

A PUBLICATION OF
The Association of the
Churches of God in Oregon &
SW Washington



Vol. 6, Issue 1
Jan/Feb 2024

— CONNECTIONS —

Connecting our Churches, Ministries & Events



Greetings Friends!

Our team has been doing a lot of thinking about the challenges and opportunities we face as an Association. We have been framing it in the language of pioneers and settlers. In his insightful book, *Canoeing the Mountain*, Tod Bolsinger reminds us that in a world filled with rapid change and uncertainty, the metaphor of 'canoeing the mountains' beautifully captures the essence of adaptability and resilience required in leadership and life's journeys.

In the book, Bolsinger draws from the story of Lewis and Clark, explorers who embarked on a mission expecting rivers but encountered the unexpected challenge of mountains. Similarly, our churches are being presented with unforeseen obstacles requiring us to pivot, learn, and adapt.

Pioneering isn't just about being the first—it's about courageously embracing the unknown, challenging assumptions, and reimagining our strategies when confronted with unexpected landscapes. The terrain we navigate might not match what we've prepared for, but it's in these moments of uncharted territories that our true leadership shines.

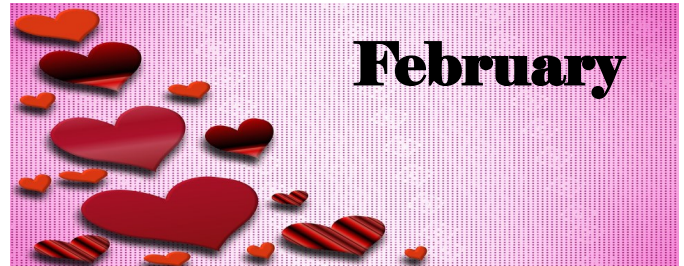
As we paddle through these unanticipated 'mountains'—whether they be technological advancements, shifting societal paradigms, or personal challenges—let us remember three crucial lessons from Bolsinger's insights:

1. **Adaptability:** The ability to pivot and adapt plans in the face of unexpected circumstances is essential. Instead of clinging to familiar ways, true pioneers learn to embrace change and innovate accordingly.
2. **Humility:** Just as Lewis and Clark had to seek guidance from indigenous people in their expedition, true leadership involves humility in acknowledging that we don't have all the answers. Seeking wisdom from diverse perspectives fosters growth and understanding in uncharted territories.
3. **Resilience:** Pioneering demands resilience—the willingness to persist even when the path seems insurmountable. Challenges are opportunities for growth, and perseverance in the face of adversity often leads to unexpected discoveries and successes.

(continued on pg 3)

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District & National Events



Jan 1: New Years Day
Jan 15: Martin Luther King Jr Day

Feb 2: Groundhog Day
Feb 14: Valentines Day
Ash Wednesday
Feb 19: Presidents Day

"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Proverbs 3:6

"Let us love one another." 1 John 4:7

YOUR CONNECTION TO THE CHURCH OF GOD
CHOG NEWS

Check out this event and so much more at Jesusisthesubject.org

"JESUS PEOPLE ... Doing What Jesus Did"



Bringing the Kingdom to Life...Together

Mark your calendars and join us this year at one of our three collaborative events!
May 15-18—Los Angeles, June 18-20—Oklahoma City, October 3-5—Columbus, Ohio



International Youth Convention
Celebrating 100 Years Nationally
Orlando, Florida—June 27-30

Pastor Jerry—Adaptability, Humility, Resilience

(continued from page 1)

In this coming year we are seeking to approach our own 'mountains' with a pioneering spirit—a spirit marked by adaptability, humility, and resilience. In doing so, we not only navigate uncharted territories but also inspire those around us to embrace the journey with courage and determination.

May Bolsinger's wisdom remind us that while the terrain may change, the strength of our character and leadership is what truly propels us forward. As we paddle through these uncharted waters, may we continue to evolve, innovate, and forge new paths, always remembering that we serve a God who is not blind to our plight and goes before us marking the way forward.

May your New Year be full of exciting adventures!

Together in ministry,

Pastor Jerry



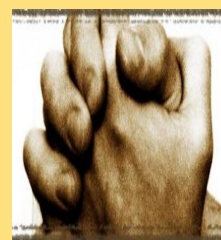
Prayer Needs & 2024 District Calendar Dates

Please continue to **PRAY** for our churches in transition with pastoral leadership.
We greatly appreciate your prayers.

