



# United News Canada

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## Feast and Elbow Grease

*by Paul Wasilkoff*

**M**any of us have family photo albums. Not many contain recent photos, however. It seems that photo albums are becoming antiquated. In one of my family's albums are photos of my sister and me when we were quite young. One shot features a state park with an old hand pump. On that trip, many years ago, I was fascinated by the pump and tried to work the handle. I was far too small to use it properly, so a kind old gentleman helped me, under the watchful eyes of my parents. With his help, water flowed from the spout.

Those of us who have used such ancient technology can attest that no electricity is needed—just some elbow grease. The harder a person pumps the handle, the faster the water pours out. Conversely, the slower we pump, the slower the water flows. If we need a lot of water, we'll have to pump longer. A single cup only requires a few pumps.

The Holy Days are like old-fashioned pumps: we get out of them what we put into them. In other words, we must invest in God's Feasts to truly benefit from them. Let's look at three ways we can invest ourselves in the upcoming Fall Holy Days.

### 1. Praying for Inspired Messages

Inspired messages are, well, inspiring. We should spend time

praying for God's blessing on the weather for each Feast. When we do, God's intervention can make all the difference. As important as atmospheric conditions can be, shouldn't we spend at least as much—if not more—time praying for the messages? Let's commit to praying in advance for God to guide the preparation and delivery of each message. Let's also be sure to regularly ask for God's blessing on what is said and what is heard (Colossians 4:2-4).

### 2. Volunteering to Serve

How does a Holy Day or the Feast of Tabernacles function? In order to run smoothly, many people coordinate their efforts to serve the rest of the congregation. At times, a very small group ends up shouldering a significant load. When we volunteer, we help share the burden. Not only does this allow us to meet new people, but it also reduces the risk of burnout. It also means that more may get done. Let's actively invest in the success of the upcoming Holy Days by committing to serve (Galatians 5:13).

### 3. Attending with Purpose

Another vital area for investment is our attendance. Health challenges or illness may sometimes prevent us from gathering. However, if we are well and able, we should make

every reasonable effort to answer God's summons to the Holy Day convocations. If we've prayed earnestly for inspired messages, we should be there to hear and absorb them—including the opening night service. We should long to be among God's people as often as we can. Our very presence, encouragement, friendly smile, and supportive conversation can have a tremendous impact. Let's invest ourselves in being there for each and every service we can attend (Leviticus 23:4).

We get out of the Feasts what we put into them, much like an old hand pump. When we arrive at a Holy Day already invested in its success, we are far more receptive to the good things that will unfold. When we pray for God's inspiration, actively serve, and commit to attend as often as we are able, we will receive blessings in abundance (Galatians 6:7).

May we all have a blessed and inspiring Fall Holy Day season! 🍂

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# Special Recognition

## Director of Operations: Mr. Anthony Wasilkoff

*by Almeda Lucas*

On June 21, at the end of the Saturday night meeting of the ministerial conference, there was a special tribute from Gary Antion, for Anthony Wasilkoff's 25 years of service as the Director of Operations for UCG - Canada. A video collage set to music with 25 years of memories of various family and church events and council business was shown. This was followed by presentations by Lloyd Teetaert (Chairman of the National Council) and John Elliott (President of UCGIA).

On behalf of the United Church of God - Canada, Mr. Teetaert presented Anthony Wasilkoff with a beautiful watch engraved with "11/99-06/25; D.O. - UCG-Can; I Tim 5:17 NIV"

which reads "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honour, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching."



*John Elliott, Anthony & Linda Wasilkoff  
Photo by Merrie Elliott*

On behalf of the Home Office, Mr. Elliott, President of UCGIA, presented a crystal globe memento engraved with "For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister" Hebrews 6:10.

Both men expressed their deep gratitude for Mr. Wasilkoff's many years of service as the Director of Operations, Canada.

The evening ended with many congratulations and heartfelt appreciation for this remarkable achievement. Mr. Wasilkoff will continue to serve as pastor and member of the Ministerial Service Team. 🇨🇦

### United News - Canada

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# Introducing the New Director of Operations

by UNC

A few years ago, Anthony Wasilkoff gave notice to the National Council that he would like to step down as the Canadian Director of Operations and gave 2025 as the target year for this to happen. According to UCG-Canada bylaws, the National Council is responsible for appointing the Director of Operations. The Governance Committee was given the task of creating a procedure for finding someone to fill this position. The committee recommended a procedure based on the one used to select the president for UCGIA. This began with council members nominating the person they thought would be best suited for the position. Those nominated individuals then submitted a resume, which was followed by a personal interview. The National Council was then to choose a successor.

On February 3 of this year, the National Council held a special meeting to determine the next Director of Operations. Paul Wasilkoff was selected and the transition date was set as July 1.

Many in Canada are familiar with Paul. He grew up in the church here in Canada. He spent his pre-teen years in Ontario, his teen years in British Columbia and young adult years in Alberta where he attended the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology receiving a diploma in Business Administration. After graduation in 1997, Paul married Coreen Groom whom he met through single activities in the Calgary church area.

Paul was working for a specialty



*Paul Wasilkoff*

*Photo by Coreen Wasilkoff*

advertising company in Calgary when ABC began. The couple decided to step out on faith, move to Cincinnati and attend ABC. Paul was asked to be president of that class, which gave him interesting leadership opportunities. Following ABC, he was offered a position as a ministerial trainee back here in Canada, but had already accepted a job in the IT department of the UCG Home Office in Cincinnati. There he learned much about the technicalities of working with computers, negotiating contracts and working with the various ministers worldwide. He was also able to continue doing IT work for Canada.

