



## Presents or Presence: Which?

You no doubt have heard and read the following expression many times: "To be or not to be, that is the question." This famous question was adeptly posed in Shakespeare's Hamlet. Many of us have studied Shakespearean plays through the years including Hamlet and have often reflected on that memorable statement.

The Feast of Tabernacles was observed a relatively short time ago. Many congregations plan a post-Feast social shortly after the Feast so that brethren can compare notes on where they have been, what they have done and what they learned. In so doing even those who were not able to travel in a given year can benefit from those who were able to travel. As virtually everyone knows, travelling to far-away locations can be very educational.

In the 2017 Festival Planning Brochure, we read the following in the "From the President" section: "Over the years we have greatly deregulated the assigning of entire churches to a specific Feast site because they were so large and we had to control attendance. But that has

not been done in some time, and our current laissez faire system has worked well. However, at some of the less popular sites we do have shortage of able people to care for physical needs of the vulnerable and disadvantaged. God does care for them, and so should we." How much then do we *really* care, I wonder?

Recently one of the pastors from Canada forwarded a heart-felt request that an article be written reminding people that if everyone transfers for the Feast every year, it becomes very difficult to effectively staff our Feast sites. You may not even have been aware of this growing problem!

Each year most of us eventually ask ourselves the question, "To transfer or not to transfer, that is the question." Many brethren do not have the luxury of that option. Their circumstances simply do not allow a transfer. In fact, an increasing number of our brethren cannot even travel to their local site because their health and/or their finances make it impossible to do so. Thus they find themselves keeping the Feast in their own homes year after year.

If you and your family attend a transfer Feast site most every year, I would implore you to consider keeping the Feast in your local area on a more regular basis. For instance, church pastors in Canada are asked to attend their local fes-

tival site for two consecutive years before they transfer elsewhere. If this approach were followed by virtually everyone in Canada, it would go a long way toward solving the manpower problem that has arisen to staff each of the Feast sites.

In the coming year we are tentatively planning to host four Feast of Tabernacles sites in Canada. Hopefully two will be in the west and two will be in the east. We ask you for your earnest prayers for God to show us where He wishes to make His name abide. When our Heavenly Father leads us to where He wants us to be, when He opens doors for us, then the likelihood for success is guaranteed. Along with finding a beautiful and functional meeting place and adequate housing and restaurants, is the requirement of sufficient local attendees to help staff the many duties required to make a festival site operate well. In addition to four standing Feast sites, there will be some satellite sites as well.

Thankfully, a significant number of brethren transfer from the United States to keep the Feast with their northern neighbours. We couldn't do it without them. However, equally significant is for members attend their local sites more often to help host the Feast. Please consider staying at a local Feast site more often. Your presence is genuinely needed!

### In this Issue:

#### Feast Reports

Victoria.....	2
Cochrane.....	2
Midland.....	3
Ottawa.....	3
Blainville.....	4
Cardigan.....	5
National Governance Meetings...	7
2017 Audit Summary.....	8
News From Across Canada.....	10
Regular & Holy Day Offerings....	16

*Anthony Wasilkoff*

## Feast Reports

### Victoria, British Columbia

The Feast of Tabernacles at Victoria, British Columbia, was located in an iconic harbour setting surrounded by local wonders of God's Creation. Sculptured garden parks, seascapes and distant mountains surrounded the quintessential landmarks, museums and the varied attractions of Victoria Harbour. Brethren devoured tasty spiritual treats in the form of 17 split-sermons plus four Bible seminars exploring the themes of God's autumn festivals.



provided by John Elliott

Family activities included a three-hour ocean cruise viewing humpback whales and sea lions among islands in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The Family Dinner Dance featured a live 17-piece Big Band playing tunes that moved all generations for hours accompanied by a catered dinner. Family Day was a discovery of the gardens, trails, vistas and petting zoo in beautiful Beacon Hill Park.



provided by John Elliott

During the Feast, teens ventured through Miniature World, Bug Zoo and a provincial museum, while the singles and young adults were invited to challenge each other at a special game establishment. Fellowshiping and other local activities were within walking distance of the Feast venue and God provided good weather to complement each day.

We have enjoyed two years of feasting in the greater Victoria area and would appreciate your prayers as we search for the location of next year's Feast somewhere in beautiful British Columbia.

John Elliott

### Cochrane, Alberta

This was the first time the Feast of Tabernacles was held in Cochrane, Alberta. Services were held in the Hall of Vision at the Cochrane RancheHouse Convention Centre. The RancheHouse was

superb, private and spacious for all of our activities. The hall features a wall of windows giving Feastgoers a panoramic view of the foothills and Rocky Mountains.

Cochrane itself has the benefits of a small town and is well situated between Calgary, the Rocky Mountains and Banff National Park, which gave families the opportunity to take afternoon trips to the mountains (including Banff and Lake Louise) as well as take in all that the town of Cochrane and the city of Calgary have to offer. Feastgoers also enjoyed the many wonderful ethnic restaurants in Cochrane.



provided by Gabriel Baer

One hundred-sixty attendees took in spiritually-filled sermons and inspiring special music. Eighty-two enjoyed a festival dinner on Canadian Thanksgiving followed by a dance. Seniors enjoyed three come-and-go events where they could fellowship and play cards and games. The teens and young adults spent an afternoon five-pin bowling – a

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new experience for our American friends! Families visited the Calgary Zoo, went horseback riding and spent time at the aquatic centre in Cochrane. Others took their children to a petting zoo and a trampoline park.



provided by Gabriel Baer

On Friday evening we ushered in the Sabbath with a hymn sing that lasted for two hours.

