



# United News Canada

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## A Promise Like No Other

*By Anthony Wasilkoff*

Prior to His departure, Jesus instructed His followers not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father. Promises are important. Some make promises but fail to keep them. Others never intend to. We know rare individuals who, when they make a promise, do all in their power to fulfill it. For this reason, they make very few promises—and work hard to deliver when they do.

The Holy Bible is replete with precious promises. In 1 Kings 8:56 we read, “Blessed be the LORD, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: there hath not failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant.” The Great God we serve issues promises to His people. When conditions are met, He is pleased to follow through. His Word is sure, and His followers can always depend on it.

Waiting for something we really want or need is usually not easy. Delayed gratification is a mark of maturity. Children typically abhor waiting and prefer immediate delivery. Adults can be the same. But we often aren’t ready right away. Preparation may be needed so we’re capable of handling what we hope to receive. You may remember the promise of your first mode of transportation—perhaps a tricycle, scooter or bicycle. You might recall having to grow into

it. Maybe your dad attached wooden blocks to the pedals so you wouldn’t have to wait quite so long to ride!



A young boy yearning for a bike.

*Image generated by OpenAI’s DALL-E*

Another benefit of waiting is heightened appreciation. As we await the day we finally receive our first something, we imagine how wonderful it will be. These are the sweet anticipatory musings of receiving the object of our affection. Memories may take you back to fond thoughts about having your own room, bed or bicycle. Or you might have imagined what it would be like to have your first pet to care for and be friends with.

The people of Israel, at the time of Christ’s first coming, anticipated His arrival with growing ardour. In *The Day Christ Died* (by Jim Bishop) we read: “The Messiah was a sweet national obsession. It was ecstasy beyond happiness, joy beyond comprehension; it was balm to a weary farmer’s bones as he lay with his family waiting for sleep; it was

the single last hope of the aged, the thing a child looked to a mountain of snowy clouds to see; it was the hope of Judea in chains; the Messiah was always the promise of tomorrow morning. This solemn surge of singing in the heart of every good Jew was the core of Judea at the time of Jesus. This was the topmost stone in the climb toward eternity.”

We know from Acts 2 that the promised Holy Spirit is described as a very special ‘gift.’ There is nothing we can do to earn it. Nothing obligates God to give it to us. Even so, there are conditions we must meet, clearly identified in verse 38.

Recently we observed the Spring Holy Days—giving due emphasis to the annual high days. Now we are on the countdown to the Feast of Pentecost. More than ever, we appreciate the vital gift of the Holy Spirit and the opportunity to rehearse and review God’s plan of salvation and the confidence we can have in each promise made by our Heavenly Father and His Son. 🌹

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# Pentecost and God's Law

*By David Palmer*

Pentecost: the Feast of Firstfruits, the Feast of Weeks. There are many beautiful applications to this Feast. It symbolizes God's first harvest of those called in this age, as a kind of firstfruits. Christ is the first of the firstfruits.

Pentecost represents a seven-week harvest period, the early harvest, and so is sometimes also referred to as the Feast of Weeks. But the Holy Day we call Pentecost also has deep significance to the law of God, both in the Old and in the New Testament.

As we follow the story of the Israelites leaving slavery in Egypt, we see that God provided the miracle of bread from heaven (manna) in the second month (Exodus 16) after the Israelites had observed the Passover in Egypt. In Exodus 17, we find the miracle of water that came forth from the rock.

In the New Testament analogy, we learn that Christ is that true Bread from heaven and that Rock that quenches our thirst.

Christ was in fact the Old Testament lawgiver and the New Testament magnification of that Law.

By the time the Israelites reached the wilderness of Sinai, they were in the third month, almost 50 days since they kept the Passover before departing from Egypt. "In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai" (Exodus 19:1). Then God prepared the people to receive the greatest set of laws the world has ever known. He told Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the Lord will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people" (19:10-11). "Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly" (19:18). This is similar to when tongues of fire descended on the apostles, as recorded in Acts 2.

As the story unfolds, we come to one of the most powerful and most poignant of all biblical chapters -- Exodus 20 and the giving of the Ten Commandments. Some biblical writers and scholars have speculated that the Ten Commandments were given to Israel on the same day the New Testament calls Pentecost.

These ten laws are at the very heart and core of God's revelation to mankind, and the fundamental teaching of Christianity. From Alfred Edersheim's commentary *Old Testament Bible History*: "The revelation of God's will, which Israel heard from Mount Sinai, is contained in the ten commandments, or, as they are called in the Hebrew original 'the ten words.'" These commandments were written on two tables of stone, which were to be kept within the ark of the covenant with the mercy seat over them.

It is not easy to say exactly how the commandments were arranged on the two stone tables, but we can conclude that the first four were on one table, the next six on the other.

## United News - Canada

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We do know for certain that the law was written on both sides of each stone (Exodus 32:15). They show love to God and love to neighbour. They also show both the physical application and the spiritual as magnified by Christ.

We see the fifth commandment forms a transition. We are to honour our parents – a duty given greater emphasis than our duty to love our fellow man. Indeed, this fifth command, our relationship to our earthly father symbolizes our relationship to our Father in Heaven. That most of the commands are in negative form may imply that sin rather than obedience is natural to us.

