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The Power of Forgiveness and the Passover

By Anthony Wasilkoff

During His earthly ministry, our Saviour taught His disciples that forgiveness was central to Christian living. During the formative years of the early New Testament church, brand new Christians valiantly sought to practice and exemplify the vital requirement of giving, receiving and seeking forgiveness.

As we approach and observe the Passover season, we especially focus on the vital component of divine forgiveness and how essential it is to God's awesome plan of salvation.

Below is a list of thought-provoking quotes from those who have come to see the inestimable value of forgiveness and how it is not easy to come by. How blessed we are to have learned and experienced God's miraculous mercy and grace.

"We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Forgiveness is an act of the

will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart."

Corrie ten Boom

"When I am able to resist the temptation to judge others, I can see them as teachers of forgiveness in my life, reminding me that I can have peace of mind only when I forgive rather than judge."

Gerald Jampolsky

"When you hold resentment toward another, you are bound to that person or condition by an emotional link that is stronger than steel. Forgiveness is the only way to dissolve that link and get free."

Catherine Ponder

"Many people have trouble with forgiveness because they have been taught it is a singular act to be completed in one sitting. That is not so. Forgiveness has many layers, many seasons."

Clarissa Pinkola Estes

"There is no love without forgiveness, and there is no forgiveness without love."

Bryant H. McGill

"Forgiveness is not always

easy. At times, it feels more painful than the wound we suffered, to forgive the one that inflicted it. And yet, there is no peace without forgiveness."

Marianne Williamson

"Some people would rather die than forgive. It's a strange truth, but forgiveness is a painful and difficult process. It's not something that happens overnight. It's an evolution of the heart."

Sue Monk Kidd

"Most of us need time to work through pain and loss. We can find all manner of reasons for postponing forgiveness. One of these reasons is waiting for the wrongdoers to repent before we forgive them. Yet such a delay causes us to forfeit the peace and happiness that could be ours."

James E. Faust 🌐

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Examinations

By Linda Wasilkoff

When I was growing up, an eighth grade examination was a requirement to take and pass before entering high school. I attended a one-room schoolhouse with just two other people in my class and only about 12 in the whole school. Thankfully, our teacher spent a great deal of time preparing us for this exam and all three of us passed. It was a bit stressful to think that if I didn't pass this test, I would have to repeat grade eight!

A dental exam always seems to cause some dread – especially when you believe there could be some problems that have to be addressed. Regardless of how often I tell myself to relax in the chair, I find myself tensing up during the poking and probing.

Other examinations I remember well are the physical examinations that occurred in both high school and at Ambassador College. These were to test our physical abilities and often included some running, push-ups and chin-ups along with other methods of measuring our physical health. Depending upon a

person's fitness, these tests could cause increased stress levels. Even for someone relatively fit, sore muscles usually remained afterward.

Each year, we undergo an examination of a different kind leading up to Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This examination is even more important than any of the other examinations we might have. There are significant differences though. We aren't being evaluated by another human but will be examining ourselves – with God's help. The results don't mean that we have to repeat a grade or need remedial dental work. The results are that we find something to improve upon in our spiritual life.

Just prior to the first Passover I kept, I went to the minister to see what I needed to do. Mr. Apartian very kindly explained that I didn't need to beat myself up and cry a lot, but just needed to carefully check and see how well I was living up to the Christian way of life. It took stress off my shoulders because I had somehow been given the

idea that I should be sobbing over how bad I was.

Each year we find something else to consider after the spiritual examination – some area of life that needs improvement. Perhaps some fruit of the spirit is lacking. As a child, one of the fruits I enjoyed eating was a persimmon. Those were different from persimmons you find in a grocery store here in Canada. One thing we came to realize very quickly was that, while a ripe persimmon was delicious, a green one made one's mouth pucker. I wonder if that is how an unripe fruit of the spirit should be viewed.

When the results of my eighth-grade examination was posted, there was tremendous relief to see that I had passed and could go on to high school. There was reason to celebrate.

The wonderful part of our self-examination this time of year is that it culminates with the Passover when we can wash the "pucker" of the unripe fruit away from ourselves. We leave that ceremony feeling cleansed, renewed and ready to begin afresh. 🍷

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Take Your Shoes Off

By Robert Berendt

Humans are social creatures. We live in different cultures so our rules or concepts of various things may differ a little. However, we all recognize that there are occasions when we need to be on our best behaviour and dressed as well as we can be. Several presidents of the United States requested that when people come into the Government building to do business, they should be dressed appropriately, and their behaviour should be exemplary. The reason was to uphold the dignity and honour of the place.

Our dress speaks to the regard we have for where we are and who we are. We all know that if we were to meet an important person, we need to consider our dress. Attending a function in the office of the Queen, President, Mayor or some other leader clearly calls for thought given to our appearance and conduct.

There are times when we may come into a place of great honour that we may not recognize. The account of Moses who was tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro and spied a burning bush that looked odd was such a moment. Moses was dressed in shepherd's clothing and no doubt would not have been acceptable in places of nobility or honour. He was told that he was standing on holy ground and ordered to remove his shoes (Exodus 3:3-6). Moses grew greatly concerned and was afraid to look upon the face of God.

