



Association of
the Churches
of God
in Oregon and
Southwest
Washington



Area Churches Christmas Events

(See Page 8)

THE CONTACT

December 2017

Volume 4 Issue 12

E-Contact

Pivotal Event: Jesus in the Neighborhood



Rev. Jerry Davisson
District Pastor

Can it really be Christmas already? I love this time of year with all the celebrations, family gatherings, music and lights. I love what we celebrate even more.

The birth of Jesus was a pivotal event in the redemptive history of the world. Look again at Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of John 1:14, "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish". Jesus willingly moved into our neighborhood so that we could be introduced to what living a

kingdom life looks like. Jesus came demonstrating the redemptive message he calls us to take to the world.

One of the themes of Christmas is *sending*. God sent Jesus into the world to capture our hearts and Jesus sends us into the world to reconcile the world to him. Second Corinthians 5:17-19 says; "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

Just as Jesus came to the neighborhood, we are called to follow his example and engage our neighbors as well. We are called to live on mission in the spaces we occupy. Alan Hirsch wrote in his book, *Right Here Right Now*; "what will be required to engage in missional Christianity is to simply reach out beyond our fears and ignorance of others, to overcome our middle-class penchant for safety, to take a risk and get involved in what God is already doing in our cities and neighborhoods."

The Christmas season is a great time to take a risk, to get to know our neighbors. Christmas is a time when people have a different attitude toward others and where goodwill is the order of the day. We should seize the opportunity to use this good will for God's Kingdom purpose. It could be as simple as taking your neighbors an inexpensive gift or homemade treat. Be creative, be bold, look to see where God is at work and join in. If you are fed up with the over-commercialism of the season, do something about it.

As missional people we are called to live a lifestyle that challenges the dominant culture. Hirsch writes, "in a world obsessed with consumerism, we choose to live more simply. In a world obsessed with social status and image, we choose to associate with poor, "invisible," and uncool people and invite them into our lives, in a world obsessed

"What will be required to engage in missional Christianity is to simply reach out beyond our fears and ignorance of others, to overcome our middle-class penchant for safety, to take a risk and get involved in what God is already doing in our cities and neighborhoods."

-Alan Hirsch



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Pivotal Event...

(Continued from page 1)

with money, we choose to be very generous. In other words, without withdrawing ourselves from our tribe, we have to model what a Jesus alternative looks like.” “Jesus became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.” I believe God is challenging us to take a fresh look at our neighborhood as well.

What is God calling you to do this year to live out your missional calling in your neighborhood? I look forward to hearing the stories of how you creatively engaged your neighbors with the message of Jesus this holiday season.

Kris and I wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a joy-filled New Year!

Congratulations to Pastor Jerry & Kris Davisson on the birth of their first grandchild, a boy,

Aiden Joseph, born November 16, 2017 to their daughter and son-in-law, Allie and Kyle Thomas. Aiden weighed in at 6 lbs., 11 oz. and was 19 $\frac{3}{4}$ " long. Mother and baby are doing fine.



Five Regional Conventions 2018



April 17–18, 2018



April 24–25, 2018



June 19–20, 2018



Sept. 18–19, 2018



Sept. 25–26, 2018

Plan now to attend one of five Regional Conventions of the Church of God: Phoenix, AZ, Oklahoma City, OK, Columbus, OH, Fairfax, VA, and Safety Harbor, FL. Early-bird registration is \$99 and only \$49 each for groups of 10 or more. Special rates available for retired pastors. Information is available now at <http://www.jesusisthesubject.org/regional-conventions-2018/>.



2019

CHURCH OF CONVENTION

JUNE 27-30, 2019

ORLANDO WORLD CENTER MARRIOTT

ORLANDO, FLORIDA



Campbell Named Dean of Nursing

Warner Pacific is proud to announce Dr. Linda Campbell, Ph.D., RN, CNS, CNE as Dean of the newly launched Warner Pacific Nursing Program.