The first command doesn't just forbid idolatry in thought, word and deed, but teaches us to love, fear, serve and cleave to the Lord. The second shows the manner in which we should serve God. The third forbids profaning God's name by using it for any untruth, vainly, cursing or in any manner of swearing. The fourth requires personal, domestic and public rest from labour, while the fifth commands honour to parents, and implies reverence to our Heavenly Father.

The last six commandments then go outward (murder, adultery, theft, and bearing false witness) with the final command getting to the innermost part of our hearts – forbidding us to have wrong desire for something belonging to someone else.

Alfred Edersheim believed that the law couldn't have been dreamed up by man because mankind can only observe the happiness and joy that comes from following it. That the commandments were placed in the mercy seat shows that we can

receive salvation through the grace of God.

Ancient Israel's priests were instructed to take a small sheaf of the early harvest and wave it before God. This was a ceremony that allowed God to accept the wave sheaf offering, the very first of the firstfruits of the spring harvest. The same ceremony took place when a risen Christ, the firstborn from the dead, was presented before God the Father.

"Now the first day of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb" (John 20:1). Bullinger's *Companion Bible* tells us that the phrase "first day of the week" in the original Greek is "Temiaton Sabbaton." This could be rendered, "On the first of the Sabbath's." So, while it was the first day of the week, it was also the first day for counting seven Sabbaths to Pentecost, which is the day Jesus was accepted by His Father as first of the firstfruits.

"Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God'" (John 20:17).

Christ our wave sheaf was presented to His Father as the first of the firstfruits on the morrow after the Sabbath during Passover season. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming" (1 Corinthians 15:22-23).

God gave ancient Israel the Ten Commandments, His perfect law. Then years later God gave His Holy Spirit to those firstfruits who were called to keep and observe the law given at Sinai. A risen Jesus told His disciples "Teach all nations to observe all things I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20).

The power to do that came on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts 2. It was the day the gift of the Holy Spirit was given in full measure. "Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:3-4). God's presence was here just as it was on Mount Sinai.

As the story goes on, we are told of a miracle both in the speaking and hearing, in that people of different languages heard and understood in their own language 'the wonderful works of God' (verse 11). When Jesus promised to send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, that promise was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost.

God's wonderful plan of salvation is portrayed in the seven Holy Days of the year, and Jesus Christ is the focus of each of those Days. In receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, we allow Jesus to live His life again through us. "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John 15:10). This is why the United Church of God continues to observe and to celebrate this special day known simply as Pentecost. 🍁



# You Do Remember!

*By Linda Wasilkoff*

“You *do* remember” was a phrase my father sometimes used when speaking with me. Usually it was related to some Biblical principle he wanted me to remember.

When I was seven, we moved back to the farm and I was enrolled in a one-room school—quite a different experience from attending a town school! It wasn’t too bad though since there were cousins and neighbourhood children that I knew attending there. There were only a dozen or so students in total so it wasn’t long before I knew everyone and was fitting right in. Or at least mostly.

That brings me to one of those “you do remember” conversations I had with my dad. You see each Monday the main topics of conversation at school revolved around the cartoons the other kids watched on Saturday morning or the trip they made into town on Saturday (nothing was open on Sunday).

Even worse was that the majority of the students attended the church right across the road from our school and on Monday morning I heard about how much fun they had in Sunday School or how much they looked forward to Vacation Bible School. Of course, I had nothing to add to any of these conversations.

So, I asked my Dad if it would be a good idea for us to attend that church too. After all, they were all good Christians and we didn’t have a church close enough to attend. It seemed like a pret-

ty good argument to me. That’s when the “you do remember” talk began. He began to remind me of the Ten Commandments and the instructions I had been given over the past few years.



A little girl thinking and remembering

*Image generated by OpenAI's DALL-E*

Of course, still not wanting to be left out, I believe I said something like, “But what if they are right?” He then explained some of the basic tenets of both religions. He ended by telling me that even if the other religion was correct and we continued in our beliefs, by their standards we would still be okay. But, if our beliefs were correct, then we couldn’t neglect the Sabbath and be okay.

This was a lesson that perhaps I mostly agreed with, however some time later I asked if I could go to town with my cousin on the Sabbath. Dad just reminded me (you do remember) that I knew the right thing to do, but he said that if I wanted to go then I could. I did – but knew it was wrong and thus didn’t enjoy

the day very much at all. That was the last time I went to town on the Sabbath.

As I look forward to the commanded Holy Day known as Pentecost, I’m reminded that this is the anniversary of the giving of the Ten Commandments. Sometimes they are difficult to keep, but we realize that they are there for our good.

I’m grateful to my Heavenly Father for giving those laws to us. I’m also grateful to my parents for teaching me to “remember” them. I think of the hours I spent on my dad’s lap as he and my mom were going through the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. I got to type the Scriptures out that were cited in the course.

My parents could have completed the lesson much faster without my help, but what we were studying began to make sense to me. I also remember that when we picked up our mail and had received the “test” back I would be just as upset as they were if they only got a 98%. Then we would go home to find what we misunderstood and why.