At services, the atmosphere was warm and cooperative. The RancheHouse staff was very accommodating making our Feast experience even better. The RancheHouse Events Planner had tears in her eyes as we were all leaving the last day. She said that she could feel a special umbrella-like presence over the convention centre for the eight days we were there, and it was the best eight days of her entire working career. She said she had never seen so many smiling happy people. Prior to our arrival, she said she was not sure if she believed, but by the time the Feast was over she knew that God's presence was there.

All in all we experienced a spirit of unity while strengthening our vision and hope of a glorious future. It was simply a great Feast of Tabernacles.

Larry DeLong

## Midland, Ontario

As brethren gathered in Midland, Ontario, for the Feast of Tabernacles, they capitalized on warm and sunny weather to tour the quaint downtown, which overlooks a picturesque inlet of Lake Huron's Georgian Bay.

The Quality Inn offered 127 brethren enjoyable accommodations and a lovely breakfast area in the atrium, which allowed for additional fellowship over breakfast each day. This same atmosphere gave an all-inclusive feel to our activities which were generally open to all.

The Family Day activity was well attended with 75 brethren getting to know each other better. Later that day we had a well-attended and enjoyed Women's Seminar given by Pam Kuver. Our Games Night in the atrium was also well attended by brethren of all ages.

Many brethren enjoyed the spectacular scenery of Georgian Bay as the Miss Midland cruised through some of the 30,000 islands on a beautifully sunny and warm afternoon. Others enjoyed strolling along the mural-graced buildings lining Midland's main street.



provided by Ernesto Yabut

For the third year in a row we had a square dance. We were directed by a professional caller who made the evening fun. In spite of many of us trying something new, our caller was able to make it easy enough that those among us with more than one left foot were able to learn.

Our seniors were treated to a heart-warming message given by Mr. Terry Johnson who also encouraged them to relate various aspects of their lives through different questions such as miracles, interesting stories, favourite verses and stumbling blocks in the lives that they had to overcome. He reminded them that their worth to the church, and more importantly to God, is of great value regardless of their age.

In addition to these activities we also had a variety night, Bible Study and a group buffet lunch on the Last Great Day.

On the evening following the Last Great Day, 38 brethren gathered at a local restaurant for one final meal together before heading home.

In spite of some health issues and other trials that came along, the brethren could often be overheard remarking how enjoyable it was to be together and what a wonderful Feast it was.

Patrick Read

## Ottawa, Ontario

Today's technology has been a wonderful help to a few members in

the Ottawa congregation. During the Feast of Tabernacles of 2017, the Internet made it possible for a few couples to get together in a private home and join the live festival site in Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. Travelling to Ottawa's assigned site was difficult for a few members in their senior years, as well as some who had health issues. What a blessing it was to be able to join in the hymn singing, the sermonettes and sermons and the opening and closing prayers that came through from Lake Junaluska. In addition to this, two other couples from other Church of God organizations were also able to attend these services.

Following services each day, members were able to travel to several different restaurants in the area and, in this way, they were able to enjoy more fellowshiping.

During the Last Great Day, time was limited to travel to a restaurant, so with everyone's help, a lunch was enjoyed together between services, serving lasagna and salad with pie and ice cream for dessert. A few people were able to take a walk after the meal, while others had a rest to be ready for the afternoon service.

Attending a satellite Feast site with only twelve members helps one realize how grateful we need to be to God who has made the internet possible so that no members are left out. Although the down side is not seeing friends who were met at former Feast sites, it is a wonderful blessing to see and hear all of the Feast messages on the television and to not have the feeling of be-

ing left out. We have a wonderful God who cares and looks out for both young and old!

*Mary Moulton*

### Blainville, Quebec

This year's 2017 satellite Feast site in Blainville, Quebec, was a treasure in many ways.

The Feast began with all the brethren receiving a calendar of the week's events and a special Feast bookmark.

There was also a thank you board that by the end of the Feast was framed with leaves with notes of thanks from the brethren to our loving God for blessings that they were thankful for.

Other activities throughout the week included:

- A women's craft afternoon where Beve Hebert taught the women "Iris Folding." Each of the ladies crafted a card or two and then the cards were sent to brethren who had been unable to attend the Feast.

- There were two evening Bible studies – one of which was a live study given by Michael Caputo.



provided by Sharon Descoteaux

- Another highlight was a variety show after which there were drawings of door prizes for everyone, from Therese Gagnon – including three paintings that she had painted herself.

- We had a French-language family-film evening, complete with popcorn and chips.



provided by Conrad Garcia

- A special treat was the blessing of little Kayla Tremblay since Mr. Caputo would be unable to be in Montreal for the usual time of the blessing of the little children on the second Sabbath after the Feast.

Last but not least, the brethren shared a delicious catered meal between services on the Last Great Day. Also an anonymous delivery of a rose for each lady present was made just before the afternoon service.

