A PUBLICATION OF

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





— CONNECTIONS —

Connecting our Churches, Ministries & Events



Greetings Friends!

I believe in the power of prayer to change things. However, too often we approach prayer as a one-way conversation where we come to God with our long list of needs and desires. We see God as a great cosmic vending machine. We feel all we have to do is put in the correct change (pray the right prayer) and out pops the answer. That is if we pray at all.

The Barna Research group found that the average person spends 1 minute a day in prayer, the average Christian spends 3-5 minutes, and the average Pas-

tor or church leader spends 7-10 minutes. This includes prayer for meals. James 4:2-3 tells us, "...You do not have because you do not ask God, when you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."

According to Richard Foster in his classic book, *Celebration of Discipline*, "To pray is to change. Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us. If we are unwilling to change, we will abandon prayer as a noticeable characteristic of our lives. The closer we come to the heartbeat of God the more we see our need and the more we desire to be conformed to Christ." How often do we complain about the issues we face in our lives, our communities or our church but never get around to praying about them? And when we do pray we assume that God will change the situation instead of me or my attitude. If we really want transformation, we need to make communication with God a priority.

PRAY. That may sound too simple to you but ask yourself, how is my prayer life? Not only in terms of quantity (how much time I spend praying) but also quality (am I fully present to the Holy Spirit when I pray). If I can be honest with you my prayer life is often anemic. I rush from one ministry opportunity to another, often doing it without really seeking the help and guidance of my Heavenly Father. Jesus said, "... I'm telling you this straight. The Son can't independently do a thing, only what he sees the Father doing. What the Father does, the Son does. The Father loves the Son and includes him in everything he is doing (John 5:19-20 MSG). Jesus did what he did because he was in constant communication with his Father. If we truly want to see transformation in our lives and our communities ... to do and be all that God wants us to, we need to spend time pressing into our Heavenly Father.

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District Office, Church & National Events



Mar 12: Day Light Saving Time Begins

Mar 17: St. Patrick's Day Mar 20: Spring Begins

"A friend loveth at all times."

Proverbs 17:17



Apr 2: Palm Sunday Apr 9: EASTER

Apr 21-22: CWC Spring Connection—Aloha Apr 25-27: WARM Gathering for Pastors

"It is True! The Lord has risen." Luke 24:34

YOUR CONNECTION TO THE CHURCH OF GOD

CHOGNEWS

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

Church of God Convention & General Assembly

Tampa, Florida June 22-25, 2023

"For the life of every living thing is in His hand, and the breath of every human being." Job 12:10 NLT

The Church of God in the United States and Canada will meet in Tampa in June 2023 for its biennial Convention and General Assembly. More than routine, this meeting will also set the stage for a historic global assembly of the Movement, as a new international partnership, drawing together 100 Church of God assemblies at work in twenty-three time zones, convenes for the first time.

In every nation, at home and abroad, there are mountains to climb, souls to save, wrongs to right, Kingdom truths to bring to life, and tests to overcome. Plenary and elective sessions will inspire and teach, even as they tackle tough stuff and big questions. Cancer? War? Hunger? Division? Fear? Death? Everything will be framed by this reassuring and empowering truth: *He's got the whole world in His hands*.

"He existed before anything else and He holds all creation together" (Colossians 1:17 NLT). Like those who originally imagined the iconic spiritual, never give up; look up . . . Jesus is the subject.

Register now. Bring someone with you. Be encouraged. Change the world.

Pastor Jerry—Praying like Monks, Living like Fools

(continued from page 1)

There are so many distractions in life that keep us from praying. Tyler Staton in his book, *Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools*, puts it this way, "the obvious obstacles to prayer live on the surface. You're busy. You're social. You're (at least trying to be) successful and desirable and socially conscious. All of those things take time, so the competition for your undivided attention is stiff. And of course, there's the fact that you carry the Internet around in your pocket." He goes on to say we find time to eat and sleep and maybe even exercise consistently. We make time for the things that are important. Ouch! If we ever hope to see God's kingdom come and His will done in our communities as it is in heaven, prayer must be a priority.

