



# United News Canada

NEWS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF GOD - CANADA

Vol. 27, No. 3

<https://unc.ucg.ca>

Winter 2023

## Reach Out And Touch Someone At the Feast

*By Anthony Wasilkoff*

Recently Canadian news sources have reported that many Canadian families have decided to drastically change their vacation plans for 2023. What was the reason? You guessed it! The upward-spiraling costs of inflation. More and more families have opted to have a staycation this year to manage the beleaguered household budget.

God has spelled out a financial plan in His Word for keeping His annual festivals. The Church of God has referred to this as the festival tithe. The principle for this important understanding is found in Deuteronomy 14:22-27. Here we read, "...take the money in your hand and go to the place which the Lord your God chooses. And you shall spend that money for whatsoever your heart desires ...."

The intent is that servants of God save a second tithe during the course of the year so that they have funds available to observe each of the festivals, especially the Feast of Tabernacles. Promoters and marketers in the world use the adage "go now – pay later." However, God prescribes the strategy of "save now – spend later." We all understand from personal experience that God's way always works best.

This year we know that anyone on a fixed income will be having a

harder time than usual making ends meet. This applies to covering the costs of keeping the Feast of Tabernacles. For reasons such as this, the United Church of God has long had accounts such as the Festival Fund and also the Families Helping Families fund. It has been God's purpose all along to be sure that no one is forgotten nor left behind. In this regard we read 2 Corinthians 8:15 which states, "As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing left over; and he that had gathered little had no lack." What a meaningful Scripture!



Reaching Out

*Image by Jackson David on Unsplash*

Along these lines we find further instructions in Nehemiah 8:10, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." In other words, it is the duty of those with more resources to reach out to fellow believers who have fewer resources. This can be done through the funds identified in the previous

paragraph and it can also be done more directly in our local areas.

Some years ago at the Feast of Tabernacles in Penticton, a mysterious Mr. Hunter was known to make a reservation at a local restaurant for a group of six to 12 people. He then enlisted two helpers to search out widows and elderly at the festival site. The individuals would be picked up by taxi for the restaurant and returned after the meal. Upon arrival the ladies had corsages waiting for them on their plates. They could order anything on the menu and the bill was paid by the anonymous Mr. Hunter. Many of the people at the table had not met each other before. It was a high point as they went home having made new friends and new memories. The identity of the elusive Mr. Hunter was known only to a few!

Although most of us cannot do what Mr. Hunter used to do, we can still reach out to others and help them have a more memorable Feast by practicing the way of give as much as our creativity and respective circumstances will allow. 🌍

### In this Issue:

Prepare for the Feast.....	2
Meeting Royalty.....	3
National Council Meeting.....	4
Ministerial Meeting.....	5
Rubies Are Valuable.....	7
News From Across Canada.....	8
A Listening Heart.....	12

# Prepare For The Feast

By Sandy Brdar Humphreys

Today I was caught without my helmet securely on and my shield loosely at my side. Arrows as thick as tree trunks came hurtling at me - and I wasn't prepared. Blows struck my heart, my back ached and tears rippled down my cheeks. I felt helpless!

Would it shock you to know that God's armour in Ephesians 6:13 was at the forefront of my mind as I was in the beginning stages of planning a time of excitement and celebrating good times? It was *spring*, the time to plan for the Feast, so why all these hardships endlessly coming at me from all directions?

If you're like me, I'm thinking of ten different things as I'm doing three things at once while the phone is ringing, spouse is talking, dog is barking, smartphone dinging and that's just at home! The work office has an extra level of distraction. Was it any wonder that planning for the Feast quickly became a part of the To Do list, my daily activity, with only drifting thoughts of "God willing" (James 4:15) in the back

of my mind?

Before I get ahead of myself here, let me explain. I am always excited about travelling, and I love the Feast! New friends, old friends, no work (hopefully) a chance to serve in a way I can't at home (I'm a newbie Usherette which I've come to love - especially when I'm at a Feast where I may not know anyone!). The fact that Fall 2023 seemingly has no sign of restriction is a miracle in itself coming from where we were, even from last year, so believe me - thankfulness is what I wrap myself up in, even while still shivering from what I still have to ac-



Preparing A List

Photo by Vlada Karpovich at pexels.com

complish before that time comes.

Fast forward to preparation:

- Determine first, second, third choice - check.
- Register for the Feast - check.
- Choose all-inclusive or hotel. Make a pros and con list - check.
- Send messages, texts and emails asking "are you in?" Check.

