



Association of
the Churches
of God
in Oregon and
Southwest
Washington

Christensen to
Speak at
Adult Retreat
(See Page 3)

Ministers Retreat: Times of Refreshing



Pastors Steve Dow (above) and Jerry Davisson (Below) enjoy time with speaker Ken Long.



Okay, so maybe there was a bit of fiddlin' around at the beach. But mostly, ministers and spouses enjoyed times of refreshing, reconnecting, and reflecting—conversation, communion and challenge.

With "Discipleshift" as the theme, speaker Ken Long shared his heart for making and maturing Christians, challenging participants to take a close look at ministry goals and the power of God in us. Pastor Doug Beisley led in worship during the sessions, beautifully setting the atmosphere. *(Continued on Page 2)*

Marriage Redeemed Conference

Tuff Stuff Ministries will present the annual "Marriage Redeemed" conference at Mountain Park Church in Lake Oswego, April 7, 2018.

The conference is geared for couples in recovery from betrayal in their marriages. Featured speakers and schedule details will be emailed to district churches in the next few weeks.

If you know of couples who would benefit from this conference please pass this information along, and watch for future announcements.

Point of contact: Dennis Miller, ICM Northwest. dmiller@icmusa.org (503)310-2754. www.tuffstuffministries.com; www.heartwords.org

Ministry Opportunity: New Dresses

Pastor Charles Hunter (Neighborhood Church of God, Portland) has informed the District Office of a wonderful ministry opportunity! He has several hundred NEW dresses that were donated to his workplace and he would like to give them away. They are sizes S-XL. They are in boxes and they need to find homes. Take as many boxes as you can use. If you know of a need or if your church would like to sell them as a fundraiser, please contact Pastor Charles Hunter directly.
Email: chuntersr@pps.net
Cell: 503-887-0036

Ministers Retreat: Times of Refreshing

(Continued from page 1)

Snow throughout the region threatened to be a concern for ministers and spouses traveling from a distance to attend the annual event at the Agate Beach Best Western Inn in Newport, Oregon, but cold temperatures and intermittent sunny skies prevailed.

Though parking was a bit of an inconvenience as contractors and supplies occupied the main lots during an ongoing reconstruction phase that began in October, April is the target completion date, and many regular attendees noted big changes already underway.

Conference rooms were chilly, but fellowship was warm, and the Spirit of God was present.

Participants shared meals, stories, challenges, times of worship and closed the event Wednesday morning with Communion. God is at work among us. Pray for our pastors, our congregations, our Association, and our work together as we seek to reach the lost, equip

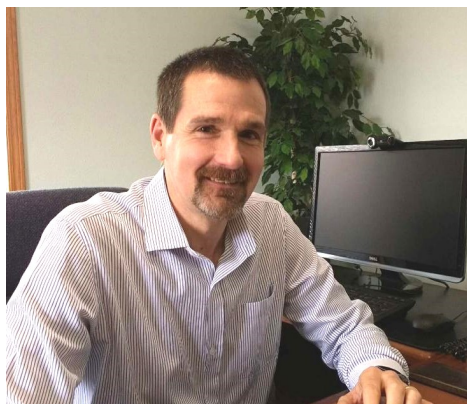
and release leaders, and reproduce mature Christ-followers. Pastor Ken's sessions provided good resources and challenges for the task ahead. And it is a big task, as we learned that seven or eight of our Oregon and SW Washington Association Churches seek pastoral candidates. Several ministers who have faithfully served in the District are stepping into retirement. Potential pastors are encouraged to contact the District office for more information, or see ChoG Ministries at www.jesusisthesubject.org.

District Pastor Jerry Davisson announced several upcoming events including a July 21 Cruise with Sandi Patti and CBH, five Regional Conventions from which to choose, and the April Adult Retreat at Cannon Beach hosted by Vancouver First Church (see page 4 for related articles).

Davisson also reported that Summer Impact will take a new form, as a one-day event this year for business meetings. Youth will join in with the Willamette Campmeeting at Turner, with District encouragement (August 5-9). Watch for more details.



Graceful, Responsible Posting



Rev. Jerry Davisson, District Pastor

Social media is a force to be reckoned with today. There are some true benefits, from getting the word out to rallying people to our cause.