It is a wonderful time of year. First we observe the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread, and symbolically put away sin. Then, we go on to celebrate both the giving of the law and the founding of the church, and even more comforting, the giving of the Holy Spirit to help us on our spiritual journey. These Holy Days continue to say to me, “you do remember!” 🍁

# Caring for Widows and Widowers

*By United News Canada*

In the book of Acts we see that the first deacons were ordained because widows were being neglected. That seems to show the importance of both deacons and widows. Later in James 1:27 we are told that pure religion includes visiting widows in their affliction. So, what can we in the church of God do to help widows or widowers? This is a situation that many in the church find themselves in and others of us will sooner or later.

One such widow recently lamented the state of widowhood. She spoke of going to community activities and then crying all the way home because she knew that there would be nobody to greet her once she got back home. She shared how she had to fill empty hours by watching television, playing on the computer and just looking at the four walls. Unfortunately, she, like so many others around the world, lives many hours away from the nearest church congregation, making it difficult for anyone to spend one-on-one time with her.

Each of us has a responsibility to not only take care of our immediate family but to also reach out to others. How can we do that? Here are some ideas.

1. Personal visits: Perhaps deliver flowers to a shut-in or take a widow out for lunch.
2. Personal cards and letters: If you aren't able to visit in person, a card or personal letter can be something that

will subsequently be read over and over whenever the individual needs a boost.



A phone call can be a real treat.

*Image generated by OpenAI's DALL-E*

3. Phone calls: If you have someone's phone number, give them a call on occasion. It doesn't have to be lengthy – sometimes a person's health means a shorter call is better.
4. Flowers/gifts: This is especially appreciated on a Holy Day or during the Feast.
5. Cards or gift baskets: These items from the congregation or the youth in a congregation are so very much appreciated.

Even if we all work together to reach out to all those who are living in isolation, it isn't enough. What can those who are alone do to help themselves? Perhaps they can utilize some of the same ideas listed above.

When individuals reach out to someone else, it often makes their own difficulties seem less overwhelming. What widows/widowers have most is time, and they can utilize it more constructively by thinking of and praying for others.

Those prayers make a huge difference as do phone calls. One widow can understand another widow's plight better than anyone else. The example of Anna the Prophetess (Luke 2:36-38) continues to blaze brightly even after all these years. We know she was at least 86 years old yet still actively serving. Matthew Henry says that she not only did that which was good, but did it from a good principle and with a good end.

Let us not wait for someone else to act—each one of us is called to be the hands and heart of Christ. The needs of widows and widowers are not abstract or distant; they are real, present, and sometimes quietly endured. We must rise to the challenge with love that is intentional, consistent, and rooted in godly compassion.

Whether we're young or old, near or far, there is always something we can do. A note. A prayer. A visit. A call. A kind word. These small acts carry eternal weight. Let us commit, both individually and collectively, to being a lifeline to those who feel left behind—redeeming loneliness with love, and filling empty spaces with connection and care. This is not just kindness. This is pure religion. 🍁

# March National Council Meeting

*By Edwin van Pelt*

The National Council met on March 10, 2025, to discuss a number of items. All Council members were present along with Bill Dimovski (Treasurer), Edwin van Pelt (Secretary), Linda Wasilkoff (Parliamentarian) and one guest. The Ministerial Services Team Coordinator, Rainer Salomaa was present for the first part of the meeting.

Following the opening prayer, Chairman Lloyd Teetaert gave some opening comments. This was followed by the review of the December 16, 2024 National Council minutes. One correction was noted and the amended minutes were approved.

There had been a special Council meeting to choose the next Director of Operations that was held on February 3. Minutes from that meeting were approved as presented.

Rainer Salomaa provided an Ministerial Services Team update. It was noted that the monthly average attendance at Sabbath services was 403 for those meeting in person and 477 including those who connect to services using Zoom.

There was a slight realignment of pastors in Manitoba and Saskatchewan along with an upcoming hire of a ministerial trainee who, along with his wife, will relocate to Saskatchewan after some initial

training. The hiring is planned for July 1, 2025.

Anthony Wasilkoff, Director of Operations, gave a National Office update. The transition date to the new Director of Operations is scheduled for July 1, 2025. The office staff is still dealing with the death of Dale van Zant. His duties have been divided up among the other staff members. Amy van Zant remains as part-time receptionist. The lease for the National Office space will be up for renewal on April 1, 2026. Options are being reviewed.



Treasurer Bill Dimovski provided a financial update. Overall the income is above budget as a result of substantial donations from a first-time donor not previously on file and the proceeds from the dissolution of another Church of God group. Expenses are below budget. The annual audit is scheduled to begin in a few months.

Media Team Coordinator and Council of Elders member, Paul Wasilkoff gave updates. On the media side, he highlighted some of the website views: the Daily Bi-

ble Reading Program generates the most views followed by the Bible Word Puzzle and the ucg.ca website. The highest number of visitors to ucg.ca are from the U.S., Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia. During the most recent COE meetings, UCGIA President Rick Shabi was not reaffirmed, but he was not fired.

An edited Member Appeal Policy 7.1.2 and additional related documents were reviewed. After some discussion, all were approved.