This year's Feast was a real success thanks to the joyful service of many dedicated brethren. Special thanks go out to Yvon Poulin for finding this fine site for us, our technician Jonathan Chirwa who made sure we received the transmissions from Junaluska, North Carolina, our two translators Conrad Garcia and Bruno Leclerc, our pastor Michael Caputo (who gave us two live sermons) and his wife

Leonilda, who stayed with us the whole Feast and Michel Gagnon who transported all the equipment to the Feast and back and others who served in various capacities.

*Beve Hebert & Sharon Descoteaux*

## Cardigan, PEI

Beautiful Prince Edward Island is called the “Garden Island” mainly because one of its main industries is farming. That and the beautiful fall colours provided a perfect backdrop for keeping the Feast of Tabernacles.

Since a number of those in attendance live in more isolated areas and are unable to regularly attend weekly services, the spiritual food from the messages as well as the time for fellowship was much appreciated.



This was the first time we used the beautiful Rodd Brudenell River Resort. The facility is located on a river (which is actually an inlet of the ocean) and includes a golf course for those so inclined. Because the hotel restaurant was officially closed for the season, we had the use of it exclusively for our breakfast (included with the cost of the room) and other group meals.

With an average daily attendance of around 75, there was a family atmosphere as people met new friends and got reacquainted with others. Attendees came from seven provinces and at least six states. All activities had high attendance, and there was also time for attendees to explore the surrounding area. A popular site was a working lighthouse where you could climb to the top and see the light in action.

A brunch for the seniors was held on Sabbath morning with good attendance. It was a good way for friendships to be made as seniors sat at round tables that overlooked the water. For most of the meal, live music was provided.

Since Thanksgiving occurred during the Feast, a special turkey dinner was arranged at one of the local restaurants on Sunday evening. Another Thanksgiving dinner was available at the golf course restaurant on Monday evening.

Almost 50 enjoyed a bus tour that made several stops, including a stop at the Anne of Green Gables Park to see the setting of many of those famous stories. The tour guide mentioned that we were there during the peak of the fall colours. The views from the bus proved him right as new vistas opened up around every corner. Another special treat was to see several red foxes along the side of the road. A popular Feast gift for the children was a special stuffed animal – a PEI red fox!

Although there were only a handful of children at this site, the

children’s lessons were lively. Our Family Day activity included everyone, young and old, in a variety of games. Everyone received a special passport to guide them through the games. Prizes were awarded to those with the highest scores for three different categories: child, adult and senior.



The Variety Show began as Ivan Veller entered the room dressed as a Scotsman and playing the bagpipes. From there, we enjoyed a variety of instrumental and vocal pieces along with a demonstration on how to make almond milk. There was a juggling act and a special appearance of the fake (Joe Camerata) and “real” (Lloyd Teeaert) Red Green.

On one afternoon, a number of ladies gathered with Georgia Veller to learn how to make homemade greeting cards. With much cutting and gluing mixed in with lots of conversation and laughter, each lady went home with a card that she had made.

On the last day, the majority of attendees enjoyed one last group meal together. One of the hotel staff commented that it had been a pleasure serving our group.

*Anthony Wasilkoff*

*“Offerings” from page 16*

so we should be eager to bless God and His church with our material harvests.

A farmer who sows realizes there are other conditions as well that help determine the size and the quality of the crop he will reap: the quality as well as the quantity and type of seed, the weather, the soil condition and the presence or absence of harmful insects or disease. We see from this that we must do the necessary labour such as sowing, watering, weeding and fertilizing, and then God will give the increase as it pleases Him.

Notice the spiritual applications of this process as explained in 1 Corinthians 3:6-8: “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to his own labor.”

That scripture makes it clear that God deserves the majority of the credit for causing things to grow. But it’s also essential that the farmer exerts “his own labour.” Our desire to give sizable offerings should be one of the factors that motivates us to have a good work ethic, to be productive, and to earn a good living.

God is highly pleased with those who are generous. And obviously giving a relatively large percentage of a small income is more generous than giving a small percentage of a large income even if the second of-

fering is much larger overall.

This principle is emphasized in the principle of the “widow’s mite.” In Luke 21:1-4, we read: “As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. ‘Truly I tell you,’ he said, ‘this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.’”

God is much more concerned about our spiritual attitudes than the amount of money. When a person gives to God or to a needy person, he should do it “willingly with his heart” (Exodus 25:2, New King James Version; also Deuteronomy 15:7-8).

In Romans 12, Paul speaks of spiritual gifts. In verse 8, he wrote: “if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.”

As Paul said, “Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Corinthians 9:7). In the New King James Version, this reads: “So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”

If during the entire year, we have been reflecting on the blessings God has given us, we have “purposed in our hearts” and planned

on giving offerings, and have prayed about our offerings, then God will inspire us as to how much to give in our regular offerings and how much to give in our Holy Day offerings.

After Paul wrote about being a “cheerful giver” in 2 Corinthians 9:7, he goes on in verses 8 through 14 to describe how God abundantly blesses those who are generously and cheerfully giving!

“And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: ‘They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.’ Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

“This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.”

*Michael Erickson*

## National Conference & Council Meetings

The annual meeting of the National Conference took place on September 17 by WebEx with 21 out of the 26 conference members on the WebEx.

The Director of Operations' address was "Power and Perils of Repetition." He pointed out the potential peril of taking repetitive things for granted such as the Sabbath, Holy Days and even the annual meeting of the National Conference. He urged everyone to not allow these things to become routine. He quoted several scriptures showing how the children of Israel took God's instructions for granted with bad results.