Redmond—Pastoral Search

Valley Hope, Hillsboro—in process of a restart, Ken Hoole, Interim Pastor

Remember we are stronger together!!



District Council Retreat @ Turner Feb 2-3

Annual Business Meeting @ Oak Park July 20, 2024

2024 Summer Camps @ CWB pg 4

Willamette Valley Campmeeting @ Turner July 28th-August 1, 2024

Pastor/Spouse Retreat @ Newport October 13-15

CWB—New Caretaker Chris Kingsley

Greetings from Camp White Branch,

Welcome Chris Kingsley, our new CWB Caretaker

Please welcome Chris Kingsley, our new Maintenance Specialist/Caretaker, his wife Tiffany, and their children Morgan and Brady, to Camp White Branch. Chris started mid November and moved into the house on site. We are super excited to have him join our staff.

Chris grew up going to Community Chapel in Sweet Home. This is where he met his wife, Tiffany, while working as a leader in youth ministry. Chris and Tiffany were married in 2008. They have 2 children, Brady and Morgan. As a family they enjoy a very adventurous life- hunting, hiking, camping, and exploring the West Coast.

Please remember Chris and his family in your prayers as they transition. You can reach them at the camp number 541-822-3511 or cwbcaretaker@gmail.com.

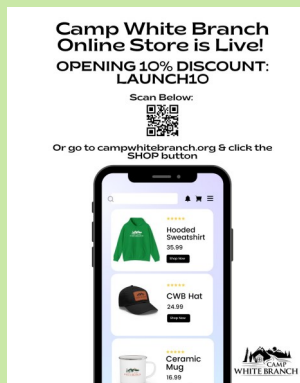


2024 COG Summer Camp

Dates are set and registration will open in February. We are looking forward to having a great camp season this year! Additional information will be sent to churches in January.

Camp Dates for 2024

July 8-12, High School Camp
July 15-19, Middle School Camp
July 22-26, Junior Camp
August 5-8, Primary Camp
August 9-11, Introductory Camp



CWB Online Store is Open!

We now have sweatshirts, hats, mugs and more available online! You can connect to our online store through our website, Facebook and Instagram. Your item will be produced on demand when ordered. We will not have stock on hand at camp for inventory reasons. Please allow at least 2 weeks for delivery. Check it out today!

Camp White Branch

COG Camp White Branch 65th Anniversary Celebration

What a great day of celebration and sharing! Even though it rained, this didn't stop the activities. We had around 75 people in attendance and enjoyed food and fellowship.

So much history about Camp White Branch was shared by Mel Neu, Owen Hinkle and Ruth Bissett (left to right)



What's been going on at camp?

Post fiscal year end we determined we had enough funds to purchase new refrigerator units for the kitchen. The old one had not been keeping temperature and the doors wouldn't latch any longer. Taking out the old unit and delivering/installing the new units was one of Chris's first jobs. The new units are more energy efficient and will allow for more space in the kitchen.

Old refrigerator



New refrigerator



We are hoping to complete some additional upgrades to the kitchen this winter related to storage and cabinetry.

The metal roof was also installed on the office building by McKenzie Roofing. This is the final building we had planned

for roofing. Additional work still needs to be done on the exterior and the interior of the office to complete this project.

We are feeling really blessed that God provides for our needs at the camp, whether it be volunteers, donations, guests, or funding of projects. If you want to be involved, we have other needs at the camp listed on our website under the support/needs list section—www.campwhitebranch.org

Blessings,

Lisa Switzer, Camp White Branch, Chair

Danette Beisley, Church of God Camp Coordinator

Embracing the Pioneering & Developing Spirit



I have come to appreciate the fact that our Association stands on the shoulders of pioneers and developers—men and women, like John Green & Mamie Bisconer, who, fueled by faith, took daring steps into the unknown world of the Northwest, leaving an indelible mark on the history of this District. As we navigate the present and look to shape the future, I am convinced we need to embrace this pioneering and developing spirit, to cultivate a culture of bold faith and innovation that propels us forward.

In "Truth Along the Trail", Sam Dunbar tells the tales of individuals and congregations who, against all odds, blazed trails into uncharted territories in our region. Their stories serve as a reminder that our District's identity is intricately woven with the fabric of risk and faith. From the earliest days, Church of God pioneers faced challenges that demanded audacity and resilience, be it establishing new congregations, engaging in community outreach, or weathering the storms of change.

