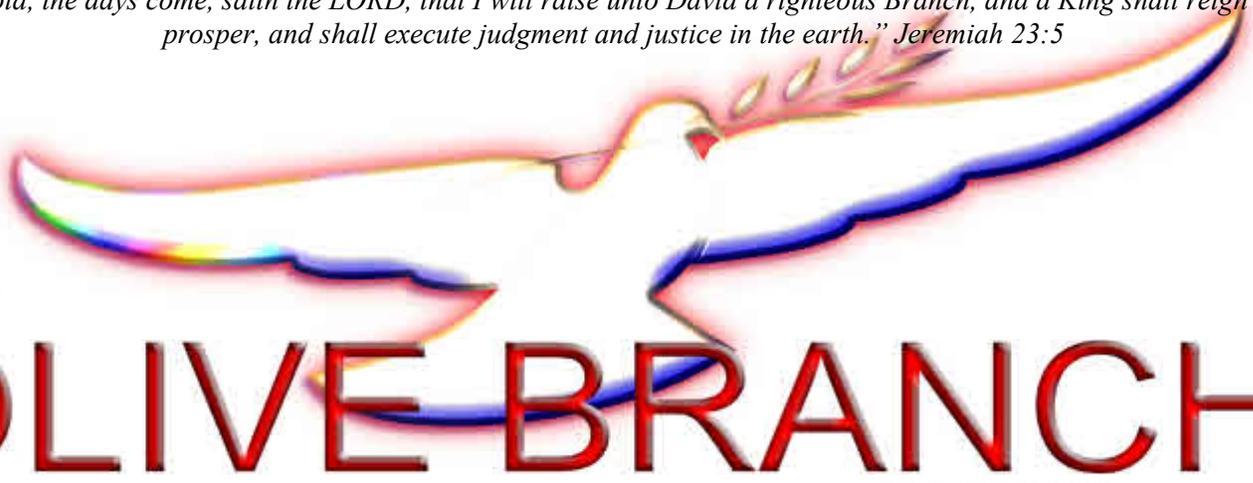


“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” Jeremiah 23:5



# the OLIVE BRANCH

JUNE-JULY 2007

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A publication of  
The Church of God  
Northeast Region

## Preparing God’s People: Part 4

**T**his series of messages opened by considering the admonition in 1 Peter 4:17-18:

- (17) *For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*
- (18) *And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*

We have seen that judgment can carry the connotation of a remedy being applied to correct what is deficient or lacking (2 Chronicles 29-30). Judgment also can mean God’s wrath poured out upon those who have often hardened their hearts toward Him and continually spurned His calling and pleading (2 Kings 17-18).

Hezekiah’s kingdom serves as a *type and shadow* of the last days total restoration of God’s plan — the Church, and of the inflow that will occur. The sudden

end of Israel, the northern kingdom, during that time demonstrates the Lord’s door of mercy being closed on those who have



*Regional Overseer  
James Smith*

continually rejected Him, just as surely as God closed the door of Noah’s ark so that none could go in or out (Genesis 7:16).

The same Sennacherib, king of Assyria, whose armies invaded and destroyed Israel in 2 Chronicles 32 now sets his ambitions on Hezekiah and the southern kingdom of Judah to plunder it just as he had the northern kingdom. To him, the

OVERSEER continued on page 7

# Welcome to the Northeast Region



A pastor and congregation at Ford City, PA and a single member at Karns City, PA were added to The Church of God Northeast Region in April.

The Ford City church was organized April 15 and now has 11 members. Ten were formerly members of The Church of God of Prophecy. One is new to the Church covenant. The Ford City pastor is Bro. Wendell Flick and the clerk/treasurer is Sis. Arlene Sturgill. The church is located at 547 Neal Ave., Ford City, PA 16226.

At the beginning of April, Bro. Bill Flick renewed his covenant to become a member of the Karns City, PA church. He was a long-time deacon in The Church of God of Prophecy.



**Top:** the exterior of the new Church of God at Ford City, PA

**Middle:** Regional Overseer James Smith (far left) and Karns City, PA Pastor Thomas Kelley (far right) with new Ford City members. They are (left to right) Bro. Raymond Flick, Sis. Shirley Flick, Sis. Moss Flick, Bro. Wesley Flick, Sis. Joan Flick, Pastor Wendell Flick, Sis. Lizzie Bowser, Sis. Mary Louise Aites Coon, Bro. Harold Fennel and Bro. Wendell Burdett. Not pictured is Clerk/Treasurer Arlene Sturgill.

