



# NORTHWEST CHURCH OF GOD

September 15, 2019

## HOME COMING 2019



We come together today to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of *Northwest Church of God*. *WELCOME* to all of our past ministers and their families, as well as past and current members of our congregation. Our hope is that this be a celebration of an era of praising God and spreading His Word, and that it invigorate us for what God has in the future for our church.

On October 7, 1979, the *Northwest Church of God* was dedicated to God's service. It has been a time of growth and regression, of joy and sadness, of peace and change. As in everyone's life, all things change. We are so grateful for all the wonderful gifts that God has bestowed upon us. When I was a child, I remember going to our church's homecoming celebration. There was so much food, family and friends, and celebrating of the lives of those who had built that church and paved the way for us to have a place to worship God. Paul talked about the discipline of looking back in Romans 15:4-6.

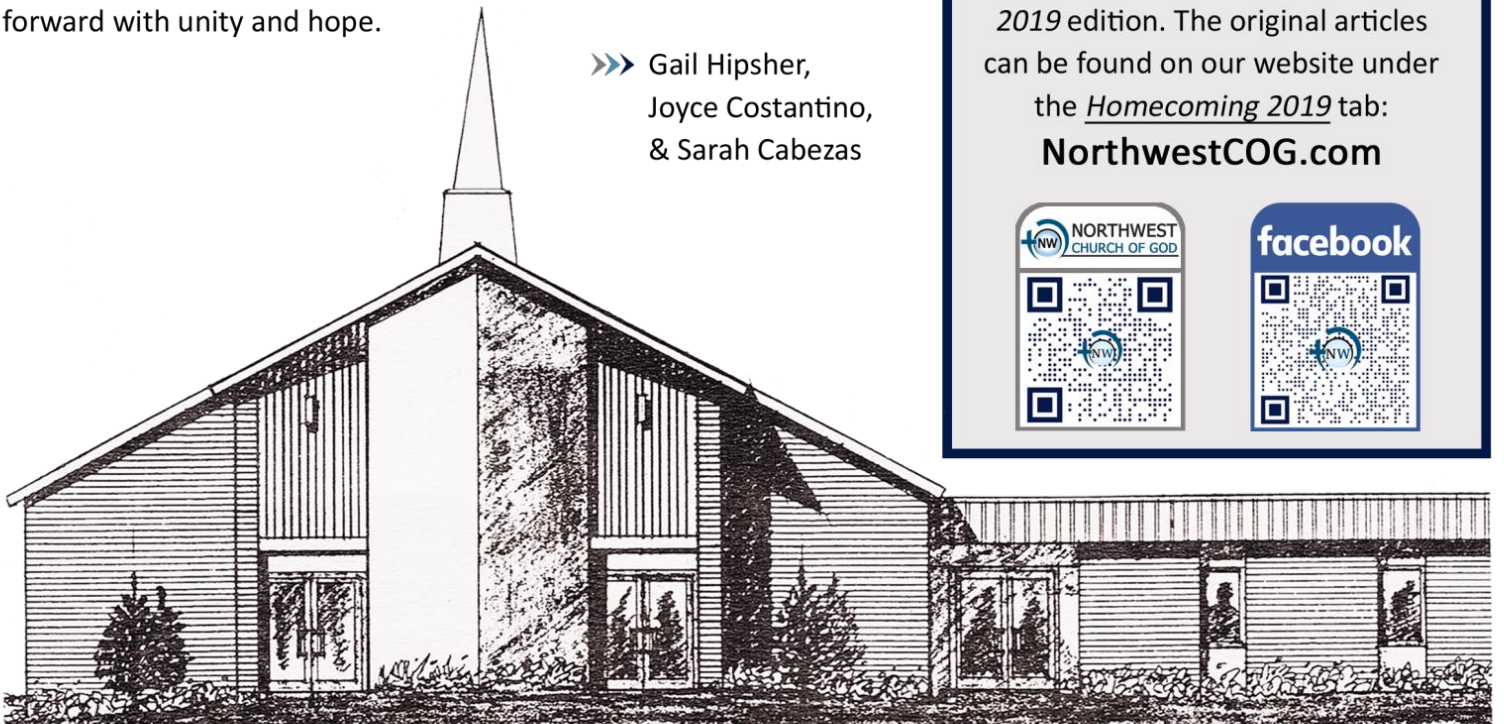
*"For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Today as we gather, we look back over these last 40 years to learn, to gain endurance and encouragement, and so that we can look forward with unity and hope.