Eventually, Paul was persuaded by the Canadian National Council that there was a need for Canadian ministers in Canada. He and his family moved back to Canada ten years ago. Since that time, he has continued as IT manager for UCG-Canada, pastored congregations in Southern

Ontario and was coordinator of the Media Team.

For the past few years, Paul has been a member of the National Council as well as the Council of Elders. This will help him with perspective as he takes on the role of Director of Operations in Canada.

Paul and Coreen have three sons who are 17, 21 and 23 years of age. The oldest was recently married. All three are active in the local congregation. The family has enjoyed wilderness camping where they canoe to a remote campsite. All have some artistic and music ability. Paul took voice lessons as a youth and in recent years has learned to play the mandolin. Another recent hobby is learning to sail. We hope that he will still find some time to pursue these hobbies. An important lesson from sailing is the adage, "we cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails." 🍁



# God's Fall Feasts

by Robert Berendt

Four of the seven annual Holy Days that God calls “My feasts” (Leviticus 23:2) fall closely together in the seventh month of God’s calendar. On the first day of the month of Tishri, the Feast of Trumpets (also called Rosh Hashana) occurs. It is followed ten days later by the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). On Tishri 15, the Feast of Tabernacles begins and lasts for seven days starting with a Holy Day. This Feast is followed by the last of the seven annual Holy Days on Tishri 22. Since this day is right after the Feast of Tabernacles, it is celebrated along with Tabernacles.

One amazing fact that the Bible teaches us is that the Word which “was with God and was God” (John 1:1) became flesh and dwelt among men (John 1:10, 14). John tells us that the world was made by Him and through Him, but the world did not know Him. When we correctly understand those verses, we can see that what we have noted as days that God calls “My feasts” are also the Feasts of Jesus Christ. We are also informed that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8). That knowledge should make us pay more attention to the Holy Days today. Jesus Christ, before coming in the flesh, gave those days to Israel with the thought that Israel would teach the whole world. The “law” was intended to be taught by God’s holy nation Israel, but sadly Israel failed totally.

The Feast of Trumpets points to

the second coming of Jesus Christ. Trumpets were used to herald the approach of some great events or rejoicing. Jesus referred to the sound of a trumpet when He returns with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30-31). This day signifies the direct intervention of God in the



*A View of the Canadian Rockies*

*Photo provided by Kaitlyn Anderson*

affairs of this world. It is shown to be a day of great terror and darkness as the return of Jesus Christ will not be quiet and peaceful. Satan will make war and humans will be infected with Satan’s hateful attitude. God will act swiftly and decisively to end the influence of Satan. There will be great turmoil (Revelation 19:19-21).

The Day of Atonement is a most solemn Holy Day. It is a day of fasting and of rejoicing. God pointed out the great meaning of this day as a time of renewal. It was the day on

which the responsibility for the sins of the world was laid upon Satan (the Azazel goat) and the blood of the sacrificial goat (symbolizing Christ) was taken and offered for the cleansing of the people (Leviticus 16:7-10). This day was symbolic of a new beginning for mankind in their relationship with God. We rejoice knowing that the blood of Christ has atoned for our sins and we stand before God cleansed through Him (Romans 5:11). The King James Bible uses the word “atonement” in this verse and the New King James uses “reconciliation.” As a further joyful event, every 50 years, the Jubilee year was celebrated on the Day of Atonement. This was the year where people could start over again by being freed of all debt and the return of their possessions. It was a year in which God provided food and crops were not to be seeded. No wonder it was greatly anticipated and joyful—though it was also solemn and a day of fasting.

This day symbolizes the elimination of sin and unity of man with His Creator. It symbolizes starting over with a clean slate with God.

The Feast of Tabernacles symbolizes God “tabernacling” with man. God did appear in the tabernacle of old with Israel, though their sin cancelled the relationship. The meaning is still great for Christians today, as the Father and Son now dwell within the converted person and within the church (1 Corinthians 6:19). In the future, God will make

# God's Fall Feasts

His abode with His children. A new Jerusalem will be here on earth and the laws of God will go forth from there (Isaiah 2:2, 3). Dwelling in temporary “booths” depicts man’s temporary physical residence in this world where Satan operates. God’s people today are likened to Israel—but we are to come out of this world and all of its ungodly ways. God is leading His people as pilgrims to the “Promised Land” where His laws will go forth to the world. We also remember that our bodies are only temporary in the flesh and we look forward to the permanent spiritual body God has promised.

The seventh annual Holy Day is attached to the end of the Feast of Tabernacles since it is the day after that Feast is over. It is a solemn day of rest (Leviticus 23:39) and is sometimes referred to as the Eighth Day of the Feast of Tabernacles, though it is a separate holy Sabbath. There is no direct explanation of a purpose for this last Holy Day. Some have thought that it simply is a conclusion of the three times God commanded that His people appear

(Exodus 23:14, 17). That explanation seems weak. Coming after all the Holy Days which are rich with meaning have ended, it might rather be the final or culminating act of God to complete the plan the Holy Days reflect. There will be a time where there is no more death—therefore no more physical beings (Revelation 21:4).