However, I sometimes struggle with

what is communicated. I recently took a break from social media for 30 days because I was getting frustrated with some of the stuff I was seeing. I have friends who claim to be Christ followers as well as those who do not confess any religious affiliation. These friends range from the very conservative to the very liberal religiously and politically. One of the things that prompted my media fast was the way in which both sides dogmatically portray their beliefs as “the truth”. Often when someone opposes those beliefs an argument ensues. I am certainly a firm believer in the freedom of speech, but I am also a firm believer that we should speak the truth through a filter of grace. John 1:14 tells us that; “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Notice in the passage that grace precedes truth. A cursory reading of the Gospels reveals that Jesus lived His life this way. I’m not saying we should never state an opinion. I would simply say that when we do, we should always run it through the filter of grace.

I must confess that when I took the month away from Facebook I felt strangely disconnected from people. If I am honest with myself, in some ways this is an artificial connection. I believe that in our society we are losing the skills necessary to truly connect with people. It seems that people are hungering for

connection with others but are not really getting that from social media. And often the way we are communicating and what we are saying are driving us farther apart. In a song made popular by Hawk Nelson titled, *Words*, they sing; “They’ve made me feel like a prisoner. They’ve made me feel set free. They’ve made me feel like a criminal, made me feel like a king. They’ve lifted my heart to places I’d never been. And they’ve dragged me down, back to where I began. Words can build you up, words can break you down. Start a fire in your heart or put it out.” I think we have all felt the positive and negative effects of words on our life. But the song goes on to offer a solution. “Let my words be life. Let my words be truth. I don’t wanna say a word unless it points the world back to You.” Can I be so bold as to suggest that you put your social media posts through the filter of those lyrics. If the words you are about to share don’t speak life and if they don’t point people to Jesus, who is Life, please, don’t hit *post*. If you have a truth for a specific person or group, prompted by Holy Spirit, seek them out for a face-to-face conversation. In the context of a relationship, hopefully grace will be shared, and truth will be heard. Please post responsibly.

Willamette Valley Campmeeting Coming August 5-9, Turner, Oregon

Michael Thigpen is scheduled to be the main speaker for the five-day Campmeeting this summer at Turner, Oregon.

The event will also include the annual Youth Campmeeting, (formerly held on the Warner Pacific Campus). Save the dates of August 5-9, and plan now to attend.



Michael Thigpen

The E-CONTACT is a publication of the Church of God in Oregon and SW Washington
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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.

Bob Christensen to speak at 2018 Adult Retreat

Come renew and refresh at the 2018 Adult Retreat (previously known as Senior Adult Retreat) in beautiful Cannon Beach, Oregon. Its featured speaker will be Pastor Bob Christensen. Music will be led by a team of people under the direction of Vancouver Church's Traditional Worship Pastor Mark Kelly.

Food & Accommodations: The Cannon Beach Conference Center is located footsteps from the majestic Pacific Ocean and is known for its relaxing atmosphere and hearty food. Included in your registration are 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 2 dinners and 2 nights lodging. Rooms range from modest to more deluxe, some being right on the beach. It's a first deposit basis, so plan ahead if you want a specific room. Please call or email Marla Riley for availability, (360) 909-8810 or marlariley@comcast.net.

Registration cost: Cost is determined by the lodging you select and number of people in the room. A non-refundable deposit of \$25.00 per person is required to hold a room. This fee is included in the price on the rate schedule.

Offsite option – If you will be staying elsewhere, the cost is \$90 per person which includes all meals,

beverages, and snacks. **Drop-in costs** for the day (meals not included) is \$10. Registration and full payment deadline: March 11

Refund policy: Reservations may be cancelled through March 11 with full refund less the \$25.00 deposit. After March 11, a refund will be given only in the case of a medical emergency. Arrival to conference: Plan to arrive before dinner at 5:30 p.m., but not before 1:00 p.m. when room keys are available.

