



Association of
the Churches
of God
in Oregon and
Southwest
Washington

2018 Regional
Keynote Speaker
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THE CONTACT

April 2018

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E-Contact

Maranatha Hosts CWC

by Nancy Kernutt, CWC President

Spring has arrived. Christian Women Connection celebrated this early at Maranatha Church of God. A special thank you to Christell Harris and Maria Dixon for a lovely weekend!

Sixty women from 13 different churches attended the March 9 and 10 event. Maranatha ladies blessed us with friendship and fellowship, and served a wonderful lunch of salads, barbecue chicken, and punch bowl cake. Toni Johnson made sure we had fun with tickets for spring prizes. She and a friend created comfort boxes for each attendee

to take home at the conclusion of the event. Thank you, Toni, for your stories, jokes and gifts!

A special thank you to Pastor Danette Beisley for installing our officers.

Our Silent Auction of gift baskets raised \$767 for our Warner Pacific University scholarship.

It was exciting to have a guest speaker from our national office. Melanie Thigpen shared about Living Water. She used the

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Association CWC Officers Installed

Officers of the Christian Women's Connection in Oregon and SW Washington were installed during the Spring Retreat at Maranatha Church of God in Portland last month. Pictured from left: Becky Sander, Leslie Duclo, Maria Dixon, Toni Johnson, LaRene Hossler, Sherrill Goodeill, Nancy Kernutt, and Danette Beisley.



Maranatha Hosts Spring CWC

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account of the Woman at the Well to show our need for Living Water that doesn't run out and replenishes us daily! Pastor Melanie spoke about the dry places in our lives. Life has a way of bringing circumstances into our lives that can potentially act as distractions from God's promises.

Thank you again, Maranatha Church, for celebrating spring with Christian Women Connection!



Rainier Community Church of God Leadership Retreat

by Rev. Tom Akery

The Lord blessed us with great weather at the Chautauqua Lodge in Long Beach, WA, March 16-17, 2018.

Pastor Roy Sprunger led the church leadership (Church Council, Board and Staff) in building unity and direction for the coming year. Many things were discussed and considered for coming ministry for the congregation in Rainier.

The highlight was Friday night as we shared the "Laying of the Altar" on the center table. This is where each member brought an object that represented how they were currently connecting with God. It was a very special time as the members shared from their heart on how God was speaking to them right now.

Pastor Roy summed up the weekend with the sense of great unity and accord that the Lord brought the leadership to. There was an emphasis on undergirding all the various ministries of the church in prayer. There will be a couple of Missions trips, one by the Youth and another that will be open to the congregation to Mexico. Prayer partners will be sought for every individual who will be going on the mission trips.

Several local ministries will be pursued with more information given as they are researched and details are settled. We thank God for a great weekend as we all got to know each other better and feel God's support for the church at Rainier.



Rainier Community Church leaders enjoy a weekend retreat. Below: "Laying of the Altar"



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PO Box 18000, Salem, OR 97305 503-393-3510 or 800-873-7729 www.orwacog.org
Rev. Jerry Davisson, District Pastor Kay Tira, Editor—contacteditor@orwacog.org
Submissions and news items for publication consideration are encouraged by the 15th of each month.

First Year Observations

by Pastor Jerry Davisson



Rev. Jerry Davisson, District Pastor

It is hard to believe that I have now been your District Pastor for one year! It has been an exciting year to say the least. I set out this year to be a listener. It has been over twenty years since I have been part

of the Oregon and SW Washington Association, so I wanted to get a sense of where we are as an Association. I visited and preached at several of our churches, convened three multi-Regional Forums, as well as participated in regional gatherings and events around the Association. I participated on the District Council, the Credentials Board and the Camp White Branch Board. We held our annual gathering in July, renaming it Summer Impact, where we heard from Church of God General Director, Jim Lyon. I have enjoyed many cups of coffee, eaten a lot of meals, put nearly 20,000 miles on the Association's car and even had the opportunity to play some golf with a couple of our pastors and church leaders. It has been a very busy year.

I recently assembled a Strategic Planning Task Force to help process the things I have observed and help to chart a course forward in the years ahead. The Task Force will be making some recommendations to the District Council on how we can work together to help accomplish our mission as an Association.

I wanted to share briefly in this article a couple of the observations I have made in my first year. **The first observation is that we have a group of extremely dedicated pastors and leaders in our Association.** I have watched and listened to leaders who have a heart to see the Kingdom of God advance in their communities and around the globe. I have watched leaders come alongside each other to encourage one another, pray for each other and to dream about how we can better partner with God in God's mission to the world.

I have also observed that a clear majority of our churches are experiencing some level of plateau or decline. I have talked to pastors who are frustrated with this trend and genuinely want to see people come to Jesus. I have watched as some pastors who have tried to maintain the status quo

have seen some of their parishioners leave for other churches or leave the church all together, while other leaders who have tried to innovate have seen similar results.