God’s just and perfect way must leave room for the long dead and forgotten to come to know Him. They could not make a choice or a determination to obey Him unless they first have heard the Truth. The Church of God has thought this last Holy Day shows the Kingdom of God on earth for a thousand years and is the final work God does for mankind. The dead will be resurrected and taught the truth. Only then can they choose to repent and obey God and receive forgiveness. This would be offered to the whole house of Israel (Ezekiel 37) and to the rest of mankind. We find an allusion to this theme in Revelation 20:11-15. The dead stand before God—these are the dead who had not yet been resurrected. The books (Bible) were

opened to their understanding and their judgment begins. We have thought this period would last for about 100 years (Isaiah 65:15-25).

At the end, all humans will have been judged after a fair opportunity. Those who succeed go on to eternal life. Those who fail go to the second death (Revelation 20:14 and 2:11). The only time when there will be no more death can be when there are no human beings alive. Revelation 21:4 speaks of a time when there will be no more death. It is fitting that this is the conclusion of the Holy Days of God, as they outline His plan.

What is going to occur beyond the Last Great Day? All of eternity stretches out before us, but little is said about that, except that we will be like Him (Psalm 17:15, 1 John 3:2). Keeping the Holy Days that Jesus declared greatly increases our understanding of the Father and Son—and gives us the training we need to be part of His future. That is why the days are joyous and happy days—celebrating the most awesome future that can be imagined. 🍁



*St. John's scenery*  
Photo provided by Maureen Delong



*Midland Children's Choir*  
Photo provided by Amy Vanzant



# Are you packed yet?

by Linda Wasilkoff

At Ambassador College each male student was required to be in Ambassador Club while each female had to be in a Women's Club. Almost without fail during one of the first club meetings of the college year, there would be a speech about how to pack for the Feast. It was seemingly a very simple speech, but I have used many of those hints for years.

Students were assigned to a festival site and also assigned where to stay at the site. Transportation was also taken care of for us—usually we traveled together by bus. So, packing for the Feast was the main thing required of us—other than saving some second tithe.

As an adult, planning for the Feast has many additional details with which to be concerned. Our planning began shortly after the Spring Holy Days when the Festival Brochure was released and we could see what Feast sites would be available this year. Shortly after receiving the brochure, registration was opened. Registering for our Feast site is an important step because it helps us personally to make plans. It also is important because it gives the festival coordinator and his staff the ability to make sufficient preparation for the festival site. I hope those of us who are able have also remembered to sign up for areas of service during the Feast.

After making our festival reservation, we are free to make our

own housing arrangements—that fit our own individual requirements and preferences. In some areas, the church is able to negotiate better rates when more people stay in the hotel where the meetings will be held. In other areas, this is not a factor.



## Travel Planning Checklist

Photo generated by ChatGPT

Of course, there are travel arrangements to make—whether by car, bus or plane. Perhaps you can provide transportation for someone who is in need.

By now we have most of the major details taken care of. Here we are back to thinking about packing—or rather the pre-packing. Do I need some new clothes or shoes? Do I have sufficient funds available? Do I need to go to the dry cleaners? A couple of years ago, I discovered that my usual dry cleaner had closed down and I had to find an alternative. The result—my husbands suit pants came back with a double

crease. Apparently, I need to find yet another dry cleaner!

What kind of packer are you? Some have a list that is updated each year and includes what to wear for each service. Some pack their suitcases a week or two in advance of leaving. Others will be grabbing items at the last minute. I tend to wait until the last minute because then I can go through the planning logically and am less likely to forget something or to pack too much. However, even though I don't actually do the packing until the night before leaving, I will have already taken inventory to see if there is something else I need. I remember getting to the Feast one year with a new skirt only to realize I didn't have a matching blouse. I try to avoid having that happen again. Of course, in thinking of the clothes needed (that will fit into our suitcase), we

must not forget our Bible, notebook and hymnal if needed.

What is the actual purpose of all of this planning? It is to have a happy, peaceful time once we arrive at the Feast. It allows us to concentrate on the spiritual purpose for being there (the reason for remembering our Bible) rather than worrying about the small physical problems we might have. Planning ahead helps to make that all possible. So, have you registered for the Feast? Have you taken care of all the pre-packing details? Are you packed yet? 🍁

# Practicing what we preach

by David Palmer

A subscriber to our publications recently sent a letter to the United Church of God acknowledging that the church preaches the doctrine of keeping the Feasts of God, but asked “While you teach them, do you actually keep them?”

Are these Feasts of the Lord still relevant today? And if so, why do we keep them? Are they just ‘religious’ trappings, or are we instructed to observe them for a specific reason? There is a Scripture in the Old Testament book of Leviticus that instructed the nation of Israel to observe the Feasts of God. “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, concerning the feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are my feasts” (Leviticus 23:2). The entire chapter then gives instructions from God as to the observation of these special Feasts, and when we look closely at the festivals outlined, we learn a number of lessons. One of those lessons is particularly important in answering the question as to why we continue to observe them today.

While many mainstream churches simply neglect or ignore these festivals, the United Church of God continues to observe all of the Feast days, including the fall festival, the Feast of Tabernacles. But why?