Special note: We would like to have skits/songs put together on the theme of JOY for our Wednesday evening entertainment. If your church or group is interested, please let Marla know. The maximum time limit is 5 minutes per skit/song, and the number of groups is limited due to time. Also, if you play an instrument and would like to participate in a band during Wednesday evening worship, please call Marla. There will be a short mandatory rehearsal on Wednesday afternoon. Questions? Call Marla Riley at (360) 909-8810

More information available online at <https://orwacog.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/2018-ADULT-RETREAT-REGISTRATION-AREA-CHURCH.pdf>

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

Arizona Pastors Invite You to the Sunny Southwest

By Carl Stagner, ChoG Ministries

Yuma, Arizona, is the sunniest city in the United States. Ninety percent of the time, residents bask in sunshine, while even a couple hours to the northeast, the Phoenix area still sees an annual average of 85-percent sunshine. While no meteorologist or travel agency can guarantee beautiful weather, the odds are good that conditions will be pretty incredible for the kickoff Regional Convention of the Church of God in

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Arizona Pastors Invite You to the Sunny Southwest

(Continued from page 4)



Sunset over the brand-new Mountain Park building.

Phoenix, Arizona, April 17–18. I should know; I grew up just northwest of downtown.

More on my experience later. For now, know that the local Church of God pastors are happy to invite the Movement to the Grand Canyon State this spring. This is, after all, the first time a Church of God Regional Convention has come to the Southwest and, for many persons-in-the-pew unable to travel long distances, it may also be their first taste of the broader Movement. Speaking of taste, you'll want to savor some of the flavors of Phoenix, see some of the unique sights, and smell some of their creosote bushes (the delightful, defining scent of the desert). So, before you book travel for the Regional Convention, consider the recommendations of a few of our Arizona pastors, and the possibility of arriving early or staying a few extra days.

Do you like pizza? Allan Fuller, host pastor of the first Regional Convention at Mountain Park



The writer's meal at Mi Patio, central Phoenix

Church, says Spinato's Pizzeria is a local favorite, but also highly recommends Perfect Pear Bistro, just a hop, skip, and a jump from the church. About the American "comfort food" restaurant, Allan says, "I don't know that it's *perfect*, but it is pretty terrific!"

If you're up for a bit of a drive, Paul Johnson, pastor at The Gathering Place in north-central Phoenix, recommends The Yard. If you like barbecue, Hector Gonzalez, who shepherds the flock at Nueva Vida Church of God in the suburb of Glendale, insists the drive to neighboring Gilbert is worth it for Joe's Real BBQ. Don Wilson, guest speaker for the Phoenix and Oklahoma City Regionals, is also from Phoenix—and suggests visitors try Ocean Prime and Kona Grill (for each, allow more travel time). Mike Hodges, who pastors West Side Church of God in Glendale, says The Old Spaghetti Factory and Rustler's Rooste aren't far from the convention site and won't leave guests disappointed. Arizona's regional pastor Don Doe agrees with Pastor Mike: Rustler's Rooste is great, especially if you also want views of the city, a western theme, and/or would like to try fried rattlesnake and cactus fries.



The writer atop South Mountain, just north of Mountain Park Church.

Looking to do something uniquely *Phoenix*? Two local pastors—Allan Fuller and Michael Fay—say a hike to the summit of Camelback Mountain is worth the 360-degree view of the city (I approve this message). But, warning: this one's not for the faint of heart (or the out-of-shape!). Fortunately, a scenic drive to the top of South Mountain (which is actually north of Mountain Park) offers an easy alternative (and even more hiking trails for all skill levels, all within minutes of the convention site).

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Arizona Pastors Invite You to the Sunny Southwest

If you're looking for something uniquely *Western*, there's Rawhide, an old Western-style attraction. Hector Gonzalez recommends Old Town Scottsdale for the shopper and anyone looking to pick up a few Southwest souvenirs. Don Wilson, Don Doe, and Mike Hodges all recommend sports fans attend a Diamondbacks baseball game (they're at home all week!). Don Doe also recommends the Desert Botanical Gardens, while Allan Fuller suggests the Musical Instrument Museum, adding that "there is nothing like it anywhere in the world."

As the introduction to this article hints, the writer of this article is, in fact, a Phoenix native. Born and raised up in the Church of God in Arizona, one of the most anticipated summer vacations was the cross-country drive to gather with the saints from near and far in Anderson, Indiana. But upon our return to the Valley of the Sun, we had to satisfy our taste buds for that which we simply couldn't find anywhere else: mouth-watering, authentic Sonoran-style Mexican food. Don't leave Phoenix without trying one of our excellent local Mexican eateries! My favorite: Popo's Fiesta del Sol. If the drive to my favorite requires too much drive time, I also recommend Los Dos Molinos, just up the road from Mountain Park. But beware: Los Dos Molino's only knows how to make it hot!