A proposed bylaw amendment (Bylaw 8.6.3) was reviewed. The Council approved the forwarding of this proposed amendment to the Amendment Committee.

The term of one of the Amendment Committee members was set to expire on March 31, 2025. The member was contacted by the Secretary and agreed to sit for another three-year term pending approval by the National Council. The Council approved the reappointment. A new alternate Committee member must be chosen.

The ballot results were announced for the 2025-2026 Strategic Plan, 2025-2026-Operations Plan and 2025-2026 Budget. All were approved.

The meeting concluded after the closing prayer. 🙏



# Alberta Teen Camp

*By Heidi Poffenroth*

The United Church of God will sponsor a Teen Summer Camp at the Alberta 4H Center west of Wetaskiwin, Alberta, for teens 13 to 18 years old. Activities will focus on living God's way of life: developing relationships with each other, with Jesus Christ and God the Father. Summer Camp dates: Tuesday, August 26 through Monday, September 1, 2025.

Our Teen Summer Camp is a five-day spiritual and physical learning adventure for our youth. At this camp, we hope to teach and encourage our teens to live by God's Fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:20. We hope to encourage strong friendship bonds between our teens and to teach them lessons in responsibility, interdependence, and interdependence. We aspire to give them a love of nature and God's creation, as we spend time outdoors. Most of all, we hope to provide them a wonderful opportunity, full of fun, adventure and God's spirit.

UCG Alberta Teen Camp has a vision of God's people growing together in unity, harmony, interdependence and most of all, Godly love. As a church family, we can use this camp as an opportunity to

develop our spiritual characters, our God-given gifts and talents, and find avenues to use and practice Godly love.

The summer camp will be located at the Alberta 4H Center near Westeros, Alberta. Directions will be provided for all those who register. Camper fee is \$300. There is a suggested donation of \$75 per volunteer to cover food costs. The registration deadline for both campers and volunteers is June 1, 2025. Teens 13-18 should be registered as campers.

The Alberta Teen Camp will use the Camp Wildrose's financial setup to facilitate all monetary transactions. Please make cheques payable to: Camp Wildrose

You may also choose to e-transfer your fees/donations. Please send e-transfers to [campwildrose@gmail.com](mailto:campwildrose@gmail.com) (no password needed).

Financial assistance may be available for those in need. Please contact camp director Larry DeLong.

Volunteers and campers should plan to arrive on Tuesday, August 26, before 5:00 p.m. Camp will

commence at 5:00 p.m. with an orientation meeting and welcome. Camp dismissal will be at noon on Monday afternoon.

Contact information:

Camp Director: Larry DeLong  
home: (403) 345-4051  
Cell: (403) 382-7525 (phone or text)  
email: [lgdelong@shaw.ca](mailto:lgdelong@shaw.ca)  
908 21A Ave  
Coaldale, AB T1M1B4

Edmonton Pastor: Michael Erickson  
Home: (250) 562-7092  
Cell: (250) 640-4701  
email: [m.a.erickson@shaw.ca](mailto:m.a.erickson@shaw.ca)

Documents will automatically be emailed after the online registration is completed. Signature required documents need to be submitted prior to camp.

Mail "signature required" consent forms to: Larry DeLong

**\*\*All paperwork pertaining to volunteer positions must be filled out, signed and submitted prior to your arrival at camp, including criminal record checks. 🍁**

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**"Thousands" from page 16.**

go in bringing New Covenant teaching into full focus, but seeds for this great foundation of truth were planted across Judaism and the surrounding Hellenistic cities. The gift of Jesus Christ as the Passover Lamb was for all mankind. The connection with Isra-

el remains clear—part of God's promise to Abraham. Jesus taught both Gentiles and Jews—though mostly Jews. His teachings, which led to the firstfruits represented by Pentecost, were for all nations to know. Jesus fulfilled the promise made to Adam, Eve, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and all the world—that a "seed" would come

and bless all nations (Genesis 12:3).

This New Covenant began in a powerful and unexpected way—but one planned from before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:17-21). Pentecost is the Feast Day that declares the firstfruits of the harvest. 🍁



2025

# Alberta UCC TEEN CAMP

**August 26-September 1**

**Westeros, Alberta**

**Ages 13-18**

**Online registration coming soon**

Canoeing	Escape rooms
Archery	Teamwork Challenges
Volleyball	Christian Living Lessons
Ultimate Frisbee	Riflery (pellet guns)
Frisbee golf	Survival skills
Geo Caching	Final day Bible Skits





# Be Actively Involved!

*By United News Canada*

The United Church of God values member input. In Canada, two National Council seats are reserved for laymembers. These individuals also become “members of the corporation,” which differs from being part of the spiritual body of the church. This provides a meaningful way to be involved!

This summer, each official congregation will again be asked to nominate someone to be considered for the National Council. Who can participate? Since we operate as a corporation, legal requirements apply. To take part, you must be a baptized member of UCG-Canada, with a completed membership form on file. If you’re baptized but haven’t filled out the form—and want to be recognized as an official member—please see your pastor.

If you’ve already submitted the form, now is the time to think about who in your congregation might serve well on the National Council. Some criteria to consider are:

- The person must be baptized and be an official member of the United Church of God-Canada.