Three specific words are used each time God reminds us that the Feasts, His Feasts, are to be observed. So, let’s take a close look at God’s instructions. “These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which you shall proclaim in their seasons” (Leviticus 23:4). The word “holy” as used in this verse refers to “a sacred place” or “thing” The Hebrew word is ‘quodesh,’

from the prime root meaning “to observe as ceremonially or morally clean.” Convocation refers to “a calling out, as in a public meeting.” In other words, holy convocation is a God commanded sacred assembly of God’s people. But the word convocation means much more than that. It also means ‘a rehearsal.’ The Hebrew word is ‘miqra’ taken from the prime root of the word ‘qara’. Why is that important? Because in a word, it means the Feast days involve ‘rehearsal’ (*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*). Each week on the Sabbath, and each year as we observe God’s annual Feast days, we are *rehearsing the plan of Salvation*.

These Feasts of the Lord, including Tabernacles, are a blueprint of God’s plan for His entire creation, and as we continue to rehearse God’s way and God’s plan, we are in effect, *practicing what we preach*. We are rehearsing for the Kingdom of God.

It’s interesting to note that the first Scripture that uses the phrase “holy convocation” is found in Exodus 12:16. It refers to the Days of Unleavened Bread. The last use of the phrase “holy convocation” is in Numbers 29:12, referring to the Feast of Tabernacles.

It is as though God set the plan in motion telling us to rehearse from the beginning of the plan at the Passover season to the final fulfillment of the plan, the fall harvest of Tabernacles and the Last Great Day of judgment.

Jesus made it clear that He came to do the will of His Father, (John 5:30, John 12:49-50). When we understand that Christ is central in God’s plan, we recognize that the Messiah observed and kept all of God’s commands,

including the Feast days. And the apostles observed them, even after Christ’s death and resurrection. In fact, the apostle Paul reminded the New Testament church that all Old Testament writings were given for our learning (Romans 15:4). The word learning refers to both ‘knowledge and function’, the concept of not just acquiring information, but acting on that information.

So, whether looking at Old Testament Scripture or bringing Jesus into the picture, we still have the commandment to keep the Feasts. And each is a portion of the overall *rehearsal program* that God laid out, so that we might be better equipped as kings and priests in His kingdom.

God tells us to keep these holy convocations, these rehearsals of His plan of salvation in their season. We are to observe, to rehearse, to practice, and to continue to do so year after year. The fall harvest is the season designated by God for us to step back from our busy world for a brief period of time, and once again rehearse His marvellous plan of salvation, by observing the wonderful, spiritually uplifting Feast of Tabernacles.

One day all this rehearsal, all this practice will be over. Jesus Christ will be here and it will be time to implement all those things we learned at rehearsal. That’s why a holy convocation, a commanded assembly of God’s people is to be proclaimed, observed, and *rehearsed*. It’s why we have the command to preach the gospel. But not only to preach the gospel, but to *practice what we preach*, and that includes rehearsing God’s kingdom at the Feast of Tabernacles! 🍁

# Leisure Time and the Feast

by Rainer Salomaa

American architect Frank Lloyd Wright once told about an incident that was insignificant at the time, but had a profound effect on him later in life.

The winter he was nine, he went walking across a snow-covered field with his reserved no-nonsense uncle. As the two of them reached the far end of the field, the uncle stopped him. He pointed out his own tracks in the snow, straight and true as an arrow's flight, and then young Frank's tracks wandering all over the field.

"Notice how your tracks wander aimlessly from the fence to the cattle to the woods and back again," his uncle said, "and see how my tracks aim directly to my goal. There is an important lesson there."

Years later, the world-famous architect liked to tell how this experience greatly contributed to his philosophy of life. "I determined right then, not to miss most things in life, as my uncle had."

Unfortunately, some make the same mistake as Frank's uncle. They are uncomfortable with relaxation and spontaneity. Let's talk about leisure time at the Feast of Tabernacles and not feeling guilty about it.

Two of Jesus's best friends were sisters. Christ defended Mary's simple and honest reaction to things that were going on around her. Notice Luke 10:38-42: "Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called

Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Christ's own life demonstrated that it was okay to sometimes relax. "And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately" (Mark 6:30-32 KJV). See also Luke 5:16.

God himself rested after six days of creation. David used his leisure time to play the harp and compose some of the most beautiful poetry known to man.

I will share the following personal experience. In the early years in my ministry I covered an area of 240,000 square kilometers, which included Northern Ontario, Northwestern Quebec and James Bay. It meant: caring for scattered membership; conducting out-lying Bible studies; driving 80,000 kilometers per year; preparing for sermons and Bible studies; performing lots of weddings; planning Public Bible lectures; attending Ministerial conferences, and

taking part in "YOU" activities. All the while providing for my young family.

My wife, Claudia, bought me a plaque with a picture of a sailboat that said, "Take Time" which we put on a kitchen wall. Later when we were transferred to British Columbia, I bought a used boat in the Shuswap and enjoyed the use of it. We also went camping as a family each summer using the boat to go to remote camping sites.

Focus on the Family ran a sad story entitled "The Silver Sword: Cutting Into a Child's Heart" (September 1992, *Focus on the Family*). In it a man described an event 28 years previously. He was a Boy Scout and there was a father-son campout planned. On the day to leave, he had everything ready to load in to the car the moment his father arrived so they could meet at the school by 5:00 p.m. His dad didn't get home until 7:00 p.m.

His father explained that something had come up at work, but promised they could get up early the next morning and join the others. The boy was up early and had everything ready and loaded by the appointed 7:00, but his father didn't get up until 9:30 a.m. Then his father went on to say that he had a bad back and couldn't sleep on the ground, and asked his son to get the things out of the car because he had several commitments that day. After unloading the car, the boy saw his father retrieve his golf clubs from the garage. He realized that his dad had never intended to go to the campout with him.