We must not merely remember these stories, we must embody their essence. The narratives of our forebearers are not relics of the past but guideposts for our present journey. They beckon us to step out in faith, to be willing to take risks, and to boldly engage with the challenges and opportunities before us. At the recent 'Helping Small Churches Thrive' conference, Karl Vaters said, "Don't do what your founders did; learn to think like your founders thought". We must grab hold of the gritty mindsets of those who have ministered before us.

This call to embrace the pioneering and developing spirit is not limited to the pages of history. It is a living invitation extended to every member of our District, irrespective of age or background. We must raise up a new generation of pioneers and developers— a released movement of regular people, filled with the Spirit of God.

This pioneering and developing spirit is inseparable from a culture of innovation. Our pioneers did not merely follow well-trodden paths; they carved new ones. In today's rapidly changing world, innovation is not a luxury but a necessity. We must be willing to adapt, to explore new ways of reaching and serving our communities, and to leverage technology and contemporary tools to enhance our ministry.

Creating a culture of innovation requires a mindset shift. It involves fostering an environment where new ideas are not only welcomed but celebrated. It means viewing challenges as opportunities for growth and embracing change as a natural part of our collective journey. As we pioneer and develop into the future, let us be known for our adaptability, creativity, and willingness to experiment for the sake of the Gospel.

Let us be a District known for our unwavering faith, daring initiatives, and commitment to innovation—not just in our past, but in the present. As we step into the future, may the Holy Spirit, as our North Star, be our guide, propelling us to new heights and enabling us to make a lasting impact in the communities we serve. Together, let us write the next chapter of our District's history—one marked by the same bold faith, transformative initiatives, and a legacy that inspires generations still to come.

Michael Guzman

Multi-Media/Resource District Pastor

jmichaelguzman@gmail.com

Lents-Gilbert Shares ...

What an eventful and inspiring journey 2023 has been for the Lents-Gilbert Church of God! The year unfolded with an abundance of blessings, culminating in a heartwarming Carol Sing-A-Long that not only celebrated the joy of the season but also delved into the profound history of cherished hymns such as "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day."

In exploring the origins of this timeless hymn, we uncovered the poignant story of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the renowned writer and poet. In the midst of the Civil War in 1863, Longfellow penned the poem "Christmas Bells" on Christmas Day. Bereaved and grappling with personal tragedy, having lost his wife, Fanny, two years prior to a tragic accident, and dealing with the news of his son Charlie being wounded in the war, Longfellow found solace in expressing the complex emotions of his own heart and the turbulent world around him.

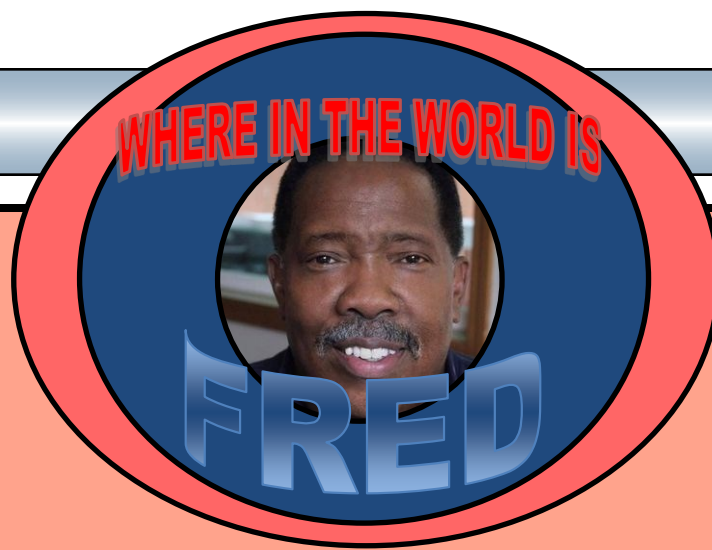
On that fateful Friday, December 25, 1863, the 57-year-old widowed father of six, whose eldest son had been nearly paralyzed, encapsulated the dynamic and dissonant feelings within him. Despite the tumultuous times, he heard the Christmas bells ringing in Cambridge and the resounding proclamation of "peace on earth" (Luke 2:14). In the midst of his anguish, Longfellow recognized the enduring promise of divine peace, a promise rooted in the biblical verse that reverberates through generations.