- The person must be able to attend a face-to-face National Council meeting each year (3 or 4 days per meeting) during his/her three-year term. The person must also be available to take part in three online meetings per year.
- The person must agree with and support the Fundamental Beliefs of the church.
- The person must agree with and support the policies of the church.
- The person must be able to communicate via the computer.
- The person should be someone of integrity and godly character.

Council business is sometimes tedious and sometimes exciting. A council member needs to have the ability to read the Bylaws with understanding as well as have the ability to plan for future growth.

So, how can you know who in your congregation would be a good choice? Most congregations will

have a list of those who are available to be selected. Start by looking to see who is on that list. Then pray for wisdom for your choice and especially for the collective decision of the congregation. Then, get to know your fellow brethren – their dedication to the church and our beliefs.

As you narrow down your choices, ask some questions of the individuals. Each year some are chosen who must decline because they would be unable to take the necessary time off work to attend council meetings. In other words – do your homework and be actively involved in this important process!

Through the years, there have been some very capable laymembers chosen to serve on the National Council. Their wise input has been valued. The collective ideas and the advice received from many different regions (from Vancouver Island to Newfoundland) and backgrounds have helped the National Council to make more balanced decisions through the years.

Don’t miss this opportunity to be actively involved! 🍁

## Food Handling Safety

*By United News Canada*

Our church has a reputation for having great potlucks. They are a very important part of providing an atmosphere for becoming better acquainted with each other and promoting unity.

Whenever a group of people get together and share food, it is important to take extra care to safely prepare, store, re-heat and serve that food. This becomes even more essential as hot weather

approaches.

One outbreak of food poisoning would not only be physically dangerous to many of our dear brethren, but could also poten-

tially have legal repercussions for the Church. If we all work together, we can greatly reduce the risk of food poisoning at any of our upcoming gatherings.

This article cannot cover all aspects of food safety, but will touch on the fundamentals. There are additional guidelines listed on many different websites, such as: Health Canada at [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca) and Partnership for Consumer Food Safety Education at [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org). These websites give helpful advice for preventing foodborne illnesses.

### **At Home**

Most foodborne illnesses are the result of improper handling. Bacteria can thrive in food that has been improperly handled and stored. Here are some tips to help reduce potential problems:

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water before and after handling food and when you switch from one food to another.
- Be sure your kitchen countertops and utensils are clean and sanitized. Don't forget other areas that come into contact with your hands or food (dish cloths, faucet handles, sink, refrigerator handles, appliances, etc.)
- Have separate cutting boards for raw meats and sanitize after each use.
- Wash lids of canned foods just before opening to prevent contamination from getting

into the food.

- Air dry dishes and utensils if possible or dry them with clean kitchen towels if you are not using a dish washer.
- Thoroughly sanitize and wash anything that comes into contact with raw food before re-using.
- Store raw meat and poultry in containers on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator or freezer to prevent raw juices from dripping onto or touching other food.
- Remember that the danger zone for bacteria to grow is between 4 and 60 degrees Celcius (40 to 140 degrees Fahrenheit). Do not keep food in the danger zone for longer than two hours.
- Thaw food in the refrigerator to be sure it stays at a safe, constant temperature.
- Promptly cool and refrigerate foods to be taken to a potluck after they are cooked. Very hot items can be cooled at room temperature until steaming stops. Leave the lid off until the food is cooled to refrigeration temperature.

### **At Church or Socials**

Since food for potlucks is, for the most part, prepared in advance and warmed at church, specific precautions need to be taken.

- All kitchen help should wash their hands for at least 20 sec-

onds with soap and warm water before and after handling food and when switching from one food to another.

- Be sure all countertops and utensils are clean.
- Keep all cold foods cold and all hot foods hot!
- Reheat food to a safe internal temperature of 74 degrees Celcius (165 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Bring all gravies, soups and sauces to a full, rolling boil, stirring during the process.
- Discard uneaten leftovers after they have been reheated.
- When heating in a microwave, stop the microwave midway through reheating and stir the food so that the heat is evenly distributed. If the microwave does not have a rotating tray, rotate the container several times during cooking.

Let us all diligently do our part so that everyone can continue to enjoy the meals without any unwanted side effects.

Members of the congregation should also remember to minimize any undue risk to others and maintain a high level of hygiene. Remember that it is not only bad manners, but also unhealthy, to eat while going through a food line as germs can be transmitted to food on the table or to the serving utensils. It is equally important to use the provided utensils (not your fingers) to obtain food from the serving trays so as to avoid cross contamination. 🍁

# News From Across Canada

## Quebec Ball Hockey Social

On January 18, 2025, several of the Greenfield Park and East Farnham congregations got together to play ball hockey at Dek Anjou in the eastern end of the island of Montreal.

There were approximately 20 players participating in the two-hour game that began at 5:30 p.m. For some players, it was only their first or second time to hold a hockey stick. For others, it was the first time playing in 50 years! The age range of the players was from five years old to 73 years old. Our pastor, Bruno Leclerc, handled himself very well considering that he had not played in 49 years.



