October - November 2025

CHURCHRIGHT

Doing church right

Portraits of Jesus Coming in 2026

The Portraits of Jesus series asks two simple questions: Who is Jesus, and why is He "good news"?

There's only one Jesus. Only one gospel. But in God's providence, He gave us the four Gospels, each proclaiming who Jesus is and why He is "good news." This is shared from the four unique perspectives of evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Join us in 2026 as we examine and come to appreciate each portrait of Jesus so that we might know Him, follow Him, and share the good news of Him better.

The *Why* of the Church

In life, true purpose and calling are often missed due to a lack of understanding of God's design and imprint on one's life. Without a clear sense of who God has made you to be, the *why* of your life becomes lost in the mundane and fleeting.

Consider Noah's ark. It was built with a clear view of what it was to be. Without its *what*, the ark would have been just another boat. But within the context of its *what*, its *why* emerges, transforming it into a lifesaving vessel with purpose far beyond the mere measure and composite of its timbers and pitch.

In a similar way, Christ builds His church with an inextricable connection between who she is and why she is. Therefore, when we consider why — or what — the purpose of the church is, a deeper reflection is necessary.

The church is the **redeemed of God** stretching through the ages, from righteous Abel to the saints transformed (Hebrews 12:1; 1 Corinthians 15:52). The church is formed by the explicit will and imprint of God. Therefore, **to love God and glorify Him forever** is not only our calling but the forever mandate of our hearts.

The church is **called out** — out of this world and into **fellowship with God** (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18; Matthew 11:28ff). We are now His. Therefore, we are to be wholly sanctified and holy indeed.

The church is **community** (Acts 4:32ff). And as we remember our part in this privileged family of God, our clarion purpose emerges: We are to **serve, love, and fellowship with one another** (1 Corinthians 12:13).

The church is the **salt of the earth** and the light in the darkness (Matthew 5:13, 14). Therefore, let us **proclaim God's love in the gospel of Christ.**

The church is **chosen, royal, holy, and God's own**; we are His elect (1 Peter 2:9). Therefore we **serve and exalt the One who alone is worthy.**

As we reflect on the *why* of the Church of God, may we remember that the answer is found in the *who* of the church — what God has done in and for us in Christ, His glorious bride.

— Greg Lincoln
GC President

District News

Central

Contributor: Mike Wallace

Montana Fellowship. *We had our best meeting yet for the Montana Fellowship on July 26. Six people attended in person and one on Zoom. Next month we will be back in Butte and then start deliberations on how we will do wintertime meetings. Pictured (L to R): Mike Wallace, Lisa Miklush, Henry Miklush, Bonnie Wallace, Sherry Elkington, Keith Elkington.*

Southeast

Contributor: Mered Zapot

Leadership meeting. *Southeast leaders gathered in Adrian, GA, August 22-24 for a time of teaching, encouragement, and fellowship. Throughout the weekend, brothers and sisters in ministry joined together to consider the biblical roles and responsibilities of leaders, elders, deacons, and pastors. The retreat was marked by a strong spirit of unity and learning, and participants were blessed by thoughtful teaching from Brian Franks, Walter Apen, Marcos Arenas, and Warrel Largie. Beyond the sessions, the retreat was filled with opportunities to share life together: meals, conversations, and moments of fellowship that reminded everyone of the blessing of serving side by side. The retreat served as a reminder that leadership in the church is both a calling and a shared responsibility, and that by seeking God together, leaders are better equipped to serve their congregations faithfully.*

Young Adult Retreat

On July 25-27, the Southeast District held its first young adult retreat in Valdosta, Georgia, under the new ministry initiative, Love Like Christ. This year's theme, "Canvas," brought together young adults from across the district for a weekend of worship, fellowship, and spiritual renewal. A highlight of the event was teaching led by Thadeus Monrose and Thyra Joseph. Their sessions encouraged participants to surrender their lives fully to Christ, trusting Him as the true artist who shapes and directs every detail of our story. Through engaging messages and prayer, the retreat created space for young adults to reflect deeply on God's calling on their lives.

This event marks the beginning of Love Like Christ's ministry efforts, led by Sharon Modeste. There are plans for future retreats designed to strengthen faith, build community, and equip young adults for service in the church and beyond.