We all realize that the physical is not as important as the spiritual in matters concerning God, but the physical does reflect our spiritual attitude. Moses had never seen or experienced anything like this before. It was clear that he had a great deal to learn about the God of the universe, whom he was meeting and who was about to commission him to rescue the nation of Israel from Egypt.

As Moses became more relaxed, he entered into a conversation with God, yet he still did not fully comprehend the majesty before him. Although God is patient and kind, Moses' words and arguments eventually angered Him (Exodus 4:14).

Another example in the Bible of a man who was not fully

aware of where he was and who he was dealing with is Joshua. Joshua had been busy working hard as God commanded and one day when he was by Jericho, he saw what seemed to be a man holding a sword (Joshua 5:13-15). When the Man said He was the Commander of the army of the Lord, Joshua fell on his face and worshipped. He was told: "Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand is holy." Here again it was simply ground, but what made the location holy was the presence of the Lord. That would make any place holy.

In the tabernacle and later in the temple, there was a small enclosed room called the "holy of holies" or "holy place." It was a smaller room but vitally important because inside was the ark of the covenant with the two cherubim on it and the mercy seat (Leviticus 16:1-24). God gave elaborate instructions about what the priest was to wear, that only the high priest could enter, and exactly how God wanted the priest to conduct himself. Any failing could result in death.

Since the coming of Jesus Christ and His fulfillment of the commission His Father gave Him, there is no longer a physical temple or holy place. It has been replaced with the greater, more important, and more perfect tabernacle (Hebrews 9:1-11).

Christ came as High Priest of good things and has entered the holy place not made by hands.



Removing our footwear when entering a building is a sign of respect

Photo by Lisa from Pexels.com

That was only a shadow of the true holy place which brings one into the presence of God (Hebrews 9:24). The tabernacle and the holy place that was built there was merely a shadow of the true holy place where God abides.

Some years ago, I was able to visit Israel. At that time, tourists were allowed to visit the Dome of the Rock, which is a mosque on the temple mount. To the Islamic people, this is holy ground. Nobody was allowed to enter without first taking off shoes. There was an area set aside where a person could leave their shoes. That was the manner in which glory and honour was shown to the ground they consider holy. In a spiritual sense, we all “take off our shoes” when we come into the presence of God.

Sometimes we are not aware that we ought to conduct ourselves in a certain way. And as in the case of Moses and probably Joshua too, they were not wearing a suit and tie. They probably had no chance to bathe, so the best that could be done is to take off their shoes.

There is absolutely no question that God does understand our circumstances. At any time and in any circumstance, God understands and we can talk with Him. Nevertheless, when we have the ability and time, we need to present ourselves well.

Today, there is no temple, but Paul wrote that the church is the temple of God (I Corinthians 3:9-17). In God’s church today, the followers and believers of Jesus Christ have been cleansed by His sacrifice and that make us spiritually clean

before God. But people are aware that physical appearance and decorum still counts when we come before His throne. We must not come carelessly before Him. The Father is still on His throne in heaven and Jesus Christ His firstborn Son is at His side.



The wailing wall in Jerusalem, associated with the former temple mount.

Photo by David Rado from Pexels.com

In such matters as prayer, we would not consider praying in just any manner. We must know that coming into God’s presence in prayer is special and needs to be treated as special in our formal prayers. There is to be reverence and dignity when we come into His presence. How we conduct ourselves shows how we think about God. We may need time as Moses did to begin to really grasp His magnificence.

There is a tendency in our society to become more casual at almost every occasion. However, when we think of a wedding, a baptism, a special occa-

sion like the Passover, and our Sabbath meetings, we need to put more thought into the fact that our actions, words, and dress reflect the respect and awe we have for the Father and Son. We are to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, as Jesus said (Matthew 22:37).

That love and reverence should be evident in how we approach Him. Whether we come in formal prayer, kneeling beside our bed or elsewhere, or when we enter His presence to ask the Father and Son to bless our church service and inspire the speaking and hearing, those moments call for special attention to our behaviour.

We are to “take off our shoes” in a sense, because we are on holy ground. Not that the buildings we occupy are holy, it is the presence of God that makes a place holy.

When a person is asked to give an opening or closing prayer, we ought to bow our heads and listen attentively so we can say “Amen” with meaning. It is not the time to be zipping cases, picking up papers, or fiddling with something instead of paying attention. While there may be moments when a small child has an immediate need, even our children should learn to be quiet and respectful when someone is speaking to God on our behalf.

Likewise, when we find a quiet place to talk with our Creator, we should remember His majesty and glory. Our actions, attitude, and focus should reflect the reverence He deserves, ensuring that we approach Him in a way that truly glorifies Him. 🍁

The Night to Be Much Observed

By Michael Erickson

We find a notable mention of this night in Exodus 12:42 (KJV): “It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.”