Floor hockey participants

*Photo by Chantel Leclerc*

Several nationalities and nations were represented in this ball hockey game: Australia, Chile, Haiti, Honduras, Italy, Mexico, Panama, the Philippines, Spain, Switzerland, and, of course, Canada. In the previ-

ous ball hockey game played on November 16, 2024, one of the goaltenders was from Malawi!

The children dominated the play time for the last thirty minutes of the game giving the older players a much-welcomed break. After a friendly yet competitive game, all the players and supporters went out to eat at the local *Toujours Mikes* family restaurant. The pleasant and hard-working waitresses accommodated thirty-two hungry customers! Since it takes a long time to serve all these customers, it was approximately 11:30 p.m. by the time everyone left the restaurant. Some of the participants said that this dining experience had a Feast of Tabernacles atmosphere.

Because of the success, the players and supporters have expressed a strong desire to have more of the same in 2025-2026.

*Pasquale Delfino*

## Quebec Potluck Social

January 25, 2025, was rich in fellowship activities enjoyed by all the various ages. The Montreal and East Farnham Churches were able to all come together and share an extra special Sabbath from beginning to end.

José Figuora began our day with a spiritual appetizer on the importance of Honoring Our Word to stimulate our spiritual appetite. Then Pat Delfino brought us the main course of Lessons From Two Kings of Ju-

day: Abija and Asa.

Sufficiently filled and inspired spiritually, we headed downstairs for an amazing physical feast; and a feast it was. We had a chance to taste delicacies from Honduras, Chili, Italy, Quebec and a number of other cultures.



Brethren enjoying games

*Photo by Chantel Leclerc*

After the delicious potluck meal, we spent the evening having a great time of games, laughter and fellowship. The evening began with an exercise that highlighted the importance of being careful about making quick judgements on first impressions, even if we think we have all the facts, because things are not always what they seem. Then the games began!

Marieanne Delfino had put together eight games: musical chairs, bouncing a ball into muffin tins, blindfolded cotton ball pickup, picking up mini marshmallows with chop sticks,



balancing jelly beans on a pop-sicle stick held in your mouth, cup pickup with a balloon, balloon pop (keep other players from popping the balloon tied to your foot while trying to pop their balloon), and transferring a cup full of water from one side of the table to the other while rolling up the toilet paper it is sitting on.

Everyone was divided into six teams and each game was played by one person per team, with points being made and accumulated for the team of the winners.

Everyone had been asked to bring a small gift, so at the end of the evening, the losing team began by going up to choose a gift, with the winning team being the last to go up. Each person had the choice to take a gift from the table or choose to take a gift that someone else had already chosen. After a fun evening laughing and enjoying each other's company, everyone had a small gift to take home.

*Sharon Descoteaux*

### **Windsor Service**

Ed van Pelt's service to the Windsor congregation on March 1 was such a blessing inasmuch as he was willing to come the distance from his home prepared with a soul searching sermon, and went far out of his way to pick up Clara DeVlugt. You can't imagine the joy that was brought to Clara, who is now 90, to be with her Windsor friends and to spend time with Ed. She is a true servant of God who has few opportunities to enjoy Christian

fellowship.



Clara DeVlugt & Edwin van Pelt

*Photo by Marilyn Anderson*

On March 22, Jim Lucas was the guest speaker and gave both the sermonette and the sermon. In addition to his wife, Almeda, he brought Bob Jetty and Clara DeVlugt. It is always wonderful to have visitors.



Clara DeVlugt, Almeda & Jim Lucas, and Bob Jetty

*Photo by Marilyn Anderson*

This reminded me of our earlier days in the church when brethren loved brethren so deeply, that no distance was too far to drive to pick up an elderly member of God's family so they could

be with their spiritual family. I know some circumstances can prevent such a happening, but careful planning can also open avenues of service.

*Marilyn Anderson*

### **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*

### **Western Canada WEW**

On the March 28 weekend, 50 ladies from Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Washington, California and Ohio came together for a Women's Enrichment Weekend in Fairmont Hot Springs, British Columbia. The theme for the weekend was "Chosen for a Purpose."

It was a wonderful time of fellowship, enrichment, fun and relaxation.

The weekend began with the largest two-day snow event northern Alberta has had since 2003. It hit Thursday and Friday



A group shot from the Sabbath

*Photo by Heidi Poffenroth*

(travelling day). But, the storm did not stop the ladies from coming! They were determined to join their sisters for this wonderful weekend. Several had stories of events that happened along the way.

Friday night we had a short welcome. Then to get the fellowship started, we went onto "speed friending" led by Heidi Poffenroth. Afterward we had more fellowship in the meeting room as well as in the hot springs.

Sabbath day started with a late brunch followed by Sabbath services. Michael Erickson gave a sermonette discussing how one is "chosen" only as a result of the choice to accept that calling, which led into Roc Corbett's sermon about the special blessing of being chosen. He discussed being chosen individually and as a body, the great purpose of God in choosing us and our response as individuals and as a body.

We had two lovely pieces of special music. One was by Eve Shaw, Janelle Anderson and Rebecca Anderson from Prince

George. The other piece was by Randa Chrestenson from Edmonton. Kim Eckert supplied live piano music for services and Angelina Chrestenson helped with the Audio Video to make everything more special. There are so many talented ladies.

