



# United News Canada

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## Back To The Basics Again!

By Anthony Wasilkoff

Vince Lombardi became the coach and general manager of the famed Green Bay Packers in 1959. In that role, he directed the team to three NFL championships. Furthermore, Lombardi led the Packers to memorable Super Bowl victories in 1967 and 1968. This was no ordinary achievement. Decades after his death, Lombardi continues to be among the most venerated and admired football celebrities ever. Significantly, his name is enshrined on the Super Bowl trophy.

One of the things that Vince Lombardi was most famous for was to begin a football season by holding up a pointy projectile to his players and proclaiming, "Gentlemen, this is a football!" Why do you suppose he did this time after time? Lombardi was absolutely convinced that athletes perform best when they are thoroughly grounded in the fundamentals. In every sport, the best coaches repeatedly take their teams back to the basics.

And, so it is with God's remarkable plan of salvation. Every spring (in the northern hemisphere) the beginning cycle for the observance of the festivals brings us back to the vital basics. Each year the cycle starts afresh with the Passover, the Night To Be Much Observed, the First Day of Unleavened Bread, five days of unleavened bread and then the Last Day

of Unleavened Bread. This launches a review of Christ's awesome sacrifice, the wages of sin, the means to forgiveness and the joys of living in faith and in harmony with God's perfect law of love.



Coach explaining the basics  
*Image generated by DALL-E 3*

Peter did not apologize for taking the brethren back to the basics when he wrote: "For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease" (2 Peter 1:12-15).

By observing the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread annually and by assembling with the church

at the prescribed times, we receive essential reminders about God's plan of salvation so that we remain established in the present truth. If we don't do so repeatedly, it is possible for us to drift away.

In his book "God's Festivals In Scripture and History" (part 1), Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi wrote, "Many pastors go for years without taking their congregations through the central truths of the history of redemption: the life, suffering, and death of Christ; His resurrection, ascension .... A church calendar patterned after the religious calendar of Israel challenges pastors and members every year to explore more fully each of these fundamental truths of the plan of salvation. It can also serve as a deterrent against the temptation to use the Sabbath religious services to promote various kinds of secular agendas."

The 2024 spring festival season provides for us the ideal time to fortify vital Christian fundamentals with fellow believers! 🍷

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# Why Clean?

By Linda Wasilkoff

It is that time of year again! Depending upon your personality, mind-set, health or stage in life, cleaning for the Days of Unleavened Bread can be either something to dread or something to look forward to. That is, you either dread the work or look forward to the results.

A search on the internet yielded a list of reasons to clean a home. While there is nothing outstanding on the list, it is worthwhile to consider the benefits that were proposed. Here are some of those benefits:

1. To reduce germs, allergens and mold in the home and improve air quality. This helps to promote better health.
2. To promote better sleep. This in turn helps to create a happier environment in the home.
3. To save money. Cleaning items can prevent or delay needed repairs or replacement of items.
4. To strengthen relation-

ships as family members work together to complete tasks.

Several years ago, a long-time member told me she was happy that we were to clean before Unleavened Bread because if it were not for that instruction, some people would never clean their home. That struck me as an unusual thing to say, but I came to realize that we all have different standards of “clean.” We really do need to identify the more im-

portant reasons for cleaning this time of year.

This year as I start the de-leavening process in our house, I plan to consider some of the above reasons for cleaning a home – with an adjustment. How can they be applied not just physically but also spiritually?

Getting rid of leavening does not necessarily get rid of germs, mold and allergens. However, in our search to find any leavening, we would probably clean corners or under items that we might not regularly get to. Applying this spiritually, we have to look hard in the hidden corners of our hearts and minds to find the spiritual “germs” that are hiding there. As I check for likely hidden leavening beneath the couch, I want to remember to check for hidden sins that I may have.

Cleaning is physically hard work, which helps to promote sleep. Also, just having a tidier house helps us sleep better. Likewise, once our home is completely free of leavening, I breathe a huge sigh of relief. There is a similar feeling after a Passover ser-



Cleaning is physically hard work!

*Photo by Giorgio Trovato on Unsplash*

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vice. Having had feet washed and partaken of the bread and wine, I come home feeling cleansed, relaxed, happy and ready for a good night's sleep with a cleansed conscience.

While cleaning prior to the Feast of Unleavened Bread does not help to save us money, it does help to repair our spiritual life before it slips too far. It is a good time to ask ourselves questions about our prayer life, Bible study habits, fasting and meditation. In other words, how we are using our spiritual funds.

Often the wife or mother is the main person to do most of the cleaning, but each member of the household should do their part since the command to delevain is for all of God's people. This

then promotes unity in the family. The duties might be changed from year to year. I remember once when I was still a girl, my mother, who rarely got sick, was so sick she was unable to do the cleaning that year and it fell on me, as the oldest child, to take on most of that responsibility. I was glad that I had helped in previous years so that I knew what to do and how to do it. As my Mom got older, she got some of her grandchildren and even her great-grandchildren to help in the areas she could no longer manage. My husband and I work together to share the load – it requires communication and planning to coordinate. This kind of teamwork strengthens our marital relationship and, as we share the spiritual lessons we are learn-

ing, it increases our spiritual relationship as well.

Getting rid of dirt and dust does improve air quality. We know how wonderful it is to be able to open windows and let fresh air into the house. Likewise all our efforts of preparation for the Feast of Unleavened Bread bring with it a renewed freshness to our spiritual journey.