The Hebrew word translated “much observed” is *shimmur*, meaning an observance. *Shimmur* is a form of the word *shamar* meaning to hedge about (as with thorns); which is, by extension, to guard, to protect, or attend to something. These words express more than simple observation; they mean to preserve and protect a thing or memory, to be circumspect and take serious heed of it. This is the reason it is translated “much observed” in the *King James Version*. God desired them—and now us, to guard, protect, and attend to the memory of it. The solemn observance that this evening commemorates took place at the beginning of the exodus out of Egypt. God had powerfully intervened through 10 supernatural plagues to demonstrate His divine will in condemnation of human oppression, captivity, and slavery.

It must have been a night of grave concern and apprehension for each of them as they began their exodus. After living for generations in the fertile Nile delta, God’s plan for the Israelites was that they would move to the land promised to their fathers. Adam Clarke comments, “[It is] a night to be held in everlasting remembrance.”

At least in part, Israel was to keep the Night to Be Much Observed as a night of watching—of watchful vigil—to commemorate the reason they were able to leave Egypt so easily. A whole nation of slaves walked away from their captors. The reason they could flee from Egypt unscathed was due to God watching over them as His plan unfolded. The origin of the word observe has the sense of guarding or watching. In the margin of many *New King James* translations for Exodus 12:42 it says, “night of vigil.” *The New International Version* says: “Because the LORD kept vigil that night to bring them out of Egypt, on this night all the Israelites are to keep vigil to honor the LORD for the generations to come.” Being alert and vigilant certainly are vital characteristics for Christians to have while living in an age that Paul calls “this present evil age” (Galatians 1:4).

The concept of keeping a vigil is also mentioned in Exodus 12:37-42 in *The Jerusalem Bible, Readers’ Edition*: “The sons of Israel left Rameses for Succoth, about six hundred thousand on the march—all men—not counting their families. People of various sorts joined them in great numbers; there were flocks, too, and herds in immense droves. They baked cakes with the dough, which they had brought from Egypt, unleavened because the dough was not leavened; they had been driven out of Egypt, with no time for dallying, and had not provided themselves with food for the journey. The time that the sons of Israel had spent in Egypt was four hundred

and thirty years. And on the very day the four hundred and thirty years end, all the array of Yahweh left the land of Egypt. The night, when Yahweh kept vigil to bring them out of the land of Egypt, must be kept as a vigil in honor of Yahweh for all their generations.”

The Torah also uses this same terminology concerning verse 42: “the same night is the LORD’s one of vigil.” Traditionally we gather in one another’s homes or assemble together as a group in a private room and enjoy a fine meal and fellowship, remembering our calling and that we, like ancient Israel, have been freed from slavery by the power of God (John 8:34-36). When we gather together with friends on this Sabbath eve, what lessons are we to focus on?

As Christians called out of the corrupting influence of sin, we celebrate on this night because we too have been delivered from Egypt—spiritually. Egypt is a type of sin (Hebrews 11:24-27). Christ, “our Passover” (1 Corinthians 5:7), has delivered us from the bitter slavery of sin. We also are able to walk out of Egypt—sin, with great emotion, exhilaration and joy because of Christ’s sacrifice! Jesus came to earth to bring a new way of life, the way of truth. He is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). We celebrate and remember our calling on this night.

Prior to Christ’s trial and persecution leading up to His crucifixion, He went to a private place to pray. In Matthew 26:36-

46 we read the account. Three times he asked Peter and the two sons of Zebedee to “watch with Me.” Each time He returned to check on them, they were asleep. In verse 41 Christ entreated them, “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” When the hour came for Jesus to be betrayed, they were still sleeping. They provided little companionship during this most intense time.

What is the meaning of this word watch used by Christ? *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* says it comes from the Greek word *gregoreo* and is used in the sense of keeping awake and spiritual alertness (see Acts 20:31, 1 Corinthians 16:13, Colossians 4:2 and 1 Thessalonians 5:6). The context of the word watch is in reference to a spiritual condition of alertness. Christ’s instruction is to prevent us becoming unwittingly deceived by Satan and falling into temptation or becoming entangled with distractions. We are to be spiritually alert.

In Mark 14:37, Christ said to Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping?

Could you not watch one hour?” It is difficult to keep focused on our calling and remain vigilant against the temptations and pulls of the flesh. It was once said that Christianity is not difficult to find, but that it is found difficult and not tried. The tragic lesson of ancient Israel was an example of human nature’s fundamental problem. It is one of the most profound lessons of human history—a lesson we are to keep forefront in our minds.

Though given physical freedom and protection by God, as a nation Israel never left the lust, selfishness and spiritual blindness that had enslaved both them and their captors in Egypt. Israel insisted on choosing their own gods and making their own rules, a problem that plagues humankind to this day. Israel enslaved itself because of rejecting God’s way of life and rulership “in their hearts, they turned back to Egypt” (Acts 7:39).

Paul reminds us all that we must continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving (Colossians 4:2). We live in a fascinating and frightening world in which it

is easy to be distracted and fall asleep spiritually. God reveals the way to freedom from the bonds of wickedness and relief from oppression and heavy burdens is by drawing near to Him (Isaiah 58:6). The Holy Day cycle starts off with fellowship among true believers who realize the vital importance of remaining on guard and vigilant against a powerful fallen archangel who wants to hinder us from being a part of the family of God.