30th Anniversary. *Three hundred brethren from around Florida and beyond gathered August 30-31 in Fort St. Lucie, FL, to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Treasure Coast church with pastor Al and Grace Haynes and the congregation. Elder Whaid Rose preached the Sabbath message, and touching remembrances of founding members, hearty praise, and great Jamaican*

food abounded. Festivities continued Sunday with a mortgage burning ceremony and ground-breaking ceremony for a new all-purpose building — and more delicious Jamaican food! There was much joy and thanksgiving for God's faithful provision.

Church ministry. *CareBag, a local church ministry of the Treasure Coast church in Fort St. Lucie, FL, supplies free hygiene products to the homeless. Their mobile shower units serve over 5,000 homeless children in the Treasure Coast and West Palm Beach area. Ministry leaders Roxanne Brown, Mark Cunningham, and Pastor Al Haynes are pictured here with their fourth mobile shower unit. You can support CareBag at* www.carebagfl.org.

Southwest

Contributors: Irma Mendoza and Victoria (Tory) Capetillo, SWD Media Ministry Director

Children's Super Sabbath. *The Houston area was filled with joy on July 19 as 62 children gathered for a special Area 3 Children's Super Sabbath. This year's theme, "God's Masterpiece" (Ephesians 2:10), reminded the kids that each of us is wonderfully created in His image and designed with a unique purpose. Thanks to the dedication of sisters Mireyda Román, Paula Meléndez, and Gabriela Fuentes from the Children's Ministry team, the little ones enjoyed a full day of engaging Bible lessons, hands-on crafts, and fun games — all pointing to God's love and plan for their lives.*

Area 6 Super Sabbath. *On July 25-26, the Tigua church in El Paso, TX, hosted the Area 6 Super Sabbath under the key verse: "They will be like a tree planted by the water . . . it has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit" (Jeremiah 17:8, NIV). Superintendent Chip Hinds, NED Superintendent Heber Vega, and Brother Zuri Gutierrez gave powerful and engaging sermons on the theme "Engrained in Christ."*

Vacation Bible School. *With the theme "True North VBS," the Fort Smith, AR church hosted a VBS for their church and community the week of June 16. The event was filled with so much love and learning for the children — and even for the adults! God is good, and spreading His Word was so special to our church.*

Couples' reunion. *On August 10, a couples' fellowship was graciously hosted by Eduardo and Socorro Villalba at the El Paso Central Church. The gathering featured*

a breakfast buffet, where couples enjoyed a time of fellowship and encouragement. Pastor Rubén Beard shared an uplifting message on strengthening marital relationships, offering biblical guidance and inspiration. We trust this event provided couples with a refreshing time together and pray that their marriages continue to grow stronger in love, unity, and faith.

Special visit. *On August 8, Central District Superintendent Ronald Rousseau visited brothers and sisters at the beautiful Denver Harbor congregation in Houston, TX. During this gathering, the GC Mission Plan was presented, and Brother Rousseau shared the Word. The following day, August 9, worship continued at the Olive Tree congregation in Galena Park. In the afternoon, we joined the Esperanza Viva (Living Hope) congregation. During this service, God moved powerfully, touching the hearts of the entire congregation, who committed to supporting GC Missions. This memorable weekend was a testimony of God's continued blessings upon His people and a reminder that He is daily gathering those who are being saved.*

Vacation Bible School 2025

The Mount Pleasant church in Texas held VBS July 16-20 with the theme "Cultivating Hearts, a Renewed Spirit." Nineteen children attended, including kids who came to our church for the first time. It was so exciting to see new little faces praising the Lord!

VBS is a unique experience because the songs, biblical stories, Bible verses, and activities made our children enjoy their vacation with praises, learning, and fun in the Lord.

We thank God for providing hands and hearts willing to serve in VBS: young people leading praise songs, instructors, and our women's group that provided snacks and meals for the kids.

We are already planning for next year's VBS. As someone once said, our children need biblical instruction even on summer vacation.

— Irma Mendoza

West Coast

Contributors: Melva Smith and Aaron Carbajal, WCD Media Ministry Director

Baptisms. On June 8, the East Valley church in East Valley, AZ, celebrated baptisms in the Salt River in Tonto State Park. Pastor Tom Donahue, along with Elders Marvin Thompson and Jonathan Marrufo, led nine candidates into the waters of baptism and welcomed nine new souls in Christ. Following the baptisms, the congregation gathered in the church building for prayer and fellowship. We give praise to God for our new brothers and sisters in Christ: Tsigerda Bihonegn, Eyerus Zenebe, Mihret Zenebe, Fikru Zenebe, Diana Lopez, Tanya Ramirez, Kharleena Robles, Amorrah Gillespie, and Fernando Barranca.