How do you recalibrate a child's



heart after it has been damaged by a dad's broken promise?

God knows the value of spending time with family and friends in a stimulating setting. That is one reason that He designed the annual festivals.

This is the final festival season of 2025. It is a time to get away from it all. It is time to camp with God. We are told, "But unto the place which the LORD your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, *even* unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: And there ye shall eat before the LORD your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the LORD thy God hath blessed thee" (Deuteronomy 12:5-7 KJV).

Some of the most pleasurable times in life are dining and fellowshiping with loved ones. A problem today is that it is getting to be more difficult to eat anything with a clear conscience. We are told to: lower our cholesterol; watch our weight; eat more fiber; consume less salt and red meat; get more

calcium; reduce fat intake; use more olive oil; avoid barbecuing; eat more fish; and beware of trans-fatty acids, aluminum and lead. On top of that, some struggle with eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia.

Eating has become more complex. I read a *Newsweek* article titled, "Feeding Frenzy." It said that often the food that truly satisfies is home cooking because it reminds us that food deserves respect.

Remember the abundance that this Feast pictures: bumper crops, tasty produce, healthy soil, clean water and saving health. In the millennium, there will be no more third world children with distended stomachs dying of malnutrition and starvation. Notice, Amos 9:12-14 (KJV) "That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit *them*; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens,

and eat the fruit of them."

Let's make feasting before God a guiltfree experience. We can always go home afterwards and be more careful of every morsel that we eat.

Let's go camping with God as He instructs in **Leviticus 23:33-36 (KJV)** "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, saying, 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month *shall be* the feast of tabernacles *for* seven days unto the LORD. On the first day *shall be* an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work *therein*. Seven days ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it is a solemn assembly; *and* ye shall do no servile work *therein*.'"

This festival season is a wonderful time to add the crowning touch to 2025 with the fall festivals. Let's: take time; use this leisure time to fellowship with God; spend time together as families; strengthen the bonds of friendship; investigate life; enjoy the festival site where God has placed His name; strengthen our relationships with one another and God; increase the level of joy; and rejoice with purpose. 🍁

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### "Camp Wildrose" from page 15.

we had a fashion show with "models" featuring the latest styles in crepe paper streamer design. Musical chairs, the Canadian Hokey Cokey, beach ball fun, hot potato dance and ice cream sundae treats are all camp favourites.

On the Sabbath, many of our youth participated in the service doing song leading, technical support, prayers and special music. Services were

webcasted and watched by many of our local congregations. A few guests attended the camp service as well, and enjoyed lunch afterwards with all the campers and staff.

The last event at camp, before the hotdog lunch and goodbyes, was our race event. Traditional potato sack and three-legged races, followed by a blindfolded watermelon eating contest and a tug of war

challenge finished off a fantastic camp experience!

Our small group experienced a true family setting with all ages working and playing together. God, throughout His Word, encourages His people to dwell in unity, calling it "good and pleasant." Camp Wildrose experienced this bond of harmony and headed home strengthened in God's armour. 🍁

# June 2025 National Council Meeting

*by Edwin van Pelt*

The Canadian National Council met in person at the National Office on June 19 and 20. This is the annual face-to-face meeting, allowing for more personal interaction. In addition, the biannual Ministerial Conference took place following the Council meetings.

The meetings commenced with some opening comments by the National Council Chairman, Lloyd Teetaert. Then the minutes for the previous meeting were adopted.

The first of five updates was presented by Anthony Wasilkoff. Each update was about 20 minutes in length. Mr. Wasilkoff shared a Power Point presentation showing various aspects of the United Church of God – Canada.

Treasurer Bill Dimovski followed with a financial update. He noted that the fiscal year ended with income above budget and disbursements below budget. Preparations for the annual audit are underway.

Council of Elders member Paul Wasilkoff provided an update on the 2025 General Conference of Elders (GCE) meetings and the Council of Elders meetings that followed. This marks the 30<sup>th</sup> year of the United Church of God.

After a short break, Ministerial Services Team Coordinator Rainer Salomaa gave an update. He noted that a number of elders from Canada attended this year's GCE. Manpower needs are increasing and the ministry is aging.

Paul Wasilkoff, who is also the Media Team Coordinator, spoke about the Team's efforts and offered insight related to traffic on the [ucg.ca](http://ucg.ca) website. The most popular download format continues to be PDFs.

After a lunch break, a number of new items were discussed by the Council. Among them were health insurance coverage, the selection of a new alternate member of the Amendment Committee (Brenda Thompson) and the selection of

a temporary Chairman for the September 14 Council meeting. Larry DeLong was selected to chair that meeting. This was necessary since Mr. Teetaert's term on the National Council expires at the end of the Annual General Meeting that immediately precedes the Council meeting. Mr. Teetaert can choose to let his name stand for another 3-year Council term. Anthony Wasilkoff put forward a proposed amendment to Policy 7.6.1 Selection of Feast sites. The amendment passed unanimously.

A short Executive Session followed, after which the Council had an open discussion about various matters.

Friday morning's meetings started with Committee reports. These were followed by the annual evaluation of the Director of Operations, which was conducted during an informal session.

After lunch, the Council continued the open discussion until the meetings concluded with prayer. 🍁

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**“News from across Canada” from pg 14**

## **Toronto BBQ**

July 19 was a special Sabbath for the Toronto congregation. No coffee or snacks were served following services. Instead everyone was invited to the home of Aurellio and Annie Caldarelli for a BBQ.