As we gather together for the NTBMO, let’s remember the lesson of vigilance. We are to guard, to protect, and attend to the memory of all that God has, and is doing, for us. Enjoy this wonderful evening! But be on guard, for the days are evil and our deliverance to a new world depends on our following God the Father and Jesus Christ our Saviour. Those who heed the calling of God, stay vigilant, walk in truth will be there to help usher in a new way of life at Christ’s return. Then “many nations shall come and say, ‘Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord ... He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths” (Micah 4:2). 🍁

“Beware” from page 16.

accepting His sacrifice for our sins. Observing the Feast of Unleavened Bread is our reminder of a spiritual commitment that allows us future opportunity to be in the Kingdom of God.

We are reminded by the apostle Paul that we are to keep the Feast, put leavening out of our homes for seven days and to eat unleavened bread. But, Paul meant more than just eating physical bread. “Therefore purge

out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:7-8).

As we approach the spring Holy Day season, the Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread, we are admonished

to beware of leaven: the puffed up self-righteous hypocrisy of the Pharisees, the false doctrinal concepts of the Sadducees and the leaven of Herod, which is this world’s demonic political and religious system.

We are to “to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness” and substitute “the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” with the guiding hand of the true Bread of eternal life, Jesus of Nazareth. 🍁

Is it Leavening?

By United News Canada

During the Days of Unleavened Bread we are to have no leaven or leavened products in our home (Exodus 12:15, 19 and 13:7). 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 can be accomplished either chemically (as with baking soda) or biologically (as with yeast). The following is a list of leavening agents to be on the lookout for as we near the Feast of Unleavened Bread.



But which ingredients are leaven?

Photo by Anna Tarazevich on Pexels.com

In preparation for this most important festival, we remove items from our homes that contain leavening agents. Items such as bread, cake, crackers, cookies, cereals and pies require careful checking of ingredients.

- **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.

- * Sorbitan monosterate: A flavour and texture enhancer. Not leaven of itself.

- * Sodium Caseinate: A milk protein, not a leaven

- * Sodium Silicoaluminate: A fine powder that is used to keep cocoa, salt and other products dry, not a leaven

- * Polysorbate 60: A preservative; not a leaven.

- * Egg whites: Not a leavening agent. While beaten egg white can be stirred into dough, it does not spread through dough as leavening does and is not leavening.

- * Steam or air (such as in popovers or angel food cake). The same principle as egg whites (above) applies; there is no leavening agent mixed through the dough.

A wonderful array of recipes for Unleavened Bread can be found at: <https://www.ucg.org/members/recipes/unleavened-recipes>. There are a number that are gluten free. 🍁

Tools You Can Use

By United News Canada

No doubt many of our readers use the search tools on the www.ucg.org website to look up articles on particular subjects. This is a great way to access a wealth of information on biblical topics.

However, did you know that there are also Bible Study “tools” available on the UCG-Canada website? These valuable resources can be found at: <https://www.ucg.ca/bible-study-tools/>. They provide insight and deeper understanding on a variety of biblical themes, making them a helpful addition to personal study and preparation.

As you prepare for the upcoming Spring Holy Days, we encourage you to explore the Bible Study tools page related to both Passover (<https://www.ucg.ca/bible-study-tools/passover>) and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (<https://www.ucg.ca/bible-study-tools/unleavened-bread>).

These pages contain a wide selection of articles designed to help you prepare both physically and spiritually for the Holy Day season. Whether you are looking for historical context, practical applications, or spiritual lessons, these study tools provide a valuable guide for meaningful reflection and observance.

The following are just a few of the many titles related to Passover:

- *Betrayed by a Friend*

- *Christian Paradoxes*
- *Gethsemane*
- *In Favour With God and Man*
- *Lessons From Footwashing*

Similarly, here is a sampling of the first few titles related to the Feast of Unleavened Bread:

- *Anticipating the Spring Feast*
- *Bunny Rabbit or Unleavened Bread?*
- *Don't Bite Your Tongue*
- *Grandma's Lectures*
- *Leaven: The Puffed-Up Principle*

Perhaps there was an article you read a few years ago that had a lasting impact, and you would like to revisit it, but you cannot recall which issue of *United News Canada* it was in. Or maybe you are a new reader eager to explore past articles that could offer valuable insights.

Either way, this ever-expanding resource is available for you to utilize at any time. By taking advantage of these study tools, you can enrich your understanding of God's Word and grow spiritually.

Another helpful resource for

the Spring Holy Days is the collection of unleavened recipes available at: <https://www.ucg.org/members/recipes/unleavened-recipes>. These recipes can assist in meal planning for the Feast of Unleavened Bread while also helping to reinforce the important spiritual lessons behind this observance. Why not take a moment to check out these resources and make the most of this special time of year?

There are two weekly-refreshing resources online that may help reinforce your Bible study:

Weekly Bible Personality – This feature highlights a new biblical character each week. You can explore this resource at <https://www.ucg.ca/resources/bible-personalities/>.

Weekly Insightful Bible Quote – This page is dedicated to quotes from influential people throughout history who found great value in the Bible. You may be pleasantly surprised by who is featured and, more so, by what they said. Check it out at <https://www.ucg.ca/resources/insightful-bible-quotes/>.