Prayer, both talking and listening, is the true key to finding and fulfilling all God has for us. This year I have been seeking to spend time every day in intentional communication with my Heavenly Father. Time where I turn off my computer, put aside my cell phone and my books, and pray! Paul reminds us in Philippians 4:5-7, "Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." There is plenty to be anxious about in our world, which means there is plenty to pray about. Won't you join me in committing to making prayer a priority in your life? Praying Together,

Pastor Jerry

Discipleship Cluster Now Forming

Are you looking for a meaningful way to live life like Jesus? We want to offer you a way to put the rubber to the road in your life.

"We all have experienced challenges in our lives. Mine are no different than many of yours. They may have different expressions but they have the same face. Since being involved in Gravity Leadership Discipleship, I experience life differently. I believe that God loves US! He is present and working where WE are! He cares about the challenges WE face more than WE do and He meets US in our reality! I am also fully aware that what He is doing through US He is also doing in US! "Paula



Not just for pastors . . . GLA Discipleship is a 10 month Zoom cluster that will give you opportunities to learn from Jesus and have others support you in the journey. Several clusters are being formed now.

If you want to sign up to experience living & leading like Jesus or just have questions, call Jerry Davisson @ 559-905-4141 or Paula Wilson @ the District Office, 503-393-3510. (Cost is \$40 for the workbook.)

Camp White Branch—2023 Summer Camps

Greetings from Camp,

Church of God Summer Camp Registration is Open!!

We are really excited to announce registration is open. The theme this year will be "GOT FAITH?". Be sure and get your campers registered early to take part in the adventures of camping this summer at Camp White Branch.





Camp Dates:

High School Camp - July 10-14

youth entering 9th grade - to graduating senior

Middle School Camp - July 17-21

youth entering 7th and 8th grade

Junior Camp - July 24-28

youth entering 5th and 6th grade

Primary Camp - August 7-10

youth entering 3rd and 4th grade

Introductory Camp - August 11-13

Parent/Guardian and youth entering 2nd and 3rd grade

Additional information will be shared with each church and can be found on our website - <u>www.campwhitebranch.org</u>.

2023 Summer Camp Needs

We are still in need of a Middle School Camp Director to lead and organize this camp this summer. Guidance and coaching will be provided so you are not on your own and we try to team you up with another person with experience the first year. What better way to be part of this youth ministry. Please pray we find someone.

Each year camp directors need help from volunteers at their camps. Many folks do not realize what it takes to have a camp. Each director needs to find counselors to be leaders with the campers, a certified lifeguard to supervise at the pool, and an individual for health care with first aid/CPR certification to manage medical issues and administer medications. Come be a part of a team leading a camp and make a difference in the life of youth!

If you are considering the Director position or coming to help at one of the camps this summer, contact Danette Beisley, our camp coordinator, at 503-396-2090 or danette@oakparkchurch.net.

Camp White Branch, as a facility, provides the staff behind the scenes ensuring meals are prepared, repairs are made, facility sanitized for groups, grounds maintained, and many other activities. We are looking for volunteers to help our staff each week in the summer for our camps and other rental groups. We would like to have a couple or 2 individuals volunteer to help with dishes, basic cleaning, and food prep in the kitchen. A food handler card is required and you must be over 18 years of age plus pass a background check. We provide lodging in our staff house and all your meals. (Bringing your own RV is also an option.) Please contact cwboperationsmanag-er@gmail.com if you are interested in helping out in this capacity this summer.

Camp White Branch

Upcoming Volunteer Work Weekend Events

We have planned two upcoming work weekend events for volunteers to come help us make needed building repairs, prep for the summer season, chop and stack wood, clean chairs and tables, plus many other projects at the camp. The dates are April 14-16, 2023 and May 26-29, 2023. The event will start at 11:00 am on the first day and finish after lunch on the final day. Please contract cwboperationsmanager@gmail.com or call 541-822-3511 to sign up. All skill levels are welcome and we will provide the lodging and meals!

Winter Fun!

We have been busy this winter with rentals groups and wanted to share some pictures! We look forward to hosting more Church of God groups year-round. Please contact us to set up a reservation for your group.



Kitchen Updates

We have started our kitchen updating with the delivery of a set of convection ovens we were able to purchase with grant funds and a new stove/oven/broiler/griddle unit with funds provided by a donor who came to camp and saw our need for a new unit. We still need to purchase a new refrigerator unit for the kitchen since our current unit's doors are not closing properly and this is causing the unit not to hold temperature accurately. We are waiting until we can secure the funds for this to purchase. These updates in the kitchen will really help our cooks in the kitchen.