**Bottom:** Bro. Bill Flick (right) renews his covenant with Karns City Pastor Thomas Kelley to become a member of that western Pennsylvania church.

To His band of followers, Jesus promised another Comforter who would never leave them. The time for His departure was approaching, and it was necessary that these believers in a new and living way would receive assurance for the days ahead, when Jesus would not be available for daily consultation. So, He said to them, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." John 14:16. His prayer was answered on the Day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2:2-4.

*And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

They would never be the same again following the Day of Pentecost. The reaction of these 120 disciples to this overwhelming experience

# WMB



2006-07 Theme:  
Work while it is day  
... Behold the  
Bridegroom cometh.



*WMB Coordinator  
Peggy Fordyce*

caused some to mistake them as being drunken.

Subsequent events would prove that it was, instead, a super empowering for a super endeavor – carrying the message of Christ to a world under Satan's dominion. But all his devices would be no match for the empowering that came upon the Church on this memorable day. The boldness with which they would execute the Commission they had been given would amaze their critics. They would hardly have been recognizable as the same ones who forsook Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane some 50 days earlier. A power

had come into their lives which made them different.

The Church today must operate with the same power to finish the Great Commission. Although we are having good reports coming in from all over the world of souls being saved and churches being organized, many souls have yet to be reached.

Do your part to help: Don't forget items for the General Assembly missions table and donations to the Missionary Partnership Alliance and Coins for Missions.

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## CONTACT US

*The Olive Branch* is a publication of The Church of God Northeast Region, which serves churches in Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania and new works throughout the greater area. It can be viewed online at <http://www.tcog-ne.org>.

**Reports and other submissions for the August-September issue must be received by July 1. Please note the assistant editor's new address and phone.**

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-----Meeting Philadelphia-----

# On the home front

**H**aving church in a home has its special challenges and blessings -- and sometimes it's hard to tell which are which.

Sis. Dolly Nathan, assistant pastor of the Philadelphia Church of God, noted that her children and others who



*Members and attendees of the Philadelphia church at the home of Ana Santiago*

attend twice weekly services at her mother's home often have a little more in mind than sitting and listening. There are potential snacks in Sis. Ana Santiago's kitchen, after all.

And it's not every church that has a dog to provide a last word to the benediction. "At the end of service we always say, 'And The Church of God says 'amen,'" Sis. Nathan said with a laugh. "My mom's dog always goes, 'ruff, ruff.' I guess he's excited that it's over."

It's all OK with Sis. Nathan and as many as nine attendees, however. "Sometimes it gets a little lonely," she said. "But the Lord has always been faithful to us and we feel His joy. It feels really good now."

Philadelphia is Sis. Nathan's first church. She is licensed as a lay minister, but feels the call to pursue a full license at some point in the future. For now, she serves as assistant pastor,

conducting services and handling many ministerial duties. Bro. Ernest Miller, district overseer for eastern Pennsylvania, officially serves as pastor. He visits the home church

to conduct its business meetings and assist with some services.

"I'm learning," Sis. Nathan said of her early ministerial experience. "I'm continuing to grow so I can be a better vessel for God."

Sis. Nathan is married to Gregory Nathan. They have three children: Ivy, 7, Victoria, 5 and Jacob, nine months.

Philadelphia has another distinction in the region in addition to being home based. It is its only bi-lingual church. Most of the services are conducted in English, but because Sis. Nathan and several attendees are Hispanic, some singing is done in Spanish.

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## *A word from Philadelphia's assistant pastor*

*Greetings and salutations to my brothers and sisters in The Church of God; our prayers are always with you and your families.*



*Assistant Pastor Dolly Nathan*

*The Church of God at Philadelphia, PA continues in the faith under the direct guidance of Pastor Ernest Miller, whose love of God abounds. We are a small church of four members and two continuing visitors. We do not have a building but we have home services every Friday and Sunday, which allows us to continue serving Jesus.*

*Please continue praying for the church so that, by God's will, we can continue to grow. Also, keep Sis. Ana Santiago in prayer and supplication for the healing power of Jesus's blood. We love you all and hope to see you soon.*

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## Youth Camp 2007: *Following Jesus*

**Who can go?** Any youth is eligible to attend as long as he or she agrees to abide by camp rules, including a dress code of no shorts, tank tops or T-shirts with profane words or pictures. Girls will also need to wear dresses or skirts and tops with sleeves to evening services.

**What is the camp about?** This year's camp theme is "Following Jesus." It will be developed through daytime classes and evening services. There will also be plenty of time for on-site recreation.