With these lessons in mind, I *almost* look forward to starting the annual cleaning. Almost, because I am still physical with time restraints that cause me to become overwhelmed at times. However, keeping the spiritual goals in mind will make all the difference.

Happy cleaning! 🍷

## Unleavened Recipes

*By United News Canada*

With the Feast of Unleavened Bread approaching we thought it might be helpful to share some resources we can sink our teeth into!

There are some fun ways to prepare food during the Spring Holy Days that make it a culinary treat, as well as spiritually rewarding.

Here is Loma Armstrong's Unleavened Bread recipe:

*1 c. flour*

*½ tsp. salt*

*2 T. plus ½ tsp. butter, softened*

*1 ½ tsp. olive oil*

*½ c water*

*Sift flour and measure. Add salt and sift again. Cut in butter until very fine. Mix the oil and water together and add to mixtures. Stir until it forms a ball and comes away from the side of the bowl.*

*Knead lightly on a floured board for one minute. A smooth ball should form. Lightly flour the board again. Pinch off ¼ of the dough and flatten. Roll as thin as you want, or until it just holds together without breaking. Cut the dough into pieces and place on cookie sheet.*

*Bake 8-10 minutes in a preheated 350° F oven until lightly browned.*

*Variations – for a buttery taste, add two additional tablespoons of butter. Or add one cup shredded cheese before adding the water and oil.*

Here is a gluten-free recipe for Unleavened Bread:

1 cup unsalted butter (½ stick)

2 cups white chocolate chips

2 eggs

½ cup sugar

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 ¼ cup coconut flour



½ cup seedless raspberry jam  
Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Lightly grease a 1-½ x 11-inch baking pan.

In a small saucepan melt the butter over low heat and stir. Add 1 cup of the chocolate chips and lightly stir until mixture is softened. Let stand.

In a large mixing bowl, on medium speed, beat eggs until foamy. Add in the sugar and beat mixture until it is lemon-yellow

in color, about 5 minutes. Gently stir in the coconut flour to the butter mixture and then add in the egg mixture to it. Beat all on a low speed until combined.

Spread 2/3 of the dough mixture into the prepared pan and bake for 15-17 minutes until it is golden brown around the edges. Cool slightly on a wire rack.

Heat the jam over low heat until it is easily spreadable. Then spread over the warm crust. Stir the remaining chips

into the remaining batter. Drop by spoonfuls over top of the jam.

Bake for another 30 minutes or until the edges are browned. Cool completely and then cut into squares.

For more recipes for the Spring Holy Days, visit:

<https://www.ucg.org/members/recipes/unleavened-recipes>



### Is it leavening?

Leaven is any agent that produces fermentation and causes dough to rise, by causing the formation of carbon dioxide gas to bubble into and spread throughout the dough. This is accomplished either chemically (as with baking soda) or biologically (as with yeast).

- Baking Soda: a crystalline alkaline salt that gives off gas when an acid is added. The following are different types of baking soda: Sodium bicarbonate, also known as “Saleratus;” Potassium bicarbonate, or potash; Ammonium carbonate, or “baker’s ammonia;” Ammonium bicarbonate, also known as “hartshorn;” Baking Powder (baking soda + acid-forming ingredients + starch filler).
- Sourdough starter (a wild yeast colony that is maintained with flour and moisture).
- Yeast (a single-celled fungi, used to leaven).

#### Not Leavening

- Autolyzed yeast: A yeast that has ‘self-destructed’ and is sterile – incapable of leavening.
- Brewers Yeast: A dead form of yeast that cannot leaven bread; a ‘nutritional’ yeast.
- Torula Yeast: A dead yeast that cannot leaven bread, considered a ‘nutritional’ yeast. Also hickory smoked torula yeast. Used as a savory seasoning that imparts smoky aroma to foods.
- Yeast extract(s): Derivatives of yeast, which are sterile and cannot leaven bread.
- Cream of Tartar: Tartaric acid – potassium bitartrate or potassium hydrogen tartrate. This is an acid used to combine with baking soda. By itself, this is not leavening.
- Tartrate powder: Phosphate powder or sulfate powder – usually added with cream of tartar. By itself this is not leavening.
- Alum: A metallic double salt, usually added with cream of tartar. Most common is sodium aluminum sulfate (SAS or sulfate powder), and potassium aluminum sulfate (or potash alum). By itself this is not leavening.

# In What Manner?

*By Michael Erickson*

The Passover commemorates Jesus' death and our deliverance from sin. It is the most solemn and sacred occasion of the year. Yet, it should bring internal joy. Consider the example and command Jesus gave us: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins'" (Matthew 26:26-28).

We know that Jesus gave His life that our sins might be forgiven. He took a terrible beating that we might be healed (Isaiah 53:4-5) and subsequently purchased the church of God with His blood (Acts 20:28). We follow Christ's example of participating in taking the bread and the wine in remembrance of Him (1 Corinthians 11:24-26).

Paul then adds a warning: "Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves,

we would not be judged" (1 Corinthians 11:27-31).

There is a lot imbedded in this section of Scripture, but let us consider one aspect of Paul's warning: What is a worthy manner?

This Scripture is not speaking about the Church member being worthy or unworthy to take it. It is speaking of the manner in which we take it. Satan will try to deceive us by sending us a message that we are unworthy to observe the Passover. None of us of ourselves can ever be worthy of God's grace and love. Thankfully, Christ willingly sacrificed His life that we may be considered worthy. If you are baptized and have God's Holy Spirit, you are worthy and commanded to keep the Passover.

