

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Church of God Big Sandy

ChurchofGodBigSandy.com

March 21, 2026 • 1:00 p.m. • Sunset 7:34

Bible studies

Interactive study—1:00 p.m. Dave Havir

Presentation study—2:00 Dave Havir
(also transmitted live)

Order of service—3:00 p.m.

Song leader Reg Killingley

Pianist Dixon Cartwright

Scripture reading Exodus 12:1–13

Sermon Mark Weiss

Quick takes

1. Dominoes tomorrow—Interested participants should contact Sue Jones.
2. Wednesday-night Bible study—March 25 at 7:00.
3. Traditional meal—If you are planning to attend the traditional meal in our building on Wednesday, April 1, please sign the list at the information table.
4. Edifying the Body—This week's article is "12 Arab and Islamic Countries Oppose 'Heinous' Iran Regime" by Ashley Carnahan.
5. Among Friends—This week's article is "A Season of Exciting Rituals" by Dave Havir.
6. Eye on the World—It was not complete at the bulletin deadline.

Prayer updates

Linda Moers reported that **Meg McAnally** is "still not awake" and is being transferred to Houston.

In the Feb. 28 bulletin, we mentioned that **Ronnie Shirley** was doing well following the surgery to remove a polyp. On Friday, March 13, Mr. Shirley went to a hospital due to “acute diarrhea.” After spending a few days in the hospital, he was moved to a rehabilitation portion of the hospital. He said that he has not had pain following the surgery, but his walking has been unsteady.

New prayer requests

On Wednesday, **Mark** and **Nina Searer** submitted the following prayer request for their daughter **Meghan Searer**: “Meghan has been fighting a lung infection for five weeks. During that time, there was improvement and then setbacks. She is currently at Christian Trinity Mother Francis Hospital in Tyler. Her blood turned septic, and she is taking IV antibiotics. There has been no damage to kidneys or liver.” On Friday, Nina Searer reported that her daughter needed the BiPAP machine for her to continue breathing. The BiPAP (which is stronger than a CPAP) forces more air to help Meghan’s breathing.

Sonia King (who lives in England) has been diagnosed with colorectal cancer.

Karel Wynn of Gladewater is dealing with a cough that has left her weak.

Shirley Ellison died on Jan 27. A memorial service is tomorrow in her church,

Spring feast days

1. Memorial on Tuesday evening—March 31, 7:30
 - Memorial of the suffering and death of our Lord
 - Christ, our Passover—1 Corinthians 5:7
 - The Night He Was Betrayed—1 Corinthians 11:23
 - Foot-washing—John 13:1-17
 - Foot-washing pans are provided—please bring a towel
 - Broken bread and wine—1 Corinthians 11:23-26
 - Live transmission
2. Remembering the time of Christ’s death—Wednesday, April 1, at 3:00 p.m.
3. Traditional meal on Wednesday, April 1—evening
 - Traditional meal—depicting deliverance from Egypt.
 - Remember the Old Testament history—gathering in homes.
 - The pastor recommends cozy gatherings in homes.
 - The building will be available for a cozy gathering.
 - Old Testament history and spiritual applications.
4. First day of Unleavened Bread—Thursday, April 2
5. Remember the timing of Christ’s resurrection—three days and three nights later.
6. Seventh day of Unleavened Bread—Wednesday, April 8

“A Season of Exciting Rituals”

This article is from the “Edifying the Body” section of the Church of God Big Sandy’s website (churchofgodbig sandy.com). It was posted for the weekend of March 21, 2026.)

By Dave Havir

BIG SANDY, Texas—As we approach the spring feast days in 2026, we have the opportunity to participate with exciting rituals.

Let’s begin this article with a definition of a ritual.

■ Some people describe a ritual as the following: “A ritual is a formal, stylized and repetitive series of actions performed in a specific order, often at set times and places. These actions are deeply symbolic and can be religious (ceremonies) or secular (daily habits)—aimed at honoring traditions, fostering community or focusing on intent.”

Secular rituals

Notice a few secular rituals.

- Morning coffee routines
- Evening bedtime routines
- Family meals
- Annual vacation trips
- Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance
- At graduation—wearing a cap and gown and walking across a stage
- Exchanging rings and vows at weddings

Religious rituals

Notice a few religious rituals.