I look at the calendar. When did March become Canada Day?! What do flights cost?

What about you? What do you get caught up in? For me it's organizing and compartmentalizing thought. For others, it's balancing money, and for some, it is what is possible based on health concerns and other factors.

Here lies the most important detail of pre-Feast planning: separating our way of doing things from God's way.

Philippians 4:6 teaches us to put all anxious care into God's hands, and Matthew 19:26 says that with God everything is possi-

## United News - Canada

**Managing Editor:** Anthony Wasilkoff

**Editorial Reviewers:** Kevin Ford, Jean Jantzen, David Palmer, Denise Ward, Linda Wasilkoff and Dale van Zant

**Layout:** Paul Wasilkoff

**National Council:** Charles Desgrosseillers, Larry DeLong, Michael Erickson, Jim Lucas, Dennis O'Neill, Cindy Ridi, Sheldon Sitter, Lloyd Teetaert and An-

thony Wasilkoff

United News - Canada is automatically sent to all members of The United Church of God - Canada and is free to all who request it.

Your subscription is provided by the voluntary contributions of members and co-workers of The United Church of God - Canada.

Donations to help share our free publications are gratefully accepted and

are tax-deductible where applicable by law.

UCG - Canada  
P.O. Box 144, Station D  
Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1  
www.ucg.ca



Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited.

Canada Post Publications Agreement #1487159. © 2023

ble. Long before that, we were already preparing as Deuteronomy 14:22 reminds us to save ten percent, starting from the previous year - a blessing in learning how to plan ahead. (Don't forget, for financially harder years there's

a Feast fund supported by members. Active as an ant—sluggards don't get stars here! Proverbs 4:6-11)

It's all these haphazard steps along the way of what we have to

do, or let go of, that highlights God's way of perfect planning. All we have to do is plan ahead, register, show up and then participate once we are there.

Happy Feast! 🍷

## Meeting Royalty

*By Linda Wasilkoff*

It was during the 1992 Feast of Tabernacles held in Jordan that church members were given the special privilege of visiting the royal palace with an opportunity to meet the Queen of Jordan. The setting was a very hot day. Our bus made its way through the streets of Amman, Jordan's capitol, passing children playing in the dirt along the side of the road. There was hardly a blade of grass to be seen anywhere and very little else that was green. During that week we had the opportunity to tour many interesting and historical sites in the country, but we also saw very real poverty. Now we were about to experience the opposite.

Whenever one is about to meet a member of a royal family, there is protocol to be learned and followed. Feast attendees were schooled in the required protocols and conduct before the scheduled meeting. Though the temperatures were high and the meeting would be outside, we all dressed in our best Sabbath wear: ties and suit coats for men; dresses (no bare shoulders) and heels for women. When you meet someone important you

are expected to be appropriately attired for the occasion regardless of the temperature.

Arriving at the palace, it was immediately apparent that this was a special location. Suddenly a lawn appeared – in a region where water is scarce! There were a few shade trees for us to stand under as we lined up to go one-by-one to meet the Queen



Meeting A Queen  
Photo provided by Aaron Dean

and give a short greeting before moving on.

Through the years since that memorable event, I've gleaned some important principles from that day that can be applied to my Christian life. There were protocols to follow to be allowed

to come before royalty just as we have guidelines to follow in our Christian life. We also have guidelines for attending the Feast, which can be found in the Feast brochure each year. These guidelines include such things as proper attire, turning off cell phones during services and other instructions meant to make services more meaningful for all.

Before meeting a royal, you are instructed on how to correctly address the individual to show proper respect for the office. Likewise, the model prayer includes "hallowed be thy name" meaning that God's very name is holy – to be shown proper respect and reverence. Anything that includes His name should be treated thus.

When visiting the Queen, we had to dress in our best and also modestly. Likewise, going to church, we should also dress for a worship service to show proper respect for where we are, why we are there and what we are doing.

When we walked onto the palace grounds, it was obvious by contrast to outside the walls that it was a special location.



When we arrive at the Feast site, shouldn't we have the same recognition? It should be a place where we show respect because we believe that God has placed His (holy) name upon that site. We feel a difference when we are there and, since it is holy, our actions should reflect that.