These are challenging times in the life of the church. We are in uncharted territory in the Western World. Many scholars describe the times we are in as post-Christendom. Christendom describes the era when the church occupied a prominent place in community life. A casual survey of society tells us that we are in fact living in a post-Christendom world. How do we navigate these uncharted waters? In the book by Tod Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory*, he describes a typical response to the challenges we face. He explains:

"We are in uncharted terrain trying to lead dying churches into a post-Christian culture that now considers the church an optional, out of touch and irrelevant relic of the past. What do you do? If you are like me, indeed, like most people, what you do is default to what you know. You do again what you have always done before."

Bolsinger further explains that we can no longer do what we have always done and hope for different results. That is the definition of insanity. We are going to need to recapture a spirit of adventure. Bolsinger, using the example of Lewis and Clark at the Lemhi Pass, describes our situation in the West:

"We are canoers who have run out of water. There is no route in front of us, no map, no quick fix or easy answer. But this is good news. This is a divine moment. This is an opportunity to express even more clearly what it means to follow and serve the God who is King of the entire world."

At the risk of sounding overdramatic, I believe we are in an adapt or die moment in the life of the church and our Association. We can no longer do church or associational life as we always have. We need to recapture a spirit of adventure, experimentation and mission if we hope to reach a changing world and see God's Kingdom come.

I am excited about what lies ahead for us as we adventure together. Thank you for the opportunity to lead off the map as we seek to be the people of God on mission together.

Look to the Hills: Camp White Branch

A big thank you to Leonard Meyer for his work on the dish room at Camp White Branch! He's now replacing the worn red linoleum squares from the kitchen floor.



With never a dull moment, the work continues to get Camp White Branch in good shape for the summer camping season. Kudos to Leonard and to the many work-camp participants and volunteers who continue to minister to our Association by their hours of labor and love at CWB.

Watch for camp details and registration information in upcoming issues of the E-CONTACT.

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



Resources Available to Local Congregations

Our Association exists in large part to assist local congregations in carrying out their ministries. In that regard we want to make you aware of two available resources.

First, is *TechSoup.org* – an organization which receives donations of software from a number of the major companies (Microsoft, Intuit, Adobe, etc.) for the purpose of re-distributing to non-profits at greatly discounted prices. Three of their offerings you might be interested in are: Microsoft Office Pro (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher, and Access which retails for over \$300) is only \$40. QuickBooks Pro (retail \$200) is \$50, and Adobe Creative Cloud (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign, and Adobe XD, 1 yr subscription at \$620) is \$5 plus \$20/month paid to Adobe.

To become eligible you simply complete documentation on TechSoup's site demonstrating your status as a non-profit and once approved, select the software you

desire and pay with a credit card, and download the software.

As a side note, should your budget be even more challenged... explore these two open-source (free) software packages. The first is OpenOffice which is a clone of the Microsoft Office suite (available at OpenOffice.org). It reads & writes all MS Office document formats. And secondly, GIMP (at gimp.org) is an image editor similar to PhotoShop or Illustrator. Both come with good documentation and community support.

Second, the Association Treasurer, Steve Robertson, has made himself available as a no-cost resource to congregations needing assistance in planning, design, training, and implementation in the areas of church accounting, website design and implementation, and email newsletter communication. Call or email the Association office to make use of this resource.

Heart of a Shepherd: Convention 2018 Speaker Pours into Pastors, Leaders

by Carl Stagner, ChoG Ministries



Ben Hardman speaks at the Philadelphia Regional in 2016.

“I have always believed everyone needs a Paul to pour into you, a Timothy to pour into, and a Barnabas to encourage you.” Ben Hardman’s words come from personal experience. Returning to the Regional Conventions this year—all five of them—the featured speaker hasn’t always lived up to this aspiration. He knows how difficult it is to lead well, make disciples in a 21st-century culture, and balance the needs of self and family. But out of his struggles, he’s celebrated numerous successes and gained a wealth of insights on the ground. The co-founder of Gravity Leadership and host of the leadership training workshop “Making Disciples in the Way of Jesus” at each Regional Convention 2018, Ben’s unique combination of life experiences has captured the attention of Church of God pastors across the country.

Since the Church of God was re-introduced to Ben Hardman at the Regional Conventions in 2016, his teaching and training opportunities have been highly sought-after among pastors in the movement. He looks forward to reconnecting with those who have already gone through, or are currently enrolled in Gravity Leadership Academy. Certainly, Ben’s return to the Regionals will be a reunion, but the first reunion was actually in 2015. Born and raised in the Church of God, Ben’s aunt is no stranger to the movement. The late missionary Susan Hardman’s contagious commitment to Christ—both in mission

and methods—are evident today her nephew, now a highly influential pastor to pastors.

“We are excited about all that God is doing in the Church of God right now,” Ben explains. “It’s a wonderful movement, and we consider it a huge honor that we are invited to share and train for a few hours at each convention.”