A final page worth visiting offers a biblically themed diversion. It features a word-guessing game based on scripture, where you'll have six chances to guess each day's five-letter word found in the Bible. Try today's puzzle at <https://www.ucg.ca/resources/bible-wordz/>. 🍀

December National Council Meeting

By Edwin van Pelt

The National Council meeting took place on Monday, December 16, 2024. It was conducted remotely with all available National Council members present.

The agenda included an opening prayer followed by opening comments by the Chairman, Lloyd Tee-taert.

The minutes from the September 2024 National Council meeting were approved. The Governance/Ethics Committee Chair, Jim Lucas, read the National Council Code of Ethics.

A series of updates followed. The first was given by Ministerial Ser-

vices Team Coordinator, Rainer Salomaa, followed by a National Office update from Anthony Wasilkoff. A Media Team update was presented by Paul Wasilkoff, who also gave a brief report on the most recent Council of Elders meeting.

The 2025-2026 Operations Plan was presented by Anthony Wasilkoff. Treasurer Bill Dimovski then presented the 2025-2026 Budget. The National Council approved both and they will be sent to the National Conference for ratification in March 2025.

National Council Secretary, Edwin van Pelt, provided the National Council with a review of the ballot

tabulation process.

Michael Erickson presented a proposed bylaw amendment for consideration. Parliamentarian Linda Wasilkoff gave an update on some proposed amendments to the Member Appeal Policy. The amendments reflect some updates made by the Council of Elders.

The formal session of the meeting ended with prayer and was then followed by an informal meeting related to the replacement of the Director of Operations.

The next National Council meeting is scheduled to be held on Monday, March 10, 2025. 🌐

A promotional poster for Camp Wildrose 2025. The background is a soft-focus image of pink wildrose flowers. At the top, the text "CAMP WILDROSE 2025" is written in large, white, serif capital letters. Below this, "UNITED CHURCH OF GOD-CANADA" and "SUMMER YOUTH CAMP" are written in smaller, pink, sans-serif capital letters. On the left side, there is a circular logo for the United Church of God - International Association, featuring a globe and the text "United Church of God - International Association" and "Preparing a People". On the right side, the dates "July 23-27, 2025" and the location "Darwell, Alberta" are listed in white, sans-serif font. Below that, "Registration is March 2-April 20" is written in pink, sans-serif font. At the bottom right, the text "Register online at" is in white, followed by the website "www.ucgedmonton.org" in pink, sans-serif font.

CAMP WILDROSE 2025

UNITED CHURCH OF GOD-CANADA
SUMMER YOUTH CAMP

July 23-27, 2025
Darwell, Alberta

Registration is
March 2-April 20

Register online at
www.ucgedmonton.org

Women's Enrichment Weekend

Chosen for a Purpose

Esther 4:14 "... Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?"

God chose to call each person for a purpose.
Are we preparing our hearts and minds to
step out on faith when the opportunities
arise?

Come join your spiritual sisters
"on the road less traveled"
in God's majestic Southeastern BC mountains
for an
Enriching weekend
of fellowship, learning, and fun discussing
God's purposeful calling and strengthening of
our faith.

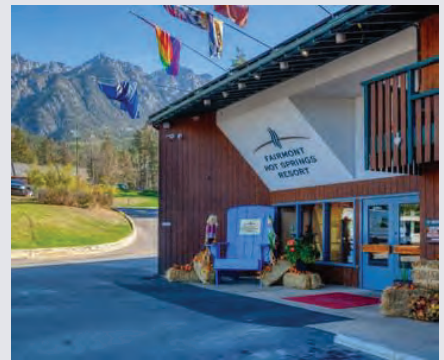


Fairmont Hot Springs Resort

<https://www.fairmonthotsprings.com/>

Fairmont Hot Springs
BC, Canada

**March 28 - 30
2025**



More details to be sent at
a later date via
Edmonton Enews and
posted on the
Women of Valor website:
<https://women.ucg.org/>

For questions contact
tonyaerickson34@gmail.com

News From Across Canada

Clothing Exchange

In these times of escalating costs, clothing can be very expensive and many people struggle with purchasing basic necessities. Appropriate Sabbath wear can be hard to find in stores, as well. With these concerns in mind, the Edmonton/Leduc congregation hosted a clothing exchange on December 14.

Members were asked to bring to church any unwanted or outgrown clothing, particularly Sabbath wear, but any type of clothing in good condition was welcomed. People could then select whatever they needed for their own use. All remaining items would be donated to charity. Tables were set up around the church hall and labelled men's, women's, children's, shoes and other items. Shopping bags were on hand to take home new treasures.

The response was amazing! The eight long tables set up were insufficient to hold everything. As a result, the coat racks and other spaces were also put to use. In addition to dresses, shirts, skirts, and pants, there were many suits, shoes, ties, and purses donated as well. The hall rang with energy, excitement and happy chatter as everyone looked through the vast selection, suggested items to a friend, or asked for a friend's opinion.

At the end of the evening, most members left with at least

a few new items. Most remarkable though, was the generosity of the members for others. The sheer abundance left over for donation filled many, many bags and could barely fit in the vehicle!