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, let us draw inspiration from Longfellow's journey, acknowledging the transformative power of faith. In the face of contemporary challenges and conflicts, the enduring message of "peace on earth" echoes through the ages, a divine assurance that transcends the tumult of the world. Luke 2:14 reminds us that, despite the wars that persist in our time, there is a profound optimism anchored in the promise of God's peace. May this optimism, fueled by our faith, guide our collective efforts to build a world that reflects the true spirit of peace and goodwill for all, grounded in the unwavering love of God.

May the coming year be a canvas painted with moments of love, kindness, and unity. As a community bound by faith, let us continue to support and uplift one another, spreading the light of God's love wherever we go. May your journey be guided by the wisdom of the divine, and may you find strength in the knowledge that you are cherished members of the family of God.

Jill MacCartney
Lents-Gilbert Worship Ministry





I really enjoyed my time of fellowship at Rockwood Church of God today. You guys really displayed the strength of your leadership as pastor Jerry Davisson fell ill with Covid. With little notice elder Ron Hoak stepped up and delivered a great message on Christmas Eve Sunday...Well done my friends, well done!!



December 24th Rockwood Church of God

December 17th Faith Rock Community Church

Enjoyed my time with Jason & Tara Hood at Faith Rock Church today. The church is full of young families. Since my last visit (May) they've birth at least 6 new babies. I really appreciate how engaged their congregation is with the community around them. They do ministry to foster care families, adoptions, domestic violence families and have a music program for kids teaching keyboard & guitar.



Enjoyed preaching for Pastor Trisa in Gales Creek today. I hope her time visiting family in Jamaica is going well...



December 10th Gales Creek Church of God

December 3rd Albany Church of God



So it was "Ugly Sweater Sunday" at First Church of God in Albany. I didn't get the memo but I enjoyed listening to Ashleigh (youth pastor) share this morning. Pastor Sprunger prayed a powerful prayer on behalf of several requests as well. My biggest treat was to hear my 89 year old friend Everett Winter sing a solo. I hope I can still sing someday at 89.

Our Associate Pastor, Fred Douglas, is on the move. Have you seen him at your church recently? If not, keep an eye out because he will probably be there soon.

**To keep up with his adventures, connect on our Association Facebook Page:
www.facebook.com/ORWACOG**

The Awakening Series



The goal of the Awakening Series is to infuse voices and inspiration into the Movement of the Church of God here in our District and beyond. Pastor Michael Guzman has been interviewing leaders inside and outside our Movement and believes there is something important we carry in our historical roots that the world needs today. We encourage you to take a look at these videos found on Youtube at www.bit.ly/orwacog-awakening. There are currently 15 Episodes available.

Episode 1, **A Movement Captivated by Idealism** is a conversation with **Dr. Barry Callen**

Episode 2, **The Five Non-Negotiables** is a discussion with **Dr. Jim Lyon**

Episode 3, **Taking Back What Hell Has Stolen** is a second discussion with **Dr. Jim Lyon**

Episode 4, **Embracing the Ways of Jesus** with **Bob Rognlien**

Episode 5, **BibleProject for the Church of God** with **Mike McDonald**

Episode 6, **The Rooted Impact of Women in Ministry** with **Rev. Dr. Kimberly Majeski**

Episode 7, **We Must Align Our Orthodoxy & Orthopraxy** with **Bishop Timothy Clarke**

Episode 8, **Pioneering Ministry & Bearing Fruit from Abiding** with **Andrew Chalmers**

Episode 9, **Missional Church** with **Dr. Jerry Davisson**, our District Pastor

Episode 10, **Decentralized Churches as a Way Forward** with **Dr. Lloyd Moritz**

Episode 11, **Time for Rebirth at Warner Pacific University** with **Dr. Brian Johnson**

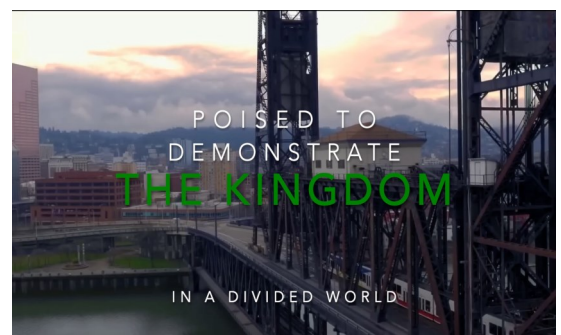
Episode 12, **Relationship Building at the Table** with **Fred Douglas**

Episode 13, **Immersing your Church in the Holy Spirit & Love** with **Matt Ingalls**

Episode 14, **A Breathe of Fresh Air for Small Churches** with **Karl Vaters**

Episode 15, **Truth Along the Trail - Pioneers & Developers in the Northwest** - Pastors' Gathering

Our Movement was born with a vision for change and the moment is ripe for our Movement to be awakened again.



