

SABBATH and PENTECOST ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDERS

North Canton & Youngstown, OH; Pittsburgh, PA; Wheeling, WV Congregations
United Church of God, an International Association

➔ **Sabbath, May 30, 2020:**

12:00 Noon (EDT) – local webcast sermon given by **Randy Stiver**.

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/north-canton-oh/webcast>

➔ **Feast of Pentecost, Sunday, May 31, 2020:**

12:00 Noon (EDT) – local Holyday webcast – split sermons given by **Keith Wilson** and **Randy Stiver**.

<https://www.ucg.org/congregations/north-canton-oh/webcast>

*DUE TO PRECAUTIONS RELATING TO PREVENTION OF THE SPREAD OF THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)
AND VARIOUS STATE REGULATIONS, WE WILL BE WEBCASTING LOCAL SERVICES UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

NEXT TWO WEEKS

(may be subject to change)

Sabbath, June 6	Local Sabbath webcast – 12:00 Noon (EDT) – https://www.ucg.org/congregations/north-canton-oh/webcast
Friday, June 12	Friday night Bible study webcast – 7:30 PM (EDT) – Randy Stiver https://www.ucg.org/congregations/north-canton-oh/webcast
Sabbath, June 13	Local Sabbath webcast – 12:00 Noon (EDT) – https://www.ucg.org/congregations/north-canton-oh/webcast

Pastor's contact information: PO Box 1474, Massillon, OH 44648. Home phone: 330-809-0566, cell phone: 740-739-7248. **Email addresses:** randy_stiver@ucg.org or rpstiver@gmail.com (both come to the same location). For emails regarding scheduling (church events, visits or counseling), please copy my wife Linda ldstiver@gmail.com. Announcements should be sent to my email and copied to our daughter Amanda at anstiver@gmail.com as she helps process them each week.

PASTOR'S NOTE:

Greetings dear brethren,

First and foremost, we hope you are well physically as well as spiritually healthy!

The Coronavirus is likely to be one of the great traumas of the world as we draw closer to the greatly longed for, second coming of our Lord, Savior, High Priest in heaven and soon-coming king--Jesus Christ.

This will be a benchmark as well as a powerful wake-up call for us to draw much closer to our Creator in these end times.

But how do we close the gap from where we are to where we need to be? Several key directives come to mind from our last Bible Study webcast:

1. Remember the height of our spiritual excitement and anticipation of our first love for God's soon-coming Kingdom. Let it fill your thoughts, prayers as well as your fellowship conversation.
2. Remember that riches aren't our goal, and wealth is not our measure. Troubles--big ones--will come, but face them down with the strength of true faith.
3. Remember to honor and never deny the truth taught by our Lord and Savior. Turn to God and never compromise His truth.
4. Remember to shield your eyes and your mind's eye to the corruption of adultery that pervades this debauched age.
5. Remember to value your spiritual life above the death-leaning, faith-losing false values of Satan's world.
6. Remember to go to God every day for even more strength to magnify the spiritual strength you have from recapturing the true values.
7. Remember: To stay alive spiritually focus on God's truth. Look sharp, be zealous for the true God of the Bible!

You might also like to revisit Revelation 2 and 3 to find additional lessons from the seven churches and the historic true Church eras.

Pray for the health of all our brethren wherever they are. Whatever time is left--is as it has always been--a short time before the return of our great Savior. Let's get God's Work done and be ready when our great King comes!

Happy Sabbath,



Randy Stiver, Pastor

1. LOCAL PRAYER REQUESTS and UPDATES

(If you notice that your prayer request needs updating, please drop us an email or a call with an update. Thank you!)

- Please pray *fervently* that during this Coronavirus crisis God protect His people, and all people. Please also pray that our opportunity to assemble together is restored as soon as is safely possible. Also pray that the financial impact globally, nationally, and individually is mitigated through God's mercy.
- **Linda Ritter** (North Canton) – Linda would appreciate your prayers for kidney and liver issues she is having, and improvement in her hearing and hearing aid performance. As with so many, the lack of opportunity to fellowship during this challenging time can be discouraging. Your prayers for encouragement and healing are much appreciated!

Ongoing:

- **Jenny Luchitz** (North Canton) – Feeling poorly with the dramatic weather fronts that come through at this time of year. Please pray for encouragement for Jenny and lessening of aches and pains.
- **Janice Walters** (North Canton) – Recovering from a fall down the stairs. Prayers for a quick recovery are greatly appreciated.
- **Steve Richmond** (Cambridge) – Steve continues to battle cancer, please keep him in your prayers.

