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

United News Weekly - September 3, 2026

September is here, and with it, a calendar of exciting events!

Today's email includes details about this year's Feast journal for young adults, an update from the recent West African leadership conference, and an ordination announcement. We also include updated details about the upcoming Good Works service opportunity.

Hope you enjoy this week's "Behind the Scenes" photo!



Heidi Braun
MANAGING EDITOR, INTERNAL PUBLICATIONS

Ministerial and Member Services





Steven Britt
SENIOR MANAGER, MEMBER SERVICES

Young Adults: Drawing Closer to God at the Feast

One of the encouraging things I have been able to see firsthand this year is the work being done to support and serve our young adults. For those who may not know, we have an entire team dedicated to that effort, called United Young Adults (UYA).

One of the projects UYA has developed for this year's Feast of Tabernacles is "Follow Me: A Feast of Tabernacles Prayer Journal." It was created especially with young adults in mind and connects with the "Follow Me" theme used at United Youth Camps this year.

The journal gives a simple daily framework (and plenty of writing space!) for use throughout the Feast of Tabernacles and Eighth Day. Each day includes scriptures to read, a short reflection prompt and a challenge to think more intentionally about drawing closer to God in prayer and following Jesus Christ during the Feast.

Printed copies will be given to young adults at all U.S. Feast sites. The journal is available to everyone online and can now be accessed at feast.ucg.org. I encourage you to make use of it as a helpful tool during the Feast of Tabernacles.

I am grateful for the work of Heidi Braun, Scott McKeon and the entire UYA team in bringing this resource together!

The Feast gives us a special opportunity to step away from our normal routines, refocus spiritually and draw closer to God. Our hope is that this journal will help make prayer an even more deliberate and meaningful part of that time—and that the habits developed during the Feast will continue long after we return home.

May this Feast help each of us respond more fully to Christ's simple but profound invitation: "Follow Me."

Download the journal



West African Leadership Conference Strengthens Unity and Service

Nearly 50 leaders from across West Africa met last week in Grand Popo, Benin, for spiritual instruction, fellowship and discussions on the opportunities and challenges facing the Church throughout the region.

Leaders from Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria and Madagascar gathered for the third bilingual French/English conference held since 2019. Steve Myers, operation manager for Ministerial and Member Services, and Ben Light, senior manager for International Services, traveled from Cincinnati to participate and give special presentations.

Also present were Paul Moody, senior pastor for English-speaking West Africa; Tim Pebworth, senior pastor for French-speaking West Africa; David Lechien, assistant pastor for Francophone Europe; Laetitia Demarest, Bordeaux office manager; and Werner Solorzano, French media analyst.

Throughout the conference, sessions were presented in both English and French on a wide range of subjects important to the continued development of the Church in West Africa. Topics included the work underway throughout the region, the organization of the Feast of Tabernacles and youth camps, servant leadership and the importance of leading by godly example. Tim Pebworth also led a practical workshop to help participants further develop their skills in preparing and delivering effective biblical messages.

The conference also emphasized that, although our members come from many nations and cultural backgrounds, God's way of life transcends those differences. His Word provides the standard by which we are all called to live. Sessions also addressed the biblical importance of marriage and family and the valuable ways women serve and strengthen our families and congregations.

The group also traveled to Ouidah, Benin, to visit the historic "Door of No Return." For about 200 years, Ouidah was a major West African port where enslaved people were forced onto ships during the transatlantic slave trade. We saw a full-scale replica of the last slaving ship to depart in 1863, bound for Cuba. The replica will be part of a museum opening next year. This sobering visit offered an opportunity to reflect on a painful chapter of human history and the tremendous suffering endured by millions.

One of the most encouraging aspects of the conference was the warmth and enthusiasm of our West African brothers and sisters. Their eagerness to learn, grow and serve was evident throughout the conference. Question-and-answer periods following the presentations drew thoughtful and heartfelt participation, while shared meals and activities—including a karaoke evening and a final dinner around the fire—provided additional opportunities to strengthen friendships and fellowship.

By the conclusion of the conference, a strong sense of unity and shared purpose was evident. Though separated by nations, languages and cultures, we are joined together by something far greater—we are members of one spiritual Body.

The conference was an encouraging reminder that God is working with His people throughout West Africa and around the world. As we learn from one another, serve one another and grow together, we can move forward in unity and faith, looking to Jesus Christ as the living Head of His Church.

David Lechien



Ordination of Steve Corley

We're happy to announce that on August 29, 2026, Steve Corley was ordained into the ministry. He and his wife, Stephanie, attend the congregation in Kingsport, Tennessee. Steve also serves congregations in London, Kentucky; Knoxville, Tennessee and Roanoke, Virginia.

Good Works

Good Works is seeking three volunteers to serve at the youth camp in South Africa. Preferably, the group will include at least one male and one female. Camp experience is required, either as a camper or as a staff member (though staff experience is preferred).

Dates: Dec. 20-27, 2026 (with about three days of travel)

UPDATED Cost: All necessary immunizations required by South Africa (scholarships available).

Deadline to apply: September 22, 2026

For more information, email Lena VanAusdle at Lena_VanAusdle@ucg.org. To apply, visit: South Africa Youth Camp 2026.

Apply today!

UCG: Behind the Scenes



Darris McNeely, Steve Myers and Gary Petty were presented with a creative gift to commemorate their time filming *Beyond Today* together.

Upcoming Events

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

October
3: Eighth Day
30-Nov 1: Houston Regional Weekend - Tomball, TX

November
13-15: Tulsa Regional Family Weekend - Tulsa, OK