Dr. Campbell's engagement in scholarship and service illustrates her commitment to building excellent programs to serve students and communities for which they will ultimately care. In addition to her academic posts, Campbell has been the Principal of "Moving Mountains," a Christian private nursing practice; and Health, Education, and Leadership Services (HEALS).

"The Warner Pacific Nursing Advisory Council and I share a vision of higher education for nursing: one that is Christ-centered and grounded in the liberal arts to convey reverence for recipients of care, increase diversity in the nursing workforce, and respond to a national nursing shortage," says Dr. Campbell. "I am thrilled to have an opportunity to serve higher education for nursing in a manner that is responsive, wholehearted, and mindful of a shared purpose: to bring glory to God and make Him known in the world."

Prior to coming to Warner Pacific, Dr. Campbell served the Loretto Heights School of Nursing (LHSON) in the Reuckert-Hartman

College for Health Professions at Regis University in Denver, Colorado, for thirteen years. Most recently she was the Director of Accelerated Nursing and Clinical Learning Unit at LHSON. In that role she served on several campus-wide committees related to curriculum, accreditation, student affairs, research, academic council and the president's advisory council. For more information, see <http://ow.ly/xGU230gQfTV>.



Dr. Linda Campbell

Willamette Valley Campmeeting to partner with Youth

By Associate Pastor Steve Kufeldt, Hoodview COG, Woodburn, Oregon

The Willamette Valley Campmeeting returns for its third year and continues to grow as it now will partner with the Association and the "Summer Impact Youth."

Plans are still in process but the dates are set for Sunday evening, August 5 through Thursday morning, August 9, 2018, at the historic grounds of the Oregon Christian Convention in Turner.

Everyone is invited to join in for informal times of worship, encouragement and fellowship. Lodging, camping and meal options are available onsite. Costs are minimal. Come for a day or for the entire five days. Registration will open on May 1, 2018. Stay tuned for more information as it becomes available.

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, Indiana;
- Provide support for the development of healthy Church of God congregations.

Leadership and Longevity: An Alabama Pastor's Personal Experience

By Carl Stagner, ChoG Ministries

Statistics don't tell an altogether encouraging story when it comes to the average stay of a pastor. Some recent surveys suggest the average is on the rise, but the present picture of pastoral tenure in the United States and Canada could certainly improve. Milan Dekich accepted the senior pastorate at Fairview Church of God in Falkville, Alabama, when the size of the church was about twenty-five. Thirty-seven years later, he preaches to a gathering of 450

strong, and has helped plant two churches and assisted in the revitalization of a third. Just because the congregation is doing well today doesn't mean the struggle hasn't been real. In fact, it has, and there were times Milan might have preferred to throw in the towel. But a commitment to God's plan kept him there, and today he's blessed to share a few of the experiences he's had, as well as a few of the lessons he's learned along the way.

Though Fairview Church of God is healthy today, it wasn't when Milan arrived. "The congregation had considered closing and joining with another church," Milan recounts. "Some of my family and friends questioned why I should go to such an out-of-the-way place and to a small congregation. I had just graduated from the Anderson School of Theology and they had different expectations for me, but I truly believe I was called there by God. In getting to know the people over the following years, I learned of some prayer warriors who were there praying for the church. As the church gained health and size, I was thankful to be a part of God's answer to those prayers."

Milan's qualifications have since led to several offers from other churches and ministries. There were times when the grass looked greener on the other side, but it didn't matter. Milan knew where God had placed him. "I had determined I would not leave because I wanted to advance my personal career or



**Pastor Milan with friend Dominique Billups,
special needs ministry**

because of problems," he reflects. "I believed I should not leave unless two realities were present simultaneously: being released from my calling at Fairview, and receiving a definite calling to another ministry. There were times I really wanted to leave or when it would have been easy to leave, but the criteria I had set for leaving was never met."