South Mountain Park is practically in the backyard of Mountain Park Community Church—you've got to check it out! The Hall of Flame Museum, Organ Stop Pizza, and the easy hike to the Hole in the Rock at Papago Park also make for memorable experiences. If you've never seen Sedona or the Grand Canyon, consider making a vacation out of your Phoenix Regional Convention experience—just plan for several hours on the road.

Host pastor Allan Fuller brings us back to what matters most about the first of five Regional Conventions this year: "I look forward to people in our church and in our area getting access to the

breadth and depth of our movement," he explains. "Perhaps because we're deep in the 'wild west,' most of our people do not have a connection or history with the Church of God. As a pastor, I'm very thankful to be part of something bigger than our church, or even the churches in our area, but most of the attendees in our Arizona churches do not have access to the great people and stories of the Church of God. My hope is that, in April, that's going to change for many."



The writer enjoying Mexican food at El Comedor Guadalajara, south Phoenix.

CWC Spring Convention



Melanie Thigpen

Christian Women Connection (CWC) features Melanie Thigpen from the National CWC Office as keynote speaker at the March 9-10 Spring Connection at Maranatha Church of God.

The theme for the weekend event will focus on John 4:10, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

Maranatha is located at 4222 NE 12th Ave., Portland, OR.

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.

Look to the Hills: Camp White Branch

Leonard Meyer has been hard at work remodeling the dish room at Camp White Branch.



Dish Room remodel project, Camp White Branch

A project larger than expected has resulted in all new pex under the floor to prevent old pipes from cracking and causing a nightmare. Installation of subflooring, and subsequent commercial grade laminate flooring is placed to hold up against water damage. The ceiling is now painted, sheetrock replaced, fiberboard on walls; and exterior siding has been replaced at the point of the crawl space. Leonard and Stacey are grateful for their friend, Todd, from Blue River who helped them out one Saturday.

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



Camps are scheduled, fees are set, and directors are in place. Encourage your church family to sponsor a camper this summer. As always, thank you for your prayers and financial support, and for the many folks who pitch in with Work Camps and other projects throughout the year.

We are trusting the Lord with His continued good work at Camp White Branch.

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.

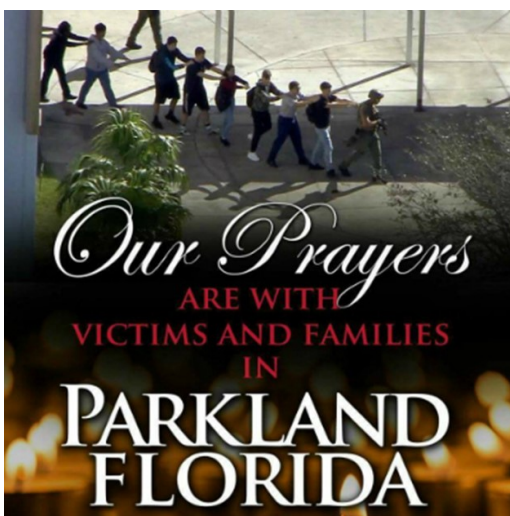
As a side note, should your budget be even more challenged... explore these two open-source (free) software packages. The first is OpenOffice which is a clone of the Microsoft Office suite (available at OpenOffice.org). It reads & writes all MS Office document formats. And secondly, GIMP (at gimp.org) 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.

Florida Congregation Offers Hope, Healing Following Parkland Tragedy

By Carl Stagner, ChoG Ministries

The night before the devastating tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Pastor Kimberly and her daughter Anna each had the same disturbing dream. At some point during the night, they both imagined being in the middle of a violent situation where they each had to use guns to defend themselves. They awoke and shared with each other just how terrifying their dreams were and how they hoped they'd never find themselves in such a situation. A few hours later, news broke about what



A meme posted on the Coral Springs Church Facebook page.

had taken place a couple miles from their home. Kim's husband, Anna's father, is the lead pastor of Coral Springs Community Church of God, the closest Church of God to Parkland, Florida.

shots fired. Sadly, friends of David's neighbor were among those who were killed, including Coach Aaron Feis. The tragedy also hit close to home for the church's day school, which cares for seventy children. The daughter of the coach whose life was claimed that tragic day is one of the day school's former students.