Angelina Chrestenson

Wild Game Social

On December 29, 87 brethren travelled from all over Alberta and British Columbia to the home of Owen and Susan Davis in the rural area of Darrow, Alberta, to attend this annual traditional social. The weekend really began on Saturday evening, after everyone had attended services. A number of out-of-town travellers enjoyed fellowship and a sleepover at the Davis'.

The next morning, after a large breakfast, the children headed out to the big hill for tobogganing fun. The weather that day was mild (-5 C) and



Playing hockey outside

Photo by Jessie Cuthbert



Warmth in visiting

Photo by Heidi Poffenroth

sunny with a recent snowfall. Brethren began to arrive around lunchtime, to enjoy hot chili before heading down to the lake for skating and hockey, or playing board games indoors.

As the sun set, the skaters returned and more brethren arrived for supper - barbecued wild meat donated by our congregational hunters, and potluck dishes, salads and desserts. This year's wild game included moose, deer and antelope, with additional home-grown lamb, smoked salmon, and smoked chicken. It was a true smorgasbord feast!

After dinner, everyone enjoyed fellowship and board games. The children (mostly teens this time) headed to the rumpus room for a Just Dance competition.

After another sleepover and a hearty breakfast, the out of town brethren headed home. It was a wonderful weekend

of bonding with our Christian family, enjoying good food, interesting and uniting conversation with lots of laughter and fun.

A quote from Warren Farrell - "A family that plays together has the tools to stay together."

Susan Davis

Games & Bowling

Wintertime means shorter days, longer nights and cooler temperatures. The indoors can be more comfortable than the outdoors, so it is a good opportunity for indoor social activities.

After the service concluded on January 11, the Surrey congregation enjoyed food, fellowship and a game of Pictionary. Brethren tried their hand at drawing a variety of biblical scenes from the Old and New Testaments. It was fun! It tested our knowledge. The drawing might not have been worth a thousand words, but still a good few!

After sunset, we went 5-pin bowling at nearby Scottsdale Lanes. Everyone cheered each other on. Whether we made hits

or misses, each bowler brought a lot of enthusiasm!

Having special social activities helps build camaraderie and unity. Everyone had a lot of fun, along with making good memories. Wintertime has its blessings, as do all seasons!

Dale Craniford

Italian Potluck

On Saturday evening, January 18, the Edmonton congregation enjoyed a delicious Italian themed potluck followed by a fun-filled evening of carnival games!



Some of the felloshipping brethren

Photo by Angela Chrestenson

The evening began with a traditional cake walk (although ours was a cupcake walk). Nearly 60 participants walked around a numbered circle, hoping to land on the number drawn to win a beautifully decorated cupcake. Afterwards, it was game time!

A number of families and individuals brought a variety of carnival games and set up booths around the building. The air was filled with carnival music and laughter as brethren of all ages tried their hand at

games like fish, toss, spin, and shoot for prizes! Other activities included a beach themed photo booth with fun dress up props, a giant Snakes and Ladders game and a giant Jenga game.

To add to the fun, we were blessed with our very own clown (Evelyn Davis) who made balloon animals for the children and a face painter (Holly Wozny). Stan and Lee Kitt provided us with a delicious carnival snack concession.

It was wonderful to see brethren of all ages playing together. The combined effort of the whole congregation to put on the carnival demonstrated our ability to work together as a team. It was a tremendously fun evening!

Susan Davis

Chili Social

The Sabbath of December 28 was a wonderful opportunity for the Hamilton congregation to host a chili and chat social. It was well attended with guests coming from the Toronto con-



Having a ball bowling

Photo by Ralph Cortes



The winning chef

Photo by Carol Pallotta

gregation. The sermon by Mr. Anthony Wasilkoff was an excellent reminder of the essentials of our fellowship with God and brethren and was followed by a delicious meal of chili.

Six different chili recipes were available from mild to hot including vegetarian and white chili options. Each person was encouraged to sample each chili and record his/her favorite. Votes for the favourite recipe were counted and the winner was Annie Calderelli who received a gift certificate prize.

The meal was rounded out with salads, garlic bread and chili toppings. The desserts were plentiful and everyone enjoyed breaking bread together and fellowship. After sunset friendly games of cards, trivia and chess were played and all too soon it was time to depart.

Carol Pallotta

Fiftieth Anniversary

November 23, 2024, was Fred and Theresa Duhan's fiftieth

wedding anniversary. The North Battleford congregation presented the couple with a cake and a fiftieth anniversary blanket.

Fred and Theresa are retired. Fred was employed by Highways and Theresa spent most of her working years as receptionist at the local radio station, CJNB. They have two children, Michael who is married and living in Colorado with his family and Trista who lives nearby in Saskatoon.

Adeline Sanoy

Joseph Broschak Obituary

On November 14, 2024, our beloved Joseph Francois Xavier Broschak passed away at the Roozen Family Hospice Centre in Edmonton with his loving wife, Lynne, at his side.

Joe was predeceased by his late wife, Mary; his parents, Michael and Anne Broschak; his brothers Frank and Mike; and his son-in-law, John Atamaniuk (Sharon).