**When is it?** 2 p.m. July 30-3 p.m. Aug. 3

**Where is it?** Camp Bucoco, near Butler, PA, north of Pittsburgh, PA off I-79,

**How much does it cost?** Camp is \$65 per camper:

--a \$10 deposit is required with application; it is refundable for cancellations received at least one week prior to camp's start

-- a late fee of \$5 may be charged for applications received after July 20

**How can I apply?** Applications are available at local churches throughout the region; and online at <http://www.tcog-ne.org/documents/Youth-Camp-Application-2007.pdf>. Mail to Camp Coordinator Alma Kelley, P.O. Box 102, Karns City, PA 16041

**Are workers still needed?** Yes. Contact Sis. Kelley at (724) 756-8841.



## Regional Convention

July 13-15, 2007

1089 Old Pittsburgh Rd.  
Uniontown, PA

**Plan now to attend**

*Why We Can't Wait*

Guest Representative:  
Clive Jared, Overseer of VA & WV



*Above: Clive Jared and Ovella Jared, his wife.*

### Where Can One Stay?

#### **Fairfield Inn**

283 MC Clelland Town Road  
Uniontown, PA 15401  
(724) 434-1800  
<http://www.fairfieldinn.com>

#### **Hampton Inn**

698 W. Main Street  
Uniontown, PA 15401  
(724) 430-1000  
<http://www.hamptoninn.com>

#### **Holiday Inn**

700 W Main St  
Uniontown, PA 15401  
(724) 437-2816  
(800) 258-7238 (toll-free)  
<http://www.uniontownpa.holiday-inn.com>

#### **Super 8 Motel**

701 West Main St.  
Uniontown, PA 15401  
(724) 425-0261  
<http://www.super8.com>

## OVERSEER

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two kingdom's "were cut from the same cloth," as the saying goes. Let's look at 2 Chronicles 32:10,13:

*(10) Thus saith Sennacherib king of Assyria, Whereon do ye trust, that ye abide in the siege in Jerusalem?*

*(13) Know ye not what I and my fathers have done unto all the people of other lands? were the gods of the nations of those lands any ways able to deliver their lands out of mine hand?*

Today, many outsiders (and insiders, too) similarly view all who "nameth the name of Christ" as "cut from the same cloth." But they are sadly mistaken. In 2 Timothy 2:19-21, the Bible confronts this misconception:

*(19) Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.*

*(20) But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor.*

*(21) If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work.*

Thus, we come to the third element of *judgment* — that of *separation* and *purging*. We think of the Lord's description in Matthew 25:32-33:

*(32) And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:*

*(33) And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.*

We think of this passage as referring to individuals, but it clearly says "nations." Under Hezekiah, the Lord had prepared

the "holy nation" of Judah, while Israel typified everything corruptible and contemptible before the Lord. We have seen the fate of the wicked nation of Israel; now we behold God's deliverance of His people.

Hezekiah and Judah did much in behalf of its own defense. He fortified the walls of the city, and turned all the water for Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 32:2-5). So likewise, we must prepare for the battle before us (Ephesians 6). But Hezekiah's real trust was in the God whom Judah served, as seen in 2 Chronicles 32:6-8:

*(6) And he set captains of war over the people, and gathered them together to him in the street of the gate of the city, and spoke comfortably to them, saying,*

*(7) Be strong and courageous, be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him:*

*(8) With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the LORD our God to help us, and to fight our battles. And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.*

As a *type and shadow* of the Holy Ghost's ministry for our day, the prophet Isaiah, who was "God's man of the hour," took the supplications of Hezekiah and the people before God and returned His answer. God's response was short and sweet, Isaiah 37:6-7:

*(6) And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say unto your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words that thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.*

*(7) Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumor, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.*

In response to God's assurances, Sennacherib but raged the more (Isaiah 37:10-13)

against Judah. Now, Hezekiah makes a direct approach unto the Lord, Isaiah 37:15-17, 20:

*(15) And Hezekiah prayed unto the LORD, saying,*

*(16) O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.*

*(17) Incline thine ear, O LORD, and hear; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God. ...*

*(20) Now therefore, O LORD our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD, even thou only.*

We love to talk of how the Holy Ghost "maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Romans 8:26) But there are times when God would like to hear from us! To Hezekiah's prayer, God gave a mighty response (Isaiah 37:21-35). God always has the final say! His action left no room for any to question, "Was this really of God?"

*(35) For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.*

*(36) Then the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses.*

*(37) So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.*

Sennacherib had steam-rolled over all the nations of the region, except Judah, on which he finally turned his focus. Today, Satan is in the process of compromising and overthrowing all the *would-be* Christian (so they claim) movements throughout the world.