Pastor David honors the day school teachers last year

Though Coral Springs Community Church isn't within Parkland's city limits, it's only a few miles away. As you can imagine, the scene that unfolded on February 14 was marked by chaos and panic. "When we were trying to return home," David recounts, "the scene was unbelievable. Emergency response and police vehicles were everywhere, helicopters were in the sky, and there were hundreds of cars with parents trying to get to the school. Traffic was blocked so badly that it took thirty-five minutes to drive just a couple miles.

The church's response

Prayer is one of Coral Springs Community Church's core values. Every month, they hold a Sunday night prayer gathering to specifically bring the needs of their church and community to a loving heavenly Father. Their first response to the tragedy in Parkland was to schedule a candlelight prayer vigil. On Friday night, the scene was solemn, tears were shed, and cries could be heard. David explains that they wanted to "give an opportunity for day school families and church families to come together to grieve, find strength in each other, and surrender pain, fear, and questions to Christ." In addition to scripture reading and music, candles were lit for each victim. David's son played a song he wrote during a particularly difficult season their family had to endure a couple years ago. The words of the chorus resonated with those in attendance:

*The God I know, he won't let go.
The pain inside he won't let hide.
The God I know, he breathes new life.
The one inside, he'll change my life.*

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At 2 AM on February 15, Pastor David Konstantopoulos lay awake, unable to sleep due to the trauma of the previous day's events in his community. He posted the following thoughts to the church's Facebook page: "As I am praying, my heart is so heavy for the many lives that have been forever altered. For many, it may seem that evil has won. We believe, however, that the power of God, found in the name of Jesus, can bring the ultimate and final victory."

Emotions were raw, the pain was fresh. Thankfully, none of the youth group at Coral Springs Community Church were at the school that day. The city of Coral Springs has four high schools; the current students aren't represented at Stoneman Douglas. "However, as you might expect, most of them—and us—are connected in some way to the school, as well as some of the victims," David explains. One of the victims was a close friend of a Coral Springs student, having taken dance class together. Pastor David's next-door neighbor is a junior at Stoneman Douglas and recounts the horrific ordeal, including hearing

Florida Congregation Offers Hope, Healing

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Following the song, as each victim's name was read aloud, someone from either the congregation or the day school came forward with a white carnation to lay next to each candle. Pastor David also shared his testimony of his experience with fear and pain in that difficult season his family endured where he and his wife nearly died, causing their world to come crashing down all around them. "I was very open and shared that I knew what it felt like to want to give up," David recalls. "But in those moments, we must keep the faith. Even when it doesn't make sense, even when we don't have the answers, even in the midst of our deepest grief, we keep the faith. And while we do so, we cry out to God. When we don't know what to say, we can cry out in pain and the Holy Spirit will make intercession for us."

Sunday night, the church met again for their regularly scheduled prayer meeting. “We spent a couple of hours sharing our stories, hurts, questions, and pain regarding the shooting that had taken place,” David explains. “Then we spent a considerable amount of time talking about how God, in his infinite mercy and grace, can take what was intended for evil, and use it for good. That is specifically what we prayed for, in addition to remembering our community and those families that lost a love one.”