Another important lesson I gleaned from meeting the Queen of Jordan all those many years ago is that it requires a special invitation and appointment to come before human royalty. We have been given an invitation to be at God's Feast of Tabernacles. We, along with

others of like mind, have an invitation for a special meeting called the Feast of Tabernacles. It is a privilege that surpasses meeting with any human Royal! Our conduct, demeanour, attire and thoughts should reflect that realization. 🌍

## National Council Meeting

By Edwin van Pelt

For the first time in four years, the National Council met in person at the National Office on June 8 and 9. All members of the National Council were present along with several guests.

The meetings began on Thursday, June 8, with prayer followed by opening comments from the National Council Chairman, Lloyd Teetaert. The minutes from the March meeting were then approved.

Joining the meeting via Zoom, Council of Elders (COE) member Paul Wasilkoff gave a report on the most recent General Conference of Elders (GCE) meetings and the COE meetings that followed. He noted that at the GCE meeting Rainer and Claudia Salomaa were recognized for 50 years of service in the ministry. Among the many items discussed at the COE meetings was the Hebrew Calendar Study Paper. The final appendix was approved and the entire paper including appendices is now available on the [ucg.org](http://ucg.org) website.



Lloyd and Helen Teetaert

Photo by UCGIA

Also joining the National Council meetings via Zoom, Ministerial Services Team Coordinator Rainer Salomaa gave an update. He noted there were a number of elders from Canada who were able to attend the GCE meetings this year during which Larry and Maureen DeLong were recognized for 25 years of service in the ministry. Canada now has three Regional Pastors: Anthony Wasilkoff (Ontario and east), Larry DeLong (Manitoba and Saskatchewan) and Rainer Salomaa (Alberta and British Columbia). The city of Abbotsford was chosen as the location for the Feast of Tabernacles site in British Columbia.

Director of Operations, Anthony Wasilkoff provided the

Council with a National Office Update in the form of a Power-Point presentation. The presentation showed the number of members, coworkers and donors in Canada along with charts indicating the number of *Beyond Today* and *Pour L'Avenir* magazine subscribers in each province and territory. Information was provided on the cities with the highest number of *Beyond Today* magazine subscribers. Nearly 2.5 million copies of *The Good News* and *Beyond Today* magazines have been distributed across Canada to date. If laid side-by-side, the line of magazines would stretch almost 500 kilometres. Information about the *Beyond Today* television program was presented. In Canada the program just started its 19th year on the air.

Treasurer Bill Dimovski provided a financial update to the Council. He reported that the lease for the mailing equipment expires in January 2024. The annual audit is underway with some preliminary work being done prior to the auditor visiting the National Office in early July. The audit should be com-

pleted in August. The cost of renting halls is increasing dramatically in some areas. Some renters are now requesting triple the amount they were asking prior to COVID.

Dennis O'Neill gave the Media Team update. The team is focusing on two areas: content and technology. Work continues on expanding the biblical characters of faith series. Links for more information are included in each short article. Technology focuses on the means for the media strategies.

Michael Erickson provided a Compliancy Task Force update. New and updated policies were discussed by the Council and subsequently approved.

Discussion turned to the National Council committees and their roles. After review, it was determined that each committee

would continue with their mandates and the work assigned to them by the National Council Chairman.

Work continues on the procedure to replace the Director of Operations in Canada when he retires. Jim Lucas presented an updated procedure that is based on the replacement of the President of the United Church of God – an International Association.

The meetings on Friday, June 9, focused on Committee reports. Charles Desgrosseilliers, Strategic Planning and Finance Committee Chair, noted that the 2024-2025 Strategic Plan will be presented to the National Council in September. He also reviewed the Investment Policy with the Council.

Governance, Ethics and Pastoral Committee Chair, Jim Lu-

cas presented an update for one policy and a new policy. After discussion the policies were approved.

Compensation Committee Chair, Cindy Ridi presented an updated list of salary ranges and job titles. The committee is composed of National Council members who are not employed by the United Church of God – Canada. A new policy was also presented to the Council. After discussion, the revised list of salary ranges and job titles and the new policy were approved.

All the new and updated policies are available on the Canadian ministerial website.

The rest of Friday morning was an informal meeting. After a lunch break some items of new business were brought to the Council. The meetings concluded Friday afternoon. 🍷

## Ministerial Conference

*By Sharon Descoteaux*

Ministers and their wives from all across Canada came together for the 2023 conference with special guests from Cincinnati, Mr. and Mrs. Rick Shabi and Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Dean. It was an extra special time for renewing old acquaintances and making new ones as it was the first time in four years that we had all been able to get together in person because of the COVID-19 restrictions.