Bill Dimovski gave a report on behalf of the Media Team. An Internet campaign will begin after the Feast. Trials will be run to see what will work best and will mainly target areas where there are church congregations. A member of the Toronto congregation recently did volunteer work for the church. He carefully reviewed internet links to be sure they were all working so that our IT person can update all the links.

On behalf of the Ministerial Services Team, Anthony Wasilkoff reported that the pre-teen camp in the Edmonton area was again successful. He reviewed plans for the Feast of Tabernacles for this year and potential plans for 2018.

During the Treasurer's address, Edwin van Pelt read the letter from our auditor. He informed the National Conference that the

Home Office has requested that UCG-Canada pay approximately one-third of the cost for mailing the *Beyond Today* magazine to Canada which will be about \$30,000 per year. This was requested after this year's budget was approved. This expense will be included in next year's budget.

In the Chairman's address, Rainier Salomaa referenced an experiment by Philip Zimbardo, a Stanford University psychologist. His experiments brought about the "broken window" theory, which shows a correlation between a lack of care of surroundings and not caring. A formula could be: lack of civility = lack of restraint = lack of respect. By using scriptures as examples, he encouraged all to avoid following others who are attacking the virtues of civility, restraint and respect whether inside or outside of the church.

September 16, 2018, was set as the date for the next annual meeting of the National Conference. It was also resolved to hold this meeting by teleconference or other electronic means.

Ballots had been taken up prior to the meeting. The September 18, 2016, Minutes and the March 31, 2017, Financial Statements were approved. The three selected to serve a three-year term on the National Council were: Stanley Kitt, Larry DeLong and Jim Lucas. By resolution it was determined to use the same accounting firm to conduct the audit next year.

Shortly after the National Con-

ference meeting ended, the National Council meeting began. The Chairman began the meeting by giving thanks to John Erickson and Patrick Read whose terms had just ended. Their service to UCG-Canada has been much appreciated. While they are reimbursed for expenses incurred for their service, this is not a paid position.

This was the first official meeting for those newly selected to a three-year term on the Council. Jim Lucas was able to be online. Due to a prior commitment, Stanley Kitt was not able to be online.

The minutes of the June meeting were approved. Then the Council made adjustment to the T3010 prior to having it sent to Canada Revenue Agency. The National Council approved reimbursement for next year's annual audit.

Each year the Strategic Planning Committee prepares the Strategic Plan for the following year. The Council approved sending the 2018-2019 Strategic Plan to the National Conference for approval next March.

With new council members, committees had to be realigned. The new committee make-up can be found at: <http://www.ucg.ca/about/national-council>.

The next National Council meeting is scheduled for December 18 and will again be held by WebEx.

# 2017 Audit Summary

The Bylaws of United Church of God-Canada require that the annual audit of the church's finances be published and made available to all congregations of UCG-Canada. If you would like to see the complete printed version of the report please contact your local pastor.

**UNC**

<b>UNITED CHURCH OF GOD - CANADA</b>							
<b>Statement of Operations and Fund Balance</b>							
For the year Ended March 31st, 2017							
	Operating Fund	Festival Fund	Assistance Fund	Building Fund	Other Funds	2017	2016
<b>Revenue</b>							
Tithes and offerings	\$1,511,346	\$ 20,839	\$ 9,005	\$ -	\$ -	\$1,541,190	\$1,447,314
Interest and other income	5,369	-	-	144	-	5,513	8,244
	<u>1,516,715</u>	<u>20,839</u>	<u>9,005</u>	<u>144</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,546,703</u>	<u>1,455,558</u>
<b>Expenditure</b>							
Salaries and benefits	838,479	-	-	-	-	838,479	774,873
Travel	101,454	-	-	-	-	101,454	89,483
Festival costs	-	21,368	-	-	-	21,368	25,751
National conferences	17,347	-	-	-	-	17,347	18,862
Office and general	118,557	-	-	-	-	118,557	121,732
Insurance	17,647	-	-	-	-	17,647	17,018
Telephone	9,784	-	-	-	-	9,784	10,159
Advertising	163,348	-	-	-	-	163,348	151,402
Professional fees	10,999	-	-	-	-	10,999	9,453
Hall rentals	132,961	-	-	-	-	132,961	123,168
Church supplies	8,146	-	-	-	-	8,146	7,637
Tape duplication	1,137	-	-	-	-	1,137	1,576
Rent	44,295	-	-	-	-	44,295	43,040
Equipment rental	5,046	-	-	-	-	5,046	4,822
Assistance	-	-	13,071	-	-	13,071	1,875
Bank and interest charges	5,137	-	-	-	-	5,137	6,302
Amortization - (Notes 2(b) and 3)	5,962	-	-	-	-	5,962	7,177
	<u>1,480,299</u>	<u>21,368</u>	<u>13,071</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,514,738</u>	<u>1,414,330</u>
<b>Revenue over Expenditure for the Year</b>	36,416	(529)	(4,066)	144	-	31,965	41,228
Fund balance at beginning of year	1,186,461	38,354	89,525	38,227	1,898	1,354,465	1,313,237
<b>Fund Balance at End of Year</b>	<u>\$1,222,877</u>	<u>\$ 37,825</u>	<u>\$ 85,459</u>	<u>\$ 38,371</u>	<u>\$ 1,898</u>	<u>\$1,386,430</u>	<u>\$1,354,465</u>