***Backpacks, other school supplies
at the church office***



***Backpacks, other school supplies
at the church office***

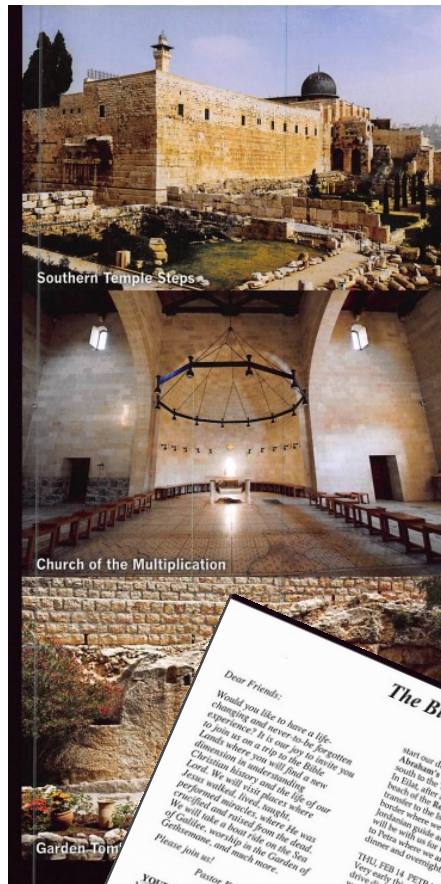
For Coral Springs Community Church, prayer is the priority. But it's also only the first step. In the past seven months since David Konstantopoulos became their lead pastor, the church has grown by nearly 80 percent. More and more, they're actively seeking ways to make a tangible difference in the community. So, when Christine Smalley, a layperson in the

church, approached David with a plan to collect supplies for Douglas Stoneman High School, it was met with great enthusiasm. Pastor David explains that, in the commotion of the students, faculty, and staff fleeing for their lives, backpacks, books, and other school supplies were destroyed, lost, or in some way mixed up in the crime scene. With donations from the church and community, including a local office supply store, Coral Springs Community Church has become a drop-off location for a tangible expression of love for the students and teachers. Additionally, the church is assembling care packages for the first-responders who went to the high school that day, and they've scheduled a blood donation event with the Red Cross.



Coral Spring Community Church gathered for worship.

“As you pray,” Pastor David asks, “remember that we are not wrestling or fighting against flesh and blood, but against spiritual forces. Pray that our movement doesn’t forget that when evil presents itself in such an overt way, it is a spiritual battle. Seeking solutions that are physical and temporal, without including the spiritual aspect involved, will serve as Band-Aids at best. When I began at Coral Springs Community Church, the vision my wife and I developed for the church was this: ‘Living life and finding faith together.’ In other words, we share life—the good, the bad, and the ugly, even when it doesn’t make sense. We do all of this together. Please pray for continued faith and unity as we seek to fulfill God’s call for our church in our community.”



The Bible Lands & Jordan

February 11-23, 2019

Hosted by:
Pastor Ken Long
Northshore Christian Church

Highlights of Your Tour

Scheduled International Flights
• Top Quality Four Star Hotels
• Israeli Buffet Breakfast & Dinner Daily • Top Guide with In-Depth Knowledge of the Old and New Testaments • Private Air Conditioned Motorcoach Visits to the Major Historical Sites • Boat Ride on the Sea of Galilee • Certificate of Your Pilgrimage to ISRAEL and more!

The Bible Lands & Jordan!

Pastor Ken Long of Northshore Christian Church is hosting a trip from Seattle, Washington, to the Holy Lands, February 11-23, 2019.

Highlights of the trip will include scheduled international flights, top quality four-star hotels, Israeli buffet breakfast and dinner daily, top guide with in-depth knowledge of the Old and New Testaments, private air conditioned motor coach visits to the major historical sites, a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, and a certificate of your pilgrimage to Israel...and more!

Costs are estimated at \$4700, depending on flight schedules, etc. A non-refundable deposit of \$300 per person is required for reservations, with the balance due on November 1, 2018.

Detailed brochures are available through Northshore. If you are interested in participating, contact Lisa Jacobs (425)322-2304 or email ljacobs@northshorechristian.org

District Calendar

- **March 9-10, 2018, Fri.-Sun., CWC Spring Connection**
- **March 11, 2018, Sunday, Daylight Savings begins**
- **March 15, 2018, Thurs., Region #4**
- **March 20-22, 2018, Tues.-Thurs., Adult Retreat**
- **March 22, 2018, Thurs., Region #5**
- **March 27, 2018, Tues., Region #3**
- **April 1, 2018, Resurrection Sunday**
- **April 10, 2018, Tues., Region #1**
- **April 17-18, 2018, Tues.-Wed., Regional Convention, Phoenix, AZ**
- **May 3, 2018, Thurs., Region #2**
- **May 13, 2018, Sun., Mother's Day**
- **May 17, 2018, Thurs., Region #4**

For more events, see orwacog.org/calendar