Let's explore more deeply what is a worthy manner. Is it

about our works? We know faith without works is dead (James 2:14-26, Ephesians 2:10), so clearly works are important. That being said, we must also understand our works fall short of what God is looking for: "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do'" (Luke 17:10).

Consider two examples in Scripture where one (or a group) looked to their works, and each proved to be unworthy. The first example is found in Luke 18 where the Pharisee stood and prayed thus, "God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess." And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 18:11-14).

The one found worthy was not the man who compared himself and his works to others around him but was the man who compared himself to God and realized how completely unworthy he really was.

Another example is of the Laodiceans found in Revelation:



Crown of thorns  
*Photo by Scott Ashley*

“Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see” (Revelation 3:17-18).

Like the Pharisee in Luke 18, the Laodiceans as a group are blinded to the true state of their spiritual lives by making false comparisons and looking to their works. Thus, Christ judges both as unworthy.

Here is the paradox we must fully understand: as we increasingly realize our unworthiness, we move closer to developing a worthy manner.

We must give great attention to 1 Corinthians 11:27-32 where the apostle Paul provides the essential first steps to avoid appearing at Passover in an unworthy manner: “let a man examine himself” and “if we would judge ourselves.” From the two examples illustrated we know, the tax collector examined himself and judged that he was sinful. However, both the Pharisee and the Laodiceans by not comparing themselves to God became unworthy—in fact, from the context it’s clear they saw themselves as not bad at all!

Now consider Romans 5 to make a comparison and bring about the humble and wor-

thy manner of the tax collector: “Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more” (Romans 5:20). This section of Scripture highlights the power of God’s law. When God’s law enters our lives through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, it reveals our sins and shortcomings by bringing to our attention how far off the mark we are.

As we understand the law and the spirit of the law more deeply, we see our failures everywhere in our lives. It seems our sins and shortcomings are growing exponentially—abounding as this verse indicates. Why? Because, with the law increasingly illuminating our once blind or darkened minds, we now see how grave our sin is; and we more clearly recognize “oh wretched man that I am! Who shall save me from this body of death” (Romans 7:24-25).

No matter how great our sin, as the last half of Romans 5:20 clearly demonstrates, more than enough grace is available to cover and forgive those sins—“grace abounds much more.” What makes that abundance of forgiveness and grace possible? The sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It was more than just a man who suffered and died for our sins; it was in fact God Himself...manifest in the flesh as we know from 1 Timothy 3:16! It was the price paid to cover and forgive—the torture and death of our Creator. Thus, a worthy manner begins with realizing the true depth of our sin and the incredible payment that was made for our sins, which was

no less than our sinless Creator sacrificing His life for His very unworthy bride.

As we enter the last few days before Passover, God wants His Son’s sacrifice and its significance to be uppermost in our minds. He does not want us to become sullen or stuck in self-pity, but to remember that it represents the very measure of His love and our worth to Him.

Meditating on this sacrifice, and remembering the price our guiltless Savior paid, should greatly reinforce the depth of our obligation to Him. Our recognition of this heavy debt to Him is not meant to become a burden, but its purpose is to fill us with wonder, awe, carefulness, and reverence that He would pay so much for ones so utterly unworthy.

Without that sacrifice, we would have no hope. Our focus at Passover should not be on ourselves and our sins but on the payment for our sins—the sacrifice that God’s justice required for them. What did we do to deserve this? Nothing! That is the point. We did nothing to deserve it. Only because of God’s love and Jesus’ sacrifice, rather than the death we earned (Romans 6:23), we instead have been given the opportunity to join the God Family for eternity as the Bride of Christ!

Let’s keep in remembrance the value that He has placed on each one of us through His redemption and the obligation we have to value all the members of His body. 🍁



# All Things Work Together

By Carol Pallotta

Are there conversations taking place in your mind throughout the day? I have them. Hopefully it doesn't mean I'm losing my mind, but there is definitely a battle taking place there.

For example, I may have a desire or purpose I really want to achieve. I pray about it, but my efforts seem to go wrong or nowhere. I might be listening to media or have an interaction with someone and negative emotions or anger are triggered. Then I regret that I reacted badly.

Sometimes situations arise that I struggle with personally that test my patience and love. These frustrating events start the mental conversation. What am I doing or supposed to be doing? What is happening and why is this happening? Sometimes doubts arise. I should know better than this or I should be doing that. I'm just failing. Why God, why? And when I'm listening for God's answers, Scriptures come to mind.

Romans 8:28 says "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." What is the context of this verse?

The reality is no one enjoys the negative consequences of falling short of God's standard. Many people in the world know something is going wrong. Some go so far as to think a God with too many rules is causing the problems.

Romans 1:25 instructs "Because they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator." Mankind's refusal to acknowledge God and to willfully sin causes God to give them over to a debased mind.

As Christians with God's Holy Spirit, what is our response to tests, trials and suffering? The answer is in the Scripture. We must actively LOVE GOD and be called according to His purpose. This is our time to be called to understand and obey Him.

Growing up and at various times in my adult life I've experienced emotional, spiritual, and physical abuse from both inside and outside the church--even with God's protection because the human heart is desperately wicked who can even know it. Free will that chooses sin produces devastating results for the sinner and those they sin against.

