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## By Faith

The phrase *by faith* occurs eighteen times in Hebrews chapter 11, often referred to as the Hall of Faith. There we read the stories of the heroes of the faith – men and women who sacrificed the pleasures and comforts of this age, and often much more, for the promise of a better country, a better resurrection, and a better tomorrow. Yes, by faith, they waited for that city whose designer and maker is God (Hebrews 11:10).

Faith is the preeminent call in Scripture, the foundational principle that every other call of God rests on. From the beginning, as Adam and Eve stood before life and death, to the last days proclamation of the everlasting gospel (Romans 10:9; Revelation 14:6), the call of God to the heart of every person is – *believe!*

Faith, in short, is trusting God. Yes, faith is taking God at His word. And without faith, as Hebrews 11:6 states, “it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (NKJV throughout).

While the call to faith is clear, living it out is not always easy. Individually and corporately, we often fail to hold with confidence all that God says He will do. We see this struggle in the Eleven as Jesus, post-resurrection, “rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart” (Mark 16:14).

The challenge before the church is to believe all that God has promised. When we ask for wisdom, we need to believe we will receive (James 1:6). When we go out into our communities, we need to believe Jesus walks with us (Matthew 28:20). When we organize a Bible study, we need to believe God will open the hearts of those who hear (Acts 16:14). When we share the good news, we need to have faith that the Holy Spirit will work, calling and convicting the souls of those who hear (John 16:8). And when we pray – yes, when we pray – we need to believe that God is hearing and moving (Mark 11:24).

In all we do, from youth camps to Super Sabbaths, the Church must mix her work with faith – great faith – that our God is able, faithful, and sure to empower and bless us to bear fruit for His kingdom and for His glory. This is His promise (John 15:16). By faith, it will be so!

– Greg Lincoln  
GC President



## District News

### Central

Contributor: Ronald Rousseau, Superintendent



**Promoting worship.** There is a spiritually motivated initiative regarding worship in the church. In that vein, the Central District started a ministry focused on promoting worship, led by Brother Noe Damas of the CoG7 Damen church in Chicago. As Central District worship coordinator, he is visiting congregations and sharing his knowledge on worship. After one of his visits, the worship team at the Aurora church in the Denver area (pictured) is on fire for Jesus! We have a great activity planned for this year (more details to follow).

### Southeast

Contributor: Walter Apen



#### Thank You, Elder Krome!

The Southeast District has been blessed by the service of Elder Steve Krome as superintendent for 17 years. We recognize his dedication and express our gratitude for his faithful service, providing unity and leadership to the pastors of the district.

The churches in the Southeast District convened on January 17 in Jacksonville, Florida, for an official expression of gratitude for Elder Krome's work. The event included praise led by Lakeland, Florida, and featured a sermon of spiritual support from Executive Director Daniel Flores. In the afternoon, GC President Greg Lincoln delivered a sermon with a message of continuity and encouragement for the work of the gospel. These men also recognized the service of Elder Krome and his wife, Jo Allison, and presented them with a plaque on behalf of the General Conference.

Approximately 300 people attended the event, including superintendents from the other districts, GC Board Chairman Dennis O'Banion, and GC Director of Communications Jamin Teran.

### Southwest

Contributors: Maria Beard and Victoria (Tory) Capetillo, SWD Media Ministry Director



**Couples reunion.** On February 14, Eduardo and Socorro Villalba hosted a Couples Reunion at the El Paso church.

Couples enjoyed a meaningful time of fellowship, encouragement through the Word of God, and a delicious dinner. The evening provided an opportunity for couples to connect, reflect, and strengthen their relationships in a warm and welcoming environment.

#### Worship Getaway

The SWD Young Adults Ministry hosted its fourth Worship Getaway December 26-29 at Lake Brownwood Christian Retreat. Many young adults from our district attended with friends from California, North Dakota, New York, Oregon, Washington, Alabama, and others!

The weekend theme, "Burning Bush," explored many "burning bush" moments throughout Scripture – from the story of Moses to Elijah and the whisper in the wind, to Jesus and the Samaritan woman, to



Paul on the road to Damascus, and many more. We also reflected on our personal lives and “burning” moments where God sought an encounter with us.