There was a new family visiting that day who were personally invited to join in the after-church activities giving

them extra opportunity to become better acquainted with brethren.

The hosts provided the meat and attendees were asked to bring side dishes, drinks and desserts. The results were a wonderful variety and abundance of food. The food reflected the different nationalities in attendance (the Toronto congregation is international in flavor). It was eaten and enjoyed in a yard with plenty of shade and an abundance of beautiful flowers—not to mention a garden

filled with ripening berries!

There was a possibility for rain that day, but it held off until after everyone had finished eating and most were preparing to leave for home. Even then it was just a light drizzle. After the barbeque was over and most had gone home, a few hearty souls stayed on for extended fellowship.

A big thanks goes to the Caldarelli family for hosting a most enjoyable occasion. *UNC*



# 2025 Canadian Ministerial Conference

by Almeda Lucas

Elders and their wives from across Canada began arriving in Toronto on Friday evening, June 20, 2025, for the biannual Canadian Ministerial Conference meetings. There were 44 in attendance from June 21-22.

The schedule of events kicked off with a combined Sabbath service in Toronto with members from Toronto, Barrie and Kitchener in attendance. Split sermons were given by guest speakers Rainer Salomaa and John Elliott. Food and fellowship followed at the church hall. Larry Delong and Lloyd Teetaert made the trip to Hamilton to give split-sermons there. The Hamilton congregation appreciated having two guest elders and their wives.

Mr. Salomaa reviewed a message he had prepared 30 years ago when UCG-Canada first started with key founding ministers: Robert Berendt, Anthony Wasilkoff and himself. The message back then was "Where do we Go from Here?" His key points were to heal spiritually and keep on keeping on. Thirty years ago, his message was about our attitude and conduct during transition with emphasis on maintaining friendships, going about our business and fearing not. Now, we care for the flock, strengthen families and congregations, pass torches, and equip the ministry. He provided his compliments to all who stepped out in faith and maintained the faith. He concluded with encouraging us to support the new leadership and continue to seek God's will and blessings as we move forward.

We were extremely honoured



Ministerial Conference Attendees

Photo provided by Jim Lucas

to have the president of UCGIA, Mr. John Elliott make the trip and present the second split sermon. Mr. Elliott has served the Canadian work for 10 years (mainly in British Columbia), so Canada has a special place in his heart. His message was about "Our Common Denominators." Our church is made up of many different cultures, languages, ages and ethnicities; but no matter where we are, we are in this together. Other common denominators are faith, belief in a Godhead, the Holy Spirit and our common foundation. We as a church body fight as a family against a common enemy working toward the common goal of salvation. God has given us many things in common and a wonderful future for the church.

The Ministerial Conference began Saturday evening with presentations from Gary Antion and John Elliott. Mr. Antion's topic was "Preaching Lessons from the Apostles." He used examples of Paul, Peter and Christ to help convey the actions needed to shepherd the flock.

John Elliott's topic was "Our Common Denominator." Mr. Elliott reminded the group of our Mission Statement: "Our mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God in all the world, make disciples in all nations and care for those disciples." He stressed the importance of collaboration (sharing resources, training, conferences, Feasts). He also stressed the importance of mentoring and teaching others.

Sunday's presentations included "The Seven-Fold Work of the Ministry" by Anthony Wasilkoff. Mr. Wasilkoff's points included: being an example; daily prayer, Bible study and fasting; preaching and teaching; visiting the brethren; providing counsel; conducting ceremonies; and overseeing and administering the local church.

This was followed by Rainer Salomaa's presentation, "Essential Principles of Leadership." Mr. Salomaa

*(Continues on page 12)*

# News From Across Canada

## Guest Speakers

On July 19, the Toronto congregation was blessed with an update about the Philippines from Bong Remo, associate pastor for the Metro Manila and Luzon areas. He and his wife Grace were visiting family in the Toronto area and were able to share in person their experiences. Mr. Remo gave a sermon titled “Called, Chosen and Faithful.”

The Hamilton congregation welcomed guest speaker Len Martin on August 2. Len (pastor and member of the Council of Elders) and his wife Julie Martin made the trip from Tennessee.

Mr. Martin’s sermon title was “Words Matter”. He discussed the importance of not sowing discord or gossiping, but that we are to go to our



Len & Julie Martin

Photo by Trish Romeo

brother. We are to ask ourselves if our words will warm the heart or cause burns. “Consider one another in order to stir up love and good works”, Hebrews 10:24 and “let our speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one” (Colossians 4:6) were among the key Scriptures covered.

The Toronto congregation saw visitors from the United States: Dan and Roxanne Dowd and Ed and RaeAnn Dowd. Mr. Ed Dowd pastors congregations in Oklahoma where he currently lives and is also the Senior Pastor for Zambia. He began by giving an update on the work in that country and then proceeded to give the sermon titled, “Chosen and Faithful”.

Mr. Dan Dowd’s Bible Study after services covered the history of the prophets and kings of Israel. He used a chronological chart to show the progression of this timeline. Mr. Dowd currently pastors three congregations in Wisconsin (Milwaukee, Oshkosh and Wisconsin Dells) and is a member of the Council of Elders. *UNC*

## “Ministerial Conference” from pg 11.

emphasized Godly leadership as servant leadership. He reminded all that the most important example and role model is Jesus Christ.