Gary Antion as well as a few other ministers and wives were unable to be with us because of

health or other issues. Cards of encouragement were signed by all and sent to them to let them know they were being thought of and missed.



Rick & Deborah Shabi

*Photo by UCGIA*

This year's get together started out with ministers and their wives who arrived on Friday afternoon of June 9, enjoying an invitation to the Wasilkoffs' home for a delicious evening barbeque and quality fellowship time in their back yard. Even the weather co-operated!

After the meal we had the added treat of being able to watch the Wasilkoffs' lovely evening primroses open before our very eyes to welcome and usher in the Sabbath.

For Sabbath services we

heard two split sermons. Aaron Dean gave a message on, "Fear is a Reaction, Courage is a Choice" and Richard Shabi gave a message about repenting and placing our hope in God—turning away from this world and turning to God where there is light, purpose, hope and eternity. Some elders travelled to Kitchener and others to Hamilton to serve the brethren in those areas.

After our spiritual meal we shared a wonderful supper put on by the ladies of the Toronto church who had even taken the time to make lovely centerpieces for each of the tables.

After supper the elders and their wives returned to the church hall from 5:15 – 8:00 where Lloyd Teetaert, as Chairman of the National Council, spoke about the importance of a good leader to not surround himself with yes people but with those whose various backgrounds and experience in specific areas can be beneficial to him.



Aaron & Michelle Dean

*Photo by UCGIA*

Aaron Dean gave the second presentation and explained the timeline of how long the Israelites were in Egypt. The third and last presentation of the evening was by Rick Shabi who gave an overview of the work

and how we are to be building God's Temple.



Gathering at the Wasilkoff's house.

*Photo by Sharon Descoteaux*

On Sunday, the first presentation was by Rainer Salomaa. He addressed some of the challenges that come from working in isolation.

Anthony Wasilkoff gave the second presentation on "Grief or Celebration – Which?" It covered how to cope with and help others to cope with the various losses in life. We sorrow but not as those who have no hope (1 Thessalonians 4:9, 13-18).

In the third presentation Aaron Dean, who was filling in for Gary Antion, explained how working for God and the Church puts us in unique and interesting situations. We need to be ready with God's Truth but not push anyone.

After lunch Michael Erickson gave a presentation on the importance for all the elders to familiarize themselves with Church Policies and Bylaws and how non-compliance with these documents can be a risk for the church.

For the second presentation, Wayne Ward spoke on "Leadership Under Pressure/Eldership

Under Pressure." He emphasized the need to be "purpose driven but pressure sensitive."

For the third and last presentation of the conference, Rick Shabi spoke on the importance of unity in the Church. He emphasized:

1. Messages must be unified and based solely on God's Truth.
2. There is no room for politics.
3. Conflicts must be resolved quickly.
4. Don't compromise; stick to the Word of God diligently, earnestly, and carefully.

On Sunday evening there was a farewell supper at the National Office for those staying over Sunday night.



One of the tables on Sunday evening.

*Photo by Sharon Descoteaux*

Attendees came away from the conference feeling well fed spiritually, refreshed and with a renewed sense of camaraderie. Each feeling better equipped and ready to return to their various church areas to continue striving to do God's work and serve the brethren to the best of their ability and looking forward to the next Ministerial Conference in 2025. 🍁



# Rubies Are Valuable

by Robert Berendt

In ancient times, rubies were known as “the king of gems.” Although the average size of a ruby is a little smaller than other gemstones, their red aura makes them appear bigger than they are. They are also the rarest of all gemstones and command extremely high prices. Today, rubies have numerous applications: as styluses in turntables, tiny bearings in expensive wristwatches, and in rod form, they form a crucial component of the laser’s core. When something is described as having the value of a ruby, that item is esteemed to be of exceedingly high value.

The book of Job is fascinating because of the interaction between Job and God. Job made some statements that God said are correct (Job 42:7). In his comments about wisdom, Job describes precious stones that are formed deep under the ground. He states that bread comes from the earth, but from deep within the earth we find the source of sapphires, gold, coral and quartz and rubies (Job 28:5-19). Job stated that wisdom had a far greater value than any gem that could be found. He also states that there is no place where a person can find wisdom in the way precious gems can be found. Only God understands the way to wisdom and where its place is. Job’s conclusion is that the fear of God is wisdom (Job 28:28). Wisdom is a gift God gives.