**UNITED CHURCH OF GOD - CANADA**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
 As at March 31st, 2017

	2017	2016
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,312,013	\$1,358,642
Bequest receivable	56,136	-
Harmonized sales tax recoverable	23,992	21,634
Supplies inventory	5,489	4,429
Prepaid expenses and deposits	<u>37,143</u>	<u>35,668</u>
	1,434,773	1,420,373
<b>Capital Assets - (Note 3)</b>	<u>23,822</u>	<u>28,744</u>
	<u>\$ 1,458,595</u>	<u>\$1,449,117</u>
<b>Liabilities and Fund Balance</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 59,478	\$ 58,007
Capital lease obligation - (Note 4(c))	<u>12,687</u>	<u>23,958</u>
	72,165	81,965
<b>Long Term Liabilities</b>		
Capital lease obligation - (Note 4(c))	-	12,687
	-	12,687
<b>Fund Balance</b>	<u>1,386,430</u>	<u>1,354,465</u>
	<u>\$ 1,458,595</u>	<u>\$1,449,117</u>



# MARSH GOULDING

**CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS**

ERNEST A. MARSH, CA (1923 - 2006)  
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## AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Members of United Church of God - Canada:

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of United Church of God - Canada, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31st, 2017, and the statement of operations and fund balance, and changes in cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

### Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### Auditors' Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

### Opinion

In our opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of United Church of God - Canada as at March 31st, 2017, and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.



CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS  
(Licensed Public Accountants)

July 12th, 2017  
North York, Ontario

## News From Across Canada

### Camp Wildrose

Canada's summer camp for youth near Darwell, Alberta, celebrated its eighth season on July 19-23 with 32 campers, their families and the many necessary volunteers for a total of 70 people. The weather was wonderful, with only one thunderstorm to contend with and a morning of rain. The calm, experienced staff took the schedule changes in stride and everything continued to run smoothly.

Many volunteers prepared lessons and activities, put together extra games and fillers, and helped organize and supervise the programs. This year, the children built and painted clay pot bird feeders during arts and crafts. They participated in team sports such as soccer, volleyball, and kickball. The youth learned paddle strokes, water safety, and teamwork while canoeing on Goose Lake. Archery continued to be a favourite activity. Teamwork challenges taught godly character traits of patience and cooperation as campers worked to solve problems and puzzles. The abundance of frogs on the property made the swamp expedition and nature lesson very profitable!

The rainy Friday morning brought the campers indoors. The little ones were kept busy playing group games, while the older campers had dance lessons in the garage. Partner dances such as the polka, waltz, two-step, box-step, and jive were practiced. They also had fun with a few line dances. Campers were able to demonstrate their new dancing abilities on Friday evening at the Family Dance.

This year's camp was extended to include the Sabbath day, which proved



provided by Susan Davis

to be a very pleasant and unifying experience for brethren. The day of rest was much appreciated after three busy days of activities. Bible games and Sabbath school entertained the children. Dr. Rick Berendt came out as a guest to lead the teens in a Bible study. Sabbath services were held in the Davis' garage, and included youth participation in song leading, opening and closing prayers, special music, and scripture reading. Rob Eckert gave a sermonette on "being holy as our God walks in the midst of our camp" and included five children to assist in reading the scriptures. Mr. Robert Berendt delivered a sermon about our Great God's divine creation and our place in it.

This year's camp theme was "Growing in God's Garden" with the feature scripture being Deuteronomy 23:14, "For the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp...therefore your camp shall be holy, that He may see no unclean thing among you ..." Morning orientation, called "Peanut Butter and Jam Time", focused on holy conduct, teamwork and being separate from the world. Christian Living lessons were themed with God's garden in mind, and worked on concepts such as giving good gifts, growing our fruits spiritually, and recognizing God's presence all around us.

Another new aspect to camp this year was the inclusion of our youth ages 16+ in the role of Junior Volunteers. These young people truly added to the camp with their youthful enthusiasm and energy. They were assigned leadership roles coaching soccer and kickball, supervising young children in tents, assisting with the primary activities, decorating for the dance, and organizing all the picnic games on the last day of camp. They were also given opportunities to participate in their own activities - archery, canoeing, dance lessons and volleyball.

We must not forget to thank our cheerful and efficient kitchen staff for all the delicious and healthy meals, snacks, and treats. The ice cream sundae bar at the Family Dance was, as always, a hit!

It was a wonderful camp experience for all ages. New friendships were made, and old ones strengthened. We encourage you to join us next year! Plans are already underway as everyone's enthusiasm spills over!

Thank you to all who support, not only our youth, but our whole church, in this endeavour to build a Christ centered spiritual family!

*Susan Davis*

## Windsor Church Picnic

Warm temperatures and plenty of sunshine paved the way for the third annual Windsor church picnic. The beautiful Kingsville Park is famous for its beauty, rustic beaches and breath-taking sunsets.



provided by Trish Romeo

The Windsor brethren graciously welcomed visitors from the Toronto, Peterborough and Detroit areas. Some relaxed while others strolled along the water's edge and enjoyed the picturesque and scenic view of Kingsville cottage country. The men bragged to one another about how they would far exceed each other in a bean bag toss game. Needless to say, one who boasts too much may have to, as the saying goes, "Eat crow!"