## OVERSEER

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Denominationalism is headed for total defeat by Satan before the Lord returns. The last great conflict then will be his direct assault on Christ and His Church – the only thing standing between him and total victory, when all outside the Church have fallen and we alone remain standing for the truth.

But, in the last days, God will again divinely intervene to deliver His people. Hebrews 9:28 tells us that “...unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” That “second time” when He shall appear is commonly referred to as the *Rapture*.

This type and shadow of God’s mighty deliverance is wonderful, but we must remember the people had to prepare – a preparation that began with the cleansing and restoration of God’s program. We, too, must be prepared.

We have often read 1 John 3:2: “*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*” We have so often emphasized His visual appearance, but what about the spiritual? Paul has described the preparation we need to be making in Philippians 3:10-15

*(10) That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;*

*(11) If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*

*(13) ... this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,*

*(14) I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

*(15) Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*

What are you doing to prepare for that battle? Paul, in 2 Thessalonians 1:4-12, contrasted the righteous judgment of God that counts us worthy...

*(4) ... all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure:*

*(5) Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, **that ye may be counted worthy** of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer:*

*(7) And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,*

...with the punishment (judgment) that will fall upon those do not obey the gospel

*(8) In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:*

*(9) Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;.*

Paul’s prayer was that we would so live for Christ as to be counted (judged) worthy:

*(11) Wherefore also we pray always for you, **that our God would count you worthy** of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power:*

*(12) That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Judgment* thus can also mean being *counted worthy* of His mercy and blessings – but only if we have prepared.

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## 2007 CALENDAR

**July 13-15** Northeast Regional Convention at the Uniontown, PA church

**July 30-Aug. 3** Youth Camp at Camp Bucoco near Pittsburgh, PA

**Aug. 27-Sept. 1** General Assembly in Cleveland, TN (*note time and place change from previous calendars*)



# Ladies Retreat 2007

About 30 women from around the region attended Ladies Retreat in early May at Camp Sunrise, Markleysburg, PA. Here are several photos of the event.

In other retreat news, Sis. Connie Wilson, guest evangelist from Virginia, thanked participants for their hospitality and love offering.

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*Top: Attendees pose for a group photo in the chapel.*

*Middle, left: Attendees, many of them from the Uniontown, PA church, enjoy pizza after evening service.*

*Middle, right: Sis. Josie Foley of Virginia is honored for her birthday by Sis. Peggy Fordyce, regional WMB and Ladies Retreat coordinator, left, and Sis. Connie Wilson, guest evangelist, right.*



*Bottom, left: Sis. Frances Leech, left, and Sis. Barbara Romano, right, both of the Monongahela, PA church, pray.*

*Bottom, right: Sis. Donna Pearce of the Grove City, PA church reads a scripture.*

## *Some final thoughts...*

In some parts of West Virginia, it is not uncommon for native sons and daughters to spend their lives on a certain mountain ridge or in a certain valley that pertains to their ancestors. Some individuals' love of their people and place runs so deep that, if they can't actually live out their days in their childhood home, they will at least live in sight of it. It is often said, quite accurately, that this is a state where residency is measured, not in years, but in generations.

My husband and I -- having been born on opposite coasts instead of in the Mountain State -- are a different kettle of fish. We are, in fact, preparing to move to what will be my 20th residence as I write this

column. He has moved even more times and we have both reached the stage where there is no place that feels like home. There are only a number of places where the surroundings are familiar and at least somewhat comfortable.

I say all this not to compare our across-

America experience with an all-West Virginia one. Both have their pros and cons. It's just that all this moving business has left me thinking about what it means to be a "stranger and pilgrim on this earth."

Found in Hebrews 11:13 and 1 Peter 2:11, those words were written in a time when most of the world's citizens lived and died in one place like so many



*Assistant Editor  
Nora Edinger*

native West Virginians still do. So, they can't have referred to geographic location, community involvement or any such natural thing. They, instead, refer to a spiritual condition of being in the world but not being a part of it's evil doings. The second reference, in fact, is accompanied by a warning to stay away from "fleshly lusts" that "war against" the soul.

That's an important perspective to keep in mind whether we're living on ancestral land or in yet another ZIP code. Homes come, homes go -- even the old home place. To Christians, it really shouldn't matter.

We should instead focus on doing all the good we can for God in whatever spot we find ourselves until that day when we enter the place that Jesus has prepared for us. That truly will be a home, sweet home.

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