»» Gail Hipsher,  
Joyce Costantino,  
& Sarah Cabezas



As we began to plan this day's celebration over the last year, several articles were written in our monthly newsletter, *The Trumpeter*, about the ministers who have shepherded our congregation. We have taken those articles and combined them here, with some editing, in this special *Homecoming 2019* edition. The original articles can be found on our website under the [Homecoming 2019](#) tab: **NorthwestCOG.com**





# HOMECOMING 2019

## 1965-1991



When Pastor Robert Johnson and Northwest Church of God purchased the property where the church now sits, his wish was that everyone who passed by could see the church. Unfortunately, he found that the property housed an old quarry. He was so afraid he had failed his congregation. He came every day to walk the property and pray that he had made the right decision.

Work began and Pastor Johnson was there to oversee the progress that was being made. One day he called his wife, Marie, and told her work had stopped. There was a huge rock in the way and it could not be moved. The contractor had brought

..... Matthew 17:20 .....  
..... *"Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."* .....

in the biggest piece of equipment he had, but nothing was working. It would not be moved! Sister Johnson told them to hold on, she would call him back. She got on her knees and prayed, crying out to God. Then she called Brother Johnson back saying, "Tell that man to move that rock. It's going to pop right out of there like a peanut out of its shell!"

The man did as she said and Sister Johnson kept praying. About 30 minutes later, Pastor Johnson called to say that rock popped right out of the ground just like she said it would!

Brother and Sister Johnson led Northwest Church of God for over 26 years, until Brother Robert developed Alzheimer's. Their faith in God was the backbone of their ministry.



*"Pastor Johnson was an excellent leader and a great man of God. He was the whole ball of wax one would desire in a minister. His wife, Marie, was a prayer warrior in every sense of the word."*

»»» by Wanda Bowling

*"Pastor Green was a real people person. He related well to the congregation, was a great administrator, and built the Family Life Center (FLC) during his time at Northwest Church of God."*

»»» by Frankie Hipsher

*"Pastor Wilson was a wonderful pastor. Any time you asked how he was, he always replied, 'Simply marvelous!' He was always there when anyone needed him, day or night."*

»»» by Nelda Scott

## 1991-1999

Dewayne and Brenda Green came in 1991 bringing the joy of the Lord and an awesome music ministry. Brother and Sister Green were never seen without a smile on their faces and an uplifting spirit. Along with their children, Keith and Tina, the Greens lifted the congregation in song.

They sang as a quartet with Sister Brenda accompanying them on piano. A wonderful sense of love was felt through the church. The congregation grew to an average of 180 people in the services. A need to provide for the members began to emerge; Brenda began forming small groups for them. She started special meetings for girls and for boys, both men and women had their own ministries, along with the youth, and senior members. *Young at Heart* was organized with Sister Ginny Trent in charge. The adult ladies interacted with the youth in a *Little Sister* program. For the middle aged group, *The Joy Club* came into being. Brother Green spearheaded this mission to provide more room for the growing church, so the *Family Life Center* was built. A newsletter was published keeping the members in touch with the activities in the church.

The Greens are remembered as being "good people." When a member of the church had surgery, Pastor Green insisted she use his parking space next to the door until she recovered since there were no handicapped spaces. He was always living the Word with his heart and actions. They are truly a blessing for the people who know them.



# HOMECOMING 2019

## 1999-2003 <<<

In February of 1999, the State Overseer presented to the church a candidate to be the new minister, Mitchell Wilson, and with him was his wife Janie and their three children.

It was soon apparent that Brother Wilson was a man of great faith and an anointing that produced miracles and healing. His face was always covered with a warm and welcoming smile that was encouraging to all. He was always quick on the draw, and, try as one might, it was hard to get anything over on him. Humor and kindness were always with him. He loved working around the church, improving and repairing things as he could. Visiting shut-ins and those in the hospital were a much loved part of his responsibilities. Teaching was Sister Janie's vocation. She loved children and it

was clear she had that gift. Singing and playing the piano were two of her

many talents. Always ready to help when she could, we could always count on her. It was always evident that she was a source of love and encouragement for her husband.

While the Wilsons were at *Northwest Church of God*, the children's programs grew tremendously. The boys and girls had their own clubs and won many awards for their accomplishments. The Young at Heart group was very active and participated in numerous events.

A church library was formed at the request of a member, Sister McCall. Pastor was glad to help get that project going and it gave her great joy. She managed the library until her death.

Pastors Mitchell and Janie Wilson were a gift to our church. God truly smiled on us when He sent them our way. It was a very sad day for all of us when we found he was being moved to a church in west Tennessee. His last service in the church was to preside over the wedding of a young couple the same day he left to go to his new congregation.