The food, synonymous with



provided by Trish Romeo

every picnic, included a variety of fruits, vegetables and colorful green salads. Of course, no picnic would be a picnic without potato salad, delicious deep fried chicken and homemade desserts.

We are ever so thankful to our Heavenly Father for the great calling he gives us to come together as His children and enjoy the camaraderie and fellowship with each other in peace and harmony and to indulge in the vast beauty of His creation. Psalm 133 would certainly apply to the annual picnic in Kingsville.

*Jo-Anne Read*

## Benefit Garage Sale

The Grande Prairie congregation held a multi-family garage sale on August 10 and 11, 2017. We were blessed with beautiful weather and a wide variety of items to offer. Two members are either moving or are related to a family who has moved, and MANY items were donated by extended members of the church family. We had bicycles, kitchen goods, clothing, and garage tools available.

Thanks to signs and social media people came from all areas of the city to our sale. Everyone pitched in as they were able. Thanks to the generosity of all who donated and helped, we were able to raise \$463 to donate to LifeNets.

*Brenda Thompson*

## Toronto Post-Feast Social

Like many other congregations, Toronto has the tradition of having a post-Feast social each year shortly after people return home from the Feast. This year it coincided with the date for the blessing of little children which made the occasion even more special.

Members arrived to a hall that was already decorated and set up for the potluck meal that was to follow services.

The meal featured many dishes found at the various festival sites individual members attended – including England, St. Lucia, Mexico, Branson, Prince Edward Island and Midland.

After everyone had gone through the food line (seconds and thirds were also available), it was time for sharing our experiences. Some sample questions were placed on slips of paper under each place setting, which included:

- What does the Feast mean to you?
- What made this Feast the best for you?
- What exciting adventure or misadventure did you have?
- Who did you get better acquainted with or who did you meet for the first time?
- What sermon did you find especially helpful?



These questions gave everyone an opportunity to receive a snapshot of different Feast sites and share the spiritual lessons learned, as well as laugh together at some of the misadventures experienced. Some received small “gifts” from the various areas for their courageous comments.

All in all, it was a wonderful opportunity to prolong the “afterglow” from the Feast and a good way for those who were unable to attend to experience it vicariously from multiple sites.

*Linda Wasilkoff*

### Hamilton Hat Dance

It was a most memorable Sabbath on November 4 when members from both United Church of God and Church of God International congregations met in Hamilton to enjoy inspired speaking and jubilant singing with old and new friends.

After services, we all gathered in the adjacent hall which had been splendidly decorated for the dance to follow. But first to the food which was laid out extravagantly on serving tables groaning under the weight of appetizing dishes and desserts lovingly prepared for the occasion. We sat at tables covered in unusual black cloths which showed off the colourful decorations, with specially made “top hat” lamps and cutlery wrapped in colourful napkins banded with amusing trivia notes in keeping with the theme of the

evening. For instance, did you know that the Yankees appeared in 1849 wearing knickerbockers and straw hats?



The theme for the Social and Dance that followed after sunset was “Wear Your Favourite Hat” and was truly a fun-filled event. Dr. Seuss would have been proud to see the tall top hat with red and white bands, made famous in his *Cat in the Hat* books, comically towering over the entire scene, left of the stage. A huge complementary poster covered the curtain, skilfully lettered to say, “Welcome to the Wear Your Favourite Hat Dance”. And what a wonderful range of chapeaus there were – everything from beanies to bonnets, gypsy headscarves to pirate hats and military tricorns, Stetsons and tams, dunce caps to cute little pillbox hats, and a truly inventive lot of homemade headgear – with and without slogans!

Our Master of Ceremonies for the evening deftly mixed dances and games with a lively blend of music and repartee, getting most people up on the floor. It seemed that the children, from toddlers to teenagers, were inexhaustible! Some of our more senior members probably wished

that they still had as much energy, whilst others who thought they still had it, may have rediscovered some forgotten muscles the following day.

We raise our hats in salute to all the very imaginative organizers and participants who gave so freely of their time and talents to make this such a memorable occasion for brethren who came considerable distances from the various congregations. Thanks for the memories, and thank you all for coming. Please come again as time permits.

*George Carter*

### Levitt Obituary

On October 4, 2017, Allan and Josephine Levitt of the Saskatoon, Saskatchewan congregation were killed in a car accident on their way to the Feast of Tabernacles in Cochrane, Alberta. It was devastating news to all of us from Saskatoon as we were spread from coast to coast in Canada, the United States and Jamaica for the Feast.

The Levitts were a very vibrant part of our congregation. They were a very joyful, helpful, dedicated couple to the church and to each other.

They started attending the Worldwide Church of God back in the 1960’s in Saskatoon and spent most of their years here, with a few years living in Alberta. Joey was the pianist, organized our choir and was ever

helpful with anything that was needed. Al was ordained an elder in the spring of 2017. He gave sermons and sermonettes and led the song service often.



provided by United News Canada

Al and Joey lived in the small town of Perdue west of Saskatoon. There they were very active with the senior's group—bowling, potlucks, etc. Al often drove seniors to doctor's appointments. For the seniors there, Joey did house cleaning, cutting grass and gave freely of her baking. They always enjoyed playing games with family and friends.