Summer Camps

Many of us remember going to youth camp. Although it was a long time ago, the memories and excitement have not faded. This year, the teens and Seekers were eager to attend their respective camps at Sis-Q Meadows in southern Oregon. Teen Camp was held July 20-27, followed by Seekers Camp on July 27-August 3.

The theme of Teen Camp was "Build a Better Boat," a reminder that we must have Jesus in our boat and

learn to live like Him so our lives are firmly founded on Christ. Thirty-one students and staff attended from the Eugene church. Highlights included early morning prayer times, evening fireside services, student baptisms, and, of course, friendships made and renewed.

Seekers Camp featured the theme "Know Jesus, Know Fruit," focusing on the attributes of Jesus and the characteristics that should be present in our lives if we follow Him (John 15:1-8). Campers also learned the contrast: "No Jesus, No Fruit." Each day they were encouraged to read their Bibles and memorize Scripture. Ten students and staff attended from the Eugene church. Their highlights included crafts, recreation, and evening fireside services. — *Melva Smith*

Baptizing youth. *During the West Coast District youth camps in California, Oregon, and Arizona July 26, we were deeply blessed to witness God's powerful work in the hearts of many young people. The precious moments captured in these images show the joy as youth publicly declared their faith through baptism, surrendering their lives to Jesus as their Savior. We welcome each of them with open arms into our family!*

Men's retreat. *What a glorious weekend we experienced at the district men's retreat March 23-25! God allowed 115 men from California, Oregon, Arizona, Washington, and Las Vegas to gather in Oakhurst, CA, to praise His name, be built up in His Word, and strengthen our fellowship. The presence of God was truly felt, and we returned home with renewed hearts and faith ignited.*

"Handcrafted." *The Arizona Youth Camp, held July 21–27, marked its first return after many years. With the theme "Handcrafted," over 40 campers gathered from churches across Arizona, Las Vegas, and Albuquerque. Youth were encouraged and challenged through powerful messages shared by the Capetillo brothers and through daily studies in the book of Ephesians. This culminated in a fun and engaging Jeopardy-style review game. Each day concluded with inspiring fireside testimonies from the camp staff. Most important, four campers were baptized at camp, with several more committing to be baptized upon returning to their home churches.*

"God is . . ." *Held July 21-27 in Weimar, CA, the Northern California Youth Camps were centered on the powerful theme "God is . . . ," with the key verse "I am the Alpha and the Omega" (Revelation 1:8, NIV). Two camps were held simultaneously: Senior Youth (ages 13-18) and Junior Camp (ages 8-12), providing age-specific teaching, fellowship, and activities. Senior campers also participated in the Eleventh Annual Bible Tournament, diving deep into the book of Hebrews and showcasing their knowledge of God's Word. A key moment was when*

one camper was baptized and many others made the decision to be baptized upon returning to their home churches. It was a blessed week filled with learning, fun, and spiritual renewal.

ARTIOS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Convention/Graduation

Convention is a special time for Artios! Because we are primarily an online school, convention provides an opportunity for students, staff, and faculty to meet in person. This year was no exception. Throughout the week, Artios presented six different workshops, hosted an after-service Meet-n-Greet, and celebrated our graduates during our commencement ceremony.

In this commencement, over 25 students who completed their academic program between early fall 2023 and summer 2025 were recognized.

Houston Satellite Campus

Artios' Houston Campus completed its first class this summer: BIS104 History and Literature of the New Testament (in partnership with the Olive Tree CoG7). Nine students participated and three people audited the ten-week class. Meetings were held on Sundays using Zoom, while coursework was submitted online.