God knows the scars I have to overcome and that trust is very difficult for me. He is well aware of my weaknesses and why

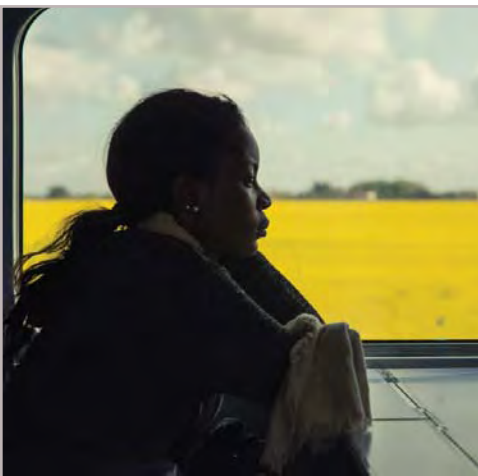
I make the mistakes I make. The example of righteous Job, explains that God would draw Job even closer to Himself through the suffering he endured because Job loved God, even more so after the death of his children.

In so many Scriptures, we are commanded to love God with all our being, to put Him first and seek His kingdom even ahead of our earthly families. Why? Because God is love. His way of life is love. There is nothing we can strive for in this life that compares to the reward God is offering us. We love Him because He first loved us as we learn in John 3:16.

Our love for God, His truth and way of life is the necessary fertile soil that He can work with to heal us and grow us closer to Him no matter how many times we fail and fall down and get back up. His mercy never fails. He promises to finish the good work He started in us. He promises to never leave or forsake us.

We read in Scripture many examples of His chosen people enduring the consequences of sin, sometimes their own and sometimes of others. He is working out His purpose and we are blessed to be a part of it. He promises to not give us more than we can bear.

When I was expecting my two children, I anticipated some pain during labour. My intention was to avoid medical intervention if possible. With my first child I reached a point I thought I couldn't bear any more pain but was able to continue when the nurse explained that



Self-reflection is important  
Photo by Johnny Cohen on Unsplash.com



An expectant mother

Photo by Juan Encalada on Unsplash.com

the birth was only thirty more minutes away.

My second child was a home birth and it came to a point I thought I must get to the hospital because something must be wrong. Thankfully, the midwife burst into the room to catch our daughter within moments saving my husband that task.

The benefits of pain during human birth are unique among God's creation. The benefits of natural labour birth over cesarean include: faster recovery for mother and child, better bonding and attachment, better breast feeding outcomes, improved immunity protection for baby through transmission of beneficial microbiome from the birth canal, improved heart rate, lower risk of respiratory problems as pressure exerted on the baby squeezes fluids from their lungs, higher apgar score, and higher IQ among other benefits.

This is made possible by the powerful hormones God provides mothers. Oxytocin starts and regulates contractions creating pain telling the mother when to move, push or not push. Oxytocin also stimulates the production of endorphins which

manage pain and surge after birth creating joy and strengthening the maternal response to bond with her newborn. The mother's responses to manage pain can include meditating, calm deep breathing and listening to soothing music.

If we compare our calling and the receiving of God's Holy spirit to the effects of oxytocin, God's spirit will guide and regulate our thinking and our decisions will be made according to God's instructions no matter the personal cost. The powerful endorphins we could liken to God's spirit producing agape in our life assuring us we will get through the difficulties and pain with joy being one of the rewards. We are also instructed to meditate on His Word, remain calm and praise Him with music. During the most stressful and painful times of our life, how often are we at the breaking point when God steps in to deliver us? Do we recognize He has been with us and brought us through circumstances if we stay the course?

Staring into the eyes of my newborn babies, the memory of pain was replaced with immense joy. I was strengthened and eager to love and care for them and



A mother looking at her baby

Photo by Flávia Gava on Unsplash.com

even die for them.

A human newborn's vision is limited to the distance between being cradled in its mother's arms and her face so they may better bond. Newborn vision outside this distance is blurry. When God seeks for us to become as little children, could He also mean we should focus intently on His face, bonding with Him, willing to be cradled in His loving embrace, trusting He will supply our needs as we place our problems in His capable hands?

Romans 8:18-23 says, "For I consider that our present sufferings cannot even be compared to the glory that will be revealed to us. For even the whole creation waits eagerly for the children of God to be revealed.

For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only they, but we also who are the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body."

We are cautioned that our calling to God's way of life will have struggles and be painful in many ways. The purpose of which reminds us to draw close to Him so we may receive the promise of spiritual birth with new spirit bodies.

We will be strengthened with great joy and be able to help God bring many more children into His glorious family. Until then we must trust that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose. 🍁



# Member Spotlight: Gaetan St. Denis

*The Trillium Health Partners Foundation gave UNC permission to use portions of their online patient story about a member of the Toronto congregation. While the article focuses on the medical procedures, Mr. St. Denis is quick to acknowledge God as the supreme healer who guided him through his care and treatments.*

## Gaetan: Receiving Expert Care Close to Home

Gaetan St-Denis has faced ongoing health challenges with a positive spirit since his youth. His health journey began in his teens with intestinal issues, leading to a diagnosis of ulcerative colitis (a bowel disease causing inflammation and ulcers) when he entered university. Annual

cancer screenings became part of his routine.

Gaetan did post-graduate studies in the United States and, some years later, was back working in the US when he received a shocking diagnosis: the discovery of a cancerous tumour in his lower colon. It was successfully removed by an eminent surgeon at a US cancer hospital but resulted in discomforting side-effects.