In the book of Proverbs we read that wisdom cries out to mankind. Wisdom is likened to a person who cries out (Proverbs 8:1). There is nothing that can match the value

of wisdom and it is better than rubies (verse 11). Furthermore, wisdom promises that “those who seek me diligently will find me” (verse 17). The chapter further says those who keep the way of wisdom are blessed. It is obvious that knowledge, understanding and their application are the most valuable asset we can ever have.



A Valuable Ruby

Photo by Girl with red hat on Unsplash.com

There may be a number of things that could be likened to rubies in value. One of them is a virtuous wife (Proverbs 31:10). She is described as a wife whose value is placed far above that of rubies. Obviously she would possess wisdom. King Solomon had a thousand wives and concubines from various lands and various stations in life and he commented that he could not find a single woman among them who could be considered virtuous (Ecclesiastes 7:28). His wives of various religious beliefs finally led Solomon into sin. Certainly Solomon’s unions were made for the sake of political gain, power, and position.

Things of great value can be considered to be like rubies. Yet the single great goal that God has set before men is to receive the gift of eternal life and dwell in the King-

dom of God. Jesus spoke about that when He discussed the kingdom of heaven. He said it could be likened to finding a pearl of great price - we could say priceless. It was lying in a field, so a wise man bought the field with all he had (Matthew 13:45-46). That is like finding a ruby. This teaching of Jesus also includes the finding and use of wisdom. We cannot separate the wisdom from God and its use from the result or outcome, which is to be an eternal member of the family of God, a brother to Christ and a co-heir of all that has been created (Romans 8:17, 29). Part of the reason rubies are valuable is that it takes a lot of hard work to find them because they are rare and buried deep in the earth.

Gold, silver and gems are considered to be items of great value and humans have put great effort into accumulating them. Life is temporary and, although it is not a sin to have assets and wealth, if we put that above the most important item - eternal life - then we have nothing. All the rubies of the world will not extend our life. Recognizing the greatest ruby or pearl of all and being willing to put our efforts into getting and keeping that priceless asset is where true value and riches lies.

We can list items that are more valuable than gold or rubies. The most valuable things in life are not things that can be bought with gold or rubies. They are the intangibles that we cannot dig from the ground. They are easily accessible to those who seek first the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33).

# News From Across Canada

## Maritime Spring Holy Days

This year several Maritime members were blessed with the opportunity to gather together in a large home in Bouctouche, New Brunswick, for the spring Holy Days. This allowed us to grow closer as a spiritual family through extended fellowship. Brethren came from as far away as Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. There was a spirit of unity, peace and camaraderie. It was like a mini-Feast for us. We all live between two to four hours distance from other brethren and so had not been together like this for a long time.

Nine members observed the Passover with one member keeping her very first Passover. It was especially memorable for her to be able to keep it with other brethren since she is so isolated from others.



Maritime Brethren

*Photo provided by Sheryl Harrison*

We then celebrated a special evening on the Night to be Much Observed with nine adults and two children.

On the First Day of Unleavened Bread we had a total of 15, with four surprise guests, which was a lovely addition to our small

intimate group. We connected with Montreal services for the Holy Day along with 10 other brethren from the Maritimes that were unable to join us in person.

The brethren commented how much it meant to be able to gather together for these days. Because they are so isolated, they have been keeping them on their own for many years. We hope to carry on this tradition of gathering together.

Brethren from the Maritimes wish to express gratitude for the support and care shown to us. It was most beneficial for the brethren to have extended fellowship time and have a true sense of family.

*Michelle Vautour*

## Sylvan Lake WEW

We had 46 women and several young ladies from across Canada attend Alberta's second Women's Enrichment Weekend held on April 21-23. This year, the event was in Sylvan Lake, Alberta, and was a wonderful weekend full of laughter, fellowship and bonding with thought-provoking and enriching discussions.

The theme of the weekend was "Head & Shoulders, Knees & Toes – effectively working in the Body" from Ephesians 4:15-16.

We started the weekend with a homemade dinner and dessert reception followed by the welcome by Evelyn Davis. We then discussed how our theme scripture

lays out how we are to accomplish Ephesians 4:15-16. Following this was a fun activity, led by Susan Davis, based on being joined and knit together. We ended the evening by worshipping God with a hymn sing.