Good thing he stayed—not only for the congregation and the community, but for himself. During his time at Fairview, he met and

married his wife, earned a doctor of ministry from Asbury, raised their children, and grew in the grace and knowledge of the Lord. No one knows what would have happened had God used him elsewhere, but Milan's commitment to the call produced an abundance of fruit for harvest. "I realized all churches have issues," Milan reflects. "All churches have difficult people. I would rather stay here and work out the issues I know about, rather than leave and adopt issues I did not know about. The bottom line is I was called here to Fairview Church of God, and have attempted to be obedient to that calling."

Instead of continuing to grow themselves, the church planted two churches, one of which now sees 400 in



**Fairview's
Hurricane Harvey relief**

(Continued on page 5)

Leadership and Longevity:

(Continued from page 4)

weekly attendance. While it looked good when Fairview topped 600 people, that which can't be measured has taken place at the two churches they sacrificially chose to plant. God has greatly blessed the church as it has striven to reach its community through a variety of outreach ministries, including their special needs' prom earlier this year.

What has Milan learned in all of this? "Have a focused vision and mission," he explains. "These keep a congregation and pastor on-point during times of transition and changes. Be biblical in leadership techniques, but learn and apply whatever is appropriate from other sources. Obey God, be sensitive to the Holy Spirit, and lift up Christ."

Pictured right: Special needs' prom 2017



Look to the Hills: Camp White Branch

Camp White Branch Board Chairman Mel Neu reports that he and his twin, Marvin, were heading back up to camp the last week of November for a week or so to try to get the sheet rock hung. "We only have the mechanical room, two storage rooms, and the hall way to go," says Neu, with hope at the progress. "Duane wants to tape and texture it later in December if the snow does not keep him out of camp. We are trying to get the back deck concreted, too, if the weather permits." Weather is a concern at this time of year. Mel adds, "We have four trees down that just missed the pump house by about eight inches."



Save the Dates: 2018 Summer Camps

- July 6 - 8, Intro camp, Jackson, \$165
- July 9 - 13, Senior High (9th-12th grades), Effingham \$250, includes rafting
- July 16 - 20, Junior (5th & 6th grades), Kuykendall, \$180
- July 30 - August 3, Middle School (7th & 8th grades), Beisley, \$205
- August 13-16, Primary (3rd & 4th grades), Graham, \$170

Camp White Branch, 61500 Old McKenzie Hwy, McKenzie Bridge, OR

God's Will, God's Way, God's Timing

By Jenny Marble Elliot

My DVDs are organized alphabetically by title. As are my CDs. Come to think of it, not only are they alphabetized by title, they also are categorized by whether or not they are a movie series, television series or movie collection. The line gets blurred when the DVDs are part of a series, yet they are in individual discs such as the Doris Day and Rock Hudson Comedy Set, vs an individual copy of *Pillow Talk*.

Needless to say, I enjoy organization and structure. I feel confident and energized when everything has a place, when I am prepared and know what to expect, knowing which rules to abide by.

As a minister (a.k.a. servant leader) there is a difference between wanting to be organized and structured, and wanting to control. The prayer on my heart the past several months has been "Your will, Your Way, and Your Time." Seeing the answers of this prayer has been, at times, hard to accept. I am learning that God's will is often far different, and always better, than my own.

For me, being a Christ-follower is not going to be perfectly organized, predictable and easy-going. Granted, I am the type of person who likes being challenged – I grow leaps and bounds when I am walking in the desert in life, relying on Christ for my every need to be met as I grow in my faith and trust in Him. Yet, I will be the first to admit that my need to be in control, or reach that perfectionist unattainable bar is hard to place on the backburner.

The moments I see God at work the most are the moments when I have surrendered my agenda to God – when I actually serve my Leader. The times I struggle the most in my faith are when I try to fix the challenges with my own strength. I am thankful God did not call us to be our own saviors: Christ took on our burdens so that we could experience hope in our difficulties, trusting in our capable, loving God to provide for our every need.