He is survived by his loving wife, Lynne; his daughter Sharon (John); his grandson Randy; his stepdaughters Roberta (Robert) and Amanda (Michael); and grandchildren Vicki, Morgan, Ethan, Mika and Lindsay.

Joe's career began in the oil-field industry where he spent many years in the automation and instrumentation sales sector. His career led to many trips to the United States for both work and vacations, with South Padre Island, Texas, being his favorite destination.

He enjoyed working in the garden, tending to the trees, feeding and watching the birds, dancing to The Emeralds at the Red Barn, dinners at La Bohème and telling the story about how he once shook hands with astronaut Neil Armstrong. Joe also loved talking about the famous Leduc Number 1 and how the Leduc started out. This discovery transformed the Alberta economy, supplanting farming as the primary industry and transformed Alberta into one of the richest provinces in the nation. It helped begin the petroleum industry in Western Canada. Joe saw it all happen first hand.

Joe and Lynne were very instrumental in helping the UCG Edmonton congregation get started. In the beginning, they made the three-hour trip from Edmonton to Calgary for services shortly after UCG began in Canada and continued until the Edmonton congregation began. Joe was a highly active pillar member and deacon for the formation of UCG in Edmonton.

Joe would bring to church his



50th Anniversary Couple

Photo by Marlene Hiebert



Joseph Broschak

Photo by Lynn Broschak

list of all the different Feast sites they had attended since becoming a member of the Church of God. This was a wonderful conversation starter allowing all to compare notes and learn from members who were around in the early days of the Church.

He rarely missed Sabbath Services, even when he was not feeling very well. You could depend on him being there if at all possible, even in extremely cold weather or bad driving conditions. No matter what, Joe would be there, and his simply being there was a great encouragement to others. He loved God, he loved God's Word, he loved God's church, he loved God's way of life and He loved all of God's people and held them close.

Anthony Wasilkoff

David Davis Obituary

David Davis was born in Beamsville, Ontario, on March 30, 1946. He was the first child of Harold and Dorothy (Comfort) Davis. He came into this world with two sets of grandparents and two great-grandparents and was the first grandson of the family. Both sides of his family were United Empire Loyalists.

He was raised on a mixed farm west of Smithville, Ontario. After high school he attended the Radio College of Canada in Toronto. Upon graduation in 1967, he travelled to Alberta to work for Alberta Government Telephone (now known as Telus) in the Engineering department. There he met Evelyn whom he married in 1971. They were blessed with five children -

Roland (Silvie), Owen (Susan), Colin (Sabrina), Ian and Heather (Darren).

Dave and Evelyn's first home was an apartment in Edmonton, but both had been raised on farms and wanted to live in the country. They moved to Darwell, Alberta, where Evelyn was raised and they have lived there ever since. David continued to work for AGT until 1990. He then left the phone company to farm full time. They raised commercial turkeys, beef cattle and grew hay. In 2008, they retired from the poultry business, built a new house, but continued to raised beef cattle and hay crops.



Dave Davis

Photo by Evelyn Davis

David always had a deep belief in God, and used to say that it was when he was listening to Garner Ted Armstrong and receiving the *Plain Truth*, that he prayed for a good wife. At that same time Evelyn's mother, Ava Stephenson, was also receiving the *Plain Truth* magazine. Together, David and Evelyn and her mother began attending ser-

vices in Edmonton, and later the congregation that was formed in Evansburg, west of Edmonton. All three were baptized in July 1974. David was later ordained a deacon in the 1980s.

In 1996, the decision was made to begin attending the United Church of God in Edmonton and continue the walk with God and the truth of His Word. David served his congregation faithfully until his illness prevented him from doing so.

David loved the outdoors. His favourite pastime was fishing; ice, river, lake or ocean. He also enjoyed hunting, cutting wood, playing the occasional game of golf, building jigsaw puzzles in the winter, travelling with his wife and gardening.

David loved to serve the brethren and was known as a kind, gentle and generous man. Many friends often spoke of what a great listener he was and of his compassion for others. David and Evelyn hosted many church socials at their home over the years. David had many, many friends and will be missed by all who knew him.

David is survived by his wife Evelyn, his five children, 12 grandchildren and his siblings. His funeral service was conducted by Edmonton Pastor, Mr. Michael Erickson and opened by prayer by Mr. Robert Berendt.

We thank the brethren for the many prayers and cards on his behalf. He died peacefully on Sabbath morning, August 24, 2024, after battling cancer for three years. He now awaits the resur-

rection by our merciful God.

Evelyn & Susan Davis

Dale Van Zant Obituary

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Dale Van Zant on Wednesday, December 18, 2024, at Humber River Hospital in Toronto after a brief illness.

Dale was beloved husband of Amy, wonderful brother to Mark (Brigitte) and Lana (Allan) Dunlop, and cherished uncle to Melissa, Jeffrey and Kaleb and great uncle to Noah.

Dale was born on May 16, 1954, in Port Credit, Ontario, to Lois Pat Orr and Calvin John Van Zant. He grew up in the small town of Little Current on Manitoulin Island, which is a closely-knit community of about 1,000 where everyone knew each other on a first name basis.