Learn more about our satellite campuses at *artioscollege.org/es/satellite-campus/*

Late Spring 2025 Graduates

Daniel Aleman, Sacramento, CA - Bachelor of Arts in Christian Leadership (Pastoral Ministry)*

Gerson Gonzalez, Claremore, OK - Associate of Christian Leadership (Pastoral Ministry)

Elizabeth Perez, Homestead, FL - Certificate of Leadership Studies

Justo Perez Marroquin, Homestead, FL - Certificate of Leadership Studies

** Graduate was incorrectly recognized with an Associate of Christian Leadership at the commencement ceremony during convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. We apologize for this embarrassing oversight.*

Winter 2025 Dean's List* Recipients

Pete Capetillo, Albuquerque, NM; Dan Davila, Justice, IL; Adiel De Leon, Lantana, FL; Otniel De Leon, Baxley, GA; Jacob Keim, Eugene, OR; Kurt Lang, Harrisburg, OR; Pablo Martinez, Sherman Oaks, CA; Jose Perez, West Palm Beach, FL; Justo Perez Marroquin, Homestead, FL; Neftaly Perez Marroquin, Homestead, FL; Rebeca Ramirez, Los Lunas, NM; Luis Rodriguez, McAllen, TX; Jesus Velazquez, Lakeland, FL; Michael Wallace, Florence, MT.

** Dean's List recipients earn eight credits per quarter with a minimum 3.5 GPA.*

Leading Like Jesus

Close to 100 showed up for the Leadership Forum on Sunday, August 17. Conducted virtually once per quarter, the forum's purpose is to provide fresh content for leadership development at a grassroots level. This session focused on the Lead Like Jesus leadership model, designed to align the four domains of leadership: Heart, Head, Hands, and Habits, as demonstrated in the life of Jesus. The presentation by Whaid Rose was recorded and is available at *center.artioscollege.org/artios-resources.*

The next forum is scheduled for November 2 at 2:00 p.m. (EST) under the theme "Profiles in Leadership: How God Shapes Spiritual Leaders." The session will be devoted to probing the lives of notable leaders in both Scripture and contemporary life for heart-shaping patterns and principles. Join via Zoom at *https://rb.gy/uit5ut.*

The Leadership Forum is a collaborative venture of the Artios Center and the International Federation's Zone 1.

THE ARTIOS CENTER FOR VIBRANT LEADERSHIP

Calendar Events

October 27 - Late Fall registration closes
November 2 - Late Fall classes begin

Late Fall Classes

COM 121 Written Communication for Leadership
LEA 111 Essentials of Vibrant Leadership*
THE 202 Church of God (Seventh Day) Doctrine
WOA 301 Worship Arts*

* *Course with limited audit availability*
Register at *https://my.artioscollege.org/en/courses.*

GC Elders Questionnaire

If you are listed in the NAMC directory of the Church of God (Seventh Day) as a minister, local pastor, leader, or congregation contact, you should have received an email from the General Conference regarding the Elders Questionnaire.

This brief form helps us identify elders serving in your local church. As stated in our bylaws, elders provide essential spiritual oversight, care, and leadership (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-3), and their faithful service is vital to the health of the Church.

If you haven't received the email, or if you have questions, please contact Daniel Flores at *daniel.flores@cog7.org.*

In 2026, our Bible Studies for Adults series, Portraits of Jesus, will study the four Gospels. And the BA will come alongside those with the "Story of Jesus" theme to cover our six issues. We will study what it means to follow Jesus as Savior and Lord and recommit ourselves to our high calling and the worship it releases.

Join us on this journey! Review themes for individual issues at *baonline.org* (About/Write For Us), then send your article submissions to *jason.overman@cog7.org.*

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Ministerial Council of Mexico: Serving with the Attitude of Christ

July 27 - August 2, we represented the United States as observers at the Ministerial Council of Mexico, alongside delegates from Guatemala, Honduras, and England. More than 400 gathered for business sessions, devotionals, and meaningful fellowship.

Among the many highlights were meetings with representatives from Districts 3 and 4 and the Executive Council — moments that deepened relationships. Daniel Flores, NAMC president, delivered a letter from Greg Lincoln, president of the Church of God (Seventh Day), which was warmly received and appreciated.

Each morning the Council began with powerful devotionals and heartfelt contributions that renewed our courage and commitment to serve with the attitude of Christ.

A significant administrative change was also adopted: the restructuring of districts, reducing the number from seventeen to seven. We pray that God will continue to guide and bless the Church in Mexico as it embraces this new chapter.

We returned with hearts full of gratitude to God, strengthened by new friendships and encouraged by the certainty that His work continues across the globe.

Daniel Flores, NAMC President
Elder Francisco Javier Ramirez

The International Federation

Conference representatives (presidents) and Federation zone representatives will meet via Zoom on December 3.

Please pray for this important session.

One Mission . . .

to reach out through training and literature to people around the world.

ARTIOS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Bible Advocate Press

GC | MISSIONS
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