Blessings,

Lisa Switzer, Camp White Branch, Chair Danette Beisley, Church of God Camp Coordinator

Sister Churches Support Each Other . . .

The Redmond Church of God and the Living Water Church of God in Prineville are unique in some ways in our District of Churches. They are close enough to each other that they can support one another but are a distance from any other Church of God congregations.

Pastor Dave Thompson and wife Karla serve the Redmond Church and Pastor Robbin Foster is the bi-vocational pastor of the Prineville Church. Robbin is married to Jeff who still serves in various ministry capacities at the

Redmond Church where they both attended before Robbin answered the call as pastor at Prineville.

WELCOME
Redmond Church of God

Redmond Church of God

SUNDAYS

Breakfast
9:15 a.m.
Sunday School
9:30 a.m.
Worship Service
10:45 a.m

Fridays 6:00 pm

Although separate church bodies, these two churches help each other with leadership, prayer needs, and assets (popcorn machine, copier, sound, etc). If one church family needs something they check with the other to see if help is available. Redmond has individual worship leadership that go once a month on a rotating basis to help with the services at Living Water. There have also been "up and coming" pastoral leaders who have given messages at Prineville and that church body loves to encourage them as they grow in their giftedness. (Pastor Dave is a great mentor to those he believes are gifted in pastoral leadership and the church family at Living Water are cheerleaders.) One individual who

is beginning Leadership Focus this year to pursue ministry, Jon Hecker, committed for a year to helping Celebrate Recovery begin on Wednesday evenings at Prineville. (He is also involved in the Overcomers ministry at Redmond.) Celebrate Recovery at Living Water will celebrate their two year anniversary on March 8th. It is exciting to see how CR is meeting an important need in their community.

It may be unusual to have individuals claim two churches as their home but there are at least 12 that "have a foot in each church" at Redmond and Prineville.

Working together is important to both churches. This last Christmas the churches decided that Living Water would offer

a Christmas Eve service and Redmond a Christmas morning service. They have celebrated baptisms together and have even collaborated on writing a song together. This sense of 'connectedness' helps them to know they are not alone as they serve the needs in their communities. One example is Gary Hudson who claims to be the longest attending member of Prineville, although the current church home for his family is Redmond. (Gary is a

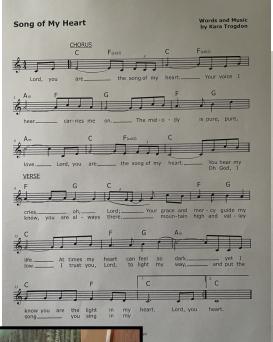
grandson to Fern & Alva Hudson that many will recognize as supporters of the Church of God ministry in Oregon and especially their service to Camp White Branch.) Gary's family is involved with worship leadership.

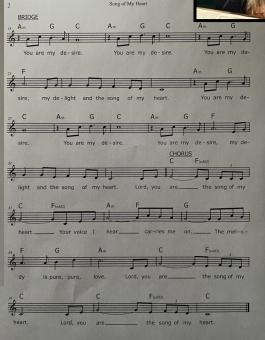
Pastor Robbin is also one of those who serves both churches as she continues to participate in the Gleaners Bible Discussion Group and recently led a women's discipleship group—both at Redmond.



Redmond & Prineville

As mentioned earlier, the leadership of both churches experienced a new adventure this last year. A young lady in middle school, Kara Trogdon, wrote a poem and the melody to a song to be used in worship called "Song of My Heart." Both Pastor Dave and Pastor Robbin used their musical skills to help Kara get the song on paper. Both churches have used it in worship and it has been well received. They said that none of them could have accomplished completing the song without the others. (If you would like a copy of it, let the District Office know. The teams at Redmond & Prineville are happy to share it with you.)







Pictures . . . top right—Kara Trogdon, left—Pastors Dave & Robbin baptizing Christy, center—Jon Hecker sharing God's Word, lower left—working together, lower right— Posters of encouragement given to the Living Water Church from the children at Redmond



CWC Spring Connection—April 21&22



CWC Spring Connection

at the Aloha Church of God

Friday, April 21 & Saturday, April 22

Register NOW—deadline is April 10th!