District Prayer List for 2024

Be sure to remember our Church of God congregations in prayer during the year. (Below you will find our District Prayer List for 2024.) There is power in prayer and we are stronger together.

*Rejoice always, pray continually,
give thanks in all circumstances; for this is
God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



Portland - Kingdom Nation	1/7/24	Albany - First Church of God	7/7/24
Powers - Powers Church of God	1/14/24	Aloha - Aloha Church of God	7/14/24
Prineville - Living Water Church of God	1/21/24	Bandon - Seabird Chapel Church of God	7/21/24
District Council Planning Retreat 2/2-3	1/28/24	Willamette Valley Campmeeting 7/28-8/1	7/28/24
Rainier - Rainier Community COG	2/4/24	Cottage Grove - Riverside Comm COG	8/4/24
Redmond - First Church of God	2/11/24	Eugene - Friendly Street Church of God	8/11/24
Reedsport - Reedsport Church of God	2/18/24	Gales Creek - Gales Creek Comm COG	8/18/24
Community Outreach in your Neighborhood	2/25/24	Hillsboro - Valley Hope Community Church	8/25/24
Salem - Oak Park Church of God	3/3/24	Husum, WA - Husum Community COG	9/1/24
Scappoose - Chapman Community COG	3/10/24	Klamath Falls - First Church of God	9/8/24
Springfield - Springfield Church of God	3/17/24	La Grande - Crossroads Comm Church	9/15/24
St. Helens - Sunset Park Comm Church	3/24/24	Longview, WA - Westview Church	9/22/24
District Committee Members	3/31/24	Medford - First Church of God	9/29/24
Tigard - Tigard Church of God	4/7/24	Newberg - River Street Church of God	10/6/24
Vancouver, WA - First Church of God	4/14/24	North Bend - College Park Comm Church	10/13/24
Vancouver, WA - Iglesia de Dios	4/21/24	Oregon City - Faith Rock Comm Church	10/20/24
Woodburn - Hoodview Church of God	4/28/24	Oregon City - Hilltop Community COG	10/27/24
Church of God Missionaries	5/5/24	Portland - Community Church of God	11/3/24
Camp White Branch Staff	5/12/24	Portland - Lents-Gilbert Church of God	11/10/24
Warner Pacific University (Portland, OR)	5/19/24	Portland - Lynchwood Church of God	11/17/24
COG Ministries Staff/Council (Anderson, IN)	5/26/24	Portland - Maranatha Church	11/24/24
Church of God District Council	6/2/24	Portland - Neighborhood Church of God	12/1/24
Summer Camp Directors & Counselors	6/9/24	Portland - Richmond Community Church	12/8/24
Summer Camp Children & Youth	6/16/24	Portland - Rockwood Church of God	12/15/24
Opportunities to share God's Good News	6/23/24	Our Pastors & Spouses—Active & Retired	12/22/24
Our Pastors/Church Staff & their Families	6/30/24	District Staff	12/29/24

THE PURPOSE

of The Association of the Churches of God in Oregon and SW Washington is to:

- Conduct business as the legally-incorporated body of the Association of the Churches of God in Oregon, Inc.
- Provide assistance to Oregon and Southwest Washington congregations and be a channel through which local congregations shall be mobilized to fulfill our united vision and mission.

THE VISION

of The Association is for every believer to fulfill the mandate of the Great Commission, the Great Commandments, and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

THE MISSION

of The Association is to:

- Create and maintain ministries that will strengthen, encourage, supplement, and promote local congregations of The Association;
- Inspire commitment to the teachings, mission, and theological perspectives of the Church of God, Anderson, IN;
- Provide support for the development of healthy Church of God congregations.



CONNECTIONS is a bi-monthly publication of

The Association of the Churches of God in Oregon & SW Washington

Rev. Jerry Davisson, District Pastor—Rev. Fred Douglas, Assoc District Pastor

Rev. Michael Guzman, Multi-Media/Resource District Pastor—Rev. Paula Wilson, Office Admin

Next issue, March/April 2024