I have made it a habit to carry around a few verses in my purse to remind me of God's faithfulness. One such verse is found in Exodus 14. In this chapter, the Lord speaks to Moses, warning him that Pharaoh's heart would be hardened, and the Israelites would be pursued. While the Israelites were continuing to move, they began to notice the Egyptians closely behind them. A terrifying sight to see, the Israelites desperately cried out to the Lord, asking why Moses would lead them out of the desert to experience more suffering (Ex. 14:1-12). Moses encouraged the

fearful, confused Israelites, calling them to wait on the Lord, who promised to deliver them. He boldly spoke, "The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still" (Ex. 14:14, NRSV).

Moses did not invite the Israelites to devise a plan to conquer Pharaoh's army, nor did he react in fear. He did not instruct God's people to run away. Instead, he acted calmly in great faith, believing that if the Israelites allowed God to intervene, they would experience renewed life.

We must not allow ourselves to think that our Mighty God is somehow required to only work within our organizational methods or structural systems. God knows what will happen in our lives, when it will happen, how, and with whom. And in every situation, God loves us. In every situation, God equips us. In every situation, God's Spirit directs us.

Ministry can be scary and confusing when we have the mindset of the Israelite's. It is freeing and hopeful when we allow God to take control, and choose to step aside. I have had situations to respond to that I would not have chosen myself, or circumstances that were overwhelming, and God gave me the strength to lean into His strength and provision. He continually leads me safely through the desert.

When we surrender our own agendas, lean into God's will, God's way and God's timing, we will grow in our trust in a Faithful God who will lovingly fight for us.

May we continue to follow our Loving God's lead.

Jenny (Marble) Elliot, MDiv., is the Associate Pastor for Friendly Street Church of God in Eugene, Oregon. She is passionate about preaching, teaching, learning and listening. She enjoys watching movies, cooking and spending time with her husband, Nate. Her article was published in the November issue of QARA, a monthly publication of the Church of God for women in ministry and missions. Reprinted with permission.



GOD'S WILL, GOD'S WAY, GOD'S TIMING

by Jenny (Marble) Elliot

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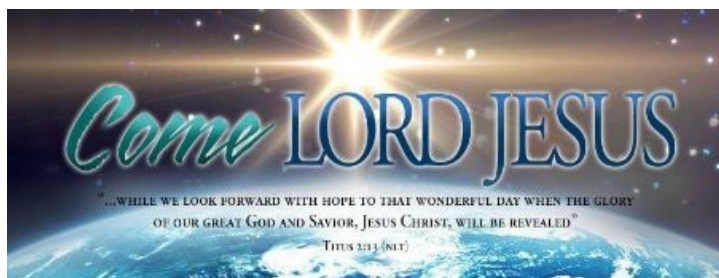
challenged – I grow leaps and bounds when I am walking in the desert in life, relying on Christ for my every need to be met as I grow in my faith and trust in Him. Yet, I will be the first to admit that my need to be in control, or reach that perfectionist unattainable bar is hard to place on the backburner.

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Christ's Birthday Observance Readies the Church of God for Christmas

By Shelly Short, ChoGNews



The word *Advent* is derived from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning “coming.” The Advent season lasts for four Sundays. This year’s Advent begins on Sunday, December 3, and, as always, ends on Sunday, December 24. The Advent celebration is both a commemoration of Christ’s first coming and an anticipation of his second coming. As Israel longed for their Messiah to come, so Christians long for their Savior to come again. Please join Christian Women Connection for the 2017 Christ’s Birthday Observance as we celebrate the birth of Christ collectively and say, “Come Lord Jesus.”