Special Music Presentation

*Photo provided by Heidi Poffenroth*

We were very blessed to have the following speakers:

Michael Erickson and Anthony Wasilkoff gave very inspiring Sabbath messages. One focused on the "Value of Women" and the other on "The Importance of Godly Touch." Both were very encouraging and thought provoking. Two young ladies from Prince George, Azalea Cartwright and Rebecca Anderson, sang lovely special music for us during Sabbath services.

Linda Wasilkoff gave an encouraging and motivating speech titled, "With Careful Design." She discussed how each of us might look a little different, but God has purposefully and carefully designed us to be together, woven together by His Spirit. She gave wonderful examples of how, with God, we can fulfill our place in the Body in ways we never thought possible or might not achieve on our own.



Tracey (Nyhus) Jongerius, a registered psychologist, gave a very heartwarming and encouraging discussion and activity around recognizing and developing our character strengths (those seen by us, not seen by us, and possibly not known by us or others). The activity started Friday evening with thinking about and writing down other ladies' character strengths that we notice about them. If we didn't know the lady well enough, that was the time to get to know her to be able to write down a strength we might see in her. On Sunday during the discussion, everyone wrote down the character strengths we believe we have individually. Then we all got to see what wonderful character strengths other ladies believe we have and compare them to those we believe we have. It was a very thought provoking and uplifting activity.



**Linda Wasilkoff Speaking**

*Photo provided by Tonya Erickson*

We had short speeches by several ladies this year. Brenda Thompson gave an encouraging speech around our place in God's Body during the Seasons of our Lives. Lynne Broschak gave a moving speech around the importance of Forgiveness and the impact it has on others. Lee Kitt gave an informative speech on Humility and the steps to take to become even more humble. All the ladies did a wonderful job!

*United News Canada - unc.ucg.ca*

We had table topic discussions, led by Synnove Teetaert, around Key Steps to fulfilling your part in the Body of Christ, taken from a sermon by Mr. Ken Martin, reminding us how important it is that we are regularly where God tells us to be at the appointed times, to understand and love one another, to give each other encouragement from a spiritual viewpoint, and how God is teaching us dependability.

We also went through a summarized session of Mr. Scott Ashley's Spiritual Gifts sermon series and the book "Discovering Your God Given Gifts" by Don and Katie Fortune, discussing why spiritual gifts are important, the different categories of Spiritual Gifts listed in the Bible and what our Spiritual Gifts might be. It was very interesting to see and recognize where each lady's strongest spiritual gift category was reflected. It was also a very good exercise to see how we all have different God-given gifts and how that is by His design. One of the best summary paragraphs from the book is included here:

"God has purposely limited and focused our giftedness so that we must work together and remain dependent on each other for effective working of the whole. All gifts are equal in the sight of God. They are equal in value in the Body of Christ. No gift is higher than or better than another gift. They each contribute invaluable to the collective functioning of the Body of Christ. If any one gift is not in operation there is a lack, a void.

Whatever motivational gift

you have been given is the best gift God could have given you for the working out of His purposes in your life and for the benefit of the other people whose lives you will touch. Rejoice in your giftedness! Use your giftedness! Develop your giftedness! 'What we are is God's gift to us; What we make of our lives is our gift to God.'

The weekend also included fun-filled group games, food and fellowship. The fellowship was bonding and the discussions were very encouraging.

Many thanks to the planning team who took time out of their lives to ensure the weekend was a success. Thanks as well to all who attended and helped make it a most enjoyable weekend. Most of all, thanks to our Heavenly Father who directed the planning, discussions, and fellowship. He worked out even the smallest details to bless His daughters as we congregated to grow together spiritually.

We look forward to seeing everyone at next year's Women's Enrichment Weekend!

*Tonya Erickson*

## **Vancouver Visits Victoria**

Four members of the Vancouver congregation took the opportunity to visit our sister UCG congregation in Victoria on May 6.

It was a pleasant and sunny trip aboard a BC Ferry from Tsawassen to Vancouver Island. We arrived in Saanich, anticipating the annual General Conference of Elders Sabbath webcast

from Cincinnati. It was an inspiring service, uniting God's people from many areas, through the blessing of technology.

Attendance in Victoria was 17 with the welcome surprise of meeting a member from Port Alberni (Ashley Erickson, daughter of pastor Mike Erickson) and Edmonton member Howard Buchanan. In addition, Alex and Marlina Escasinas, Maggie Zazubek and Dale Craniford were visiting from the Vancouver congregation. There was a delicious potluck after services, good spiritual discussion and 'catch up' time. The fellowship was appreciated!



