United News WEEKLY
NEWS of the UNITED CHURCH OF GOD, an INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

United News Weekly - July 30, 2026

Just in: Be sure to read the included letter from our president, John Elliott, and an important announcement about Winter Family Weekend.

In the news: wildfires in southwest France and nearby Spain have forced evacuation for hundreds of thousands. In this week's key article, we read an update on the brethren living in this area along with specifics on how we can pray for and support both members and the community.

We also share two camp reports: Camp Ironwood and Northwest Camp. As with our other camps, you'll see the full reports along with a wider selection of photos in the September-October *United News*.

Please join us in praying for relief from the fires in France and thanking God for His loving hand in a successful camp season.



Heidi Braun
MANAGING EDITOR, INTERNAL PUBLICATIONS



France Wildfire Relief Update



Lena VanAusdle
GOOD WORKS COORDINATOR

Hot weather and dry conditions across France have led to a massive wildfire, burning thousands of acres of forests as well as farmland and villages. Earlier this week, members of the United Church of God were forced to evacuate their homes. Thankfully, at this time all are safe.

Fires, hurricanes, droughts and earthquakes . . . natural disasters occur all the time all over the world. Sometimes we're the ones facing the challenge, but so many times it's something that has occurred far away to people we don't know. But, as we know, in God's Church we are all connected; when one of us celebrates, we all celebrate. And when one of us mourns, we all mourn (Romans 12:15).

The Good Works program has been a powerful way that we have been able to care for others in times of need. We have had situations where our members have faced recovery efforts that just felt . . . impossible. But we have come together and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to help people rebuild.

But sometimes, in the face of overwhelming disaster, God has spared our members from the catastrophes, and rather than needing to rebuild entire lives, they've just needed a little help to carry them through (paying an insurance deductible, restocking a fridge after a long-term power outage, paying for temporary housing after an evacuation). For these types of situations, Good Works maintains a disaster relief fund that can be sent immediately without the need to set up a fund to raise thousands.
Funds have already been sent to the United Church of God French office to support our members and their communities in purchasing and delivering water, food and other relief items.

We are so grateful to all of the people who donate to Good Works to make these efforts possible! Updates about our efforts in France will be provided by Tim Pebworth, the senior pastor for French-speaking areas, in the coming weeks.

Donate to Good Works

United Youth Camps



Camp Report—Camp Ironwood



David Schreiber
DIRECTOR, CAMP IRONWOOD

A total of 212 enthusiastic campers, teens, parents and even a few grandparents shared the 26th year of preteen camp Ironwood in southern Minnesota.

Each morning began with Christian living classes in three separate groups—campers, teens and adult staff—all centered on our camp theme: “Be My Disciple and Follow Me!” Building on last year’s study of Jesus Christ as the foundation on which we build our lives, campers and teens focused this year on His invitation to become His disciples. Through Scripture, they discovered what it means to follow Christ—to learn from His example, listen to Him and obey His teachings, and develop a lifelong relationship with Him.

The goal of this summer’s Christian living classes was to help the children understand that Jesus is the Master Teacher. The whole camp also enjoyed the new Jelly video as Jelly and Captain Finn shared their fishing adventure and taught everyone a lively song about following Jesus.

Throughout the day, campers participated in a wide variety of activities, including the zipline, horseback riding, slip ’n slide, team challenge, creek walk, field games, archery and slingshot, climbing wall, petting zoo, swimming, and arts and crafts. Evening activities included a campfire sing-along, novelty Olympics, treasure hunt, carnival and dancing with Jelly.

We give thanks and praise to God for blessing us with another memorable year at Camp Ironwood!



Camp Report—Northwest Camp



Ben Light
DIRECTOR, NORTHWEST CAMP

This year, 115 campers and 69 staff have come together at Camp Magruder on the beautiful Oregon Coast, to learn more about God and His calling for our lives. Our Christian living theme this year, “Follow Me” has led to many important discussions about what God is doing in each of our lives as we grow in our capacity as disciples.

The activities this year have been enjoyed by all, and our staff has worked very hard to make them something to remember. Our activities have included boogie boarding and skim boarding on the beach, softball, ultimate Frisbee, pickleball, dance, archery, volleyball, arts and crafts, Excellence in Living, teambuilding and speedaway. Unfortunately, Lake Lytle wasn’t capable of supporting waterski this year, but we added a hike down at the beautiful Kilchis Point Reserve so campers could enjoy the beautiful Oregon Coast.

We’ve been blessed this year to be joined by Mr. David Middleton and his wife Shana, from New Zealand, and their presence, as well as our staff and campers from Australia, Netherlands, Canada and the United Kingdom, has added a real international flair to our camp this year.