They are survived by three daughters and one son, along with their spouses and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Their funeral was held in Perdue on October 20, 2017. They were much loved and respected by their family, people of the town, church members and old acquaintances from WCG days, which was very evident by the large crowd of people at their memorial.

They will be greatly missed. We all look forward to seeing them in the future.

*Darleen Buck*

## Blender Obituary

Mary Blender of the Regina congregation died in the Preceville Long Term Care Center on October 8 at 88 years of age. Her husband, Bill, predeceased her in 2003.

Mary and Bill lived on a farm where they raised two boys and two girls. In addition to caring for a big garden, Mary also kept busy crocheting and knitting. At once point, she taught a sewing class in the local community.

In 1978, Mary became a cancer survivor. Later in 2011 she had open heart surgery. The following year, she moved into a



provided by Rainer Salomaa

long-term care center where she continued to be active and kept up with her hobbies and doing jig saw puzzles.

According to Rainer Salomaa, pastor of the Regina congregation, "Mary was a woman who lived a long and full life. She loved her family and her Creator." She will be missed by many.

*Joyce Greba*

## Robinson Obituary

Gordon Harvey Robinson was born on May 31, 1934, in Edmonton, Alberta to Fulton and Eva Robinson. As a result of Fulton's career with the British American Oil Company, Gordon's family moved from Edmonton to Toronto, to Montreal, and back to Toronto.

Gordon was a builder by trade. At the age of 18, he started building cottages north of Peterborough on Beaver Lake in the Kawarthas. The first cottage he built was for his parents. He continued to build and sell cottages to his friends, and also built a cottage for himself. After years of building cottages and homes, he established "Robinson Construction Company".

At the age of 22, he met Lillie Saunders at the wedding of mutual friends. After their first meeting, he professed his love for her and asked her to marry him, which he continued to do each weekend for a year, as he visited her in her hometown of Kingsville. Gord and Lillie were married on August 16, 1958 and had two children: Brett and Patricia.



provided by United News Canada

Gord built their first home in Peterborough and continued to build until his retirement in 1998. For two years of his career, he taught math and building skills at Sir Sanford Fleming College in Lindsay, Ontario. In the early 70s Gordon purchased property next to a ski club in Bethany and built his family a home where he spent the remainder of his life.

Gordon had a passion for both downhill skiing and waterskiing. He built waterskis at Beaver Lake and spent countless hours skiing, slaloming, bare footing and ski jumping on the lake.

He obtained his pilot's license and purchased a single engine Cessna which he would fly up to the cottage. Another passion was boats. Throughout his life he owned many canoes, ski boats, power boats, catamarans, and sailboats.

He fulfilled one of his lifelong dreams and built a 50 foot sailboat which he sailed down the eastern seaboard to Florida to his ultimate destination of the Bahamas. Many years were spent with his family on this boat which he named Reverie, meaning "dream".

In 1970, while shingling a roof and attempting to prove to his wife that the Sabbath was not on Saturday, Gord became convicted that it was. The next weekend, he was at services in Toronto asking to be baptized. Less than a month later, he and Lillie were both baptized by

Gary Antion.

Gordon's health began to decline as a result of an Alzheimer's related condition. Throughout his life he endured three back operations and multiple severe injuries which also contributed to his decline. He died on the morning of October 9, Thanksgiving Day, 2017. He was deeply loved and admired by his friends and family and will be missed dearly.

*Trish Romeo*

### Stevens Obituary

Charles Edward "Ted" Stevens, longstanding member of the Church of God, passed away on October 13 at the age of 83. Until he suffered a stroke in 2014, Ted was an active member of the Vancouver congregation and often led hymns at services.

Ted was born in 1934 in Calgary, Alberta. He had two siblings, an older sister named Connie and a younger brother named Jack. The family moved to Toronto in 1941. In November 1954 he joined the Royal Canadian Air Force where met his future wife, Mary Alice Loch, who was also in the Air Force and they married in 1957.

Their oldest son, Lorne, was born in 1959 in Trenton, Ontario. Shortly after, they were stationed in Baden-Baden, Germany and were there for several years. Their daughter,

Beverly, was born in 1961 and then they had a son, Kenneth, in 1963. Sadly, in 1964 at age one, Kenneth became very ill and died. Shortly after that the family returned to Edmonton, Alberta.

In October 1966, Ted left the Air Force and the family moved to Vancouver, where they started attending the Worldwide Church of God. They attended their first Feast of Tabernacles



provided by David Palmer

in 1967 in Squaw Valley and were baptized soon after. Ted remembered that the first people to greet them were Lyle and Joyce Simons, whose daughter, Valerie, would later marry Ted's son Lorne in 1989. In 2006, Lorne died from a heart attack at age 47.

Ted loved to drive and made his living as a city bus driver, local truck driver and delivery driver, crossing the country to deliver vehicles to their new owners. He also loved classical music and instilled this in his children. His brother Jack remembers many family get-togethers at their cabin on Union Bay (Vancouver Island) and describes Ted as "a gentle soul with a generous heart."

Between 1983 and 1994, he lived in Phoenix, Arizona. When he returned to British Columbia, he lived in Maple Ridge with his older sister, Connie.

In 2014 Ted suffered a severe stroke which left his left side paralyzed. He spent a few months in the hospital and rehab but was eventually able to return home. He continued to live with Connie until March 2017 when it was decided he could no longer live at home and he was placed in a care facility in Maple Ridge.