**Brethren In Victoria**  
Photo provided by Dale Craniford

Following services, Wendy Corrigan kindly invited everyone for extra fellowship at her home. Interestingly, it was the day of King Charles' coronation. We enjoyed good conversation, tasty pizza, and strawberries with ice cream!

Appreciation goes to our friendly Victoria hosts, Richard and Maureen Shiundu. Also, thanks to all who attended for their warm fellowship. We hope to make the island trip again next year, God willing. How good and how pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity (Psalms 133:1).

*Dale Craniford*

## **Surrey Pentecost**

Attendees in Surrey, British Columbia, had a blessed Pentecost service. Included with the many wonderful biblical truths, the day of Pentecost celebrates the birth of the New Testament church (Acts 2:4).

There were 26 in attendance and some were observing Pentecost for the first time! We heard an offertory message about counting the cost of Christ's sacrifice, our calling and the work of the church. Split sermons focused on what would we do if we had the power of God from associate pastor David Palmer, and how we can exercise faith, using biblical examples from pastor Wayne Ward. There was an abundance of good food and warm fellowship following the service fulfilling Psalms 133:1. This Day of Pentecost was a joyous occasion!

"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:16).



**Pentecost In Surrey**  
Photo provided by Yolanda Tan

Thanks to all for helping to make it such a wonderful day, and above all praise and thanks to God for His many blessings! Observing Pentecost following a Sabbath is like a mini Feast. The inspiring messages were the spiritual food we needed. Now we move on into summer towards the next phase in God's plan, the fall Holy Days.

*Dale Craniford*

## **Camp Wildrose**

Camp Wildrose Youth Summer Camp, located in Darwell, Alberta, took place July 19-23. All five days of camp were hot and sunny, with only one night time thunderstorm to keep things exciting! The camp hosted 20 campers ages four to 15, three junior volunteers, ages 17-18, and 17 adult staff. Attendees were from the Edmonton, Grande Prairie and Prince George congregations.

Our theme this year "One Body, Many Parts" was taken from Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12. Our focus was on being one body as God's family with many parts that are important, valued and contributing to the whole. Sub themes worked on identifying our spiritual gifts and how to use those gifts, group unity and harmony, and the benefits of belonging to God's family. The theme was featured each morning in the Scripture of the Day, in Christian living classes and during fireside discussions, as well as emphasized in every activity. We believe that this year's group truly understood and demonstrated God's purpose for the body as incred-





### Enjoying the Water

*Photo provided by Susan Davis*

ible unity and cohesiveness was evident throughout the camp.

The hot weather allowed for water activities. The campers enjoyed canoeing and water tubing at the lake, and a giant slip and slide to cool off. Traditional and always popular activities included archery, volleyball, soccer and group games such as Steal the Gold (variation of Capture the Flag) and parachute play.



### Camp Attendees

*Photo provided by Susan Davis*

Our camp craft this year was thoroughly enjoyed by all ages. It involved stamping and staining leather pieces that were then fashioned around mason jars to become a drinking cup. A few new activities were also introduced this year and were a big hit with campers. For example, they tried slingshots and that deci-

mated many tin cans. They tried geocaching using technology to find hidden caches of treasure, and rubber tomahawk throwing. Teamwork challenges emphasized our camp theme. The campers displayed cooperative teamwork as they solved puzzles and navigated group exercises. Fireside is an evening tradition at Camp Wildrose where we do group activities such as Bible Charades and enjoy delicious over-the-fire snacks.

On Friday evening, there was a Music Social enjoyed by all. We did a number of popular line dances, played the Limbo, Musical Chairs, a Beach Ball dance and the Hokey Pokey. One event featured a fashion show, as groups created unique costumes from party streamers. The snack break featured an ice cream sundae bar.

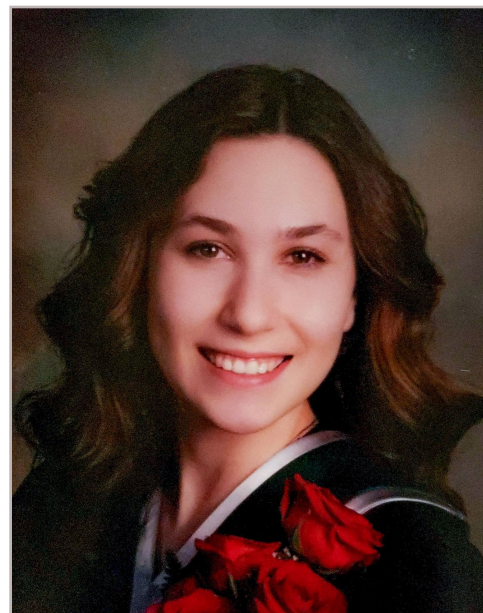
This year's camp emphasized the importance of building strong bonds of love and friendship as members of God's family. We learn how to live and work together as a unified body, striving together in one purpose. We encourage everyone to come and join our camp family next year and share in this

tremendous opportunity to grow as God's people.