“...while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed” (Titus 2:13 NLT). In the 1949 issue of *Friends of Missions*, Mary Lovely wrote an article titled “How Far on Christ’s Offering.” In her article, Mary asked these important questions: Is Christ’s name on our Christmas list? What will be our gift to him on his birthday? My question to you today is if we say, “Come Lord Jesus,” are we ready to give of our talents, time, and resources to Christ? I find the answer to this question to be a resounding Yes!

Together we will pray with and for each other through Project Prayer. We will spend time in devotion and thought through the Meditation Journal. We will celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ through our gifts and by generously contributing to the Christ’s Birthday Observance offering. You make a significant difference in the work of the Church of God through your prayers, devotion, and gifts. Almost every ministry of the Church of God is touched in some way by the Christ’s Birthday Observance offering. This church-wide offering supports Church of God Ministries (including Global Strategy, the Church of God Convention, and the International Youth Convention, and much more) and the endorsed agencies, including our colleges

and universities and Servant Solutions. Through Christian Women Connection, mission projects, leadership development, scholarships, and women’s ministries are funded.

Over the years, the Christ Birthday Observance has raised substantial resources to promote the kingdom work throughout the Church of God and beyond, to a world that desperately needs to know Christ as their Savior. I thank you in advance for your generous gifts as we enter the 2017 season of Advent. May this year’s observance prove to be our best to date!

What is the Christ’s Birthday Observance?

The Christ’s Birthday Observance is a tool to help your church begin the journey of Advent with prayer, devotion, and celebration.

Why should my church participate in the Christ’s Birthday Observance?

- Focus on Christ during the season of Advent (which is often overtaken by commercialism).
- Share the story of Christ’s birth.
- Celebrate Advent in concert with Church of God congregations around the world.
- CBO is deeply rooted in the Church of God. The Observance, which began in 1949, continues to be one way Church of God congregations come together for the benefit of the kingdom.
- In addition to prayer and devotion, CBO offers an opportunity to give to the combined ministry efforts of the Church of God in the largest offering in the Church of God.



Advent readings this year are written by former missionary Kathy Rankin Simpson

(Continued on page 9)

Christmas Events at Association Churches



December 1, 2017

HANGING OF THE GREENS & ANNUAL SOUP, BREAD, DESSERT COMPETITION

Longview First Church of God

2335 46th Ave., Longview, WA 98632

6:00-8:00 p.m.

Questions? Call: 360-636-0370

Website: <http://www.lvchog.org>

CHEER & CHEESE

Holladay Park Church of God

2120 NE Tillamook Street, Portland, OR 97212

4:00-8:00 p.m.

Bring dessert to share.

Phone: 503-287-1238



December 2, 2017

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

Longview First Church of God

2335 46th Ave., Longview, WA 98632

8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Phone: 360-636-0370

BRIDGETOWN SOUND & HP CONCERT

Holladay Park Church of God

2120 NE Tillamook Street, Portland, OR 97212

7:00-9:00 p.m.

Bring a canned good or nonperishable food item

Phone: 503-287-1238

December 6,8-10, 2017

45th ANNUAL SINGING CHRISTMAS TREE

Vancouver First Church of God

3300 NE 78th St., Vancouver, WA 98665

With Guest Artists Jim Fischer and Friends

(First come, first serve; no reservations)

Wed. & Fri. Dec. 6 & 8, 7:00 p.m.

Dec. 9 Sat. 3:00, 7:00 p.m.;

Dec. 10 Sun. 3:00 p.m.

Bring fresh canned food item for

The Giving Closet

Phone: 360-574-1611

www.vchurch.org



December 10, 2017

CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA

Aloha Church of God

13830 SW Kinnaman Road, Aloha, OR 97078

Sun., 6:00 p.m.

Phone: 503-649-5678

www.alohacog.org

December 15-17, 2017

LIVE NATIVITY

Friendly Street Church of God

2290 Friendly St., Eugene, OR

7:00 – 9:00 p.m. each evening

Drive or walk by scenes of Jesus' life

Free event for the whole family!