In 2010, Gaetan moved to Mississauga where he has received ongoing care at Trillium Health Partners, including at the Mississauga and Credit Valley hospital sites. His next major health issue was the discovery of a large cyst in his abdomen: his family doctor sent him to Credit Valley Hospital where it was surgically removed. Four years later, Gaetan was diagnosed with aggressive cancer cells in his bladder and received chemotherapy at Credit Valley Hospital before more surgery. He was especially moved by the celebration when he got to ring the bell. "It was encouraging to have all those nurses just be happy that I'd successfully gone through the chemo," Gaetan remembers.

Now Gaetan's bladder and prostate were removed and a stoma was created – a surgically made hole in the abdomen. Gaetan was always impressed by the above-and-beyond attitude of staff. For example, his wound care clinician was immensely helpful and would answer ques-

tions via cellphone even on his days off.

Recently, a follow-up CT scan revealed a small tumour in Gaetan's lower abdomen. His family doctor suggested interventional radiology, leading edge treatment that combines imaging and minimally invasive treatment. "I searched all the Toronto area hospitals only to learn that I could receive it at Trillium Health Partners," Gaetan marvelled. The hospital team used real-time imaging to guide two needles to freeze and destroy the tumour, the first time they had performed the procedure for this type of abdominal case.



At the Feast, with massive leaf obscuring his swim shorts.

*Photo provided by Gaetan St. Denis*



Gaetan speaking at the hospital

*Photo by Trillium Health Partners*

Throughout his journey, Gaetan has been deeply impressed by the dedication of the staff at Trillium Health Partners and their pursuit of leading-edge treatments.

*“Trial” from page 16.*

allowed the moneychangers into the temple. When Jesus threw them out, Annas was not only embarrassed, he also lost money.

Ecclesiastical law prohibited any member of the Sanhedrin from sitting in judgment of any accused if they had any personal dealings with the individual that might cause them not to be impartial. Exact language of the Sanhedrin code reads: “Nor under any circumstances is a man known to be at enmity with the accused person permitted to occupy a position among the judges.” This law was to protect an accused from being tried before judges who were his enemies. According to that law, several members of the Sanhedrin should have been disqualified.

Total membership in the Sanhedrin was 71 but on the night they tried Jesus they purposely selected a bare quorum of 23. Almost all were related to Annas – five were sons, one was a son-in-law and others were said to be cousins.

The fourth law broken was related to the Passover. Their law prohibited the Sanhedrin from meeting during the Passover, but they ignored that prohibition.

The fifth error was that no one had actually charged Jesus with anything. Suddenly after about 30 minutes of a mock trial. Caiaphas, the High Priest, pronounces Him guilty as charged but at this point, He had not been charged with anything.

The sixth error involved witnesses. Mosaic Law states, “At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is

worthy of death be put to death, but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.” They could not find even one true witness, so they willfully broke the ninth commandment “Thou shalt not bear false witness” and found an individual willing to do just that.

The seventh error is related to jurisdiction. The Sanhedrin had no jurisdiction in the case against Jesus. Until a prisoner had been lawfully arrested and charged, they had no jurisdiction to make judgment. Jesus had not been legally charged. There was no warrant for His arrest. They had simply snuck out at night, captured Him and then took Him before an unlawful 23-member court.

The eighth error was their inability to prove His guilt. He said He was the Son of God. It was up to them, as before any court and as crown council even today, to prove that He was lying about whom He said He was. They could not do that, so they simply accused Him of blasphemy.

There were several other infractions of law including failing to allow Christ to introduce witnesses of His own – which He would not have done, but they did not know that! Another law that was ignored was regarding an individual’s confession. If it was the only evidence, the court was then prohibited from issuing a death sentence. Furthermore, according to their own law, “A criminal case, where a death sentence is to be pronounced can not be concluded before the following day.” They simply ignored that too.

Pilate the Roman governor of Judea broke Roman law when, after finding Jesus guilty of doing nothing wrong (not once but four

times), instead of making a decision that only he could have made, turned Jesus over to the mob to be crucified.

What happened to Jesus of Nazareth was highly illegal under the law of His day. Yet while we can look back at those religious leaders, the Roman civil authorities and the mob that screamed “Crucify Him,” the Bible makes it clear that it is the collective sin of all humanity that brought Christ to the stake.

In the book of Isaiah, we read this prophetic statement. “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was tortured for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity (lawlessness) of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter. . .” (Isaiah 53:3-7 KJV).

Jesus Christ died a horrifying death in the most cruel and inhumane way known to the world at that time. His trial was illegal and His death murder. Yet it was according to predetermined divine purpose. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved” (John 3:16-17 NKJV). 🍁



# December Council Meeting

By Edwin van Pelt

The final National Council meeting of 2023 was held on December 18. All Council members and several guests were on-line for the virtual meeting.

The agenda for the meeting included accepting the minutes of the previous Council meeting, reading of the National Council Code of Ethics as well as several reports. Business items on the agenda included the 2024-2025 Operations Plan and 2024-2025 Budget.

National Council Chairman Lloyd Teetaert called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. (Eastern time). After the opening prayer and a few introductory comments, the minutes of the September 11, 2023, National Council were reviewed and accepted.

Following the reading of the National Council Code of Ethics, Ministerial Services Team Coordinator Rainer Salomaa gave an update. He reported that most congregations are meeting on a weekly basis once again after COVID; some congregations have live speakers while others connect to a webcast. There were 12 baptisms in Canada in 2023.