*Susan Davis*

## Davis Graduation

Kaitlyn Davis (aka Katie) graduated from Onoway Junior Senior High School at the end of June. Katie attends the UCG Edmonton, Alberta, congregation where she actively serves with hymn accompaniment on her tenor saxophone, assisting with lunch set up and working as a camp counsellor at Camp Wildrose in the summer.



Kaitlyn Davis

*Photo provided by Susan Davis*

Katie enjoys playing saxophone in her high school honour band, spending time with her pet bearded dragon, "Freddy" and crocheting Amigurumi stuffed animals for her small business (Katie's Kreations). She has been accepted to the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) in Edmonton for the Interior Design Technology program and will begin her studies in January, 2024.

*Susan Davis*



# Take A Listening Heart To The Feast

By David Palmer

When we think of the word “feast” it brings to mind a wonderful festival, the biblical observance of the Feast of Tabernacles. But let’s take a closer look at the word “feast.”

Most dictionaries describe “feast” as a “joyful religious anniversary;” “an annual village festival;” “a sumptuous meal, especially in public.” But the biblical expression found in Leviticus chapter 23 “feasts of the Lord” emphasizes an important festival observed at a fixed time or season, an assembly convened for a definite purpose, a festival God called The Feast of Tabernacles.

One commentary describes the word feast as “a mark of hospitality (Genesis 19:3; 2 Samuel 3:20). Feasting was also a part of the observances connected with the offering of sacrifices (Deuteronomy 12:6, 7) and with the annual festivals (Deuteronomy 16:11) it was one of the designs which required the attendance of the people at the sacred tent, that the oneness of the nation might be maintained and cemented together, by congregating in one place, and with one accord taking part in the same observance. To keep the people’s consciousness alive to God’s way, to revive, strengthen, and perpetuate it, nothing could be so well adapted as these annual feasts.” (*Easton’s 1897 Bible Dictionary*).

The phrase “keep the feast” also encourages us to commune spiritually. As we travel each year to one of various festival sites, we recognize that we are

invited guests, not only to a banquet of good food, fine drink and wonderful fellowship with other brethren who have made the same trek, but we also recognize that the invitation is from God. Not only does He want us to rejoice with the physical blessings that have been bestowed on us over the past year (Deuteronomy 14:22-26), but He also wants us to commune spiritually with Him and with each other. How do we commune spiritually?



*How willingly do we listen?*

*photo by Andrea Piacquadio on pexels.com*

Let’s look at a biblical example. When Solomon replaced his father David on the throne, God appeared to Solomon in a dream and said “ask what I shall give you” (1 Kings 3:5). Solomon asked for an understanding heart - a hearing or listening heart - that he might better judge God’s people, that he might be a better king, “And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing” (1 Kings 3:10). Solomon was blessed not only with the wisdom of a listening heart, but great physical blessings as well.

The lesson is this. Not only do we participate in the Feast of Tabernacles for the physical meat, but for meat which will not perish, but leads to everlasting life (John 6:27).

When you and I travel to the Feast this year let’s ask God for a listening heart, a heart willing to hear God’s instruction. Remember what the apostle Paul wrote “That it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Corinthians 1:21).

If we determine to attend this year’s festival with a listening heart, we will not only be in spiritual communication drawing closer to God and Jesus Christ, but like Solomon we will find the physical blessings are much more enjoyable as well.

The Feast of Tabernacles is a wonderful opportunity to rehearse the kingdom of God and let God commune with us spiritually. The Feast is also a great occasion for us to commune with fellow brethren. The word commune merely means fellowship.

We will meet many personalities at the Feast, people who are quiet and shy, some who have a hard time communicating. If we put warm, friendly and encouraging conversation on our to-do list for the Feast this year, we can contribute to someone’s festival just by striking up friendly conversation. “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver” (Proverbs 25:11).

When you pack and prepare to travel to the Feast of Tabernacles this year, remember to take “a listening heart.” 🍁