Gary Antion then covered the topic of “How to Handle a Crisis.” Mr. Antion discussed key points on how to bring a person through difficult times. In conclusion he reminded the group that Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are the ultimate Comforters. He also reminded everyone that there are times when a crisis requires trained professionals and then it is appropriate for a referral.

Each ministerial conference includes a review of some key policies. Michael Erickson ably walked the group through some key policies hitting the high points. Mr. Erickson encouraged all elders to review all of the

Churches policies and procedures on a regular basis.

“The Evangelical Conundrum” was the topic covered by Paul Wasilkoff. He pointed out some of the complex challenges and tensions faced by the evangelical community in the modern era. This includes navigating faith and doctrinal purity while engaging with culture and popularity.

Mr. Wasilkoff encouraged the group to not despise the small things (small church), but to value quality, to stand fast and hold the traditions. We may be tempted by the fact that big churches are/appear successful and feel compelled to emulate their practices, but Scripture supports reasons to resist these notions.

The last presentation was “The Future of the Church” by John Elliott. He asserted that future details are

only known by God, but He gives us clues and glimpses into the future. A vibrant church is one where we grow, live God’s way and be a light to the world. Mr. Elliott said that our members are always an integral part in bringing people to the church, and our congregations need to reflect a great place to be. We need to pray for God to open and soften hearts towards Him and the truth.

The minister’s conference provides an important opportunity for elders and their wives to strengthen existing bonds, develop new relationships and promote unity within the ministry of the church. We appreciated having John and Merrie Elliott as special guests. Everyone left with a sense of rejuvenation and was encouraged to continue the work of Jesus Christ. 🍁



# News From Across Canada



Squibb & Tilley

*Photo by Ellsworth Stanley*

## St. John's Ordination

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is always an exceptional time and this year in St. John's it was even more special. It began with a meaningful Passover followed by a delicious catered meal in a private room at a hotel for the Night to be Much Observed. The majority of the congregation was able to take part in this special occasion. A potluck meal was enjoyed after the congregation assembled on the First Day of Unleavened Bread for services.

All of this was very special, but what made this Holy Day even more special was an ordination of a deaconess. Florence Squibb has been fulfilling that role for quite some time. Florence's husband, David, is a deacon and the two of them, among many other things, manage set-up and the sound system for the church service. Anthony Wasilkoff was in attendance for the special occasion. He and resident elder, Ellsworth Stanley, performed the ceremony.

As well, the credentials of another deacon were recognized. Mervyl Tilley has been a member of the Church of God and a deacon for many years. He has been attending United for a while now and the time had come to officially recognize him as a deacon in the United Church of God - Canada.

We congratulate both Florence and Mervyl, and thank them for the service they faithfully give to the St. John's congregation.

UNC

## Windsor's Special Sabbath

A few years ago, the Windsor, Ontario, congregation, under our former pastor Mr. Patrick Read, asked Mr. Brian McGuire of the Ann Arbor, Michigan congregation if he would be able to minister to our brethren from time to time.

Even though he had a busy life with a lovely wife and four children to nurture, a vitally important job to maintain and was a busy in the United Church of God as a speaking

elder, he agreed to assist every fifth Sabbath of the month. He and his wife were faithful to their commitment, bringing their young family with them, who set a perfect example to all as each followed in the Scriptures with note-taking.

It wasn't long before the two oldest boys, Andrew and then Aidan, began to assist by leading hymns and giving prayers.

As the four children were growing into adulthood they became involved in their own church activities, so we saw less of them, and eventually Brian and Laurie came to Windsor by themselves. In all the many years, they missed only two Sabbaths: one because of illness and the other because of wintry weather conditions, when all Ontario churches were advised to ZOOM at home.

The time arrived when the children left home for higher education. Audrey attended Ambassador Bible College, and after university Andrew married his beautiful wife Tarra.



McGuire Family (Aiden, Andrew, Tarra, Laurie, Brian, Audrey, Caleb)

*Photo by Elizabeth Ouelette*

Because we kept asking about the children, Brian promised to get the entire family together one convenient weekend, and all would visit Windsor. The excitement of the promise turned into joy on the Sabbath of May 31, 2025, the day before Pentecost. The lovely McGuire children are now young adults. We stood in admiration as we witnessed the awesome transformation into young servants of God. Aidan led the song service, Caleb led in prayer and Andrew inspired us with the sermonette.

Thank you, Brian and Laurie, for sharing your love to our 11 brethren in the Windsor Church of God. Your steadfast love to God has been a beacon of light to your Canadian family.

*Marilyn Anderson*

### **Pentecost 2025 in Newfoundland**

Newfoundland was blessed on the Pentecost weekend to have Mr. and Mrs. Darrell Keisel from Central Illinois in attendance for the back-to-back Sabbaths. Everyone was so pleased to have these two wonderful servants of God to encourage, uplift and teach us His Word. On the Sabbath, Mr. David Penney gave a sermonette called “The

Comfort of the Holy Spirit” and Mr. Keisel gave the main message titled “The Melchizedek High Priest Jesus Christ.” The congregation had finger snacks after the service.

On Pentecost, we had an offertory sermonette by Mr. Merv Tilley titled “On The First Pentecost” and the main message from Mr. Keisel titled “The Indispensable Gift.” Afterward seated around our big table, we had a potluck meal and enjoyed some good fellowship.

We were really blessed to have such a wonderful Pentecost with the Keisels and our lovely brethren.