Through the Word, workshops, and worship, we learned that God is always working around us. He pursues a loving relationship with us and wants us to work with Him and experience Him in our lives.

*words, and actions through obeying His Word. The weekend featured impactful messages, workshops, and youth-led worship, addressing topics like guarding the mind, living sacrificially, and applying God’s truth in daily life.*



**Super Sabbath.** On January 31, brethren gathered at Treviño Church of God in Austin, TX, for a Super Sabbath. The day was centered on the theme “The Worshipping Church – Created, Redeemed, and Gathered for Worship.” Greg Lincoln, GC president, and Daniel Flores, executive director, shared encouraging messages during both English and Spanish services. We experienced uplifting worship, biblical teaching, and sweet fellowship as we united in praise to God.



Photo by Sofia Barrientos

**Pastor installation.** The church in McAllen, TX, gathered on January 24 to celebrate the installation of Brother Daniel Barrera Solano as pastor. The occasion was marked by prayer, encouragement, and a shared commitment to support his ministry and leadership. We thank all who attended and contributed to making this service a blessing.

### SWD Upcoming Events

May 22-24 - SWD Children’s Camp

### West Coast

Contributors: Josue Aleman and Aaron Carbajal, WCD Media Ministry Director



**Youth winter retreat.** The Southwest District Winter Retreat was held December 25-28 at Dover Camp in Oklahoma, bringing together 54 youth and staff from 14 churches across five states. Centered on the theme “Echo My God” (James 1:22), the retreat encouraged youth to reflect God in their thoughts,



### Ministering to Couples

A marriage workshop, organized by the Las Vegas Marriage Ministry in collaboration with the CoG7 Las Vegas, Nevada (United in Christ), took place January 23-24 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Approximately 70 couples came from different states, including California, Arizona, and Utah.

During the workshop, couples shared special moments of fellowship and communion, in addition to participating in sessions focused on strengthening

marriage. These uplifting sessions, led by Brother Joel Pachuca and Sister Eva Escamilla, left a deep desire in each couple to place Christ Jesus at the center of their married lives.

The experience concluded in an atmosphere of joy and spiritual renewal.



### Anointing Elders

On January 31, the 71st Street congregation in Sacramento, California, celebrated a landmark moment in their history: confirming Josue Aleman’s and Abraham Frausto’s call to eldership with the laying on of hands and anointing before the congregation.

The anointing by Superintendent Larry Zaragoza and Pastor Daniel Aleman was a moment of solemn worship and joy for the entire church family.

This event reflects the commitment to a biblical model of spiritual leadership in the local congregation. Like many of their sister congregations throughout the Conference, the 71st Street church had voted brethren into elder positions for a given term, much like board members.

Over the last few years, the local church began to notice the service and support Josue and Abraham provided Pastor Daniel in shepherding the congregation. At the 2025 GC Convention in Utah, Elder Whaid Rose’s workshop “Getting Eldership Right” helped the church see that Josue and Abraham had been serving as elders for several years. After convention, the local congregation seriously considered the nature of the call to eldership as one from God by appointment instead of by election.

With much joy, Brothers Aleman and Frausto now step into that calling with a clear purpose: to support Pastor Daniel Aleman in shepherding the 71st Street church – preaching, teaching, providing spiritual direction, anointing and laying hands on the sick.

This moment was a reminder that the Holy Spirit is still at work in the Church, shaping and directing it, returning it to the truth of God’s Word.

– Josue Aleman



### Young Adult Gathering

At our young adult service on February 7, hosted by the 71st Street church in Sacramento, about 60 young adults attended from congregations across Northern California. It was a powerful time.

Our theme was “Getting Up After a Fall.” We often talk about faith as a steady climb, but if we’re honest, it usually looks more like tripping, stumbling, and finding the strength to stand up again.

Reading from Proverbs 16:18, Brother Chuy Manso shared that while it’s easy to get up when we stumble, it’s not so easy when our pride is the cause of our fall. In moments like this, we’re reminded that faith isn’t about never falling; it’s about trusting God to meet us where we are and lift us back up (Psalm 145:14).

So many young adults were encouraged and connected with others. They were reminded that no one walks this journey alone.

We left the service strengthened and ready to keep moving forward *together*. We look forward to more young adult events!