Synnove Teetaert kicked off the afternoon meetings by introducing our guest speaker, Nancy Corbett. Nancy gave a wonderful and encouraging speech titled "Discovering God's Purpose for Us." Evelyn Davis and Susan Davis followed with short inspira-

tional speeches titled "And God Called You to Grow" and "Such a Time for Martha."

We had two sets of table topics this year to give the ladies more time to discuss things in smaller groups. The first was on Saturday afternoon led by Willetta Ellington with the topic "Stepping out on Faith." This was taken from a women's discussion guide prepared and shared by Jim and Joan Tuck. The second was on Sunday morning with the topic "Abraham and You, Chosen for a Purpose" prepared and presented by Lee Kitt. Both table topics led to many discussions at the tables.

We had additional time for fellowship after our group buffet dinner Saturday night in the meeting room or in the hot springs. Then we ended Saturday night with a "Paint and Chat" activity led by Heidi Poffenroth and Wendy Burton. Ladies were able to take home their artwork, although some had to leave it because of travelling on an airplane. But fun for all those who participated!



Nancy Corbett presenting at the weekend

*Photo by Heidi Poffenroth*





The results of the painting activity

*Photo by Heidi Poffenroth*

Sunday mid-morning we had our group session titled “Living God’s Purpose” led by Tracey Jongerius, a registered psychologist. This is always a great addition to the weekend and always helpful to the ladies! We really appreciate Tracey taking the time for this every year.

Brenda Thompson gave a wonderful short speech at the end of our Sunday schedule with a very moving “flash mob” video showing how each person makes the journey more special.

A big thank you goes to Joyce Iiams and the Spokane Women’s weekend. They supplied all our ladies with lovely notebooks as gifts. Lee Kitt designed a beautiful removable label with our theme for every lady to take home. Evelyn Davis supplied all the table decorations and then a few ladies got to take home the centerpieces. The Prince George congregation donated several gifts that were distributed via a draw. Thank you to everyone who went above and beyond to make the weekend more special.

Lots of fun, fellowship, bonding and enriching took place. On the drive home, people were able to see the majestic landscape that was not hidden by fog as it was on the way to the weekend.

God definitely protected and blessed His daughters for this wonderful weekend together!

*Tonya Erickson*

### **Patty Whyte Obituary**

Sadly, Patricia Rae Whyte lost her battle with cancer on Monday, March 31, 2025. In her battle, Patty was so strong and so brave for so long. Her example will serve as inspiration for her loving family forever.

Over the day, on Sunday, March 30, Patty was visited in her home by her children and grandchildren. It was hard for Patty to speak, but she greeted everyone and listened intently as everyone spoke with her. She smiled and hugged her family one by one when they left. Patty loved life. She loved her family. That night her husband sat

by her bed and held her hand for a while, then retired beside her. Somewhere around 1:00 a.m. she slipped peacefully away.

Patty was born on November 20, 1952, in Swift Current, Saskatchewan. Growing up, her mother’s pet name for her was “Patsy Rae”. “Patsy Rae” was much loved by her parents, Jean and Ray Humble, and all her extended family in Swift Current. Patty is survived by her brother, Bob, her husband, Mike, her son, Ben, and her daughters, Keri-Jean, Elizabeth and Brittany. Patty has eight grandchildren. She is predeceased by her parents.

Patty and Mike became good friends in high school. Their friendship developed into true love, and they were married in Swift Current on June 24, 1973. Patty attended the University of Calgary starting in 1971 and had started attending Worldwide Church of God in Calgary. Mike was attending University of Regina and also had started attending Worldwide Church of God. Patty and Mike lived in Regina for a year while Mike finished his degree. Then Patty and Mike went to Pasadena, California, in 1974 to attend Ambassador College as married students.

In 1976, Patty and Mike moved to Waterloo, Ontario, to attend university. They attended the Kitchener congregation. Their oldest child, Ben, was born in Waterloo. In 1978, they moved to Toronto and attended the Toronto congregation. Keri-Jean was born in Toronto. In 1981, Patty and her family moved to Medicine Hat, Alberta, where Elizabeth was born. While



in Medicine Hat, they attended the Maple Creek congregation. In 1985, they moved to Calgary, where Brittany was born. There the family attended Worldwide Church of God Calgary congregation until 1996. In 1997, Patty and family started attending the United Church of God in Calgary, where Patty has served as a deaconess.

Patty loved family times at Fairmont Hot Springs, British Columbia. Patty and her family went to Fairmont two or three times a year – skiing in winter; tennis, golf and barbeques in summer; swimming all the time! To Patty’s children, Fairmont was almost a second home. Patty loved the change of pace and the relaxation. All the family have also loved camping – from the early days in simple tents to comfortable trailers in later years! Patty had many happy memories of group camps, family excursions and private times with just herself and her husband.

Since 1994, Patty and the family have lived on an acreage just south of the city of Calgary. Patty loved gardening. Every year she had many beautiful flowers growing. Patty loved the peace and quiet of the country. The view of the mountains brought her joy. Patty loved to stand with her husband and watch the sunrise. Patty and her family have many cherished memories of family events and good times together “on the farm.”