2. INDIVIDUAL PROTOCOLS FOR PREPARING TO RE-CONVENE IN-PERSON SERVICES

As we continue to plan for the limited re-opening of in-person services as halls become available and as safety permits, there are some guidelines for every member to consider as we look at a format for services that will, temporarily, be quite different from what we are used to. Please see “Coronavirus Protocols for Holding Sabbath Services” (based on UCG, and state and national guidelines), attached PDF and below. Review the protocols and consider carefully your personal situation and the challenges posed by social distancing as you decide whether to attend when in-person services can safely open up again.

Meanwhile, we will continue to locally webcast Sabbath services and the regular Bible Studies. If you are able (and this will vary for everyone according to health issues or concerns) to meet in small gatherings (being mindful of social distancing) to tune in to the webcasts, that would be a good opportunity for fellowship, in addition to fellowship on social media, by phone, letter, and video chat.

3. PENTECOST HOLYDAY OFFERING INFORMATION

Due to the restrictions placed on meeting together at this time, many congregations will not have face-to-face meetings this year for Pentecost. Here are three ways that you can conveniently make your Holy Day offering, if you will not be meeting in person.

Donate Online

Many members already use our website's online donation page at [donate.ucg.org](https://www.ucg.org) to give their Holy Day offerings when they are not able to be at those services--as well as their regular tithes and offerings. We have added Pentecost to the donation page; it will remain on the page for about a week after the Holy Day, so you will be able to make your offering online, if you prefer.

If you are new to online donations, we have produced a video that walks you through the process: <https://www.ucg.org/members/news/how-to-donate-online>

If you use the online option, please note the following:

a) Please include your PIN (the number that begins with "U" on your green Holy Day offering envelopes, just above your name and address.) This greatly speeds up the processing here at the home office. When a PIN is omitted, it requires extra work on the part of the personnel here at the home office to ensure the donation is being credited to you.

b) To optimize your offering, please use the "Online eCheck" option, which is the same as writing a check for your offering--because using your credit card for payment costs the Church around 3% of the donation amount to process.

Banking Bill Payment

Others may choose to use a "bill pay" service through their bank. Again, if you choose to pay this way, in the section for your "account number," please list your PIN and then, in addition, put H3 (Pentecost) after your PIN. This will help us credit the correct fund for your donation receipt.

Sent by Mail

For those who choose to mail their Holy Day offerings, please use the green Holy Day offering envelopes which were mailed to you earlier. Please use a separate check and envelope for each Holy Day offering. You will then need to place these envelopes into another carrier envelope and mail to the following address:

United Church of God - HDO
P.O. Box 541027
Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027

Thank you for your cooperation during these extraordinary times we find ourselves in this year.

--Ministerial and Member Services

4. FEAST SITE IN ZANDVOORT, THE NETHERLANDS – CANCELLED

National restrictions regarding "social distancing" now limit the number of people allowed in the meeting hall for the Feast of Tabernacles to 100 people from the originally anticipated 300. Even though we will be limited to 100 people at the Feast, the hotel has also informed us that our costs for various services (hall rent, etc.) will not be reduced accordingly.

When the UCG-Netherlands National Council decided last September to host a Dutch feast site, the decision was based on a cost calculation with 300 people in attendance and the expenses being covered in part by our many international guests. With the capacity limitations now imposed on us by "social distancing", our cost calculation is obviously no longer valid. For that reason, as much as we regret it, we have decided to cancel the Dutch feast site in Zandvoort.

5. NORTHWEST CAMP and CAMP WOODLAND – CANCELLED

Due to the State of Oregon not allowing overnight camps this summer we will not be able to hold Northwest Camp this year. We want to thank all of the campers who applied and staff who wanted to serve the youth of God's Church. We look forward to a great camp in 2021.

-- Rex Sexton, Camp Director

Sadly, Camp Woodland will be cancelled for 2020 due to the CDC mandate for Georgia. The camp facility managers have relayed that they have cancelled all of their overnight June camps and will likely cancel their July overnight camps due to the current CDC requirement for all staff and campers to test negative for COVID-19 within 7 days prior to camp. This is a mandate that the camp facility and UYC do not want to require for our youth and staff and therefore we will not be able to hold camp this year. We'll deeply miss being together this year but will greatly anticipate next year!

-- Jay Ledbetter, Camp Director

6. LOCAL FESTIVAL COORDINATORS

Festival Planning Brochure: feast.ucg.org

Accommodation information: <https://www.ucg.org/members/feast/sites>.

Please be sure to register for the Feast and make reservations as your circumstances allow.