Phone: 541-345-6553

Website: [https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/FriendlyStreetChurchOfGod)

[FriendlyStreetChurchOfGod](https://www.facebook.com/FriendlyStreetChurchOfGod)

LIVING CHRISTMAS STORY

Hoodview Church of God

1530 Mt. Hood Avenue, Woodburn, OR

6:00 – 8:00 p.m. each evening

Walk-through or drive-through

(live animals, free refreshments)

Eleven outdoor scenes from the Life of Christ

Phone: 503-981-1660

www.hoodviewchurchofgod.com.

December 17, 2017

SEASON OF MUSIC & DELECTABLES

Holladay Park Church of God

2120 NE Tillamook Street, Portland, OR 97212

6:30-8 p.m.

Bring dessert to share.

Phone: 503-287-1238

CHRISTMAS EXPERIENCE

Longview First Church of God

2335 46th Ave., Longview, WA

6:00 p.m.

Phone: 360-636-0370

Christmas Events at Association Churches



(Continued from page 8)

December 17, 2017



SEASON OF HOPE

Lynchwood Church of God

3818 SE 174th Avenue, Portland, OR, 6:30 p.m.

Choir, Drama and Children
Phone: 503-665-6638

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Redmond Church of God

818 NW Elm Ave., Redmond, OR
6:00 p.m.

Phone: 541-548-4162

www.redmondchurchofgod.com



December 24, 2017

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT

Mt. Scott Church of God

10603 SE Henderson, Portland, OR 97266
5:30 p.m.

Phone: 503-771-1195

CAROLS & CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION

Longview First Church of God

2335 46th Ave., Longview, WA
6:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

Holladay Park Church of God

2120 NE Tillamook Street, Portland, OR 97212
7:00 p.m.

Phone: 503-287-1238



***"And in the fullness of time,
God sent His son..."***

Galatians 4:4

*Christmas Events will continue to be added
to the website as we are made aware of them.
<https://orwacog.org/calendar/christmas-events/>*

Christ's Birthday Observance

(Continued from page 7)

How can my church get involved?

Every church can participate in this journey by using Advent resources, participating in Project Prayer, and by giving to the Christ's Birthday Observance offering. Each year your church will be sent a resource packet to help in the celebration. For more information, go to the web site at www.christianwomenconnection.org or call 866-778-0804.

District Calendar

- **Dec. 3**, 1st Sunday of Advent, Candle of Hope
- **Dec. 10**, 2nd Sunday of Advent, Candle of Response
- **Dec. 17**, 3rd Sunday of Advent, Candle of Miracles
- **Dec. 24**, 4th Sunday of Advent, Candle of Peace
- **Dec. 25**, Mon., CHRISTMAS DAY (District Offices closed)
- **Jan. 1, 2018**, Mon., New Year's Day (District Offices closed)
- **Jan. 11, 2018**, Thurs., Region #2, 10 a.m.- Noon
- **Jan. 18, 2018**, Thurs., Deadline for Ministers & Spouse Retreat registration
- **Jan. 20, 2018**, Sat., Eastwood memorial, 3 p.m.
- **Feb. 9-10, 2018**, Fri.-Sat., Warner Pacific College Homecoming
- **Feb. 18, 2018**, Sun., Freedom Sunday
- **Feb. 19-21, 2018**, Ministers' & Spouse Retreat
- **Feb. 19, 2018**, Mon., President's Day



Homeward Journeys

Rev. Troy Eastwood, a retired Church of God pastor (Aloha COG from 1984-2000), passed away early in the morning Wednesday, November 1, 2017, from injuries suffered in a bicycle accident. A memorial service will be held Saturday, January 20, 2018, at 3:00 p.m. at the Holladay Park Church of God, 2120 NE Tillamook Street, Portland, OR 97212. Please continue to pray for Troy's wife, Kathryn and family.