Dale participated in various sports during his early school years, including softball, golf and curling. While attending Laurentian University in Sudbury, he played competitive football for the Sudbury Spartans during the summer months and competed with other teams throughout Ontario. He was part of the Canadian Luge Team for the 1980 winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York. He was the back up for the team.

Dale graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree in Political Science in 1978 from Laurentian University in Sudbury. He pursued further studies in 1987 in the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax, Nova Sco-

tia where he obtained a Master of Theological Studies.

Dale began to attend the Worldwide Church of God in 1992 where he met his wife, Amy. They married August 31, 1997. They began attending the United Church of God in 2002.



Dale Van Zant

Photo by Anthony Wasilkoff

Dale was involved in a variety of careers including sales, career counselling and teaching English as a second language. He worked in diverse areas dealing with services to seniors, and cultural awareness and English improvement for newcomers to Canada and outplacement. He also counselled people and organizations in periods of transitions garnered in both the private and not-for-profit sectors.

Dale was ordained a deacon in the United Church of God on September 18, 2010. He was hired in the National Office of the church in 2013 where he looked after areas of bookkeeping, purchasing and human resources.

Being an avid follower of

sports, Dale applied his background in sports to his work and emphasized these lessons through his messages to the brethren – to find a better way of improving our lives, to show concrete results, and find a better way of furthering God's work.

Dale's infectious smile and humour are well known amongst his friends and family. Many times he would elicit laughter with his well-spun jokes. His warm personality, smile and service left positive impressions in the hearts of people with whom he came in contact. Dale taught and encouraged others to take action and to be proactive in their daily Christian life.

Michael Caputo remembers Dale as a faithful part of the Toronto church family and employee of the National Office. "His desk there was constantly covered with tasks to be completed. He was always warm and welcoming to visitors to the office and always had funny jokes to share. He was able to extract lessons from history and infuse his practical and useful messages with them."

Cindy Ridi has this to say about Dale: "Dale is unforgettable and irreplaceable. When visiting the Toronto church, we always found Dale and Amy serving the brethren. Dale took his call to serve very seriously. It is who he was. His smile, laugh and wit are seared in our memory. We are grateful to have known him."

Dale will be forever remembered and forever missed.

Amy Van Zant

Why Did Jesus Say, “Beware of Leaven?”

By David Palmer

During His ministry, Jesus often used the expression “beware” (be careful, cautious). He told His followers to beware of men for they will deliver you up to the councils, and scourge you in their synagogues. Beware of false prophets that deceive. But, there was another warning He issued -- something He told His disciples to beware of -- and the first time He warned them, they didn’t get it. “Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. Then He charged them, saying, ‘Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.’ And they reasoned among themselves, saying, ‘It is because we have no bread’” (Mark 8:14-16) (NKJ throughout).

The disciples at this point did not perceive what Jesus was really getting at. Bread itself was not the point. Leavening was! “How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but to beware of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Matthew 16:11-12).

“Leaven translated as sour dough, is the remnant of dough from the preceding baking which had fermented and become acid” (*Easton’s Bible Dictionary*). It is “a small portion of fermented dough used to ferment other dough and often symbolizing a corruptive influence” (*Holman’s Bible Dictionary*).

By analogy, Jesus used three symbols of leavening, the Pharisees, the Sadducees and King Herod. Leaven of the Pharisees represented hypocrisy (Luke 12:1). The name Sadducees translates “righteous ones” but in fact they were leavened with self-righteousness and false teaching. They did not believe in the resurrection of the dead (Luke 20:27, Mark 12:18). The leaven of Herod represented political and religious worldliness under the influence of the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4).

Our world has been permeated (corrupted) with the leaven of the devil. When Jesus referred to the sin of leaven, He was referring to sins of the heart. “Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man” (Matthew 15:11). “But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man” (verse 18).

Leaven has corrupted the true teachings of Christ. Many churches, while claiming to be Christian, are in fact leavened with tradition. The apostle Paul had to address just such a concern in the church at Galatia. Some members felt converts had to be circumcised. This was Jewish tradition and Paul explained it is circumcision of the heart that he is referring to. This argument over tradition, like leaven, permeated the whole church causing division. “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love” (Galatians 5: 6). “A little leaven leavens the whole lump” (verse 9) meaning a little corruption

can spoil a whole congregation.

Paul also dealt with a leaven problem within the congregation of the church at Corinth. An individual was committing incest. In responding Paul compared the problem to leavening the entire church. “And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you” (1 Corinthians 5:2). “Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?” (verse 6).

Each year when we observe the Passover we recognize that Jesus is indeed our bread of life, the true bread that came down from heaven, that He was without sin, the unleavened bread of life (John 6:35, 48).

Following Passover, we observe the “Days of Unleavened Bread” an observance symbolizing the putting away of sin, as we remove all leaven products from our home. We are also commanded to eat unleavened products symbolizing taking in more of Jesus Christ. When we partake of unleavened bread that bread becomes part of us. We ingest it into our physical body, a portion of the fuel that keeps the body functioning.

When we observe the Passover and symbolically eat of the body and drink of the blood of Jesus Christ, it is spiritual fuel. To eat His body is to ingest into our hearts and minds more of our Saviour. We are continuing the covenant made at baptism,

See “Beware” on page 6.