Some elders who live near the border with the United States have the opportunity to attend regional ministerial conferences when those conferences are held near them. Several pastors have had difficulty booking suitable meeting spaces for Sabbath services and Holy Days. Skyrocketing rental costs are a factor. Of the nine pastors in Canada, about half are also Festival Coordinators.

National Council member Paul Wasilkoff also serves on the Council of Elders (CoE). He reported on the most recent round of CoE meetings. A new Human Resources Manager was recently hired at the Home Office in Milford, Ohio. The update to the [ucg.org](http://ucg.org) website has been delayed due to unforeseen circumstances. Advertising on YouTube® has begun. A new venue for the Winter Family Weekend was secured in Hamilton, Ohio. The new venue included accommodations as well as space for the various events that are part

of the Weekend. The most recent audit of the United Church of God – an International Association (UCGIA) was favourable and income is holding up well for UCGIA.

Anthony Wasilkoff, Director of Operations, provided a National Office Update. Mr. Wasilkoff used a PowerPoint presentation to give information about the work in Canada. Some of the information included the number of members, co-workers and donors in Canada, the current number of subscribers to various publications, the most popular booklets and study aids in English and French, and the number of Subscriber Development Letters (SDLs) mailed. Some of the highlights include the total number of *The Good News* and *Beyond Today* magazines distributed (over ¼ million copies since 1998); the total number of *Bonnes Nouvelles* and *Pour L'Avenir* magazines distributed (nearly 100,000 since 2003) and the total number of SDLs

mailed (nearly 270,000 since 2005 including over 14,000 in 2023). Almost every booklet has been offered in the SDLs. The November SDL was sent to 3,776 subscribers of *The Good News* and *Beyond Today* magazines



Board Members & Administration participating in an online meeting

Photo by United News Canada



with a response rate at the time of the meeting was 7.3%. A number of responses also include donations, helping to offset the cost of mailing the letters.

National Council member Dennis O'Neill provided an update on the Media Team. His PowerPoint slides included content statistics such as the internet traffic leverage, and the number of various page views of the [ucg.ca](http://ucg.ca) website for the period of September 1 through November 30. Content and technology are two aspects of the statistical review. On the technology side, there are various downloads available on [ucg.ca](http://ucg.ca); PDF is the

most popular. Downloads from Canadian users were generated primarily from Québec. User visits were more than double the previous three-month period (June 1-August 31). The top three users by country were the United States, Canada and Britain. The top three user operating systems were web/mobile, web/desktop and web/tablet. English is the most prominent of the 35 languages used by those who access [ucg.ca](http://ucg.ca). Team member Anthony D. Wasilkoff developed "memory scriptures" for the Ambassador Bible College students which are available at [ucg.ca](http://ucg.ca).

Director of Operations, Anthony Wasilkoff, presented the 2024-2025 Operations Plan to the National Council. The Plan was subsequently approved by the Council and sent to the National Conference for their ratification.

Treasurer Bill Dimovski provided a financial update and presented the 2024-2025 Budget. Mr. Dimovski noted the difficulty in forecasting income and expenses. The Council approved the Budget as presented.

The two-hour-long meeting concluded following the closing prayer. The next meeting is scheduled for March 11, 2024. 🌹

## News From Across Canada

### Edmonton Ballet Night

On October, 23 ladies and girls enjoyed a lovely night at the Alberta Ballet in Edmonton.

Everyone, from five to 95-years-old, enjoyed the won-

derful performance of the ballet dancers in "The Sleeping Beauty" and especially getting to experience it with each other. It was a lovely evening.

*Tonya Erickson*

### Hamilton Anniversary

It was something of a whirlwind romance. Margot Schaefflein had just arrived from Germany to visit her sister in Hamilton in June 1958. As it happened, her sister had married Jack (Jacobus) Schoutsen's best friend. And so, Jack met Margot first at her sister's place. He thought she was lovely.

They met again a week later at a dance at the Dutch Club in Hamilton, Ontario. Jack asked

Margot for a dance and discovered that they both enjoyed dancing. They stayed on the floor for a few numbers. During one of the pauses Jack confessed to Margot that he had taken to her the first time he saw her -- and he loved her and wanted to marry her. She thought he was nuts, but nice and agreed to a date.

He went home that night and told his mother that he had met the girl he was going to marry. She asked him if the young lady knew about it yet? Well not really, but he would tell her soon.

Several dates followed in quick succession, and Jack asked Margot to marry him. In saying "yes," she thought it would be the following spring, but Jack



Awaiting the start of the ballet

*Photo provided by Tonya Erickson*

thought that was too long to wait. They married on November 29—five months after they first met.

They worked well together, each pursuing different lines of work. Jack drove buses in Hamilton and built some houses; Margot went into Real Estate. They both enjoyed gardening and the fresh produce they grew for themselves. They had many friends and kept themselves busy.

Happily they raised two children who are members of the United Church of God in Hamilton. Their daughter, Marcela, was baptized with Jack and Margot in 2003 in Toronto with Anthony Wasilkoff officiating. Their son, Dr. Gary Schoutsen, had already been baptized. They have three grandchildren and one great-grandson all of whom love to get together at the family farm.

*George Carter*

### Edmonton Wild Game Social

God's Sabbaths are a blessing. Brethren from the Edmonton, Calgary, Prince George and Grande Prairie congregations gathered together on Sunday, December 31, to fellowship, enjoy the outdoors and eat. The event took place at the home of Owen and Susan Davis on their property west of Edmonton.