- Daily prayer
- Water baptism
- Religious ceremonies—at regular church services
- Religious celebrations at festivals
- Religious pilgrimages of visiting sacred sites

Who has more?

Which religion has more rituals, the Catholic religion or Jewish religion?

While Catholicism and Judaism are both considered highly ritualistic, they express their rituals differently. While some observers suggest Catholicism seems “more” ritualistic due to the visible and ornate ceremonies, Juda-

ism’s daily-life-based rituals are often considered more numerous and integrated into everyday existence.

Supporting differences

■ It is my perspective that the Roman Catholic Church and the Jewish religion generally have more rituals than many Church of God congregations. I don’t choose to follow many Catholic and Jewish rituals, but I support their freedom of choice to follow the rituals of their conscience.

■ It is also my perspective that many branches of the Church of God have more rituals than our congregation. Here is an example. Although most people in our congregation do not wear tassels, friends in other congregations love to wear them. And I know the good reason why they do it. The tassels remind my friends of the commandments of the Lord—Numbers 15:37-41. As I said, I support an individual’s freedom of choice to follow the rituals of his conscience.

■ I know that there are members in our congregation who follow different rituals.

Great. Rituals can be a wonderful reminder.

And now our congregation is entering the spring season, when many of us will be following a few rituals that are bunched together. Let’s notice them.

Suffering and death of our Savior

■ Foot-washing

The majority of the members of our congregation will be washing the feet of their friends at the commemoration of the suffering and death of our Savior (John 13:1-17)—whether it occurs at our congregational observance or in the privacy of their homes.

■ Broken bread

The majority of the members of our congregation will be partaking of a small amount of unleavened bread at the commemoration of the suffering and death of our Savior (1 Corinthians 11:24)—whether it occurs at our congregational observance or in the

privacy of their homes.

■ Small amount of wine

The majority of the members of our congregation will be partaking of a small amount of wine at the commemoration of the suffering and death of our Savior (1 Corinthians 11:25)—whether it occurs at our congregational observance or in the privacy of their homes.

After the commemoration

After the commemoration of the suffering and death of our Savior, many of His followers will observe a ritual during the Days of Unleavened Bread. The ritual has to do with leaven and unleavened bread. People will be avoiding leavened food items for a week and will be including unleavened food items during that same period.

The ritual involving leaven has two distinct meanings.

First lesson—leaving in haste

During the Days of Unleavened Bread, many members in the Church of God keep leaven out of their homes—as an important reminder.

Here is the first lesson. The people of God need to be prepared to move in haste.

■ Exodus 12:33—The Egyptians urged the people to leave quickly.

■ Exodus 12:34—The Israelites took their dough before it was leavened.

■ Exodus 12:39—The Israelites baked unleavened bread—because it was not leavened due to their being driven out of Egypt and they couldn't wait for the bread to rise.

■ Matthew 24:16-18—Matthew quoted the Son of God reminding the disciples of a future time when His followers would flee quickly.

■ Luke 17:31-33—Luke also quoted the

Son of God reminding the disciples of a future time when His followers would flee quickly.

Second lesson—stop sinning

Here is the second lesson. The people of God should stop sinning.

(For your information, many Bible students are aware that scriptures like Matthew 13:31-33 and Luke 13:20-21 also use leaven as a description of an expanding Kingdom of God. So please recognize the context.)

Here are a few scriptures that picture leaven as sin.

■ Mark 8:15—Beware of the leaven of the religious leaders and of the leaven of the secular leaders.

■ 1 Corinthians 5:6—Your glorying is not good. Don't you know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?

■ 1 Corinthians 5:7—Therefore, purge out the old leaven that you may be a new lump (since you are truly unleavened). How are we unleavened? Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

■ 1 Corinthians 5:8—Keep the Feast not with old leaven, nor with malice and wickedness—but with unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

■ Galatians 5:9—When the Son of God was correcting those who were promoting circumcision, he said: "A little leaven leavens the whole lump."

■ Romans 6:1-2—Since we are saved by grace, should we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not. (Stop sinning.)

■ Ephesians 2:8-10—Since we are saved by grace, walk in good works (and stop sinning).

■ Titus 3:4-8—Since we are saved by grace, maintain good works (and stop sinning).

Scriptures to consider

Exodus 12:13—"Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt."

Hebrews 9:14—"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"