Speaker—Teresa

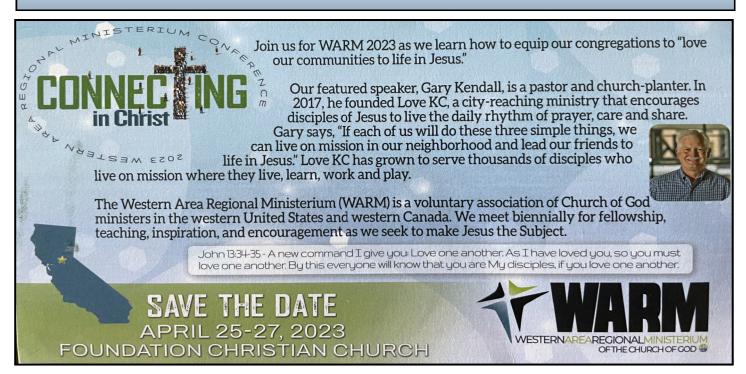
Speaker, Teresa Hellstrom, will share from her own experience and personal journey the importance of having the right mindset and motivation in our relationship with Christ. "Starting Strong" needs to lead to endurance so that "we can run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

Registration Brochures & Posters are available in your churches and on the website.



Worship—Angelee

WARM 2023 @ Citrus Heights, CA



Campmeeting—July 30th-August 3rd



Join us at this year's **Willamette Valley Campmeeting**, our district's annual gathering in Turner, OR. This is a great time of worship and inspiration for the whole family. Mark & Lori Fast, a Pacific Northwest pastoral couple who now serve through Church of God Ministries, will be our main speakers for the daily combined services as well as the morning youth services.

Held on the historic grounds of the Oregon Christian Convention, this family-friendly event offers a variety of activities, onsite dining, overnight lodging options (cabins, dormitory rooms, RV & tent spaces) and daily commuters are also welcome. Costs are kept low to make it affordable for all.

Plan now to join us. Registration begins on May 1.

SAVE the Date—Annual Business Mtg, July 8



Annual Business Meeting

Our Annual Business Meeting for our Association is scheduled for Saturday, July 8th @ Oak Park Church of God in Salem.

Pastors & Delegates please mark this date on your calendar. Your participation is important to us as we move forward as a District.

Restart @ Valley Hope

Have you ever experienced a **RESTART** . . . in life, school, marriage, your walk with God? Many of us have and we need lots of prayer and support from others to be successful!!!

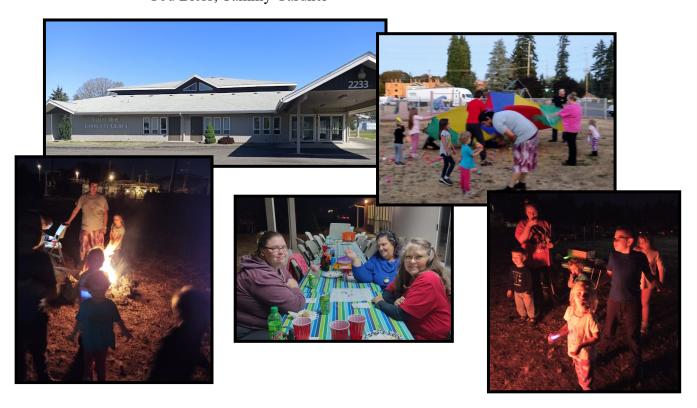
Valley Hope Church (Hillsboro), after much prayer and consultation, has decided that a restart is what is best for their ministry. They have a wonderful building that not only serves their church family but a Hispanic Congregation and also a daycare in a thriving neighborhood in Hillsboro, but they need help in bringing JESUS and meaningful ministry to their community.

Please pray for the leadership at Valley Hope, our District as we come alongside them, and national leadership as they walk through this restart. If you are open, God may call you to help in other ways.

To give you a peek into this community of believers, here are a few pictures of their church home and a fun outreach event they did last Fall—a Staycation Campout. Here is what one of their leaders shared with us . . .