The day started with a chili lunch. Guests could then choose to head to the lake for skating and hockey, or remain at the house to play games or do a puzzle and visit.



Enjoying pond skating & hockey  
Photos by Brenda Thompson & Azalea Cartwright

The weather was mild and comfortable for outdoor activities. There was absolutely no snow, so the lake ice was smooth and clear as glass. As the sun went down around 4:00, everyone gathered back indoors for



Preparing the wild game  
Photo by Kim Eckert

the barbequed wild game supper. This year our successful hunters were able to serve elk, moose and venison as well as farm grown prime rib, beef brisket, smoked chicken and BC smoked salmon. The feast was complete with potluck crockpot dishes, salads and desserts.

There were 72 attendees this year and we were so happy to have them all there! Thank you to everyone who helped set up, barbeque meat, contribute food and carpool with others. God's family gatherings are so important for unifying the body and creating special memories to cherish.

*Susan Davis*

### Surrey Games Social

In Surrey, British Columbia, following services on February 10, the congregation enjoyed food, fellowship and played a Bible knowledge game. It consisted of four categories: direct questions, true or false, multiple choice and fill in the blank. Differing numbers of points were awarded for each category. The team with the highest total after 20 questions won. To sweeten the pot, each member of the



Sportsmanship  
Photo provided by Yolanda Tan



winning team was to be rewarded with a delicious and healthy chocolate bar!

It was a close game, as the top team won by only a single point. Everyone was a winner though! The game was fun filled, with iron sharpening iron as brethren discussed their biblical knowledge, and asked each other related questions while enjoying a friendly competition.

Much appreciation to all who participated for making this Sabbath fellowship activity a great success and so much fun. More such activities are being planned for the future. Who knows, maybe a Pictionary game is up next!

*Dale Craniford*

### **Frandsen Obituary**

Knud Eric Frandsen was born in Nakskov, Denmark, on January 20, 1942. As a child, he emigrated to California and then to Canada where he had a long career spanning almost 40 years at NCR. At first he serviced cash registers across Hamilton, but he eventually became project manager for Ontario.

When Eric was about five, his dad came across the World Tomorrow program. He remembered the program and as an adult searched for the Radio Church of God. He began receiving the *Plain Truth* magazine in 1959, came into the church in 1972, attended his first Feast of Tabernacles in 1973 and was baptized in 1974. He was ordained a deacon in the early 1980s and served faithfully

in the Hamilton congregation in that position until health prohibited him from doing so. He was a kind and caring individual who was always willing to help others. Through the years, he and his wife hosted many Bible studies and other events in their home.



Eric Frandsen

*Photo provided by National Office*

Eric died in Hamilton, Ontario, on January 5, 2024. He was predeceased by Sue, his wife of 60 years. He is survived by children Kristine Frandsen (Shaun), Michelle McCartan (Keith) and Stephanie Smith (Kevin). He was cherished grandfather to Holli McKnight, Sean McCartan and Sarah McCartan; brother to Ken and Steve and uncle to many nieces and nephews.

The family held a celebration of life on January 21, 2024, in Dundas, Ontario.

*Frandsen Family*

### **Gerner Obituary**

B. Darlene Garvais-Gerner died November 29, 2023, after a second battle with cancer. She was born March 6, 1935, at Lame Deer, Montana, on the Rosebud

Indian Reservation to parents Charles and Ella (Contway) Garvais. Darlene had an Indian heritage. From her dad: Chippewa, Assiniboine Sioux and Metis. From her mom Sisseton Yankton Sioux.

Both of Darlene's parents were from Montana. Her Dad worked for the Government CCC camps. From the Desautel camp at Coyote Creek, the family moved to Inchelium, Washington, on the Colville Indian Reservation. Then because of jobs opening up at the Old Biles Coleman Lumber Mill in Omak, the family moved to Omak in September 1941.



Darlene Gerner

*Photo provided by Amy van Zant*

Darlene started first grade in Omak and graduated from Omak High School in 1954. After working two years in Omak, she moved to Seattle to work. While there, Darlene met her future husband, Oskar Gerner. They were married on January 16, 1963, in Toronto where he was from. They eventually moved to Mississauga and she lived there until her death.

Darlene was preceded in

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death by her parents, her husband and siblings: Albert C. Lawrence, Anita C. Lawrence, Alvin Lawrence, Robert Lawrence, Eddie Lawrence and Ken C. Garvais.

She is survived by a special friend, who was like a daughter, Dina (Steve), sister Elaine (Garvais-Moomaw), brother Ron (Pat) Garvais and numerous nieces and nephews.

Darlene was baptized in January 2017 and was a cherished member of the Toronto United Church of God congregation. She loved the socials and was especially fond of the times the congregation went bowling. She brought her own bowling ball and proceeded to bowl better than many who were years younger than her. Her infectious laugh and love of life is greatly missed.

*Gerner Family*

### **Laird Obituary**

Samuel Charles Laird of Charlottetown, Prince Edward



Sam Laird

*Photo provided by Michelle Vautour*

Island, died peacefully at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, on January 8, 2024. He was 70.

Sam is survived by: his children, Jason, Asha, Kayla, and Robert; his brother, Larry; and his beloved friend and fiancé, Leona Moher. Sam was predeceased by his parents, Samuel and Loy Laird, and his sister, Becky.