Ted was often visited by both the local ministry and membership, and enjoyed those visits very much since he was basically

bedridden and in constant pain.

I had the privilege for three consecutive years to assist Ted in observing the Passover at his home and later in the care home. A local deacon, Dale Craniford, also spent many hours with Ted in the years prior to his death. Occasionally we made arrangements for Ted to actually be at church services in his wheelchair. He often told me this was the highlight of his week.

Ted was a gentle man and kind to everyone he met. He had strong faith in God and His Kingdom and that faith kept him going through the difficult times as he approached the end of his life. Despite his difficult

circumstances he always had an amazingly positive attitude.

Ted is survived by: his daughter, Beverly Look, and her husband, Mike, who live in California; his brother, Jack Stevens, and his wife Barb; three nieces, Cathy, Janice and husband George, Carol and husband Scott; two nephews, Mark Burton and wife Cathie, Scott Burton and wife Chris; one great niece, Tori; and four great nephews, Tyler, Josh, Levi and Max.

Ted Stevens was loved by his family and friends including many brethren in God's church. He will be greatly missed.

*David Palmer*

## Spiritual Gardening

Matthew 13:23. "But he that receives seed into the good ground is he that hears the word and understands it, which also bears fruit and brings forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

It's good to garden and it's a great feeling to see in the spring, seeds sprout, take root and then in no time bud, flower, and fruit start to show.

However, different parts of the garden though can bring forth different harvests, some 30, some 60 and some 100. Why is this? Well, it all depends in part on the quality of the soil.

During the dark of winter un-

til the Passover season, the soil in the garden is enriched by continually adding compost of many different types. This breaks down into good nutrients, and the more compost added, the bigger the crop for the following year.

So also in the months ahead from the Feast until Unleavened Bread, the adding of the spiritual

food from the Feast and weekly Sabbaths to the soil of our lives enables us by God's Spirit, and the clear instruction in the Bible, to change our thinking and habits.

If we put these spiritual nutrients (Galatians 5:22) into the soil of our lives through the winter months and uproot the unproductive thorns of our own ways, we then put God's way ahead of our own. He will produce the right results in us by His Holy Spirit. We can then bring forth growth, 30, 60 or even 100-fold and be ready for the Feast of Unleavened Bread and springtime and a much bigger harvest in our lives.



provided by United News Canada

*Wendy Corrigan*

## Regular Offerings & Holy Day Offerings

This summary is designed to bring added clarity to this subject for some and serve as a reminder to others of what they already understand.

Regular offerings” are the donations in addition to our tithes, which we regularly (the amount and timing is left up to us) give to the church. “Holy Day offerings” are the offerings given on each of the seven annual Holy Days.

Our tithes already belong to God. Holy Day offerings are commanded. Our regular offerings are what we voluntarily give to God. They are our opportunities to go “above and beyond” what is required. However, Malachi 3:8 lets us know that neglecting to tithe and neglecting to give offerings are both considered robbing God.

“Three times (better understood as “three seasons”) a year all your men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before the LORD empty-handed” (Deuteronomy 16:16).

The reason it says “man” is that in that culture, the husband (or father) was responsible for the family finances. Today each household or individual should bring an offering – it makes no difference which member of the family writes the cheque.

This says “three times” but our custom in United Church of God is to take up a collection on each

of the seven Holy Days. Why is that? The custom is not an effort to get more income for the church. Think of this in the following way: each person can determine the total amount he/she wants to give in Holy Day offerings for the entire year. Then that amount can be divided into seven parts instead of three parts. Giving an offering on each Holy Day makes each of those days seem special compared to the weekly Sabbaths. It is also a good time to start teaching children the principle of giving offerings.

There is another major factor to understand. In ancient Israel, an “offering” was often an animal like a sheep, goat or cow. The people made three trips a year to Jerusalem to celebrate the annual feasts, which meant bringing three live animals. One pilgrimage was to celebrate the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread includes two Holy Days. When we give money during that Feast, we can easily divide the money into two parts, one part for each Holy Day. But if we were bringing a live goat, we would not try to divide it into two parts to give one-half on each Holy Day!

Continuing in Deuteronomy 16, verse 17 says: “Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.” This involves two factors. How much can you afford to give keeping in mind all of your financial obligations and needs? And how grateful are you for the blessings God has bestowed on you?

We should be “counting our bless-

ings” and thanking God throughout the year in our daily lives. After God blesses us, He watches to see how much we believe He has blessed us. He observes the kind of appreciation we show plus He watches to see what we do with our resources. Are we stingy or generous, especially towards God?

Jesus said, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21). It’s a beautiful circle. We tend to put our treasures where our hearts are, and, vice versa, when we give a “treasure” to God’s Work, that reinforces our heartfelt love for God and devotion to furthering God’s Work.

There is a related factor to consider—a law of nature that is also a spiritual law. This law is mentioned several times in Scripture. “A man reaps what he sows” (Galatians 6:7). Paul expands this thought in 2 Corinthians 9:6 “Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.”

If you are a farmer and you do not sow a crop, you will not have a harvest. If you sow a small amount, you will only have a small harvest. If you sow bountifully, or of full measure, you will reap more bountifully.

In 1 Corinthians 9:11, Paul wrote: “If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you?” Based on this scripture, we can think of God and His church as blessing us with spiritual harvests,

See “Offerings” on page 6