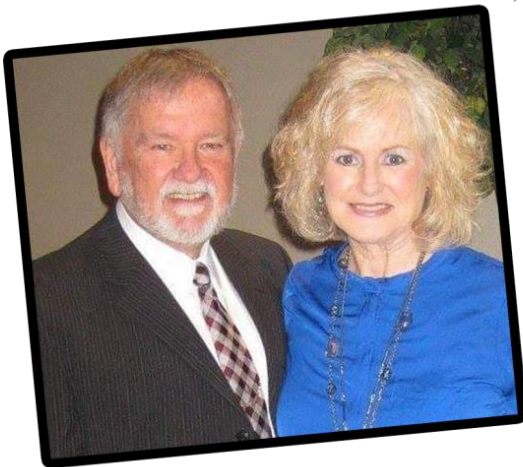


## >>> 2003-2007

Soon after the Wilsons left Northwest Church of God in 2003, Larry and Faithe Winters were welcomed to the church. They came to us with two children still at home, and two grown with their own families. Pastor Larry Winters was a very kind and friendly man, approachable and available for his congregants. We were blessed that both he and his wife were anointed to also lead our music ministry.

Pastor Winters has been described as a praying machine, a man with wonder working faith. Many healings took place during his tenure. A member of the congregation took a prayer cloth to her daughter who was in severe pain, and the moment she received it in her hand the pain stopped and has never returned in the years since!

During his time here, Pastor Winters once held a 40 day fast to pray for growth in the church. His leading the church through prayers, faith, and fasting brought it to where it is today, with our current pastor and congregation that believes in the power of prayer, and to a church that has grown, with children and youth who have received His love and know of His sacrifice to save us.



*"Pastor Winters was a dynamite prayer warrior and enjoyed praising the Lord in song."*

>>> by Frankie Hipsher

*"Pastor Kirkendall was a fine man, a great musician, and an excellent teacher."*

>>> by Mae phillips

*"Pastor Wilkinson has continued to follow in the prior pastors' footsteps. He has proven to be a very friendly and caring leader to every member of the church. He has brought the youth and children back to Northwest Church of God and he leads by example."*

>>> by Joyce Costantino



# HOMECOMING 2019



## 2007-2017

Jack and Miriam Kirkendall came to *Northwest Church of God* from Dayton, TN. They met while in Bible college and shared a strong faith in God. Music was a gift they shared with the church every Sunday, singing and playing the guitar.

Pastor Jack was very knowledgeable about the Bible and it showed in his teachings. His willingness to share that knowledge led to some great Wednesday night Bible study sessions, with lively conversation all around. He led by example, always willing to show up early, stay late, and engage everyone in each and every activity had at the church.

The following article appeared in the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, Saturday, Sept. 1, 1979:

### Congregation to Meet in New Church...With New Name

When the congregation of *Oakwood Church of God* meets for services at 11 a.m. Sunday, it will be in a new church with a new name.

The new church, *Northwest Church of God*, is at 5320 Pleasant Ridge Rd.

The \$300,000 facility is on five acres across from *Northwest Junior High School*. The sanctuary will seat 350 persons. The facility includes office space, a fellowship hall and an education wing with 11 Sunday school rooms. Another wing will be added later.

Rev. Robert F. Johnson, pastor for 14 years, said the name was changed because it is a new church. He said in the mid-1960s *Oakwood Church of God* merged with the *Burlington Church of God*.

"The new name and church shows we are starting as one congregation in a new church," he said.

Services will begin at 9:30 a.m. with Sunday school and worship at 11 a.m. and 7 pm. Dedication will be on Oct. 7.

## 2017-2019

Our current minister, Pastor John Wilkinson, has spent the last two years at *Northwest Church of God*. He came to us from *Sixth Avenue Church of God* and *Covenant Life Church*.

Jatina, his wife, and he have 3 great children: Emma, Nolan, and Adam. They have certainly been an answer to our prayers. At the time, our church attendance had dropped and we were in fear of losing the church or being combined with another. Prayers went up from every member of the congregation for God to shine His face upon us and bring us a man of God who would help move us on to where He wanted us to be.

Brother Bewley from the State office introduced Pastor John Wilkinson to us and after a few words, the message was clear – we had a new minister.

Pastor John has inspired us by example. If there is work to be done, he is in the midst of it. He seeks guidance from God and places himself with experienced ministers who are willing to assist him and lead him. Our church has thrived and continues to grow. We are so grateful for God's love!

