to Adam and Eve. It is clear that Abraham knew about tithing. He also was bless-

ed for obeying God and was very wealthy. Thus, humans were given the opportunity to give a tithe plus an offering even in Abraham's day. Later the nation of Israel was given precise instructions about tithing.



Many hands reaching out
photo by Hoàng Tiến Việt on pexels.com

God could not have called me at a worse time to teach me about tithing. I was a university student, married with two children and had a very small income. But I did set about trying to figure out how to give tithes and offerings. My solution was from the grocery money, and it was up to my wife who was baptized to manage that. I do not know how she did it, but we were able to do what we knew was asked and support the work of the Worldwide Church of God, which was the only church I knew preaching the Word clearly. I learned that my task was to give tithes and offerings to preach the Good News and it was up to God to control what was done with the funds. I saw that Israel was told that tithes and offerings were holy and to be used to support the Temple and go to the Feasts.

For all thinking people, a dilemma occurs when they see corruption, greed, vanity and pride enter into the church. Jesus condemned the priests and the manner in which the temple became what God never intended. Jesus also complimented the woman who gave an offering by taking food from her table (Mark 12:42-44).

King David gave mightily to the building of the temple in Jerusalem (I Chronicles 28:9-29). Little did King David know that within 30 years the temple to which he so strongly donated his offerings would be corrupted and rejected by God. But David's giving was still right and honoured by God – just as yours and mine are.

For the last almost 30 years, I have given tithes and offerings to the United Church of God. I loved the way UCG began with over 400 ordained elders of God affirming their loyalty to the Word of God and to serving His people. I realized the people of God are His temple and tithes and offerings are needed to support that structure and preach the gospel (2 Corinthians 6:16-18). The goal must always be to preach the Word and live according to His laws and commandments.

There will always be concerns from time to time in every organization run by humans. There will be false ministers and false members. God does teach us to use wisdom, discretion and self-discipline as we walk in Jesus' footsteps. We sometimes have a heart that finds it

See "Giver" on page 11.

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