– Josue Aleman

### WCD Upcoming Events

**May 22-24** - Men’s Retreat, Oakhurst, CA:  
“Epic Friends”

**June 12-14** - Women’s Retreat, Oakhurst, CA:  
“Beauty for Ashes”

**September 16-20** - Adult Senior Retreat,  
Sis-Q Meadows, Cave Junction, OR

### Eastern Canada

Contributor: Carmen Mejia

**Pastor ordination.** On January 31, Isai Urizar was ordained as pastor of the church in Laval, QC, Canada.

Pastor Aubrey Williams performed the ordination. He is pictured here with Isai and his wife, Carmen, with their children Lorelei, Lukas, and Ilyana.





## Winter is Waning

Planning for our Biennial Convention makes its way through the seasons.

Fall encapsulates the beauty of enjoying memories and celebrating successes, the bittersweet glow of embers fading yet faintly burning.

Winter puts convention behind as we settle into family routines and local church ministry patterns. Attention is rightly planted elsewhere, and thoughts of our gathering hibernate under the snow of concealment. New visions and dreams bide their time, waiting for the spring rains to stir.

Spring kicks off the vision and planning for a new convention to come! Ideas germinate, excitement sprouts, and life is infused into the details. Assignments are filled, sessions are planned, and opportunities for connection are faithfully fertilized.

Summer arrives, and the gathering of the family of God is in full bloom! Ah, the moments we have been waiting for. The Spirit of unity is present and moving among us as we share in the camaraderie and love, as if we had never been absent. What a divine picture of the coming day of the Lord, with eternity in tow!

The silly groundhog may have predicted more snow, but winter is waning, my friends. Planning for our 2027 Convention is morphing into spring, and we invite you to begin dreaming with us about our approaching time together. Fill this long season of spring with growing anticipation and move with us to our summer culmination.

Summer will last but a short week of beautiful gathering, yet don't despair: Participate with us in the long spring season when your plans and ours move ever more quickly and decisively toward their goal. The journey is before us, and our destination faithfully awaits!

Water the seeds of prayer as we seek God's mighty move among us. Call into bloom the excitement of joining a thousand voices worshipping – the beautiful foreshadowing of millions who will gather with the elders before the throne of the Ancient of Days. Let the springs of hope begin to gush as we dream of shared time together that will refresh our souls and renew our faith.

General Conference 2027 (June 28 - July 3) in Greensboro, North Carolina, awaits, and spring is on the horizon. Summer may be more than a calendar year away, but the time will fly. Plan now to share in these precious moments with us. The warmth of summer is quickly approaching!

– GC Convention Program Committee



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Editor: Sherri Langton

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Back row (L to R): Jerad Ullrich, Wayne Hrenyk, Tim Endecott, Ruben Beard, Robert Grabinsky, Raul Romo, Samuel Holland, Neftali Hernandez, Ron Cummings, Ramon Ruiz Garza. Front row (L to R): Dennis O'Banion, Greg Lincoln, Daniel Flores. Not pictured: Reuben Zaragoza.

# Annual Board of Directors Meeting

The board of directors met February 15-18 at the Marriott at Gateway Park in Aurora, Colorado, for its annual meeting. The event included prudent financial oversight, strategic financial planning, GC Ministries/Departments updates, convention leadership changes, leadership affirmations, and other work.

**Financial oversight.** The 2026-2027 budget was reviewed and approved.

**Financial planning.** A special financial report was received from Edward Jones Investments, providing insight into current investment performance and positioning. A new Artios Endowment Fund was officially established to strengthen long-term ministry sustainability. Stay tuned for more exciting details. Also, an Endowment Committee report was given by Treasurer Neftali Hernandez, a member of the committee.

**GC Ministries/Departments.** The board heard presentations, directly or indirectly from Missions, Artios, Publications, Communications, and Information Technology. These reports highlighted ongoing impact and future opportunities. (An update was also given on the International Federation.)

**Convention leadership.** Kurt and Kristi Lang were appointed as co-chairs for the 2027 Convention and will begin assembling their leadership team. We praise God for their willingness to serve and the expertise they bring to their positions.