Ben’s not the only one who has felt the new wind blowing through the movement. When he considers the direction of the Church of God in recent years—rallying around Jesus as the subject, calling churches to reclaim what hell has stolen, and now emphasizing the abundant life that Jesus gives—and that we are called to give—Ben rejoices.



Ben Hardman

“Jesus is the full revelation of God, and our command to live as he lived and walk as he walked (1 John 2:6) is central to who we are at Gravity Leadership,” he explains. “Much of what we do at Gravity is help Christian leaders and pastors make disciples, lead like Jesus, and live on mission. The challenge of this is that many of the modern American church methods actually fight against disciple-making. We are committed to challenging leaders to not just understand the teachings of Jesus, but look deeply at the methods of Jesus, as well. We are thrilled to be partnering with the Church of God again!”

Unlike the workshops Ben led in 2016, this year’s events will also introduce some of the other voices of the Gravity Leadership team to the Church of God.

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Heart of a Shepherd: Convention 2018 Speaker

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"These are all leaders who have been making disciples and living on mission in their local context," Ben explains. "They will share a love of practical wisdom and experience."

All the work Ben's accomplished in a relatively short period of time has empowered countless leaders to "re-imagine discipleship and navigate the mission of God together." Despite the challenges inherent in ministry, Ben keeps pressing forward. "I am a pastor, myself," he reflects. "I know how difficult and challenging ministry can be, and I know what it can take from you. The comment we get most often from pastors who go through Gravity Leadership Academy is that their lives are so much healthier today. For many years as a pastor, I believed that God was disappointed in me—that I could never really do enough to please him. I have begun to see my identity as a son and not a slave."

But the heart of a shepherd, especially a shepherd for other shepherds, is a tender and vital organ. It must be cared for, or it cannot truly take care of others. "People know me and see me at my worst and my best," Ben reflects. "I think it's really easy for pastors

in our culture to hide—to never really be known apart from the pulpit. When you're doing life with other believers, eating meals with each other, and being honest about what's going on, that makes the difference. I have mentors and leaders who invest in me. I have weekly conversations with people who are simply pouring into me. I am now so fired up about walking beside leaders and helping them rediscover the passion ministry once had for them. I have the best job in the world!"

Sit under Ben's teaching at one of the Church of God Regional Conventions. Register today at www.chogconvention.org.



Time with family is essential for Ben Hardman.

Attend one of Five Regional Conventions 2018



April 17–18, 2018



April 24–25, 2018



June 19–20, 2018



Sept. 18–19, 2018



Sept. 25–26, 2018

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.

Lents-Gilbert Celebrates One Year with the Hermansens

A year ago we asked Pastor Harry Hermansen to serve a three-month term as interim Pastor. Here we are a year later, still blessed by his presence as well as by that of his lovely wife, Carol Ann. He's had us busy loving God, and loving others.

We've also been busy in many other ways. We have:

- heard some wonderful church music (Carol Ann has shared her musical talents, plus we've experienced Pastor's barbershop group music)
- held monthly themed-potlucks
- had plays where even Ananias and Nicodemus appeared
- seen them open their home on numerous occasions for fellowship and wonderful food, and
- experienced their loving home visitations for congregational members in need.

We continue to grow as a multi-cultural church, adding a Hispanic Sunday night service to the New Life Samoan afternoon service. Church usage

continues to be strong with music lessons, AA, TOPS, AV, Imago Dei counseling nights and now we lease the Annex building to an artist who consigns artwork and teaches classes.

We say "thank you, God" for delivering the Hermansens to us, and we are looking forward in faith.

The Lents-Gilbert Church of God family, Portland



Pastor Harry and Carol Ann Hermansen

District Calendar



- **April 1, 2018**, Resurrection Sunday
- **April 5, 2018**, Thurs., Regions #4 & #8
- **April 10, 2018**, Tues., Region #1
- **April 17-18, 2018**, Tues.-Wed., Regional Convention, Phoenix, AZ
- **April 22, 2018**, Sun., District #5, Free Fishing Day and potluck picnic at Trojan Park
- **May 3, 2018**, Thurs., Region #2
- **May 13, 2018**, Sun., Mother's Day
- **May 17, 2018**, Thurs., Region #4
- **May 22, 2018**, Tues., Region #3
- **May 24, 2018**, Thurs., Region #5
- **Summer Camps** (See page 6)
- **Aug 5-9, 2018**, Willamette Valley Campmeeting, Turner, OR



Please Join us at the



Albany First Church of God
5pm, Sunday, April 15, 2018

to celebrate with
Pastor Steve & Kathy Dow
as they move to a new ministry.

Dinner provided, please RSVP to

fcgstaff@firstchurchalbany.org

or call 541-926-2095

Please send any cards, gifts or donations to "Rose" at

Albany First Church of God, 1225 SW 15th Ave., Albany, OR 97321