As a farewell to Sarah Balloch, some of the church members took her out for supper at Swiss Chalet. Sarah had been in Newfoundland since January for a work contract, and had finished up and was going back to Ontario to prepare for her upcoming wedding to Logan Wasilkoff. We really loved having her here, and enjoyed hearing the younger generation’s perspective and sharing in all the enthusiasm and excitement of someone starting out on her life’s journey. God bless you Sarah.

*Joyce Penney*



Newfoundland brethren

*Photo by June Penney*



Maislynn Cricket Salva

*Photo by Heidi Salva*

### **Salva Birth Announcement**

Tony and Heidi Salva are overjoyed to announce the arrival of their daughter, Maislynn Cricket Salva. Miss Maisie came quickly on April 6, 2025, 3.5 weeks early weighing in at a tiny but mighty 5.8 pounds.

She’s already filled our hearts in the biggest way, is thriving and is truly another miracle from our Great Father. Big brother Remington is smitten and takes his job very seriously—with plenty of kisses and hugs to go around.

*Heidi Salva*

*(Continues on page 10)*



Janet Keisel & Mary Wells

*Photo by June Penney*



# Camp Wildrose, Darwell, Alberta

## July 23-27, 2025

by Susan Davis, Camp Director

Camp Wildrose hosted a small, but unified and joyful group this year! There were 19 campers, four junior volunteers (age 16+) and 20 staff in attendance. The weather was almost perfect, with pleasant temperatures and mostly blue skies. Thunderstorms skirted around us, with the only rain occurring during the night and late Sabbath afternoon.

The children were able to enjoy canoeing and tubing on Lac Ste. Anne, and a giant slip n' slide with the nice weather.



2025 Camp Wildrose

Kaitlyn Davis



Tubing activity

Kaitlyn Davis

This year's Christian theme was "Standing Strong In the Armour of God." Our Christian living classes, morning sessions, and Sabbath game focused on "putting on God's armour so that we may stand against the

devil's schemes." Our lessons also discussed the weapons Satan uses to attack us, and how we can keep our armour strong so that Satan cannot

Sabbath game highlighted God's gift of armour mentioned throughout the Bible.

Other activities enjoyed were volleyball, field hockey and kickball, as

well as archery, teamwork challenges and slingshot practice. The craft this year was a glow in the dark lantern with silhouette pictures. Our younger children played parachute games and blew gigantic bubbles with a homemade soap solution. The evenings were filled with fireside activities and traditional bannock and s'more snacks. The oldest campers put on a skit about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego using God's armour in the fiery



2025 Camp Wildrose services

Kaitlyn Davis

cause it to weaken and fall off. The

furnace. A storytelling activity had us all laughing, and campers of all ages had great fun with their made-up game of ankle tag every evening. One of the biggest highlights of camp is the Friday evening music social with line dancing and musical games. This year

# Best Feast

by Gary E. Antion

**H**ow to have the Best FEAST Ever! One sure way not to is to do everything for ourselves and exclude others. By seeking only our own way, we are sure to be disappointed. We indeed need to rejoice ourselves, but also consider others, as to how we may add to their enjoyment of the Feast.

So, how may we have and give the best Feast ever?

The answer: By following **FEAST** we will be able to have the best Feast ever.

**Fear God:** Keep God in sight at the Feast. Look not only at Him, but to Him in worship, service and obedience. Prayer and study are vital for us to stay close to God. Our offerings are another way of showing how much we honour Him at the Feast. Also, rejoicing in the song service is another way of honoring or fearing God at His Feast. Read: Deuteronomy 14:23, Leviticus 23:36, Jeremiah 32:39-40.

**Enjoy yourself:** The Feast is a time to be happy. Physically prepare by making lists of what you want to take in the way of clothing and other gear to add to the enjoyment. Try to do something special and different to add to the joy of the Feast: a different restaurant, a new experience, visit a new geographical site, try scuba diving. Don't forget to take some time and money to bring joy to others as well. Make another person(s) the object of your attention for a lunch,

an evening of fellowship, etc. and help them enjoy the Feast more too. See: Deuteronomy 14:26, Philippians 4:4-5, Isaiah 35:10.

**Attitude Setting:** Be prepared for different situations and circumstances that can affect our attitude and outlook. After all, we will be "strangers" in the area where we will be keeping the Feast. Because of our temporary status, it behooves us to be more patient, kind and tolerant with our

at the Feast. There are ways behind the scenes to serve. Fellowshiping is another prime way of laying down your life for the brethren. Give of yourself and let God do the rewarding! See: 1 John 3: 11, 14-18, Galatians 5:13, Isaiah 49:23.

**The Trip:** There is a wonderful opportunity to let our lights shine to and from the Feast as well as while we are there. God's people have chalked up a marvellous record with the areas we have come to for the Feast. Let's bring glory to our God and to Jesus Christ while at the Feast, as well as on our trip to and from the Feast. Be courteous, thoughtful and thankful. Let the love of God in us shine forth! Please read: Matthew 5:14-16, Deuteronomy 4:6-8, Zechariah 8:16-17, 22-23.

In conclusion if we follow the acronym, "**FEAST**" we will have and give the best Feast ever! 🍁



neighbors and family! At each service, bring a humble, teachable and cooperative heart and mind. Remember if we miss sleep regularly, it will affect our attitude. Please note: Philippians 2:1-5, Psalms 25:4, Ezekiel 36:26.

**Service:** None of us need an official badge to help out