**Leadership affirmations.** Biennial appointments

made by GC President Greg Lincoln were affirmed by the board of directors in the Southwest District (Chip Hinds), Northeast District (Rex Miller), Southeast District (Walter Apen), Eastern Canada (Aubrey Williams), and Western Canada (Orville Rose). Ministry director appointments were affirmed in Publications (Co-Directors Jason Overman and Keith Michalak) and Artios (Co-Directors Makayla Ross and Brian Franks).

**Presidential evaluation.** The president's vision, goals, and overall performance were evaluated. In keeping with governance structure, the president is accountable to the board for all activities within the districts, GC Ministries, and GC departments. This evaluation process reinforces transparency, accountability, and a shared strategic alignment.

**Fellowship.** The board conducted a special visit to the Denver offices and shared a luncheon with staff, strengthening relational connection among the president, executive director, board of directors, and office staff.

**Worship.** The board enjoyed worship at the English and Spanish church on Sabbath.

As is customary, each day included dedicated time for prayer and the ministry of the Word of God, ensuring that all deliberations were grounded in spiritual discernment.

– Dennis O'Banion, Chairman  
Board of Directors

## Early Winter 2026 Graduates

William Aba - Associate of Christian Leadership (Pastoral Ministry), Summa Cum Laude • Jose Barrientos - Certificate of Leadership Studies • Abraham Benavides - Associate of Christian Leadership (Pastoral Ministry), Cum Laude • Emanuel Huerta-Paz - Certificate of Leadership Studies • Richard Palmer - Associate of Christian Leadership (Pastoral Ministry).

## Let's Catch Up!

Wondering what we've been up to? Check out our newsletter at [artioscollege.org/newsletter](https://artioscollege.org/newsletter) where we highlight what happened in 2025. While you're there, don't forget to subscribe to receive it in your inbox a couple of times a year so you don't miss out on the latest news, encouragement, and celebration!



## Introducing Online Conversations

Join Artios Center Dean Whaid Rose and featured guests for a series of invigorating conversations on the second Thursday every other month. The series launched on March 12 with a conversation about artificial intelligence (if you missed it, you can register to watch the recording). The second conversation in the series, Lowering the Stigma on Mental Health, will be on Thursday, May 14.



Learn more and register at [my.artioscollege.org/en/resources](https://my.artioscollege.org/en/resources).



## Scholarship

Do you know about a scholarship just for our CoG7 students outside of the US and Canada? The CoG7 International Scholarship assists students beyond the US/Canadian General Conference whose local church or national conference is affiliated with the Church of God (Seventh Day) International Federation. The scholarship provides up to 100 percent tuition for the duration of their academic program.

Learn more and access the application at [artioscollege.org/sponsorship](https://artioscollege.org/sponsorship).

We need partners to help fund this special scholarship. If you have a heart for helping our international brothers and sisters, consider this opportunity to assist them in receiving the training they crave. Donate at [artioscollege.org/give](https://artioscollege.org/give). Be sure to designate your donation "Artios - Scholarship Fund."



## Interested in Auditing?

Auditing is now available for select online courses! See Calendar Events, below, for courses with auditing seats available. To view all audit courses for the 2025-2026 school year, see the Course Schedule at <https://my.artioscollege.org/en/catalog/current/academic-calendar>.

Learn more about auditing at [my.artioscollege.org/en/catalog/current/academic-policies#auditing](https://my.artioscollege.org/en/catalog/current/academic-policies#auditing). To audit a course, register at [my.artioscollege.org/en/courses](https://my.artioscollege.org/en/courses).



## Calendar Events

- March 30** - Early Spring registration closes
- April 5** - Early Spring classes begin
- May 11** - Late Spring registration closes
- May 17** - Late Spring classes begin

### Early Spring Classes

- BIS 104 History and Literature of the New Testament\*
- COM 121 Written Communication for Leadership
- LEA 331 Church Administration
- WOA 311 Prayer Ministry


### Late Spring Classes

- CHE 301 Administration of Christian Education
- COM 121 Written Communication for Leadership
- LEA 111 Essentials of Vibrant Leadership\*
- PSY 311 The Church and Mental Health\*

\*Course with limited audit availability.

Register at [my.artioscollege.org/en/courses](https://my.artioscollege.org/en/courses).






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