It’s hard to think that in a few short days we’ll need to leave the Zone, and return back to the world. This time together has been a much-needed respite. We’re all looking forward to the day when the Kingdom of God is here, and permanent—the conclusion of the calling of God and the path and journey we’re here to learn about this week at camp.

President's Letter

Greetings brethren,

As we each contribute to fulfilling the Great Commission given us by the Head of the Church, Jesus Christ, let me share some milestones we've reached that are important for us all to embrace.

Ministerial and Member Services is expanding its ability to serve congregations in the United States and around the world. Mr. Ben Light serves as senior manager for international services, helping strengthen communication, coordination, training and support throughout our international areas. Mr. Steven Britt serves as senior manager for member services, with responsibilities that include youth programs, camps, festivals and resources for members and congregations. Working with Mr. Steve Myers, they will help provide more timely and consistent support to brethren, elders and pastors.

Next year will mark 20 years since the smartphone began transforming how we receive and send information. Have you noticed that postal mailboxes are much emptier now? We prefer instant news, weather, email, messaging, shopping and payments. The world's knowledge is at our fingertips, tailored to our immediate interests with just a keyword or two. It moves with us everywhere. "Mobile first" has become the norm providing it all to everyone everywhere.

This email, *United News Weekly*, is an electronic publication intended to provide you with current, up-to-date information. I am writing this on Thursday morning and you should receive it within hours. In contrast, the new monthly print *United News* features lasting, meaningful content that members can enjoy, share and keep. When you hold a *Beyond Today* magazine today, you are among the few who read a physical copy. Publishers of all sorts have seen steep declines in print circulation as readers move online. So, we've added the new digital subscription option, as well as begun more frequent publishing of articles online.

If you have watched *Beyond Today* TV episodes on US cable TV, you were among a small number who viewed them there. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands watch *BT* episodes on YouTube, Roku, Amazon Fire TV, smartphones and our website. Have you installed the *Beyond Today* app to your smartphone and television yet? Merrie and I have watched it on YouTube for years, along with live webcasts of UCG church services.

Another recent enhancement to our website is the updated donation process. If you don't already use the new features, give them a try. The next time you make a donation or offering, log in and try out the new process. Once you do, it will remember your information for future donations. The updated checkout process is simpler, faster and more convenient.

Here's what I did during Pentecost services: When the offering began the person said, "If you need an envelope, raise your hand." My hand went up and a green envelope was handed to me. I opened the camera app on my iPhone and held it over the QR code on the envelope. When the little yellow bar appeared, I tapped it and the Give page opened. I clicked on "Pentecost," entered an amount and clicked "Submit." The response was "Thank you," and when the offering basket passed by I dropped in the unused envelope. All done!

My donation was completed immediately so no later counting, packaging, mailing, receiving, recounting, typing into computers or depositing at a bank. Consider going online now and familiarize yourself with the process so it will be ready the next time you choose to make a donation or offering. I think you too will appreciate the simplicity and immediacy that it offers.

As we continue to make practical enhancements to advance God's work more effectively, please realize that these changes are intended to serve everyone and help us faithfully carry out the work God has given us with the urgency and faithfulness our calling requires.

With love and appreciation for you all,



John Elliott
PRESIDENT, UNITED CHURCH OF GOD

Winter Family Weekend

Save the Date!

Plans are officially underway for Winter Family Weekend 2026! We invite you and your family to join us to strengthen the bonds of our "Household of Faith."

Dates: Tuesday, December 22–Sunday, December 27, 2026
Location: Champion Mill in Hamilton, Ohio
Theme: "Household of Faith"

We've reimagined this year's experience as an opportunity to reconnect, recharge and grow together as a Church family. Our theme explores three key aspects of our spiritual family: Sonship, the Body and Hospitality.

You can look forward to a fantastic weekend filled with inspiring seminars for all ages, opportunities for spiritual growth, meaningful fellowship and, of course, plenty of sports.

There'll be plenty of other ways to connect, including our signature Friday Night Family Banquet, expanded Sabbath Fellowship Brunch, Family Olympics, evening dances, Jelly Live! and other fun activities for everyone.

Start planning now. Registration opens soon! Watch for announcements and information at wfw.ucg.org.

We can't wait to see you there and celebrate together as the Household of Faith!



Dave PerMar
WINTER FAMILY WEEKEND COORDINATOR

Upcoming Events

August
1: Dallas 70th Anniversary - Dallas, TX
7-9: Women's Enrichment Weekend - Portsmouth, OH
14-17: Indianapolis Regional Young Adult Weekend - Nashville, IN
16: ABC Welcomes Class of 2027 - Milford, OH
16: Northwest Kids' Rodeo - Portland, OR

September
6: Gear Grinder Bike Ride - Twin Cities Minnesota
12: Feast of Trumpets
21: Day of Atonement
26-Oct. 2: Feast of Tabernacles

October
3: Eighth Day