Sam was a member of the Maritime congregation.

A funeral service was conducted by Bruno Leclerc on Thursday, January 18, 2024. A Zoom service was provided for family and friends from afar who could not be present in person.

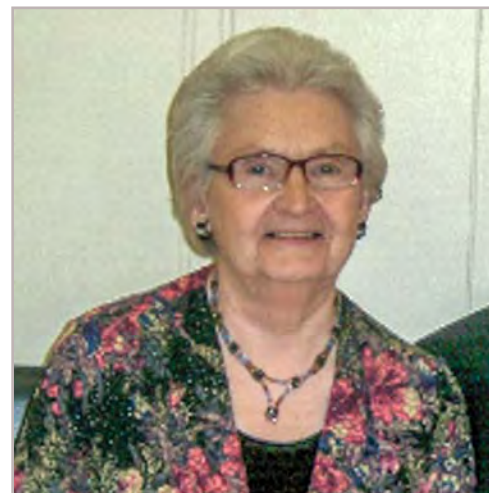
*Michelle Vautour*

### **Moulton Obituary**

Mary was an only child and her parents doted on her. When she was young, she had said that she did not want to live on a farm or have any children.

She married Joseph Moulton in 1948. They settled on a farm in the Prescott, Ontario, area. She became a young mother in 1949. Joe and Mary went on to have ten children. She was busy being a wife, mother and helping her husband on the farm. She always had a big garden to tend in the summer and did lots of canning to make food stretch throughout the winter. She made some of the family clothes and she was always mending socks and patching pants. She was also talented at knitting and crocheting and loved to read. In recent years, she had time to put to-

gether puzzles.



Mary Moulton

*Photo provided by National Office*

Mrs. Moulton was ordained a deaconess in 1970. She was often found in the kitchen cooking and baking. There were often additional people in their home at mealtime. There were lots of functions and activities. There were always extra people in the house and she always made them comfortable. People raved about her cooking.

Mary was predeceased by: her husband, Joseph; her sons, Steven and Chester; and her grandson, Matthew. She is survived by her children: Garry (Lori), Alan, Greg (Mary Ann), Joan Kingston (Paul), Richard, (Michelle) Mark (Angie), Julie Morasse (Dan) and Mary Jo Robertson (Stewart); and numerous grandchildren, nieces, nephews and cousins.

A funeral service was held on Friday, March 8, 2024, in Cardinal, Ontario. She will be greatly missed by the Ottawa congregation where a number of her family attend.

*Moulton Family*

# The Illegal Trial of Jesus Christ

By David Palmer

“After two thousand years a brilliant lawyer proves that Jesus of Nazareth was tried and condemned to death for treason and blasphemy in direct and specific violation of the laws of His own time, both religious and civil” (Charter Book Publishers-New York).

Few will dispute that a man named Jesus lived 2000 years ago and that He was a great teacher who impacted the world from His time onward. But the world, in general, sees Him as a controversial figure. After all, He made an incredible claim – that He was the very Son of God, the long-prophesied Messiah!

The religious authorities in Jerusalem rejected and eventually succeeded in having Him put to death. The local Roman civil authorities saw Him as a threat and became complicit in His execution. The religions of His day, both Judaism and paganism, opposed the growth of His teachings and used unlawful and violent means to destroy those who became the Church He said he would build. The government of Rome vigorously persecuted the followers of this Jewish teacher from Galilee.

Prophecies written long before His birth predicted that Jesus Christ would be rejected not only by His own people, but also by the world in general. Jesus referred to this prophecy when He told His followers: “Have you never read in the Scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes” (Matthew 21:42 NKJV).

The Apostle Peter repeated it: “This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone. Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:11-12 NKJV).

Just how was the trial of Jesus Christ illegal?

Filled with jealousy and hatred, both the local religious hierarchy and the civil Roman government of Judea wanted to get rid of a man they perceived as a threat to their authority. As a result they were willing to break even their own laws. In fact, several specific laws related to both their religious



Roman soldier holding a flagrum  
Image generated by DALL-E 3

code and civil law were violated.

The author explains that the first unlawful act was the apprehension of Jesus by a multitude led by Judas Iscariot, the betrayer who stood by while the soldiers “captured” Jesus. Under the law it was mandatory to inform the person being arrested what the charges were. In Jesus’ case they

did not charge Him with anything at that point – this was illegal.

The second unlawful act was when they bound Jesus and brought Him before Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas and his colleague in the high priesthood, known as the Sanhedrin. “The Sanhedrin had the power of life and death in their own hands in every thing that concerned religion; but since they did not have evidence to put Christ to death because of false doctrine, they gave credibility to their conduct by bringing in the civil power. The Jewish right to try capital cases was taken from them some forty years prior to the destruction of Jerusalem, which would mean it was approximately at the time of Jesus’ trial that the enactment of the Roman order prohibiting the Jewish court from trying such cases was affected.” (Adam Clarke’s New Testament commentary)

“Then Pilate said to them, ‘You take Him and judge Him according to your law.’ Therefore, the Jews said to him, ‘It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death” (John 18:31 NKJV).

So in effect, Annas had no jurisdiction over Christ. The law prohibited taking a prisoner before any one individual, even a judge, for private examination. Annas went ahead and ordered Jesus before him in private, thus breaking both Roman and Jewish law.

The story of how Jesus cleared the temple of the moneychangers is well known. What is not so well known is that it was Annas who

See “**Trial**” on page 10.