"Our people invited friends to share in the fun and festivities. We had brave souls that brought tents and slept in the great outdoors. We also turned our fellowship hall into one big tent and invited those that were not as brave, to sleep on the floor in the warm church. We were able to have a small campfire where we roasted marshmallows and had s'mores, because what is camping without gooey chocolate and marshmallows. We also played games and just spent time together. Fun was had by all."

God Bless, Tammy Gardner



Remembering Pastor Larry Whittlesey



Larry Whittlesey 1955-2023

Larry was born the third child of Robert and Lenora Whittlesey on June 7, 1955 in Portland, Oregon. He spent his growing up years in Portland, OR, Concord, CA, Reno, NV and in Salt Lake City, UT. He served in the United States Air Force before attending Point Loma College as a young man planning to enter ministry. It was at Point Loma that he met his wife Chris and,

although some wondered how long their marriage would last when they became engaged after 3 weeks of dating, they enjoyed 46 years together. Chris was the love of his life.

Larry served in the Air Force again before he began attending the University of Oregon and then later Western Evangelical Seminary, where he earned his Masters of Divinity degree. Following the completion of his masters degree he served in a number of ministry positions in CA, OR and recently as the Community Pastor at the Vancouver Church in WA.

Larry loved life, living each day loving people and loving God and he threw himself wholeheartedly into everything he did. Everyone who knew him knew that he did life big. He was larger than life with a dynamic personality and a soft heart. He was a pastor, teacher, speaker, leader, husband, father, grandfather, friend, and man of God. He enjoyed storytelling, especially to children, and a favorite of his was "The Great Wall of the Jungle." He loved his family, serving in ministry, eagles, good food, good southern gospel music, and the Oregon Ducks. He loved being able to serve those around him. Whether that looked like being a youth pastor and doing every silly and crazy song or stunt that could be thought of, preaching and teaching on a Sunday morning, organizing and planning community events to bring the church to the local people, running and leading national events like Promise Keepers, working to put the "C" back in the YMCA, or just loving his family and those around him. Larry's greatest joy came in bringing people together, especially when it brought them closer to Jesus.

Larry Whittlesey left his earthly life unexpectedly on January 20, 2023 to be with Jesus. He leaves behind his beloved wife, Chris, as well as his three kids (Larry, Jeremy, and Marci), and seven grand-children (Kaitlyn, Braeden, Lexi, Emma, Gabby, Addi, and Lukas).

A memorial service for Larry was held at the Vancouver Church on February 18th. Funds are being raised that will go to help his wife, Chris, during this time of unexpected tragic loss to stay on her feet while she navigates this sudden change to her world. If you would like to contribute, go to GoFundMe <u>@ https://gofund.me/a6e4513f</u>. Funds will be used to cover monthly expenses, making needed repairs to the house, and providing basic support she will need during this time.

Larry's memorial can be viewed at the Vancouver Church YouTube page: https://www.youtube.com/@vancouverchurch7073/streams

Churches in Transition

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

Husum Community, WA—seeking a permanent pastor **Valley Hope, Hillsboro, OR**—beginning a restart

Remember we are stronger together!!



2023 Calendar Dates

CWC Spring Conference @ Aloha April 21-22

WARM Pastor's Conference @ Citrus Heights, CA April 25-27

Work Weekend @ CWB April 14-16

Work Weekend @ CWB May 26-29

Church of God National Convention & General Assembly @ Tampa Bay, Florida June 22-25

Annual Business Meeting @ Salem July 8

Senior High Camp @ CWB July 10-14

Middle School Camp @ CWB July 17-21

Introductory Camp @ CWB Aug 11-13

Junior Camp @ CWB July 24-28

Willamette Valley Campmeeting @ Turner, OR July 30-August 3

Primary Camp @ CWB August 7-10

Men's Retreat @ CWB August 18-20 (Speaker Aaron Hiller)

CWC Women's Fall Prayer Retreat @ CWB September 15-17



Do you have EVENTS planned for your Church and/or Community?
We would love to hear about them. We will be updating our website and facebook page regularly and can post your events on those sites.

District Prayer List for 2023

Be sure to remember our Church of God congregations in prayer as we begin a new year. (Below you will find our District Prayer List for 2023.) There is power in prayer and we are stronger together.

"I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." — Mark 11:24 ESV

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



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.