If you need local assistance, please contact your festival coordinator:

North Canton: Freeman Kuhns and Mark Miller

Pittsburgh: Nathan Courtney

Youngstown: James Guy

Wheeling: Jim Kocher

SPECIAL RESOURCES FOR DURING THE COVID-19 SITUATION

COVID-19 Links and Resources:

National: <https://www.coronavirus.gov/>

Ohio: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/>

Pennsylvania: <https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx>

West Virginia: <https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>

UCG home office: <https://www.ucg.org/members/news/united-church-of-god-coronavirus-updates>

VIEWING SABBATH WEBCASTS – How-to

The following link can help you better connect to the webcasts from the UCG.org website. Please follow the link and read the extensive directions for more information and troubleshooting help:

<https://www.ucg.org/help/problems-viewing-ustream-and-youtube-videos>

PHONE HOOK-UP to Home Office Webcasts

If you need a phone hook-up to the webcast services from Cincinnati (2:30PM on Sabbaths) here are the directions:

Please call no earlier than 5 minutes before the service will begin. If the Home Office has not activated the meeting, the caller will be put on hold, and then asked to call again later.

Normal Calling Directions for Home Office Webcast:

For those who can pay for long distance calls or have an unlimited phone calling plan:

Call: 1-508-924-1634

No access code needed.

If you know someone who could use the phone hook-up number, but does not get the announcements by email, please call them and pass along the information! Thank you!

-END-

Coronavirus Protocols for Holding Sabbath Services For the North Canton and Youngstown, OH, Pittsburgh, PA, and Wheeling, WV congregations of UCG,IA

(Condensed from official protocols from the *United Church of God, IA* and state and national guidelines.

As time and circumstance dictate, the following list may be subject to additions and revisions.)

1. 6-foot social distancing at all times for adults and children (except for family members). This includes seating areas.
2. Face masks required (exception for serious medical issues).
3. Be mindful to avoid touching shared surfaces as much as possible. The hall will be sterilized to the best of our ability, but viruses have a way of slipping through. Frequent use of hand sanitizer is encouraged.
4. Limits on number of members attending (approx. half our normal numbers).
5. Wait in vehicle until approx. 10 minutes before services, then make way into hall and to seats. Please, no groups or seating that put you in closer proximity than 6 feet.

6. If there is a greeter at the door, please don't shake hands, but do allow them to open and close the door for everyone. Greeters, please open the door so that it is a barrier between you and whoever is going inside or outside.
7. Service will have opening prayer, sermonette/sermon or split sermons, and closing prayer. To err on the side of caution, hymns will not be sung for the time being to avoid aerosol spread of virus in water droplets from increased exhalation during singing.
(From the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6919e6.htm>)
8. After service, please exit the hall promptly, in approx. 10 minutes.
9. No food or drink.
10. When using toilet facilities, disinfectant wipes will be provided for you to sanitize the toilet handles and sink handles and door handles before and after use. Wash your hands carefully. Please be responsible for yourself.
11. Please, no handshakes, hugs, or other similar physical greetings.
12. If you are ill, please DO NOT come to services.
13. If, after having attended services, you begin to feel ill with symptoms resembling the COVID-19 coronavirus, please notify the proper health authorities and the pastor as soon as possible. We will then begin the process of quarantine for ALL members who attended that Sabbath.
14. If you are a health care worker at risk for high exposure to the COVID-19 coronavirus, please considering staying home and tuning in via the local webcast.
15. If you are over 60 and have significant health issues, please stay home and tune in via the local webcast. Likewise, those under 60 who have significant health issues, please continue to tune in from home.
16. For those with children we are asked to consider: if multiple families with young children attend, what would be the difficulty in keeping the children from playing with one another, or maintaining appropriate separation? If this situation could become burdensome for you, please consider tuning in from home.

While these protocols are certainly very different from our normal Sabbath service experience and far from ideal, they will, we hope and pray, help us to avoid the spread of a disease that though for some is very mild, is for others extremely serious to the point of life threatening.

Our desire, by following these set protocols, is to avoid doing harm to one another, an expression of outgoing love and concern which is *the* way of life exemplified by Jesus Christ and God, the Father. The example we set as we conduct ourselves together can bring a positive *or* negative light on what the Church of God is and what it represents, namely, the God Family and the Kingdom of God. Our individual and collective choices matter.

Though we have limited fellowship time through this constrained format for Sabbath services, after the service is over going to a safe restaurant for a meal or enjoying fellowship in a nearby park or hosting a small gathering at home are options that can allow for more fellowship time. If so doing, please keep groups small enough to be mindful of social distancing.