Patty’s children and grand-

children loved her very much. Patty had no greater pleasure than to watch her grandchildren in their sporting events. Everyone who knew Patty loved her, and she loved everyone she knew. Patty was kind and gen-



Patty Whyte  
Photo by Mike Whyte

tle. Her smile, her laugh, and just her presence could warm up a room. Patty’s absence leaves a great hole in the lives and hearts of her family. Everyone who knew Patty will miss her.

At the beginning of Patty’s battle with cancer, when she was in the hospital, her son, Ben, wrote on her board “FREEDOM.” Patty cherished “FREEDOM.” The thought encouraged her through all the dark times:

“You will know the truth, and

the truth will make you free” (John 8:32).

Patty survived a ten-hour surgery in August 2023 to remove the cancer. It seemed to go well, but in March 2024 scans revealed that the cancer was back. Many people prayed for Patty over this trying period. Many people expressed their concern and love. Patty’s family thanks everyone for their prayers, concern, and love. Over this last year, Patty and her husband took solace in the knowledge that their separation will be temporary – soon they will be **TOGETHER FOREVER**. Throughout the ordeal, Patty’s favourite slogan was “KEEP GOING”.

Patty’s funeral on April 8, 2025, was an honourable goodbye to a wonderful person. About 130 friends, relatives and family attended. The funeral was officiated by Rainier Salomaa, United Church of God—Canada Pastor and a good friend of Patty for nearly 20 years. The tributes by Patty’s children and grandchildren were particularly moving. With the help of their cousin, Patty’s children created a spectacular video tribute. A large number of the guests came to the cemetery where Patty has been laid to rest on a quiet, peaceful, beautiful hillside to wait for that last trumpet call and the voice of God to welcome her to the Kingdom of God.

*Mike Whyte*

# Thousands Upon Thousands

*By Robert Berendt*

This time of year, many Christians think about the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In a recent movie, Jesus is depicted as a person with long hair, scruffy looking and wearing rags. Yet the Bible tells us that at age twelve, Jesus was already so learned and wise that He could talk easily with the most educated teachers in the temple (Luke 2:40–47). Jesus astonished all who heard Him at this young age.

The movie contradicts what Paul taught—that a man ought not to have long hair (1 Corinthians 11:14)—and at Jesus' death, His cloak was so valuable the soldiers gambled for it (John 19:23–24). We do not often hear of the incredible work Jesus did during His ministry. It is educational to have a map of the Promised Land before us when we trace some of the cities Jesus visited. He was more than remarkable.

The book of Mark shows a pattern in the activities of Jesus and His followers. Jesus had a powerful impact on every city He visited. He cast out demons, healed the sick, and preached about the Kingdom of God. He grew more and more famous. Mark explains Jesus spoke with great authority and everyone was looking for Him (Mark 1:27, 37–39). He continued through every city and village of Galilee. There were ten Hellenistic cities east of the Jordan called “Decapolis,” where Jesus also taught and did many miracles.

Jesus travelled to the area of Tyre and Sidon, far up the coast of the Mediterranean Sea (Mark 7:24, 31). We read of Jesus feeding thousands of men, women and children on many occasions.

Jesus became so famous that people in every city and village of the Promised Land knew of Him. His teachings reached as far as Damascus and Haman, the present capital of Jordan. Jesus sent 70 disciples with the power to heal, cast out demons and perform miracles to cities and towns in the north, south, east and west of the Promised Land. Then He followed them to these centers. People who heard He was coming went out to meet Him, bringing their sick and needy (Luke 10:1).

No wonder the chief priests and scribes feared a major uprising as they planned to capture and kill Jesus (Mark 14:1–2). It's also clear that Jesus and His work were well known throughout the Middle East. Obviously, at His capture, crucifixion and death, the news spread quickly. The news of His resurrection would have spread quickly as well.

During the 40 days Jesus remained on earth after He rose, news of Him must have travelled

far. Paul noted Jesus was seen by His followers and by a crowd of 500 at one time. That was before Pentecost—that eventful day we look forward to. We must not think the news hadn't reached the entire region.

Jesus ascended to the Father as He said He would, and God's Holy Spirit was given on Pentecost. That exciting account is in the book of Acts. We are told that people from distant lands came to observe the Passover, as did large crowds from nearby. That was normal since Pentecost was a Holy Day and people came to the temple if they were able.

We should note that the news of Jesus—His life, death, and resurrection—had spread across the region. When God acted in power on Pentecost, the eleven spoke of Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 2:22–24). Those deeply religious people responded by repentance and baptism (Acts 2:41). These were not people unfamiliar with Christ, but many who had seen Him and were still deeply moved by the events they'd witnessed.

They were so affected that they defied the chief priests. Some priests also repented, aware of all these things. 3,000 were baptized that Pentecost and many wonders followed. God kept adding to the Church daily (vv. 41–47). This was only the beginning. Bold speaking by the eleven and others increased (Acts 2:13–19). Soon the number of men reached 5,000—and likely as many women. Thousands repented during that Pentecost season.

There was still a long way to

See “**Thousands**” on page 7.



A sheaf of wheat

*Image generated by OpenAI's DALL-E*